



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL & TOURISM
ASSOCIATION

For Immediate Release

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CHTA's Director General Frank Comito

CARIBBEAN TOURISM PROGRESS HINGES ON SMARTER PARTNERSHIPS

CHTA points to progress, but government and private sector stakeholders must exercise greater prudence in managing communications and resolving challenges

MIAMI (August 27, 2017) - The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) applauds efforts being made by the region's public and private sectors to grow tourism, but cautions against the inherent risks if the sectors do not work more closely together to resolve differences.

With regional and global investor confidence critical to the Caribbean's tourism future, the organization called for more effective collaboration and pointed to tourism's immense contribution to employment, entrepreneurial activity, tax revenues and to its untapped potential to grow and develop to the benefit of the Caribbean's people, governments and the industry.

The Caribbean is the most tourism-dependent region in the world and CHTA maintains that tourism's contribution to the region's economies cannot be understated, generating more than 80 percent of GDP in some jurisdictions. Travel and tourism is already one of the world's largest economic sectors, supporting 292 million jobs, and is projected to become the largest in the next several years.

Frank Comito, Director General and CEO of CHTA, asserts that a healthy investment climate and investor confidence are linked directly to good governance and sound business practice. "Any discourse which casts aspersions on the motives of government or maligns our tourism industry players and their significant contributions to socio-economic development cannot be good for our region," he said.

"In today's era of risk aversion for financing by banks and other investors, it is essential that we continue to advance an open and transparent investor-friendly environment. While we may tend to think of ourselves as individual companies or countries, many investors look at the Caribbean as one, so what happens in one destination, positive or negative, can reflect on the entire Caribbean," Comito added.

Comito, the former executive vice president of the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association, said there has been greater movement in recent years towards stronger public-private sector collaboration and a civil discourse, through CHTA's work with the Caribbean Tourism Organization and CARICOM Heads of Government, as both organizations work to mount a regional tourism development and marketing initiative. "We are also seeing more progress at the destination level - albeit not to the level it needs to be at yet," he said.

CHTA recognizes the committed and hardworking public sector officials who are devoted to ensuring Caribbean countries and territories continue to generate revenues to maintain systems that keep communities running. The association also observes greater resolve by civic, business and government leaders to create a more positive investment climate, eliminating the corruption, bureaucratic torpor and inefficiencies stifling development in other regions.

The common ground between the public and private sectors is far greater than points of difference, CHTA asserts, and the Caribbean should focus on what can be done together for the greater good while addressing differences in a manner that engenders confidence and trust.

Expressing concerns about those situations where the public and private sectors don't see eye-to-eye, Comito was confident that all parties, today and in the future, will rise above their differences to work together towards what's best all around.

He asserted that collaboration was beneficial not only to the thousands of people directly benefiting from tourism, but also to the investors who have risked their resources and placed their confidence in the stability and predictability of investing in the region. "Our region has come a long way and we should remember these achievements as we move towards honorable conclusions to unfortunate misunderstandings."

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, CHTA 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 businesses. 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 .

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