

CTO to Launch Future Leaders Forum at SOTIC 2026

Interactive pre-conference town hall will connect students with tourism leaders and give the next generation a voice in shaping the Caribbean's tourism future

BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS, September 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) will launch its inaugural Future Leaders Forum at the 2026 State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC) in Guyana, creating an interactive space for students and emerging professionals to engage directly with leaders helping to shape the region's tourism industry.

Held Monday, Oct. 5, from 10–11:30 a.m., the pre-conference event will take place under the theme "From the Classroom to the Caribbean: Conversations with Tourism Leaders." Rather than a traditional conference session, the forum will use an interactive town hall format designed to encourage candid conversation, questions and the exchange of ideas across generations.

The initiative complements the SOTIC 2026 theme, "Tourism Futures: Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive," by bringing young Caribbean voices directly into discussions about the forces expected to influence tourism over the next



Narendra Ramgulam, CTO's deputy director of sustainable tourism



Regional Tourism Youth Congress participants at SOTIC in Barbados last year

decade — from climate change and artificial intelligence to entrepreneurship, biodiversity, community tourism, destination management and workforce development.

“The future of Caribbean tourism will not be shaped only in boardrooms or conference halls; it will also be shaped by the questions, ideas and ambitions of the young people preparing to enter this industry,” said Narendra Ramgulam, CTO’s deputy director of sustainable tourism, who will moderate the forum. “The Future Leaders Forum is designed to give students a genuine voice in that conversation — not simply as spectators but as participants. We want them to challenge us, tell us what they see coming, and leave SOTIC understanding that they have both a role and a responsibility in defining what Caribbean tourism becomes next.”

CTO secretary-general and CEO, Dona Regis-Prosper, will open the forum, underscoring the organization’s commitment to investing in young people and preparing the next generation to lead an increasingly complex and rapidly evolving tourism sector.

The program will begin with a live audience poll exploring which issues participants believe will have the greatest influence on Caribbean tourism over the coming decade. This will be followed by a “Town Hall Kickstarter,” during which tourism leaders representing government, the private sector, academia and communities will each respond to a single question: What is one challenge the next generation of Caribbean tourism leaders must solve — and why?

The session will then shift to an “Ask Me Anything: Caribbean Tourism Edition,” giving students the opportunity to lead the conversation and question tourism leaders on issues ranging from climate resilience and technology to entrepreneurship, careers, community development and the future direction of the industry.

Ramgulam is encouraging participating students to come prepared to make the most of the opportunity. “Bring your questions. Bring your ideas. Challenge us,” he said. “This is not a session where young people are expected to sit quietly and listen. We want them to ask the questions they have always wanted to ask tourism leaders, raise the issues that matter to them and tell us what they believe the Caribbean tourism industry should look like in the years ahead.”

A centerpiece of the forum will be the Caribbean Tourism Legacy Wall where participants will complete the statement, “My legacy for Caribbean tourism will be ...” and publicly post their commitments. Regis-Prosper will be invited to make the first pledge, followed by participating tourism leaders and students, symbolizing the shared responsibility of established and emerging leaders for the Caribbean’s tourism future.

The emphasis on young people will continue during the week with the Regional Tourism Youth Congress, another signature conference event that gives young people from across the Caribbean a platform to debate tourism issues, share their perspectives and present ideas for the future of the region’s leading industry.

SOTIC 2026 will be held in Georgetown, Guyana, Oct. 5–9, bringing together tourism ministers, commissioners and directors of tourism, private-sector executives, industry specialists, media and other regional and international stakeholders to examine the issues and opportunities shaping the future of Caribbean tourism.

To register, visit <https://sotic.onecaribbean.org>.

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. 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 and execution, and research and information technology.

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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