

For Immediate Release

Source: Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association

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CHTA Champions Sports Tourism in the Caribbean Following Historic Paris Olympics Success

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (August 14, 2024) – The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is calling for the region to embrace sports development and sports tourism following the outstanding performance of Caribbean athletes at the recent Paris Olympic Games. Historic achievements by athletes like St. Lucia’s Julien Alfred and Dominica’s Thea LaFond, who secured their countries’ first-ever Olympic medals; Marileidy Paulino the first woman from the Dominican Republic to win an Olympic gold; and Jamaica’s Roje Stona setting the Olympic men’s discus record, have shone a global spotlight on the Caribbean’s diverse athletic prowess.

“The success of our athletes is a testament to the incredible talent and potential that exists in the Caribbean,” said Nicola Madden-Greig, President of CHTA. “It’s time for us to dream even bigger and invest more in developing our sports men and women across all disciplines and seek to build a strong sports tourism market, not only to support our athletes but also to reap the economic and cultural benefits this thriving industry can bring to our region.”

The Caribbean’s recent Olympic success builds upon the incredible legacy of sporting giants who have long put the region on the global athletic map. Jamaican sprinters Usain Bolt and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce revolutionized track and field with their dominance and charisma. Grenadian Kirani James brought attention to the smaller islands with his 400m prowess, earning Olympic gold, silver, and bronze medals across three Games.

CHTA stresses the crucial role of cooperation among governments, tourism departments, sports organizations and the private sector in building a strong sports tourism infrastructure. The organization underscores the need for educational programs and initiatives to nurture young talent and create opportunities for athletes, sports associations and administrators to excel. This extends to fostering talent in event management and marketing, enabling the Caribbean to create curated tours, establish museums that honor the region’s sporting heritage, and organize distinctive sports events that spotlight Caribbean culture and provide a platform for local athletes to shine.

According to CHTA’s data partner, ForwardKeys, sporting events play a significant role in boosting tourism across Caribbean destinations, with varying levels of impact. High-profile, internationally recognized events like the recently held ICC Men’s T20 Cricket World Cup tend to generate substantial increases in traveler volumes, as they attract a broad audience of fans from around the world. For example, ticket sales to Barbados during the week of the fixture announcement (January 4-10, 2024) for travel dates during the competition increased by 90% compared to the same period last year.

“Sports tourism is more than just hosting events; it’s about creating a holistic experience that showcases our culture, natural beauty, and sporting excellence. By investing in sports tourism, we can attract visitors from around the world, including those looking for year-round training destinations and experiences.

This will boost our economies and inspire the next generation of Caribbean athletes,” Madden-Greig added.

CHTA advocates for the Caribbean to embrace sports tourism, recognizing its significant cultural and economic potential. This growing sector, now taught at leading universities, generates about 10% of global tourism expenditure according to UN Tourism. The sports tourism market, valued at US\$564.7 billion in 2023, is projected to grow to a \$1.33 trillion industry by 2032 (Global Market Insights, March 2024). The association stresses the importance of integrating sports tourism into regional development strategies to diversify and enhance the Caribbean tourism product, capitalizing on this rapidly expanding market.

CHTA is committed to working with its partners to seize the momentum generated by the recent Olympic success and establish the Caribbean as a premier sports tourism destination. Many hoteliers throughout the region already participate in, sponsor, and support sporting events, and CHTA encourages all its members to get involved with this growing segment. “Together, we can transform the Caribbean into a global sports tourism powerhouse while also empowering our young people to become the leaders of tomorrow,” Madden-Greig stated.

This year’s Olympics saw Caribbean athletes continuing this tradition of excellence with the total medal count for the region at 25. In addition to athletics, Caribbean countries found success in boxing and wrestling, while many Caribbean and Caribbean-origin athletes won medals for other countries where they hold citizenship.

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.

For further information, visit www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com.