



The Official E-Newsletter of the Caribbean Tourism Organization

Welcome

Welcome to this special STC-12 issue of *CTO News*. *CTO News*, the Caribbean Tourism Organization's e-newsletter, is an important tool to help keep our stakeholders and partners in Caribbean tourism up to date on issues, events and opportunities impacting the region. This special STC-2 issue will keep you up to date with all the developments at the 12th annual Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development taking place here at the Fairmon Southampton in Beautiful Bermuda where you always Feel the Love. We hope it proves valuable to you. We welcome your participation and feedback. Please feel free to e-mail me at jjohnrose@caribtourism.com to express your views or offer suggestions for future content.

VIRTUAL CARIBBEAN

What's on OneCaribbean

Download the latest statistical review of how the Caribbean tourism industry performed in 2010 and see what the projections are for 2011 – it's on OneCaribbean.org

SPOTLIGHT ON

Bermuda

Bermuda, just under two hours from the Northeastern U.S., stretches for 21 miles along turquoise waters and is surrounded by a 200-square-mile coral reef plateau. Bermuda's accommodations range from luxury resorts to intimate guest cottages and family-run inns, all incorporating the sophistication and hospitality unique to the Bermuda experience. The island includes more than 150 restaurants to fit any traveler's budget, from simple and inexpensive to elegant and special dining. Bermuda's diverse activities offer an array of vacation options all year round, including more wreck dives than anywhere else in the world, championship golf, horseback riding, world-renowned deep sea fishing and smooth pink beaches to rest on by day's end



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ABOUT THE CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANIZATION

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) is headquartered in Barbados with marketing operations in New York, London and Toronto. The CTO is the Caribbean's tourism development agency and comprises membership of over 30 member governments as well as a myriad of private sector entities.

The CTO's mission is to provide to and through its members, the services and information needed for the development of sustainable tourism for the economic and social benefit of the Caribbean people. The organization provides specialized support and technical assistance to member countries in the areas of marketing, human resource development, research and statistics, information technology, and sustainable tourism development. The CTO disseminates information on behalf of its member governments to consumers and the travel trade.

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STAY IN THE KNOW

The Tourism Executive Brief is your source for invaluable industry intelligence provided by the CTO to members and their strategic partners and by visiting <http://www.onecaribbean.org/marketingintelligence>.

Contact Annette Stowe at Annette@caribtourism.com if you would like to be added to the email distribution list.

HOT DATES

Caribbean Goes South

April 25-28, 2011

CTO Meet the Media (London)

May 17, 2011

Caribbean Week in New York

June 4-11, 2011

Gov'ts of the Caribbean State Ball

June 10, 2011

Caribbean Ball (London)

June 16, 2011

For more information on events, contact ctony@caribtourism.com

Rising Above the Numbers

Against the backdrop of Bermuda's pristine beauty, the official parade of flags opened the 12th annual Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development today. The theme this year is: Keeping The Right Balance: Rising Above the Numbers – and the next three days promises to ignite debate and discussion around the pressing issues associated with tourism sustainability.

The first speaker of the day, Bermuda Minister of Tourism Hon. Patrice K. Minors, offered context for delegates: "Tourism is a must for island destinations – where it drives economic wealth," the minister said. "It is also a sector with sweeping social, economic, environmental and human impacts."

She added that the challenge for Caribbean countries is to recognize that the wellbeing of the community and the tourism product is directly linked to the long-term sustainability of the region.

In addition to renditions by the Bermuda Regiment, delegates attending the opening also heard a feature presentation by Premier Paula Cox, and from the CTO Secretary General, Hugh Riley, who, in

sharing greetings from Hon. Richard Skerritt, CTO's Chairman echoed those words: "We must reinforce the value of the assets with which we have been blessed. Achieving balance is about living well while safeguarding our future."

Coverage of Premier Cox's and Secretary General Riley's presentations follow in this newsletter.

