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CHTA CELEBRATES CARIBBEAN RESILIENCE AS FORWARDKEYS DATA REVEALS STRONG START TO THE NEW YEAR

U.S. Virgin Islands tops Caribbean recovery; Curaçao registers impressive results

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (April 6, 2023) — The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is applauding Caribbean tourism stakeholders for their exceptional efforts in leading the global travel rebound this year, noting in particular the strides made by the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) and Curaçao.

New research from ForwardKeys, a strategic data partner of CHTA, reveals that international arrivals to the Caribbean for the first two months in 2023 are behind by only one percent when compared to the same period in 2019. In contrast, Europe is registering a 25 percent lag, while Asia-Pacific is 54 percent behind. Total international inbound is trailing by 31 percent compared to the same period in 2019.

“These are impressive results for our region,” stated CHTA President Nicola Madden-Greig, who expressed her gratitude for the close collaboration and smart partnerships between health organizations, hospitality leaders, businesses, governments, the Caribbean Tourism Organization, airlines, and the hard-working staff in the visitor industry that helped to achieve such a strong recovery.

According to ticket booking data for arrivals through the end of March, the USVI has recorded an impressive increase of more than 22 percent compared to the same period in 2019, leading the region. Following closely behind is St. Maarten, with a growth rate of 18 percent, while Guadeloupe and Turks and Caicos are tied at 17 percent. The USVI has also received top marks for its resilience measured by arrivals growth for the first two months of the year compared with 2019.

An important factor contributing to the growth of Caribbean tourism is the increase in travelers from South America. Colombia and Argentina are among the top-growing international markets to the region, with growth rates of 50 percent and 15 percent, respectively. Curaçao, Jamaica and Aruba have seen the greatest increases in business from Argentina.



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Curaçao is also leading the region in terms of welcoming visitors from South America, primarily through the growing Panama City hub, followed by the Dominican Republic and Aruba.

Olivier Ponti, VP of Insights at ForwardKeys, highlighted the importance of regional hubs for travelers from South America who typically have to connect to reach their destination. “ForwardKeys has uncovered the growth of Panama City as a gateway to the Caribbean for trips from South America. Miami is, on the contrary, losing its market share (for connections to the region from South America),” said Ponti. However, he also noted that limited air capacity remains one of the main challenges hindering growth in some emerging markets for the Caribbean.

Meanwhile, Curaçao has also shown impressive growth in the U.S. market, with Grenada and Antigua and Barbuda following closely behind. For the French market, St. Barts, St. Maarten and Puerto Rico are seeing the highest rates of increase.

According to ForwardKeys, there has been a rise in flight searches from Canada, which is welcome news for the region as travel from Canada has been slower to recover.

Demand for spring and summer travel to the Caribbean is expected to surpass 2019 levels, with spring arrivals projected to exceed 2019 figures by 20 percent and summer arrivals set to eclipse pre-pandemic records by 48 percent.

Madden-Greig offered words of encouragement to Caribbean tourism stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of continuing to pursue cooperative efforts and dedication to strengthening the region’s crucial tourism industry.

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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