

EVERYBODY PROFITS FROM NONPROFIT TOURISM BODIES

MIAMI, UNITED STATES, July 20, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A joint editorial by Frank J. Comito, CEO and Director General, Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA); and Brian D. Frontin, President, Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives (CSHAE) and CEO, Trinidad Hotels, Restaurants & Tourism Association (THRTA)

The nonprofit tourism associations of the Caribbean are integral to the region's recovery and to the sustained profitability of the tourism and hospitality sector. And, during these difficult Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) times it is even more important to support these vital development-driver institutions if we are to emerge from the pandemic more quickly and in the best economic shape.

Moving beyond this pandemic well-prepared for the new realities of global tourism requires governments to collaborate closely with the private sector, speaking with one voice through their national associations and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) on hurdling the barriers lining the path back to profitability.

We know from experience with hurricanes and health crisis situations that when the business community and governments work in a unified way they are able to accelerate the return to full employment, restoring tax revenue, rebuilding dynamic business, and enhancing education, health and other government services.

The most important thing the business community can do is to support its local and regional hotel and tourism associations by being as collaborative and engaged as possible on a variety of issues which affect their bottom line and the well-being of the communities where they operate.



Nonprofit organizations are society's biggest (little-known) change agents, especially the business-led NGOs like ours, marshaling and leveraging resources at the local, regional and international levels. Their historic contributions to the economies and development of the Caribbean region are considerable, working tirelessly for decades on advocacy, training and education, research, marketing, beautification, environmental protection, energy efficiency, product development and community enhancements. One can easily state that through the dedicated volunteer business leadership of these nonprofit organizations, businesses and governments throughout the Caribbean have flourished.

Today, however, the very survival and future viability of many of these organizations is in question.

Leadership, beacons of guidance, providing answers, support and advice through crises are provided by national and regional associations to help businesses make it through the storms and create a path towards recovery. We have received plaudits for the important benefits accruing from membership of CHTA and national associations which shone brightly over the past 100 days as tourism stakeholders, in many instances working in step with governments, have worked on response, mitigation and recovery.

The rapid Caribbean-wide response of CHTA to the crisis was made possible by national tourism associations assembling data from countries and territories, which were fed to member groups directly to support local efforts or through such avenues as the resilience series of webinars launched by CHTA.

The value of our membership associations has been proven so often that we may be suffering from our own success as destinations and resorts appear to be taking our collective efforts for granted. Our biggest challenge as nonprofit organizations is to get many more in the business community to realize that we are their insurance policy. But we need them to pay the correct premium for this insurance coverage.

We are supported by voluntary contributions and only about half of the private sector in most jurisdictions actually come to the table to help make the difference in their own industry – often because they don't know the extent of what the organizations do for them, but also unfortunately because some businesses simply don't see supporting the collective as part of their responsibility, but are willing to freely accept the benefits to their businesses which these associations bring about, thanks to the dedicated leadership and support of some of their fellow businesses. This simply is not fair play.

Those who are disengaged don't seem to realize they're hurting themselves and that it's absolutely essential, especially during crises like the one we have now, to come to the table and lend talent and resources for the benefit not only of their own properties, but for all the Caribbean enterprises, because as we know all too well, in small island states, a rising tide raises all boats. At the minimum, a modest financial dues investment should be committed.

Every association in the Caribbean is financially strapped, but we in regional and national organizations are being asked on a daily basis to do far more with fewer resources during the toughest of times. Without the urgent support of industry stakeholders, some of these long-standing national hotel and tourism associations may soon be forced to close their doors.

Such closures would be lamentable because we are all in this together, not just those in the major breadwinner of the region, tourism, but also the majority of private sector concerns linked to the sector.

Banks, insurance companies, telecommunications firms, wholesalers, shipping firms and service providers are among the many industry players whose success has been built through tourism. Decades of development work by the region's 33 national hotel and tourism associations and CHTA have contributed to their collective success. Now, in this time of incredible vulnerability, as best they can, we need these businesses, along with all tourism-related businesses, to support our nonprofit organizations and associations.

After all, this would be a business imperative – not an act of charity – because they will be investing in the recovery of the most important revenue producer of the region. The return on their investment in tourism associations will help to reignite tourism faster, which will more readily accrue benefits to these businesses in the medium to long term.

The pandemic lockdowns have allowed our associations to make our industry smarter and stronger by intensifying training in the sector with heightened hygiene and health and safety guidelines. Our training modules are now being carefully studied by the private sector – another benefit produced by nonprofits that helps corporations.

CHTA has focused a lot of effort on improving and honing health, safety and environmental standards collaboratively with the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Commission (OECSC), and the Jamaica-based Global Tourism Resiliency and Crisis Management Centre (GTRCMC) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Such initiatives will help countries and territories rebound and recover faster, while building consumer confidence, and confidence in our own employees as they adhere to protocols that can keep them safe as well. Importantly, this coordinated skills boosting will build confidence in travelers as word gets out that the Caribbean is really helping to mitigate or remove altogether health and safety risks.

The point is, tourism is everybody's business and for everybody's benefit: governments benefit because they generate tax revenue from our generation of business for the economy and many jobs and spin-off businesses are created, broadening tourism's impact even further. Those businesses which have benefited so richly from tourism can look at ways of supporting their local national hotel and tourism associations and CHTA, because tourism generates a tremendous value that enhances the health, wealth, environment and well-being of all our

people.

We applaud those businesses and their dedicated owners, operators, managers and supervisors in the region who have invested leadership, time and money into making these institutions possible.

We challenge those who have not stepped up to the plate, at a minimum, with the remittance of a small annual dues investment, to do so. Time and time again, whether they've realized it or not, our nonprofit organizations have been there for them and it is not only long overdue, it is fair play and simply good business for them to step up in this time of tremendous need – for their own benefit, if nothing else.

Standing by and watching nonprofit tourism associations struggle or fail is just bad business.

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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