

FERNANDEZ LEADS DELEGATION TO CARIBBEAN STATE OF TOURISM INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

Increase in airlift, cruise calls, and accommodations are in place for the season

PROVIDENCIALES, TURKS AND CAICOS, October 12, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Tourism and Investment, Hon. Charles 'Max' Fernandez, with the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) CEO, Mr. Colin James, and other tourism executives are attending the Caribbean Tourism Organizations (CTO) State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC) in the Turks and Caicos.

Billed as the Caribbean's premier forum for the presentation and exploration of the major issues impacting the development of the sector in the region, SOTIC gathers regional and international experts, thought leaders, decision-makers, and influencers to focus on the next steps needed to be taken for the region to remain competitive and grow sustainably.

When addressing the press, Minister Fernandez articulated, "The multitude of advancements in Antigua and Barbuda's tourism offerings reflect the substantial investments made in our hospitality sector. These enhancements render our islands an even more enticing haven for travelers in search of distinctive experiences, luxury lodging options, and various accommodations catering to budget-conscious tourists. However, as we expand, we remain acutely aware of our duty to cultivate a tourism infrastructure that prioritizes environmental



L-R, Colin James, CEO, ABTA; Louise Twinning-Ward, Senior Private Sector Specialist, World Bank; Hon. Charles 'Max' Fernandez, Minister of Tourism and Investment; Alba Coli-Vinent, Analyst for Trade, Investment Competitiveness Global Tourism, World Bank

preservation and sustainability."

In his presentation, the Minister shared information on the increase in airlift from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. "At the same time, cruise lines remain attracted to Antigua. Development continues at our new port terminal to be completed in 2025, and Antigua is now known for excellence in homeporting," he continued.

In his remarks, the CEO James shared, "Iconic resorts like Curtain Bluff are refurbished, and there is an increase in rooms at Hawksbill Resort, Tamarind Hills, Verandah Resort, and Jolly Beach, while phase one of the new Royalton Chic will come on stream. There are new developments for 2024, including Moon Gate Antigua at Half Moon Bay and the construction of the luxury beach club, Nikki Beach. Simultaneously, in Barbuda, Nobu Barbuda begins construction in the first quarter of 2024 and will be added to Barbuda's room inventory".

James reported that the ABTA is also promoting events to attract visitors. "There is the Antigua and Barbuda Wellness Month in January, Antigua and Barbuda Restaurant Week, May 4 – May 16, Antigua and Barbuda Art Week, November 27 – December 3, along with signature events like the Talisker Whisky Challenge, Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta, Antigua Sailing Week, Barbuda Caribana, Antigua Sportfishing, Antigua Carnival" he shared. Minister Fernandez played a key role during the conference by participating in the Aviation panel. His presentation emphasized the significance of inter-island connectivity, underlining, "In this tourism-dependent region, many Caribbean nations have identified intra-Caribbean travel as one of their top five sources of tourism arrivals, making the success of regional travel essential." He stressed that addressing the region's challenges effectively requires a combination of regional cooperation, intergovernmental collaboration, and public-private partnerships.

Meetings were convened with the Minister, the CEO, Louise Twinning-Ward, Senior Private Sector Specialist at the World Bank, and Alba Coli-Vincent, Analyst for Trade, Investment Competitiveness, and Global Tourism, at the World Bank.

These meetings aimed to support the World Bank in collecting data for an in-depth analysis of the actual costs and benefits associated with tourism in the region. Furthermore, the purpose was to explore ways in which the World Bank could assist in developing policies and programs aimed at optimizing the advantages of tourism for the country.

The SOTIC conference is themed Invest. Innovate. Inspire. and closes on October 13.
-ENDS-

ABOUT ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Antigua (pronounced An-tee'ga) and Barbuda (Bar-byew'da) are located in the heart of the Caribbean Sea. Voted the World Travel Awards Caribbean's Most Romantic Destination, the twin-island paradise offers visitors two uniquely distinct experiences, ideal temperatures year-round,

a rich history, vibrant culture, exhilarating excursions, award-winning resorts, mouth-watering cuisine, and 365 stunning pink and white-sand beaches - one for every day of the year. The largest of the Leeward Islands, Antigua, comprises 108 square miles of rich history and spectacular topography, providing various popular sightseeing opportunities. Nelson's Dockyard is perhaps the most renowned landmark, the only remaining example of a Georgian fort, a listed UNESCO World Heritage site. Antigua's tourism events calendar includes the prestigious Antigua Sailing Week, Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta, and the annual Antigua Carnival, the Caribbean's Greatest Summer Festival. Barbuda, Antigua's smaller sister island, is the ultimate celebrity hideaway. The island lies 27 miles north-east of Antigua and is just a 15-minute plane ride away. Barbuda is known for its untouched 17-mile stretch of pink sand beach and as the home of the largest Frigate Bird Sanctuary in the Western Hemisphere.

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