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For Immediate Release

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CHTA President Nicola Madden-Greig (left), Jamaica’s Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett, and Robin Russell, President of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, address the media during Caribbean Fireworks.

CHTA’s Caribbean Travel Marketplace to introduce new features in Jamaica *President Nicola Madden-Greig reports strong buyer interest in landmark tourism meeting*

KINGSTON, Jamaica (March 18, 2024) – The 42nd staging of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)’s Caribbean Travel Marketplace, scheduled to take place at the Montego Bay Convention Center from May 20-23, 2024, will feature new new additions and three dedicated tracks, promising an even more dynamic and engaging experience for attendees.

During a recent “Caribbean Fireworks” press conference in Kingston, CHTA President Nicola Madden-Greig stated, “This year we will be taking the event to a new level with three distinct tracks — The Business of Tourism: in the form of the Caribbean Travel Forum; the Marketing of Tourism: CHTA Caribbean Travel Marketplace; and the Community of Tourism: with our first ever Responsible Tourism Day.”

Caribbean Travel Marketplace will kick off with the Caribbean Travel Forum on May 20, focusing on “Visioning a New Tourism Landscape for the Caribbean”. The forum will feature an awards



luncheon to honor the Caribbean Hotelier of the Year and present Destination Resilience honors and the President's Award for Excellence in Caribbean Tourism.

Responsible Tourism Day, which will coincide with Jamaica's Labour Day on May 23, will include a focus on addressing climate change, sustainable development, and agricultural linkages to emphasize responsible stewardship of tourism communities.

Madden-Greig highlighted the introduction of a dedicated Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) itinerary for the first time, with 20 meeting planners attending the inaugural Caribbean MICE Exchange. She emphasized the significant potential of the MICE market, which generated over US\$900 billion globally in 2023 and is expected to double by 2032. "It is time for the Caribbean to focus on getting a bigger slice of that very significant pie," she asserted.

The event will also welcome 50 regional and international media representatives, a handful of whom will participate in the first multi-destination media familiarization trip to the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Cayman Islands, aimed at showcasing the rich cultural diversity of these nations and promoting multi-destination travel within the Caribbean.

Madden-Greig reported that 150 buyer companies are expected to attend Marketplace with significant interest from Asia, Europe, and Latin America. To date, 86 buyer companies have registered, surpassing the number from last year's event by more than double at this stage. Among these, 14 new companies from countries including Estonia, Italy, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, the UK, and the US have registered.

President of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) Robin Russell opined that Marketplace presents excellent opportunities and access for hoteliers and tourism suppliers. "You are able to interact with the very top of the food chain in every aspect of the business, from tour operators to travel agents ... everybody who wants to do business comes to Marketplace," he said. He added that for small enterprises, "It is probably the only opportunity you're going to get unless you're spending big money to interact with these persons."

"(Caribbean Travel Marketplace) is not an event in the context of a single activity, but it's an opportunity, a great opportunity for us as a Caribbean people, not just to showcase the strength and power of our assets, but also to provide leadership with innovation," said Jamaica's Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett, who thanked CHTA for selecting Jamaica to host this important gathering of tourism stakeholders.

Reflecting on the Caribbean's performance in 2023, Madden-Greig noted a three percent growth over 2019, according to data from ForwardKeys. She stressed the importance of continuing to drive growth, especially with over 59,000 new hotel rooms planned or in progress across the region, according to STR. "We cannot rest on our laurels as the potential for even



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more impressive growth is possible (and) events such as CHTA Marketplace must continue to deliver for our region,” she said.

Close to 1,000 delegates are expected to attend Marketplace with approximately 150 supplier companies from various Caribbean destinations already set to participate. Representatives from Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Saint-Martin, Sint Maarten, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have registered to date.

About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean’s leading association representing the interests of national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 60 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working with some 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 helping to navigate critical issues in sales and marketing, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, climate change, data and intelligence or, looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on issues which matter most.

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