



**MINISTRY OF
TOURISM**
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
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CARIBBEAN

**CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT (STC-14)
APRIL 15 – 18, 2013 – PORT OF SPAIN, TRIINIDAD**

**“KEEPING THE RIGHT BALANCE: ENHANCING DESTINATION SUSTAINABILITY
THROUGH PRODUCTS, PARTNERSHIPS, PROFITABILITY”**

Rapporteurs Report

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVE

- To examine the critical issues and explore ways in which the Caribbean can enhance destination sustainability and competitiveness in the current global environment

Monday April 15th – Opening Ceremony

Opening of Exhibition

- Addresses by Chairman CTO; Minister of Tourism TT, Acting Prime Minister-TT
- Keynote Address by Prof Carlos Vogeler of WTO
- Travel and Tourism now a global force – technology and mobility the drivers of change
- Sustainability not an option but a necessity – now driven by customer demand
- People, planet and profit must go together
- Ethical tourism to manage negative impact
- We must have one Caribbean space for the people of the Caribbean (Ag Prime Minister of T&T)

- Exhibition....About 30 booths –sustainable products, stakeholders

Tuesday April 16th – Feature Address

Jake Kheel – Success of Punta Cana in Sustainability
over the last 25 Years

- Airport in 1983 – built with only sustainable products
- Sustainability fully embedded into their businesses – hotels and resorts, private homes, real estate and golf courses
- Sustainability based on new technology and innovation- energy efficiency, recycling of waste and water, maintenance, organic purchases, coral gardening, **worm composting**, community development
- Continued investment in sustainability – reduced costs, huge savings, more tourists
- 35,000 hotel rooms, 2 million tourist arrivals, one-third of Dominican Republic foreign exchange

Tuesday April 16th – Session I

Creating and Managing Sustainable Caribbean Destinations

Presenters: Willard Phillips (UNECLAC) Prof. Patrick Watson (UWI) & Shrimatee Ojah – Maharaj (St. Petersburg, Florida)

- Caribbean Tourism is waning – market share, competitiveness
- Challenges and Opportunities facing Caribbean tourism sustainability:
 - ▣ Increased competitiveness
 - ▣ Limited source markets
 - ▣ Changing travel markets – we have a new traveller
 - ▣ Limited product specialization...focused on nature-based
- Sustainability must be based on environmental + economic and social
- Caribbean must become efficient producers of **marketable experiences**
- Protection of and investment in biodiversity assets is critical for increasing tourism demand
- The success story of St. Petersburg – moving from a ‘challenged’ city to a designated ‘green’ city through strong govt leadership, serious commitment, full community engagement, holistic development of green projects

Tuesday April 16th – Session II

Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Good Practices Showcase

Presenters: Wolde Kristos-Bluefields Bay Fish Sanctuary, Jamaica; Alison Godwin-Grande Agro Tourism Ltd, Trinidad; Ewald Biemans-Bucuti&Tara Beach Resort, Aruba

□ Successful sustainable initiatives- small enterprises

Jamaica

- Government support and community collaboration

Grande

- Providing a value-based cocoa product with a focus on authentic food, culture and experience

Aruba

- Use of new technologies and practices – recycling practices, eco rooms, high occupancies, 100% carbon neutral by 2014

Tuesday April 16th - Presentation by Guyana Indranauth Haralsingh, Director of Guyana Tourism Authority on developments since STC13

- STC-13 helped to motivate and keep the focus on sustainability. Guyana won 3 of 5 CTO Awards in 2012, has very low deforestation rate

- Increased focus and continuing initiatives:
 - ▣ Turtle Conservation and Development
 - ▣ Community tourism infrastructure projects
 - ▣ Capacity – Building Workshops
 - ▣ Guyana Mangrove Restoration Project
 - ▣ Introduction of ‘green’ loan initiatives
 - ▣ Distribution of solar panels to hinterland communities
 - ▣ Merchandising of community products

Tuesday April 16th – Presentation by Turk and Caicos Hon Dr. Rufus Ewing, Premier and Min of Tourism, Turks and Caicos

- Turks and Caicos
 - British overseas territory
 - Hosted STC 5 years ago
 - Population 35,000 Avg annual income US\$16,400
 - High-end tourist resort destination...40% of GDP
 - 3000 rooms; 325,000 air arrivals; 725,000 cruise arrivals
 - # 1 in list of top 10 places for luxurious travel; voted Best Beaches many times
 - Relatively low crime
 - Excellent service
 - Heavy imported workforce

- Managed through the 08/09 recession quite well
 - Given investment made in the past
 - Continuing investment in the destination... infrastructure, cruise ports, resorts, telecommunications, product, human capital, marketing and promotion
 - Maintaining high-end brand – focus on resorts, dining, diving, (not shopping)
 - Succeeded in removing seasonality of tourism
 - Strengthening partnerships in air links/ airlift
 - Looking at additional source markets in Latin America

- Moving towards diversification within tourism and beyond tourism

Tuesday April 16th – Workshop A

Partnership Strategies to Increase Profitability and Visitor Spending

Presenters: Hugh Cresser, Man Dir, Hugh Cresser, Jamaica; Gia Gaspard Taylor, Pres of Network of Rural Women Producers, TT

