

# Director General for The Bahamas Joy Jibrilu addresses UNWTO

NASSAU, BAHAMAS, September 22, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- NASSAU, The Bahamas - General of the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism Joy Jibrilu was at the United Nations World Tourism Organization General Assembly in Medellin, Columbia to assure member states that The Bahamas is vigorously working on a vibrant sustainable tourism strategy.

UNWTO encourages the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts, and is committed to promoting tourism as an instrument in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) geared towards reducing poverty and fostering sustainable development.

The event began on September 11. Ms. Jibrilu was acting as the chairperson of the event in the stead of Minister of Tourism Obie Wilchcombe. The UNWTO event focused on developing sustainable tourism goals. While addressing the conference, Ms. Jibrilu noted that in 2014 worldwide tourists arrivals ballooned by an additional 48 million to more than 1.1 billion travelers over 2013.



This, she said, translated to more than \$1 trillion injected into various economies. “The result of this spending creates equal greater opportunities for job creation, growth in foreign direct investment, alleviation of poverty, enhancement of airports, constructing bridges, new modern highways, development of marinas with newer responsible technologies to protect the natural environments,” she said.

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*Joy Jibrilu, Bahamas Ministry of Tourism General*

“Notwithstanding, while we are very cognizant of the true economic and social benefits that this sector contributes to island states like The Bahamas, we are aware that this same sector has the potential to destroy the same assets which it depends on for sustained development.”

The director general assured the conference that The Bahamas truly embraces the concept of responsible, sustainable development as a major principle in the country's growth agenda. “In this vein, we became one of the first

governments to develop a set of sustainable development policy guidelines for the development of our tourism sector in 1994, resulting in a World Travel and Tourism Council Green Globe Environmental

Achievement Award in 1996 and again in 1997,” she said.

“We also play our role in regional efforts to protect the fragile resources which provide the opportunity to sustainably develop our economies. As one of 32 member states of the Association of American States we are integrally involved in the Greater Caribbean forming the first Sustainable Tourism Zone in the world (The Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean).

“In so much, we have committed to become one of five pilot countries in the region to utilize selected sustainable development indicators to measure our level of sustainable development of a selected destination within The Bahamas. The selected destination will then develop a management plan to close gaps in areas where there are weakness in sustainability, with an objective to protect our human and natural capital.”

Ms. Jibrilu said additionally, the Government of The Bahamas is collaborating with Royal Caribbean Cruises and Sustainable Travel International in a Sustainable Destination Alliance of the Americas scheme. “This program is geared firstly to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the destination’s performance against globally recognized indicators for sustainable destination management. This will be followed by the development of an action agenda to address any deficiencies and finally, but very importantly, to monitor key performance indicators. It is important to note that these indicators are focused on social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development,” the director general explained.

“Finally, my ministry and indeed the Government of The Bahamas are working with the Inter American Development Bank and Carbon War Room on a Caribbean Smart Islands initiative with an objective of reducing the carbon footprint of visitors and residents of one of our unique islands as a model to other destinations. One of the strategies to achieve this goal is to reduce the dependency on fossil fuel by utilizing solar energy for 50 per cent of the island’s energy demand.”

UNWTO’s membership includes 156 countries, six associate members and over 450 Affiliate members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.

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