

# CTO SG Dona Regis-Prosper Calls for Caribbean Unity and Innovation at Virgin Islands Tourism Summit

NJ, UNITED STATES, January 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Caribbean must leverage more than just its natural beauty and focus on strategic partnerships, innovation and sustainable tourism to remain globally competitive, Dona Regis-Prosper, Secretary-General and CEO of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), declared in a thought-provoking keynote address at the 2025 Virgin Islands Tourism Summit, held at Peter Island Resort in the British Virgin Islands this month.

The event was hosted by the BVI Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development, in partnership with the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board and the British Virgin Islands Yachting, Hotel and Tourism Association (BVIYHTA).



Dona Regis-Prosper, Secretary-General & CEO of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) (right), with British Virgin Islands Premier Dr. Natalio Wheatley and Junior Minister of Tourism Luce Hodge-Smith.

Addressing an audience of over 300 tourism stakeholders on “Strategic Partnerships for Sustainable Caribbean Tourism Services”, Regis-Prosper challenged the region to rethink its approach to tourism development, emphasizing that dialogue alone is not enough.

“This is not a talk shop,” she asserted. “It’s important that we get together as professionals and talk about the future of tourism.”

Her speech, delivered in the British Virgin Islands – a place she fondly referred to as “home” due to her past years of living and working in the territory – set the stage for an ambitious vision of a collaborative, resilient and innovation-driven Caribbean tourism industry.

## Is Beauty Alone Enough?

Regis-Prosper posed a pointed question to the audience: "Is our beauty enough to guarantee our future?"

"At this critical juncture, while our natural beauty is undeniable, we must not for one minute believe that it's enough to secure the future of the Caribbean," she warned, emphasizing the need for strong, innovative and sustainable tourism models.

## Five Pillars for a Sustainable Future

Highlighting the CTO's Five Ps of Sustainable Tourism – People, Planet, Prosperity, Purpose and Partnership, Regis-Prosper stressed that tourism must go beyond resilience and become restorative.

She announced that later this year, CTO will unveil a reimagine plan focused on five key areas:

1. Advocacy
2. Market Intelligence
3. Market Competitiveness
4. People Development
5. Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism

"These pillars represent a collective vision for a resilient and sustainable tourism sector," she stated, adding that true collaboration "has to start in the mind."

## Strategic Partnerships: The Key to Growth

At the heart of her address was a call for greater regional and international collaboration. Regis-Prosper highlighted the CTO's expanding network, which now includes 25 member countries and 65 private-sector partners, spanning airlines, cruise lines, travel and marketing agencies.

She emphasized the power of public-private sector partnerships, which allow governments and businesses to pool resources, expertise and knowledge.

"The CTO, for example, is a real-world example of the power of partnerships," she said, citing joint efforts to tackle issues such as sustainable infrastructure, waste management, and eco-friendly technologies.

She also underscored the importance of local communities in shaping the region's tourism future, especially in the area of product development. "Residents must be included in the

discussions," she said. "These are the people, the stewards of our culture, our environment, and our resources."

### Tourism Education and Workforce Development

The tourism leader identified people as the Caribbean's greatest asset and urged the industry to invest in workforce development.

"Tourism is ultimately about people," she said, pointing to CTO's 192 training courses (developed in partnership with the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association), online learning platforms, and tourism eBooks for primary school students aimed at encouraging young people to see tourism as a viable career.

She also gave the audience an exclusive preview of CTO's 2025 training calendar, reinforcing the organization's commitment to skills development and capacity building.

### Emerging Trends Shaping Caribbean Tourism

Acknowledging the shifting global tourism landscape, Regis-Prosper identified key trends shaping the future of the Caribbean's tourism industry:

1. Health and Safety Post-Pandemic – While the region has shown remarkable resilience, she urged continued vigilance in hygiene standards and contactless travel innovations.
2. Sustainability and Regenerative Tourism – With 80% of travelers willing to pay 10% more for sustainable options, and 41% willing to pay 30% extra for adventure and eco-tourism experiences, she said the Caribbean must capitalize on this demand.
3. Technology and Innovation – From contactless check-ins to ride-sharing apps across the region, she emphasized that technology is reshaping tourism and that the Caribbean must listen to visitors' demands.
4. Experiential Travel – Today's tourists want authentic, immersive experiences, and the Caribbean is uniquely positioned to meet this demand.

### A Call to Collaborate, Not Compete

Regis-Prosper closed her address with a call for regional unity, urging leaders to see each other as collaborators, not competitors.

"We have the opportunity to shape tourism that benefits not only our local economies but also our environments and our local communities," she said. She challenged stakeholders to embrace partnerships, innovation, and sustainability to ensure that the Caribbean remains "the world's most desirable and responsible tourism destination."

With her stirring message, Regis-Prosper left no doubt: the future of Caribbean tourism will be

determined not only by its beauty, but by its vision, strategy and collective action.

#### 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.

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For more information about the Caribbean Tourism Organization, visit [www.OneCaribbean.org](http://www.OneCaribbean.org) and follow the CTO on Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn to be part of the conversation.

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