

CTO Members, Royal Caribbean President Talk Cruise Tourism During 'Iconic' Summit

MIAMI, FL, UNITED STATES, December 25, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) partnered with Royal Caribbean during Caribbean Weekend in Miami this month, bringing together regional ministers and directors of tourism, as well as other stakeholders, to explore the potential for economic growth, sustainability, and deeper community engagement.

Hosted aboard Royal Caribbean's Icon of the Seas, "Envisioning Caribbean Tourism: An Iconic Summit", featured a dynamic discussion with Michael

Bayley, President and CEO of Royal Caribbean, which was moderated by Bevan Springer, President of Marketplace Excellence, public relations agency of record for the CTO.



The summit provided a unique opportunity for mutual exchange on topics such as the cruise industry's role in creating employment and opportunities in the Caribbean.

"The Caribbean is the soul of Royal Caribbean. About 60 percent of all our business is the Caribbean," stated Bayley, noting that everything the cruise line does – from the colors and designs of its vessels to the warm, friendly culture of the company —reflects the company's connection to and association with the region.

Bayley highlighted Royal Caribbean's longstanding commitment to fostering the success of all stakeholders throughout the region's cruise tourism ecosystem, emphasizing employment opportunities and sharing that the company is maximizing its efforts to increase local sourcing in the Caribbean.

He noted, however, that enhancing supply chain systems remains essential for sustaining and expanding these efforts. "It does require a lot of cooperation from the Ministry of Agriculture to

work with the cruise lines to try and figure out how to create cooperatives to aggregate product so that we can purchase it ... It takes time, commitment and focus, but we're very open to that," Bayley indicated.

The company executive also spoke about potential for Caribbean governments to develop frameworks similar to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, which could pave the way for more Caribbean nationals to join the cruise workforce. Bayley praised the American Caribbean Maritime Foundation cadet program, sharing a recent success story of a female Bahamian second officer who brought Icon of the Seas into Nassau during its inaugural season.

Sustainability was another focus of the discussion, with Bayley describing Royal Caribbean's investments in and embrace of waste reduction initiatives and innovative energy solutions such as biofuels and LNG.

CTO Chairman Ian Gooding-Edghill, who also serves as Barbados' Minister of Tourism and International Transport, shared his reflections on the importance of collaboration with the cruise industry, noting that as CTO reimagines the future of Caribbean tourism, the summit initiative demonstrates its commitment to building successful partnerships that benefit economies and communities.

Minister Gooding-Edghill recognized Royal Caribbean's role in providing economic opportunities across the region. "It is a wonderful story ... it says something about your leadership, it says something about your company," he said, thanking Royal Caribbean for its longstanding commitment to the Caribbean.

CTO Secretary-General & CEO Dona Regis-Prosper also expressed her gratitude to Royal Caribbean for its collaborative efforts: "This iconic summit underscores the power of partnerships and collaboration as we reimagine our approach to tourism development and deepen our engagement with the cruise industry."

As Royal Caribbean prepares to unveil its next Icon Class ship, Star of the Sea, Bayley assured attendees that the Caribbean will remain central to its operations. CTO has pledged its commitment to strengthening partnerships with Royal Caribbean and other cruise lines, to sponsor opportunities for open dialogue between the cruise industry and Caribbean stakeholders, and to pursue opportunities for sustainable growth and mutual benefit.

PHOTO CAPTION: Caribbean tourism officials aboard Royal Caribbean's Icon of the Seas.

Front row (l-r): Tashia Burriss, Secretary of Tourism for Tobago; Dona Regis-Prosper, CTO Secretary-General and CEO; second row (l-r): Carlos James, Minister of Tourism for St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Ian Gooding-Edghill, Chairman of the CTO Ministerial Council and Barbados Minister of Tourism; Josephine Connolly, Minister of Tourism, Turks and Caicos Islands; Luce

Hodge Smith, Junior Minister of Tourism, British Virgin Islands; Marsha Henderson, Tourism Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis; Latia Duncombe, Director General of Tourism in The Bahamas; and Grisha Heyliger-Marten, Minister of Tourism, St. Maarten; back row (l-r): Anthony Mahler, Minister of Tourism, Belize; Owen Darrell, Minister of Tourism for Bermuda; Adrian Thomas, Minister of Tourism, Grenada; and Parliamentary Secretary Guibion Ferdinand of St. Lucia. They are joined by Henrik Loy, Captain of Icon of the Seas.

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: +1 246 427-5242; Email: CTObarbados@caribtourism.com

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

Heather Gibbs
Marketplace Excellence
+1 201-861-2056
[email us here](#)

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