

British Virgin Islands Wins CTO's Regional Tourism Youth Congress

PROVIDENCIALES, TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS , October 15, 2023

/EINPresswire.com/ -- In an inspirational demonstration of passion, preparation and poise, Naomi Onwufuju, Junior Minister of Tourism of the British Virgin Islands, brought home the winner's plaque at the 19th Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) Regional Tourism Youth Congress, held at Beaches Turks & Caicos in Providenciales on Friday.

Competing against students from 13 other Caribbean destinations, the 16-year-old skillfully presented three innovative strategies her country could undertake to develop and implement an initiative whereby tourism stakeholders and their allied partners can work together to enhance access, safety, use, and enjoyment of the destination's tourism offerings by visitors with disabilities.

"Accessibility is not only a responsible tourism policy but also a moral obligation," declared the Elmore Stoutt High School student as she described her vision for increasing accessibility to the islands' beaches, restaurants and other attractions ensuring inclusivity and equity for all visitors.

Elated upon hearing the declaration of her victory, Onwufuju was effusive in her praise of her fellow contestants.

"I love my country and I am honored I have gotten the chance to represent and to win this [award] for my Territory to be able to be an influence in tourism so that my ideas and the ideas of everyone who participated in this competition today can be heard. Truly, everyone had



Naomi Onwufuju of Elmore Stoutt High School in the British Virgin Islands is jubilant after winning CTO's Regional Tourism Youth Congress at Beaches Turks & Caicos on Friday.

amazing ideas!" she stated during a press conference immediately following the Youth Congress event, which was attended by ministers and commissioners of tourism from numerous CTO member countries and territories.

Seventeen-year-old Jordan Greig of Barbados, a student at Harrison College, who was named the second-place winner, was recognized for his polished presentation of his thoughts related to executing a strategy for addressing tourism workforce issues facing the island's tourism industry.

Tobago's Junior Minister of Tourism Jael Morgan was awarded the third-place award. The 17-year-old student from Signal Hill Secondary School described three innovative strategies her country could carry out to realize an initiative to offer visitors unique, sustainably developed wellness tourism experiences.

Layla Leathen, Junior Minister of Tourism for the Bahamas, was recognized for her performance with an Honorable Mention for an excellent presentation on the topic of wellness tourism, which demonstrated a unique approach to promoting health and well-being for visitors.

Sharon Banfield-Bovell, Director of Resource Mobilization and Development for the CTO, who served as Master of Ceremonies for the competition, lauded the participants for demonstrating excellence in their research, ideas and presentations. "It is



Kenneth Bryan, Chairman of the Caribbean Tourism Organization, congratulates Naomi Onwufuju of the British Virgin Islands.



Turks and Caicos Islands Minister of Tourism Josephine Connolly extends her congratulations and appreciation to CTO Regional Tourism Youth Congress winner Naomi Onwufuju of the British Virgin Islands.

extremely evident that the future of Caribbean tourism is filled with great promise and potential in the hands of these future leaders,” she stated.

Fourteen CTO member countries and territories participated in the Regional Tourism Youth Congress, which was chaired by the 2022 winner, J’nae Brathwaite of Tobago. Each Junior Minister made a three-minute presentation on one of the three topics: Wellness Tourism Beyond the Norm, Accessibility Tourism, and Building a Resilient and Sustainable Tourism Workforce. They were also required to make a one-minute presentation on a “mystery” question. In this category, the contestants were asked to identify an interesting, unusual or unique place, person, thing, event or activity from their respective destinations which they believed would provide a visitor with a rare and exceptional experience.



Barry Brown, Executive Director - Sales with AFAR Media and a member of the CTO Allied Board; Stacey Liburd, Director of Tourism for Anguilla; and Petra Roach, CEO of the Grenada Tourism Authority, served as judges for the highly anticipated competition.

The 2023 Regional Tourism Youth Congress marked the end of the CTO's Business Meetings and State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC), which began in the Turks and Caicos Islands on October 9.

Prizes for the winners were provided by the Caribbean Tourism Organization; the Turks and Caicos Islands Ministry of Tourism; the Turks and Caicos Islands Department of Youth Affairs; Flow; Chukka Caribbean Adventures; Carnival Corporation in partnership with Acordis International Corp; and Dufry.

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