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JAMAICA AND ELEUTHERA, BAHAMAS TAKE HOME DESTINATION RESILIENCE AWARDS

BARBADOS (May 18, 2023) – Affirming its commitment to the sustainability of the Caribbean tourism industry, the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) announced the winners of its 2023 Destination Resilience Awards in Barbados last week.

Jamaica and Eleuthera in the Bahamas took home the top awards, while Bonaire, St. Maarten and St. Lucia were recognized with honorable mentions.

The second annual awards recognize the extent to which public-private sector partnerships drove the successful tourism recovery of the region.

Announcing the winners during the second annual Caribbean Travel Forum, held at Sandals Royal Barbados, Vanessa Ledesma, Acting CEO and Director General of CHTA, said that this year's submissions "all exemplified a high level of stakeholder collaboration, something which we wanted to advance."

The awards, presented by CHTA in collaboration with the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), were conceived during the COVID-19 pandemic and are aimed at recognizing destinations with a deliberate focus on resilience and sustainability.

Judges assessed destinations' commitment to addressing some or all of the World Tourism Organization's sustainable development goals, recognizing destinations that subscribe to a collaborative approach and engage public and private sector stakeholders in innovative, needs-driven strategies. The awards recognize efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change and the broader challenges impacting sustainable development.

A panel of tourism experts chose the winners based on the following criteria:

- Commitments to partnership and collaboration
- Sustainable/resiliency-related activities undertaken
- Innovation and technology
- Linkages and external engagement (i.e., other sectors, community)
- Contribution of initiative(s) to tourism



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Jamaica emerged the winner in Category A, reserved for destinations with total 2019 stopover visitor arrivals greater than 500,000. Initiatives such as the JAMAICA CARES program, a public-private partnership, took a holistic approach to resume post-pandemic travel and successfully positioned Jamaica at the forefront of international tourism recovery.

“It was no easy feat to reopen our borders in such a short time, and this award highlights the importance of partnerships in a crisis,” said Jamaica’s Director of Tourism, Donovan White. “We’re truly grateful and deeply honored to receive this distinction,” he added.

Robin Russell, President of the Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association, said, “Our partnership with the public sector was truly momentous and allowed us to forge a strategy that led to an unprecedented recovery.”

In Category B, Eleuthera in the Bahamas was victorious for destinations with total stopover arrivals under 500,000. Eleuthera has demonstrated a commitment to a more sustainable future with efforts such as the Island School, Cape Eleuthera Institute, the Eleuthera Sustainability Council Cooperative Society and the Center for Training Institute.

“I am pleased to see the efforts to promote sustainability in the Bahamas and notably Eleuthera, recognized by the Caribbean community and rewarded with the Destination Resilience Award,” said Latia Duncombe, Director General of Tourism in the Bahamas.

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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