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For Immediate Release

Source: Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

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## **CRISIS OFFERS BIG CHANCE TO UPGRADE TOURISM PRODUCT, SAYS TOURISM CHIEF**

MIAMI (April 21, 2020) – Frank Comito, the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association’s (CHTA) chief executive, told the world press how the Caribbean hospitality sector and destinations were marshaling their crisis management experience to be able to bounce back stronger and better once the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis has subsided.

Speaking on a Zoom link from Miami on a recent Foreign Press Association (FPA) webinar, Frank Comito, CEO and Director General of CHTA, commended resort owners for using the opportunity to refresh their offerings and facilities and train staff on advanced aspects of the sector – albeit at a social distance – while the region remains closed to new visitors.

Host and FPA President Ian Williams expanded on Comito’s insightful remarks and invited him to explain the measures the tourism sector and governments were taking to protect the workers in the industry and to preserve and develop their skills.

Comito described the initiatives which CHTA, working in partnership with the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), put in place since January. The measures built upon previous efforts to address health threats with training, information sharing, and signing up hotels to participate in an online health monitoring platform which was developed several years ago by the health agency.

Offering words of optimism, he pointed to research coming out of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and Oxford Economics research following the 2017 hurricanes showing that the Caribbean tourism sector recovered to pre-hurricane levels faster than anticipated, after returning with a new and improved product.

The CHTA chief told international reporters attending the virtual press conference that the Caribbean tourism sector had a proven ability to rebound strongly from adversity, after developing resilience from experiences including 9/11, Zika, hurricanes, chikungunya, volcano eruptions and earthquakes. “The data clearly shows we bounced back better and stronger ... there’s every reason to believe we will be resilient once again,” he stated.



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He urged tourism stakeholders to take advantage of COVID-19 resources set up by CHTA to contain the spread of the virus in the region, and laid out on the CHTA COVID-19 Resource Center at [www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com/covid-19/](http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com/covid-19/), which covers everything from readiness to handling cancellations. He reinforced the important role which the Caribbean will play in restoring wellness and well-being as many look to refresh and 'get back to nature' once the pandemic subsides.

In thanking Comito for his insights, FPA President Williams agreed that "we'll need the Caribbean to recuperate after months of confinement," and proposed hosting a future webinar from a beach in the Caribbean.

#### 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.

For further information, visit [www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com](http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com).

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