



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL & TOURISM
ASSOCIATION

For Immediate Release

Source: Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

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CHTA WANTS BETTER U.S.-CUBA RELATIONS

MIAMI (June 23, 2017) - The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) regrets the recent U.S. reversal of its travel policies on Cuba and the likely effects on the socio-economic development of Cuba and the wider Caribbean region. The Association continues to support the ending of the U.S.-Cuba embargo and its restrictions on trade and travel, and encourages Cuba's active engagement in regional economic development. CHTA concludes that the announced policy changes could stall or altogether reverse the heartening progress made in recent years.

If restrictions are indeed re-imposed, the Association expects adverse effects for U.S. businesses - not only for import-export companies, but also for the U.S.-based travel-related businesses that have made considerable investments in Cuba since normalization began - and lost opportunities for those U.S. companies considering doing business there.

Even before full normalization, Cuba's hospitality industry's growth outpaced the rest of the region and most of the world. Major global hotel chains from outside the United States have been investing in Cuba and today they manage tens of thousands of rooms. As latecomers, U.S. firms are already at a competitive disadvantage in Cuba. They risk becoming marginal players in the travel industry's growth in Cuba and throughout the region.

The Association urges the United States and Cuba to accelerate cooperation and collaboration between their governments, based on their mutual acknowledgment that the growth of travel and trade presents the greatest opportunity for breaking the long-standing social, political and economic barriers that have historically divided the two countries.

CHTA urges that any new regulations continue to encourage small and medium enterprise opportunities, both Cuban and U.S.-sourced. It also urges Cuban authorities to accelerate adjusting their investment and business licensing regulations to foster the local enterprises so crucial for a growing travel industry.

In its presentation to the U.S. International Trade Commission in 2015, CHTA called for a new U.S.-Caribbean relationship - sparked by a new U.S.-Cuba policy - through the creation of a Caribbean Basin Tourism Initiative, which would recognize travel as a way to foster regional development and trade, and create points of engagement between the U.S. and the Caribbean's public and private sectors.

A vibrant travel industry both in Cuba and throughout the Caribbean basin benefits both the region and the United States, helping to ensure the security of the United States' "Third Border" while stimulating employment, entrepreneurial activity, trade and government revenues in the region. In the face of concerns about immigration into the United States, it is self-evident that a prosperous Caribbean will put less pressure on population movements. The economies and people of the U.S. and the Caribbean are interdependent and regional prosperity can be significantly improved through enhanced travel and with Cuba's full engagement.

CHTA remains hopeful that the recent U.S.-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act will be a catalyst for this and that the regulatory framework developed in the coming months by the U.S. Administration, regulating Cuba travel and trade, will address concerns being raised by regional and U.S. travel industry stakeholders as a result of the recent announcement.

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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