

CHTA leader issues appeal for homegrown tourism solutions

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The president of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) appealed to Caribbean tourism leaders to craft their own fate in the vital travel and tourism sector and not be driven by the agendas of interests outside the region.

Nicola Madden-Greig noted that although overall tourism activity in the Caribbean is almost back to pre-pandemic levels, with some destinations growing by “leaps and bounds”, others are lingering in recovery mode, largely because of an imbalance in the dispersal of flights and insufficient marketing resources.

For the region’s tourism industry to recover fully and equitably, Madden-Greig said it was important for government leaders to frame policies and strategies to boost regular, predictable, inter-island connectivity.



CHTA President Nicola Madden-Greig, OD



The head of the region’s leading private sector tourism organization pointed out that such a move would not only encourage tourists to visit more islands, but also would help to meet the needs of Caribbean residents who travel for family, business and leisure activities. “We must support those airlines which are stepping up to the plate to strengthen our aerial linkages, but we also should embrace this crisis in airlift as an opportunity for a homegrown solution within our region,” she commented.

Madden-Greig echoed the advice of Barbados' Prime Minister, Mia Mottley, who exhorted the region's tourism leaders to shed post-colonial attitudes, take control of their tourism sectors, and be "shapers not takers", while delivering the keynote address during CHTA's successful Caribbean Travel Forum, which preceded the association's Caribbean Travel Marketplace in Barbados in May.

She also agreed with Prime Minister Mottley's call for better use of regional capital, and urged policymakers to design new financial instruments that could be used for the region's biggest earner, tourism, rather than left idling in low interest-bearing accounts.

Notwithstanding its inherent volatility, Madden-Greig described tourism as "the world's fastest growing and the most dynamic sector of the global economy," adding that the Caribbean "should not be left helplessly tied to the fates of others alone. While international partnership has its value, regional collaboration is essential. The work is too important to not have independent regional solutions."

She commented: "We must continue to solidify links with our international partners, but we must also take a leaf from the pages of entrepreneurs like Adam Stewart and Kevin Hendrickson in Jamaica, Peter Odle in Barbados, the Lamontagne family in St. Lucia, and the Hopkin family in Grenada, to name a few, and become craftsmen of our own fate." Tourism is the region's economic driver but it can also be a vehicle for creation of generational wealth for Caribbean nationals, she asserted.

Madden-Greig, who is Group Director of Marketing & Sales with The Courtleigh Hospitality Group in Jamaica, believes that as the tourism industry continues to grow there should be a serious effort aimed at implementation of tourism worker pension schemes across the region, especially given the volatility of the current labor market. Heralding successful efforts by the Jamaican government to implement such a system, she reasoned that the welfare of tourism workers, who have been the foundation of building the region's greatest revenue driver, must be a priority. "Many of our workers are retiring with little to no safety net and it is time we took a more serious look at solving this problem," she commented.

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 60 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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