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For Immediate Release

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CARIBBEAN HOSPITALITY YOUTH ENCOURAGE PEERS TO GET BEHIND COVID-19 DIRECTIVES

MIAMI (April 11, 2020) – Young leaders of the Caribbean tourism sector are throwing their support behind calls to heed the advice of public health officials to stay at home so that the region’s leading economic sector can rebound quickly once the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic subsides.

The recently established COVID-19 Caribbean Tourism Task Force is enlisting the dynamism and innovativeness of young hospitality professionals to encourage protective practices by Caribbean nationals, especially younger ones, many of whom have been slow to respond to the urgency of the outbreak.

Striking messages of encouragement from young professionals in Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Turks and Caicos, released by the task force, implore fellow youth to take more seriously the dangers of the contagion to the Caribbean.

The Task Force, which comprises representatives from the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), and the Global Tourism Resilience & Crisis Management Centre (GTRCMC), unveiled the two-minute video, which contains essential guides to safeguard communities and individuals.

The Task Force initiatives support those of Caribbean tourism leaders and health organizations, who are working together to prevent the spread of COVID-19 throughout the region, and are implementing response measures to contain the spread of the virus.

In the video, Kamille Huggins, Executive Assistant of The Landings Resort & Spa in St. Lucia, echoing job loss concerns of many of her peers, said: “We have to get back to work to pay the bills and to feed our families. When are we going to lick this thing? It’s hurting all of us.”

“Listen. The power is in every one of us to end this isolation sooner rather than later. This invisible virus can disappear so much sooner if each one of us does what the experts tell us. The sooner we do that, the sooner we can go back to work and return to normal,” declared Sonia Simmons, Communications Manager of the Turks and Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association.



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“Here’s what the health experts tell us. Please stay at home. We cannot contain this threat to our lives if we continue to go out carousing,” stressed Jamal Griffith, Sales and Marketing Manager of Bougainvillea Barbados, while Issia Thelwell, Sales and Marketing Manager of Round Hill Hotel and Villas in Jamaica, pointed out, “If (you stay at home), you may be a part of a new dynamism we need to restart Caribbean tourism.”

The message, which has generated strong interest on social media, is especially important since many young people across the region have been ignoring public health advisories which warn residents of the danger of spreading the virus by hanging out in groups.

CARPHA Executive Director Dr. Joy St. John welcomed the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) calls for leaders in the private sector to support efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. “We need to lock arms across the region to ensure that we have adequate medical supplies and testing equipment,” she said. “But we also need to work together to educate our communities about this dangerous disease, and develop strategies which focus on what our post-COVID recovery looks like in the months ahead.”

Drawing on information presented in a recent CHTA webinar, young professionals agreed it was imperative for the region’s public and private sector representatives to work closely together to prepare for the post-pandemic recovery. They opined global travelers have become more inured to global shocks, such as natural disasters and geopolitical events, and were optimistic that the Caribbean region would recover faster than many areas in the rest of the world.

“By staying home today, we can travel tomorrow,” they stressed.

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 55 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working with some 1,000 hotel and allied members, and 33 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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