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For Immediate Release

Source: Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association

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| **Karolin Troubetzkoy, President, Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association** |

**MESSAGE FROM KAROLIN TROUBETZKOY, PRESIDENT, CARIBBEAN HOTEL AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION (CHTA) ON THE OCCASION OF EARTH DAY - APRIL 22, 2017**

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) welcomes the focus of Earth Day 2017 on Environmental and Climate Literacy, especially at a time when the very existence or impact of climate change is being challenged by some, if not outrightly denied and dismissed.

The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio was "our last chance to save the Earth". Twenty-five years later, we must take stock of where we are and unite to face the realities of climate change, especially in a region and an industry as vulnerable as ours. Most importantly, we must take action.

Our association is committed to ensuring our members and our destinations are fully conversant with the need to be climatically responsible. We know that being aware of the dangers of climate-changing activities not only helps to protect the environment but is also good for business.

In a sense, the Caribbean region is the world's lungs. People come to our shores for fresh air and clean seas in which to relax.

Individually our islands may be small, but collectively we can make a significant statement to the world about our care and concern for protecting our fragile natural resources. We do not have room for waste, nor can we afford to muddy our own pool when we are inviting the world to come and splash in its pristine clarity.

Looking after our environment is not just good for the planet, it is good for our livelihoods as well. It is not only economically efficient, but many of our guests want to know that their presence is preserving the region rather than polluting it.

The governments of the Caribbean played an instrumental role in the adoption of the 2015 agreement at the Paris climate conference. CHTA is calling on the region's public and private sector stakeholders to renew our support for the Caribbean Community's call for a cap on the world's temperature rise at 1.5 degrees Centigrade made to the United Nations conference in Paris. Anything less than a full commitment to the accords reached in Paris would have devastating consequences for the region.

Furthermore, we should increase our climate knowledge by supporting research and mitigation measures to counter losses.

CHTA is working on several fronts to create a more sustainable tourism industry by adopting measures to reduce the carbon footprints of our members. With the support of the Inter-American Development Bank, detailed energy efficiency audits have been conducted on more than 150 regional hotels. Additional energy conservation work in the tourism sector is being done with the support of the United States Agency for International Development.

Through these and other initiatives, many of the region's hotels have put energy efficiency measures in place, and our sector has advanced training, policies and incentives that support greater efficiencies and lower carbon footprints. Many of the region's governments have put in place policies to promote energy efficiency, water conservation and waste management. These efforts need to continue.

The Earth Day focus this year on Environmental and Climate Change Literacy fits well with the UN's declaration of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development because controlling the release of climate-changing emissions is a key element in advancing the contribution of the tourism sector to the three pillars of sustainability - economic, social and environmental.

Such continuing education will raise awareness of the true dimensions of a sector that is often undervalued because of a lack of literacy on its real contributions across all areas of society.

In the Caribbean, we benefit enormously from our region's biggest money earner and CHTA unreservedly embraces our responsibility to ensure that tourism is sustainable so it can be an even greater contributor to the socioeconomic development of the region, supporting our schools, our hospitals, our businesses and our culture while preserving the environment, which is our biggest asset.

Let's Save the Earth - and Keep the Caribbean Clean!

About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean's leading association representing tourism interests for national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 50 years, the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working together with 1,000 hotel and allied members and 32 National Hotel Associations, CHTA is shaping the Caribbean's future and helping members to grow their business. Whether navigating new worlds like social media, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, data and intelligence or looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on matters that matter most.

For further information, visit [www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com](http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com/).

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