

Message from Bahamas Tourism Minister, Hon. Obie Wilchcombe, on the occasion of World Tourism Day 2015

NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS, September 28, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- NASSAU, The Bahamas - On Sunday, September 27, countries around the world and members of the United Nations celebrated World Tourism Day 2015. Under the theme "One billion tourists, one billion opportunities," the focus this year is on the impact of the tourism sector on economic growth, job creation and development.

As we observe this important day we celebrate that The Bahamas has been a leader in the Global Tourism Industry for more than 50 years. We salute the leaders of our country who stood strong, marched forward and confidently executed a vision for tourism development that has propelled and sustained the economic development of The Bahamas for more than one half century.

Today tourism continues to and will dominate the economic landscape of The Bahamas for the foreseeable future as the principal engine driving our dynamic economic locomotive.



As Minister of Tourism I wish to congratulate former Ministers of Tourism who have guided our industry through many challenges, only to emerge as a leader in regional and international competition. I wish to also thank all stakeholders, especially the Director General of Tourism, Mrs. Joy Ann Jibrilu and her executive team; Permanent Secretary Harrison Thompson and all of the hardworking staff at home and abroad in our field offices.

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*Hon. Obie Wilchcombe,
Bahamas Tourism Minister*

The tireless work of our airlines and cruise line partners; our hotel and guest house proprietors and operators; our taxi cab and tour bus drivers and operators; our entrepreneurs at the iconic Straw Market on Bay Street; our artisans; retail shop owners and workers and the hospitality of Bahamians generally have embellished and defined The Bahamas brand internationally. Working together, they have delivered more than fifty years of unprecedented success. Surely their consistency cannot be understated.

Tourism is a people's business and the resilient and

indomitable spirit of our people remains our greatest asset and the principal reason for our continued growth and development over the years. Many would recall that just four years ago the performance of our number one industry was at a twenty-five low, severely impacted by the global recession. The meteoric turnaround in this industry, especially in the family islands, is a tangible testament to this resilience and this “no quit” attitude of our partners and stakeholders. I thank them again.

Wherever you travel around the world, people remember our brand as an archipelagic and multi-destination paradise with natural beauty, exotic food and friendly and helpful people that constantly remind them that it is truly better in The Bahamas.

For these primary reasons, The Bahamas stands proudly among the leaders of the Global Tourism Industry. Over the past year alone The Bahamas moved up four spots in ranking in the Americas and first among the English speaking Caribbean countries. For its hard work The Bahamas is now the 2015 recipient of the top Brand Award. There is no doubt that The Bahamas has made considerable strides. We have many more to make in our quest to create more opportunities for Bahamians.

On this day we commit the Ministry to advance plans for the diversity of the Tourism Industry, always mindful to protect our cultural and natural heritage through a strategy of sustainability.

We must seize the many opportunities tourism presents for greater inter-industrial linkages. With more than six million visitors annually, there is no reason our country should not have a vibrant light manufacturing industry supplying many of the needs in our hotel industry, such as pillows, pillow cases, sheets, towels and furniture in support of our fledging pine-based lumber industry.

The Bahamas Agriculture Marine and Science Institute (BAMSI) provides many opportunities for linkages in the areas of value-added food products – from Bahamian fruit-flavored ice cream and yogurts, dry fruit snacks to coconut water. Many of our locally made products should be prominently featured on the menus in our hotels and restaurants and built into the physical plants. Bahamian entrepreneurs must exploit these opportunities.

The Tourism industry is catalytic in nature as it profoundly impacts every sector of the economy, from food and entertainment to the environment, our culture and our heritage.

As we recommit ourselves and our nation to greatness and excellence through sustainability, we reflect on our 2015 theme, fully confident of the power of tourism and travel to positively impact economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction and national development.

May Almighty God continue to bless the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

Hon. Obie Wilchcombe
Minister of Tourism
Commonwealth of The Bahamas

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