

ASTA International Destination Expo – Puerto Rico – 14th April, 2011

Session: Sustainable Tourism and Development: How the Caribbean is Leading the Way!

CARIBBEAN FACT SHEET

The Caribbean Tourism Organization

- The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) is an international development agency which represents over 30 Caribbean countries and assists them to work towards the development of a sustainable tourism programme throughout the region. The CTO has its headquarters in Barbados and marketing offices in London and New York. The organization is active in all aspects of tourism development including training, consultancy, research, public relations and wide-ranging promotional activities.
- Websites: www.OneCaribbean.org; www.CaribbeanTravel.com
- Email contact: ctoNY@caribtourism.com

Some CTO Initiatives (spearheaded by CTO or in collaboration with other organizations):

- Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme:
 - Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework
 - Caribbean Regional Disaster Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan
 - Caribbean Hotel Energy Efficiency Action Programme
 - Carbon Neutral Tourism Programme for the Caribbean
 - Annual Conferences and Trade Shows– e.g. Sustainable Tourism Development, Human Resource Development, Caribbean Tourism Conference, Caribbean Week
 - Promoting the Caribbean at major tourism trade shows e.g. WTM, ITB and other specialized shows in our major markets.
 - Encouraging the development of innovative, high quality and sustainable tourism products through our publications, workshops
 - Recognizing them through the CTO Caribbean Excellence in Sustainable Tourism Awards
 - Provision of scholarships and grants to Caribbean nationals in tourism and hospitality-related areas through the CTO Foundation.
 - Implementation of a Caribbean-focused Hospitality Assured Programme
 - Newsletters and collateral material – CTO, Making Waves (for kids), brochures/magazines

Protection and recognition of Caribbean Tourism Assets

- 24 inscribed and 37 tentative UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- 50 Green Globe and 36 Earth Check Global certified businesses
- 22 Blue Flag certified beaches and marinas
- 8 Hospitality Assured certified properties
- Member Participation in regional and international Tourism Awards contests.

GREEN GLOBE CERTIFICATION

Green Globe is an international brand for sustainable travel, tourism and related green businesses. The Green Globe Certification seal is an independent recognition of businesses' and communities' sustainability achievements. Environmental activities and initiatives delivering Corporate Social Responsibilities are benchmarked against the Green Globe Standard. Green Globe's online Certification System and Benchmarking Calculators provide immediate reporting on carbon footprints, water consumption and waste recycling. Green Globe has expanded its programs to consulting with destinations seeking carbon neutrality status via mitigation technologies and offsets. Green Globe's worldwide network extends across nearly 50 countries.

EARTCHECK GLOBAL CERTIFICATION

The EarthCheck Program was developed by the Australian government-funded Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) and is an environmental management system in use by the travel and tourism industry for the benchmarking and certification of their operational practices. EarthCheck has been designed to meet the needs of the new carbon economy. It facilitates the independent calculation of Scopes one, two and three emissions. The Program complies with the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) Greenhouse Gas Protocol, and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14064 range of standards for greenhouse gas accounting.

CARIBBEAN BLUE FLAG CAMPAIGN

The Blue Flag Campaign is an environmental initiative for the certification of beaches and marinas. Started in Europe in 1987, it is administered by the NGO Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) based in Denmark and England. FEE administers the Blue Flag on over 2,500 beaches and marinas across Europe, and has expanded to South Africa and now the Caribbean. The Blue Flag is an internationally recognized symbol of quality for beaches that are well managed and adhere to a system of key environmental criteria for safety, cleanliness and environmental awareness.

Its objectives are to:

- Improve understanding of the coastal and marine environment
- Promote incorporation of environmental issues in decision-making process of authorities and their partners
- Achieve self-regulation by industry to meet environmental standards

HOSPITALITY ASSURED PROGRAMME

The aim of the Hospitality Assured Programme is to promote a culture of quality, service excellence and continuous improvement in the Caribbean, which are driven by international standards and certification, in order to strengthen the business performance and overall competitiveness of tourism enterprises in the region. The specific objectives of this program include:

- To enhance the capacity of CTO in introducing and institutionalizing the service quality management certification system which will allow Caribbean tourism enterprises to be more responsive to the needs and expectations of their key customers, thereby creating customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and improving their overall business performance and profitability.
- To engender greater confidence on the part of customers purchasing the products and services provided by Caribbean tourism businesses.

