



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL & TOURISM
ASSOCIATION

For Immediate Release

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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 THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is proud to support the United Nations General Assembly's declaration of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development . The declaration mirrors our calls for change in policies, business practices and consumer behavior towards a more sustainable tourism sector.

We agree wholeheartedly with World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Secretary-General Taleb Rifai that the year gives us a unique opportunity to build a more responsible and committed tourism sector that can capitalize its immense potential in terms of economic prosperity, social inclusion, peace and understanding, cultural and environmental preservation.

Tourism already accounts for seven percent of worldwide exports, one in eleven jobs and 10 percent of the world's gross domestic product. The tourism sector, if well managed, can foster sustainable development that benefits everyone.

The impact is much higher for us in the Caribbean who benefit enormously from our region's biggest money earner.

It also means our region has an added 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 culture and our environment.

In the broadest sense of the meaning of 'sustainability', there is so much more that CHTA and the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) can advance to protect and capitalize upon our natural resources, build economic linkages with tourism to reduce import costs and support local production, and better incorporate our diverse heritage and creative talents into our tourism offerings.

There is much already being done in these areas and much that we can share and learn from one another. Products "Proudly Made in the Caribbean" deserve special attention and preference. Introducing our visitors to our arts and crafts and uniquely Caribbean cultural experiences should be wholeheartedly embraced by our tourism enterprises.

While social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction are paramount considerations, the UNWTO urges us to remember the need for resource efficiency, environmental protection and sensitivity to the dangers of climate change.

Sustainable tourism also has to enhance cultural values, diversity and heritage while it fosters mutual understanding, peace and security.

These are all things we in the Caribbean embrace so it's comforting to know the rest of the international community joins us in rededicating ourselves, our islands and our nations to these noble and achievable goals.

CHTA continues to work aggressively to counter the impact of factors like Zika, Sargassum, climate change, and energy cost and waste on tourism and the broader population, and it has become abundantly clear that nothing short of a major shift in focus and commitment is necessary for Caribbean tourism to grow in 2017 and beyond.

We strongly believe that the region has much to gain in addressing these issues and others by working together - public and private sectors, Government and business leaders - to help shape our destiny. In 2016 we laid the foundation for a more collaborative shift; now we must aggressively and collectively resolve to build on that foundation.

I remain optimistic about our industry's future. There is no other place on earth which possesses the incredible natural beauty, rich cultural diversity, and warm hospitable people like ours. For that, we must all be grateful.

All of us at CHTA and CAST wish you all the very best for a happy and sustainable year.

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.

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