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Premier Cox bats for sustainable tourism



The 12th Annual Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development (STC-12) opened here this morning with Bermuda Premier Paula Cox outlining a vision for tourism in her country that is based on sustainability.

In her address to the conference, Premier Cox told delegates that a sustainable development economic model for her island would require that the tourism and financial services sectors "are in sync and that we leverage the existing strengths and consolidate the gains so that there is a win-win vision.

She said the vision for Bermuda and the region is for them to become the year round destination for business and tourism, acknowledging that to do so in "this economic climate is not easy.

"Nothing daring was ever accomplished by the faint hearted and there is always an uneasy tension between where to draw the balance, between progress and environment, sustainable development sustainable tourism where are we?" she asked.

"Sustainable development as we all know is development that meets the need of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," she said.

The Premier added that it was important to enhance the sector in a manner that ensures it meets the various global challenges.

"Tourism has always been seen by this government as the leveler...and from a policy perspective it is important to us that

tourism fortunes change and rise," she said. "When the music changes so too does the dance. From a strategic perspective, as a government we consider it imperative to strengthen this key economic pillar to enhance our competitiveness and to look for new sources of business so that we have a sustainable economy that is both healthy and vibrate."

STC-12, which has as its theme: Keeping the Right Balance-Rising Above the Numbers, is organised by CTO in collaboration with the Bermuda Department of Tourism. It is being held at the Fairmont Southampton Hotel.

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CTO SG: Region should seek to earn revenue from ETS programmes

The CTO Secretary General Hugh Riley has told delegates attending STC-12 that the Caribbean must take advantage of the opportunities for generating much needed revenue from emissions trading schemes even as Member Countries implement measures to maintain the pristine environment of the region.

In an address at the opening of the conference, Mr. Riley said while the region's tourism sector faces variety of threats, its people must lead the way in finding the right solutions.



"Threats to our industry, whether they manifest themselves in the form of natural disasters such as hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis; or manmade phenomena like crime and terrorism; or political creations such as the United Kingdom's Air Passenger Duty, can certainly have the initial effect of creating disruption and confusion.

"Naturally the first impulse is to take cover; to protect ourselves. But as strong, resilient people, we also have a history of recovery and renewal. So we must commit ourselves to keep bringing attention to the issues that threaten to harm us and stay focused on finding appropriate

solutions," the Secretary General said.

He added that it was vital for the Caribbean not to stand and become collateral damage, stressing that the Caribbean contributed little to climate change.

"We are low carbon emitters. No one in their right mind could seriously be thinking that the Caribbean is a significant contributor to global warming. But we certainly could suffer the consequences climate change and rising sea levels could create conditions that would devastate our economies.

"Therefore we must be prepared to scrutinize how the actions of our industrialized neighbors in developed countries can impact our lives, and together we must examine measures that rather than simply punish us through emissions taxes, will in fact help to compensate our countries for being responsible stewards of the environment."

The CTO Secretary General said it was important therefore for the CTO member countries to lead the way in environmental best-practices and "must move quickly to take advantage of the opportunities for generating income from emissions trading schemes such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

The CDM allows developing countries to earn emission reduction credits, which can then be traded and sold for use by industrialized countries to meet their emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol.

"Let us take actionable steps to reach our goals. One of the enduring and perhaps most meaningful features of the Sustainable Tourism Conference over the years, is that each year the previous host-country is required to come back and report on whatever significant action it took as a result of recommendations coming out of the conference."

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How Sustainability is Transforming the Way of Travel



"Tourism is like fire – out of control it can burn a house down. Harness it and you can stay warm and prepare and bring food to the table." This quote set the tone for today's keynote address by Costas Christ, Editor at Large of National Geographic Traveller.

Christ's views on sustainable tourism were first shaped in the Caribbean, having spent his early years living and studying in the region. But his sharp opinion on tourism's future was focused through a lifetime of travel across the globe.

