

CTO Chairman urges action on disaster preparedness and climate resilience

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- Kenneth Bryan, chairman of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), speaking to senior tourism and government officials, scientists and members of the media from around the region meeting last week to address issues of hurricane preparedness and climate resilience, stated that hurricanes and climate-related hazards threaten the region's development and its tourism sector, and preparation and mitigation are of paramount importance.

He asserted that as a counterbalance to life in one of the most desirable travel destinations in the world, "the price that we pay for living in the beautiful Caribbean is that we are faced with a variety of weather-related threats that can have hugely detrimental effects on human life, property, livelihoods, businesses, investment and the environment."

Minister Bryan encouraged the Caribbean, and by extension the

regional tourism sector, to confront the significant effects posed by global climate change and its related impacts, such as dry spells and droughts, which impact the ability to provide adequate water resources; heat waves that have health implications for tourism employees and visitors alike; and sea level rise, which is accelerating beach erosion and increasing the vulnerability of tourism facilities, many of which are located in low-lying coastal areas.



CTO Chairman Kenneth Bryan addressing last week's webinar



Additionally, he asserted that increasing sea surface temperatures have contributed to coral bleaching and the eventual mortality of this valuable natural resource, which he noted is not only a key tourist attraction, but also serves as essential nurseries for declining fish stocks.

Chairman Bryan, who is Minister of Tourism and Ports for the Cayman Islands, was addressing a virtual CTO Forum, the first in a series on disaster preparedness and climate resilience, as part of preparedness activities for the 2023 Atlantic Hurricane Season.

The CTO Forum gathered experts from the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to address the 2023 seasonal forecast and share mitigation and preparedness strategies. Best practices for hazard response and recovery, which are equally important, will be covered in the next forum.

In the Caribbean context, natural hazard risk management and building resilience to climate change, according to Chairman Bryan, draw on the same intervention methodologies, predicated on safeguarding lives, livelihoods, property and investments.

Even as the region navigates through the vestiges of COVID-19, the development of a sustainable tourism industry, stated Chairman Bryan, “requires a multi-pronged approach that must include the formulation of adequate policy safeguards.”

The head of the intergovernmental agency stated that success “calls for both government and the private sector to work collaboratively in the development of plans and strategies to reduce risk and vulnerability.”

Even more important, he urged a proactive approach to implement the needed actions to increase the resilience of destinations and “by extension, our tourism sector through actions such as infrastructure improvements; investments in early warning systems; engaging in joint advocacy; effective communication and media management before and after times of crisis; and education and awareness for visitors and residents alike, all underpinned by robust digital technology and information communication systems.”

He observed that tourism is a powerful economic engine, which fuels the region’s economies, drives new businesses and investments, provides linkages with other economic sectors, and generates the tax revenues essential to the building of infrastructure and government services.

Given this foundational reality, Bryan urged the participants to be proactive and rigorous in undertaking the necessary actions to enable long-term tourism resilience.

The CTO chairman called on the region to renew its commitment and responsibility to safeguard people and visitors within the region, the planet, properties and infrastructure investments, “which will ensure that this Caribbean paradise that we all call home remains globally competitive, and maintains its appeal as a safe destination to live, visit and invest in.”

The 2023 Atlantic hurricane season is expected to be “near normal”. Experts suggest that there will be 12 to 17 named storms and five to nine hurricanes this year, with one to four major hurricanes.

To review the webinar, visit <https://youtu.be/ujxsGVDt-eE>.

About the Caribbean Tourism Organization

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), headquartered in Barbados, is the Caribbean’s tourism development agency, comprising membership of the region’s finest countries and territories, including Dutch-, English- and French-speaking, as well as a range of private sector allied members. The CTO’s vision is to position the Caribbean as the most desirable, year-round, warm-weather destination, and its purpose is Leading Sustainable Tourism - One Sea, One Voice, One Caribbean.

Among the benefits to its members, the organization provides specialized support and technical assistance in sustainable tourism development, marketing, communications, advocacy, human resource development, event planning & execution, and research & information technology.

The CTO’s headquarters is located at Baobab Tower, Warrens, St. Michael, Barbados BB 22026; Tel: (246) 427-5242; Fax: (246) 429-3065; E-mail: CTObarbados@caribtourism.com.

For more information about the Caribbean Tourism Organization, visit www.OneCaribbean.org and follow CTO on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn to be part of the conversation.

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