

NOTES FROM A PRESENTATION TO  
9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CARIBBEAN TOURISM CONFERENCE  
ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT (STC-9)

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V Vanderpool-Wallace  
Secretary General & CEO  
Caribbean Tourism Organization

1. Minister Clifford, thank you very much for hosting this most important conference. I am delighted to be back in Cayman for my third time in two years wish to congratulate you on the many improvements that we see. I know of a destination that has been using the line: "It Just Keeps Getting Better" and though registered, they appear not to be using it so you might wish to approach them to use it for Cayman since one of the cardinal rules of sloganeering is that it should be obviously true.
2. I would also like to thank Pilar Bush for her contributions to our Directors of Tourism meeting this afternoon. We had a very, very good, discussion.
3. I would also wish to acknowledge the presence of Minister Simo from the Dominican Republic, the Honourable Donna Banks from Anguilla and the Honourable Norris Prevost from Dominica.
4. I am here by instruction, not by invitation. Mareba Scott and her team told me that I will be here at this time, that I will deliver the keynote presentation and that I will like it. So I agreed.
5. They did not say this but I know that I was selected because I am a convert.
6. I used to be the person who thought all of this discussion about sustainable development was for the birds. I used to be the person who would listen intently to the sustainable development adherents then throw their papers in the garbage when they left because I thought their ideas good for mental exercise but had very little practical application.
7. The good news is that by the time I got to CTO, I was not only a convert, I was an evangelist. In fact, one of my very first acts was to call Mareba Scott who was in charge of sustainable development and tell her that she will no longer work on the fringes of the Caribbean. We agreed that our task would be to get sustainable development and its principles front and centre in everything that we do.

8. We did not have to look very far or very long to converge on a theme for this conference: “Finding the Right Balance, Health, Wellness, Communities, Environments and Economies.”
9. People at CTO know that I become apoplectic whenever we speak about Community Tourism because, by definition, it suggests that it is a niche and that there should be some form of tourism that is not community based tourism.
10. The same applies to Health & Wellness. Allow me to tell you why.
11. We forget that the word travel comes from the word “travail”. If you think that travel is onerous today, imagine what it is like to travel in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries for weeks on uncomfortable, smelly, unhygienic vessels with animals and cargo. It was truly travail. It was very hard work.
12. So in the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, what would cause someone to endure weeks of travail aboard a ship to come to the Caribbean. What was that great and powerful attractor in the Caribbean? Yes, it was in search of health and wellness. There is a very long and well known list of the famous and infamous that traveled to the Caribbean in their quest for improved health and wellness.
13. So health and wellness is not a niche market it is the bedrock on which travel to the Caribbean rests. Indeed it is the bedrock for all travel which is to invigorate the mind, the body and the spirit.
14. Has it ever occurred to anyone that the word “hospitality” has “hospital” at its root? Clearly people in search of hospitality are people in search of healing. Think about the word “recreation”, people engaging in recreation are people seeking to recreate themselves. Now think about the word “vacation”. In today’s very stressful world, what would be better than to provide places where people can vacate their minds and start afresh.
15. All of these concepts that we associate with travel and tourism are engaged in health and wellness in one form or another. People travel to us because they are in need of healing. And there is no better place to provide that healing than places that are full of fresh air, naturally clean, naturally green and naturally serene. That is the Caribbean.
16. And in the midst of all of this, let us not forget our own people. The credibility of the Caribbean as a place to come for health and wellness soars to the degree that prospective visitors see our people practicing what we preach. We have some people in the Caribbean that are examples for the rest of the world to follow. Unfortunately there are far too many of our fellow citizens that need to focus on improving their own health and wellness.

17. Finally, there is one other matter that must keep on our radar screen. Many of us have seen the UK government attach taxes to of up to eighty pounds per person on long haul flights ostensibly as a part of addressing the problems associated with global warming. This is pure folly. First of all, the airline industry contribute less than one percent of the global stocks of green house gases. Secondly, by placing a tax on long haul travel to the Caribbean, the UK government, which was one of those industrialized countries most responsible for the current stock of green house gases in the atmosphere, is punishing the Caribbean which has been one of those regions that has contributed the least to the stock of green house gases. In fact, the Caribbean was ahead of the curve in our concerns about green house gases and was doing something about it in the public and private sectors long before others even became aware of the problem. These kinds of taxes not only have to be stopped from spreading, the existing ones have to be eliminated.
18. So I cannot imagine a set of subjects on which the governments of the Caribbean would be more united:
- Let us go back to the trumpeting the primary reasons to travel to the Caribbean in the first place, that is, health and wellness
  - Let us preserve that which we share in common, our environment, to nourish that health and wellness.
  - Let us practice what we preach and ensure that we are looking after the health and wellness of our people with equal intensity and equal focus.
  - Let us ensure that industrialized countries do not burden us with these taxes that are clearly intended to increase the funds in their treasuries and have nothing to do with reducing the stocks of green house gases.
19. Right after September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, the governments and the private sector of the Caribbean came together to promote tourism. That collaboration in which I was fortunate to be involved, produced a line that resonated deeply with the traveling public as people were much more in tune with their lives, in tune with their families and yearning for a much simpler time. That line was simply: "Life Needs The Caribbean".
20. The last time that I visited Cayman for a financial services conference I shared with the audience something that I found amazing. I found the results of a piece of research that came from the front page of the London Financial Times. I thought it appropriate to share it with you.

21. The findings of the research reported on the front page of the Financial Times indicated the following:

- ***“Materialistic pursuits are not a path to sustainable happiness.”***
- ***“Spending on experiences rather than possessions appear to make people happier.”***
- ***“So to increase happiness concentrate on experiences (diving, safari and concerts) rather than possessions (new house, fast cars, flash watches)”***
- ***“The evidence is clear. Experiences add more to our happiness than possessions***

22. Yes, this is from the Financial Times.

23. So if we do our jobs right and when we live up to the lofty goals that we are setting for ourselves, we can go to the world and declare:

- Life does not need an new Ferrari
- Life does not need another house
- Life does not need another fancy watch

24. If it is health, wellness and happiness that you seek, LIFE NEEDS THE CARIBBEAN!