"Today's traveller is criss-crossing the world at a greater volume than ever before. The issue is not how we stop tourism. The issue is

how do we get it right?"

With compelling examples, including the powerful film, *Gringo Trails*, Christ illustrated the sustainability imperative with conference delegates. And for Christ, it boils down to three pillars, all of which must be met for sustainability success: Environmentally-friendly operations in business at the destination level (reduce, reuse, recycle); Support for the protection of cultural and natural heritage; and direct and tangible social and economic benefits to local people.

"Sustainable innovation is transforming the industry in ways that were unimaginable five years ago," he said. "From Belize to Boeing – the tourism sector is developing new products and programs with a view to the long-term. And if you accept the global statistics, it is clear, sustainable travel is not a trend. It is here to stay.

"If ever there was a time for the Caribbean to embrace and expand sustainable tourism, it is now." Embracing sustainability, he said, is not just a question of ethics, it is also about doing what is right for

business. <<Back to Top

Haven't Been Here, Done That



Energized and inspiring presenter, Judy Karwacki led delegates through a thought-provoking session on Experiential Travel on day one of the 12th Annual Sustainable Tourism Conference in Bermuda.

She explained that experiential travel engages people in a series of memorable events that are revealed over time. And it involves a sixth sense – the heart. This type of travel is all about a relationship with the traveller and the host community on an emotional, physical, intellectual and experience level. And what's more, experiential travel is a high-value business that delivers significant economic benefit.

The experiential economy takes a commodity (like lobster) and elevates it to an experience level (e.g., lobster fishing with Captain Jack), driving its value exponentially.

"The market is changing and people want to have experiences," says Karwacki. "We are living in a

commoditized society where everything is similar. In experiential travel, our challenge is to differentiate and draw people back, time and time again. This requires a fundamentally different mindset."

As a first step in building an experiential travel programme, Karwacki said "identify your assets."

What makes your country, region or town different than anywhere else? she asked. "Is it nature? Culture? Heritage? Cuisine? Art? Dance? Then, make an inventory and brainstorm experience ideas. "The goal is to give people a sense of what it is really like to live in this region."

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Building Your Sustainable Tourism Plan



Jeremy Viray of Quinn & Company, CTO's PR representative in New York, attended a workshop by Brian Mullis on Reducing Risk, Raising Returns: Building Your Sustainable Tourism Plan. Here are Jeremy's notes.

Brian Mullis from Sustainable Travel International conducts a more intimate discussion with all the delegates and seeks to know what others are looking to get out of the workshop. In attendance are tourism executives from the region, media and university students. Everyone is here to learn from destinations' sustainable tourism plans. Some of the items delegates want to know include how to build on returns, new trends and how to increase planning.

Mullis discusses what defines sustainable tourism and what it is not. Unsustainability involves a lack of planning that leads to underdevelopment. Some useful sustainable tourism tools include eco-certification, carbon monitoring and impact assessment. Sustainable tourism planning has to place equal emphasis on employment and stakeholder coordination. Why is planning important? It assists destinations in stewardship goals to help achieve sustainability objectives. In short, long term successes require long term care.

Building a Plan: review/analyze current and past performance, identify current issues, examine how alternate growth scenarios may affect the issues, envision future state, establishing objectives, build plan with continual monitoring, and coordinate government involvement.

Critical elements include: governance structure, land use planning, health/safety/security, quality standards, climate change, leakage, community linkages, increased competition, energy security, green investments, employment/training/tourism education, youth development and dependence on tourism. Mullis introduces Director of Tourism of Belize (Seleni Matus) to share her insights. She says the largest challenge is climate change. Belize is working with organizations like WWF and Cornell University (US) to create their master sustainable tourism plan. She asks what have been the benefits and costs of sustainability? In Belize's plan, she addresses how she works with other agencies and organizations and how crucial these relationships are. It is essential to understand the linkage between short term and long term planning.