Rich Diversity of Caribbean Tourism Products based on:

- Beaches – pink, black, golden and white sand
- Mountains and volcanoes
- Lakes and rivers
- Mangrove swamps, bird sanctuaries
- National parks, forest reserves, marine parks, biosphere reserves, botanical gardens etc.
- Festivals – music, film, literary, Carnivals, culinary/agro/wine/rum, dive, art and craft, performing arts, religious, cultural/heritage
- Soft adventure – birding, hiking, whale/dolphin watching, zip linings, canopy tours, cave/river tubing, submarine tours, abseiling, kayaking
- Wide variety of water and land-based sports
- Multi-ethnic populations – American, British, French, Spanish, Dutch, Other European, African/Maroon, Asian, Indigenous peoples (Kalinago/Carib/Arawak/Taino)
- Markets – farmer's, floating, fish, fruit and vegetable.
- Sustainable transport options – solar vehicles, bicycles, segway, railway etc.
- Community-based/agro tourism – farm tours/stay, agricultural routes (e.g. Ruta de café), community-led projects.
- Accommodation options – camping, host homes/home stays, B&B, guesthouses, eco/nature/spa/leisure resorts, hotels, boutique hotels
- Visual arts - craft villages, art galleries
- Performing arts –stage shows and cabarets, theatrical performances, spoken word events etc.
- Nature trails e.g. Waitukubuli National Trail, Dominica
- Built Heritage – historical buildings, Great House and plantation/estate tours, museums, forts, signal stations etc.
- Restaurants with a very diverse range of local and international cuisine

25 Wonders of the Caribbean:

1. Morne Trois Pitons National Park, Dominica – the first natural UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Eastern Caribbean.
2. The Boiling Lake at the Morne Trois Pitons National Park, Dominica is the second largest of its kind in the world.
3. The newly opened Waitukubuli National Trail, Dominica is approx. 115 miles long and divided into 14 discontinued segments.
4. Belize is home to the largest cave system in Central America.
5. Belize and The Bahamas have the world’s second and third longest barrier reefs running 175 miles and 140 miles respectively along their coastlines.
6. The Blue Hole, Belize is at the top of the world’s must-do dive sites.
7. Washington-Slagbaai National Park, Bonaire is one of the oldest national parks in the Caribbean
8. Flamingoes almost outnumber people in Bonaire and iguanas have the right of way in Little Cayman.
9. The highest mountains in the Caribbean are in Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti).
10. The Citadelle Henri Christophe, Haiti is the Caribbean’s largest fortress.
11. Shipwreck Alley, Bermuda – 365 wrecks dating from the 1500s
12. The world’s first Underwater Sculpture Park is located in Grenada.
13. Barbados is the first Caribbean Island to have Zagat rated restaurants.
14. St. Nicholas Abbey and Drax Hall in Barbados are two of only three existing Jacobean houses in the Western hemisphere.
15. The Mikve Israel-Emanuel Synagogue, Curacao is the Caribbean’s oldest continually operating synagogue.
16. The Pitch Lake in Trinidad is the largest of three natural asphalt lakes in the world.
17. Main Ridge Forest Reserve in Tobago is the oldest protected rainforest in the Western hemisphere.
18. Trinidad and Tobago is the birthplace of the steelpan, calypso and chutney music (a mix of calypso and Indian music)
19. Tobago has the world’s largest know brain coral.
20. Angel Falls in Venezuela is 16 times higher than Niagara falls.
21. The Turks and Caicos National Museum in Cockburn Town features possibly the oldest shipwreck in the Americas.
22. The St. George’s Cathedral in Guyana is tallest freestanding wooden building in the world.
23. Cuba is the home of the modern rumba, the mamba, the cha-cha-cha and the salsa dances.
24. The Pitons mountains in St. Lucia have one of the world’s few drive-in volcanoes.
25. Some Caribbean countries have changed hands as many as 14 times resulting in several different languages being spoken up to today.