- Caribbean tourism is bouncing back, but with varying degrees among islands
- Shared examples of partnership programs that are working well e.g. Rio Grande Valley, Jamaica... focus on selling **experiences** through **creativity**
- Must strive towards reducing operating costs and increasing visitor arrivals + spend for increased profitability
- Promoting profitability through entrepreneurship
 - ▣ Mango Festival and its opportunities for rural women
 - ▣ Festival has been to UN and OAS. Now going to Commonwealth
 - ▣ Mango Conference first hosted in 2012, coming up in 2013

Tuesday April 16th – Workshop B

Promoting Sustainable Tourism Products-Turtle Village Experience

Presenter: Dr Allan Bachan, Executive Director, Turtle Village Trust, Trinidad and Tobago

- Sea Turtles and the environment as a catalyst for developing sustainable communities-Grande Riviere case, Trinidad

- Vision of the Trust
 - “To make TT the premier turtle destination globally”

- Based on huge efforts at conservation by community
- Must have benefits for community people...people are central to sustainable development
- Stimulating community vitality through sustainable tourism
- Grande Riviere has seen an increase in guest room stock, in agricultural production, increased taxi services
- Poaching still a big challengereceiving attention

Wednesday - Study Tours – Models

- Grande Riviere - Turtle Village
- Salybia, Matura – Coastal Recreation
- Brasso Seco - Agro Tourism
- Sugar Heritage and Museum - Heritage Conservation
- Chaguaramas National Park and Gasparee Caves
- Tobago Tour - Eco Tourism Model
- Wild Fowl Trust, Pointe-a-Pierre – Eco Tourism

Thursday April 18th – Session III

Rethinking Destination Development, Branding and Marketing for the Responsible Traveler

Presenters: Dr. Martha Honey, Co-director for Centre for Responsible (CREST) Travel, USA;
Kristin Dhal, Sen. Manager, Travel Oregon, USA; Trudi Pearce, Destination Partnerships, UK

- **Global Trends – Responsible Travel Organizations**
 - ▣ Strong case for responsible travel
 - ▣ Sustainable tourism demand market is growing
 - ▣ 51% of meeting planners looking for sustainable venue
 - ▣ 30% of travellers looking for eco-destinations
 - ▣ Sustainable travellers are higher-value travellers
 - ▣ Costa Rica ... leading eco – tourism destination in world...
premiered on strong certification systems
 - ▣ Stories are the new marketing currency
 - ▣ Stories behind the place more important than the place
 - ▣ Case of Oregon, US - community projects, scenic
bikeways/bicycle tourism

Thursday April 18th – Session IV

Stakeholders Speak Out!

Speakers: Suzan Laxhan, Chairman, Nature Seekers, Trinidad; Ena Harvey, Agri-Business Specialist, IICA

- Great community success stories in rural tourism:

Nature Seekers

- Turtle Conservation in Matura since 1990s
- Strong partnership approach
- Slaughtering a thing of the past
- Increased education and awareness
- CNN Hero Award for Conservation
- Reforestation
- Convert trash to cash – Jewellery Project

Brasso Seco

- Development of eco-tourism through agriculture
- Host homes, trails, hikes, birding & forest camping
- Entertainment – Parang
- Indigenous Cuisine – smoked meats, cocoa and coffee
- Cocoa and Coffee House – dancing cocoa, products

Heritage Preservation, creating livelihoods, fostering community pride, attracting tourists

CTO and Travel Mole

Sustainable Tourism Awards

- A record 29 entries received this year from 10 member countries in Caribbean
- Aimed at identifying and showcasing sustainable tourism good practices
- Destination Stewardship – Puerto Rico
- Sustainable Accommodation – Jamaica
- Community Benefit Award – Jamaica
- Heritage Protection - Guyana
- Biodiversity Conservation – Guyana
- Caribbean Excellence in Sustainable Tourism – Guyana (Karanambu Lodge)

Thursday April 18th – Session V

Youth Forum – “The Wisdom of our Next Generation – Sustaining our Tourism with YOU-th”

- For the first time – presentation of tourism challenges/solutions by youths **through drama**
- 8 groups, 3 finalists
- Winners

Thursday April 18th – Workshop A
Global Marketing Trends and Rules in Sustainability



Thursday April 18th – Workshop B

Building Successful Sustainable Tourism Destination Networks



SUMMARY POINTS *and* GOING FORWARD

- Global travel and tourism is growing fast
- Global tourism sector embracing responsible tourism
- Cbean has a strong 40-yr brand, but market share is waning
- Issues and challenges facing Caribbean tourism articulated in great detail since STC1997, *but solutions and actions elude us* (Hugh Riley)
- We continue to be challenged with air connectivity (global and regional), data and statistics, safety and security, service quality, marketing, product, energy efficiency, taxation on tourism, visa requirements etc
- The new traveller mandates that the Cbean product be refreshed and revitalized, and that sustainability be embedded in all our endeavors
- Sustainability strengthens brand value
- Sustainability reduces operating costs, increases profits and brings tourists

SUMMARY POINTS *and* GOING FORWARD

- Many fabulous models of sustainability exist in Cbean
 - Innovation, creativity, and use of new technology are critical
 - Full community and stakeholder engagement are critical
 - Call for communities to demand the direction of sustainability that they want
 - Govts in the Cbean have to take the lead in encouraging sustainability
 - Too much lip service being given by Cbean Govts
 - ▣ Need for consistent investment and support by govt in sustainable “green” projects
 - ▣ Call for govts to demonstrate strong leadership and policy in support of sustainability efforts
 - A lot needs to be done to engender sustainability in Cbean
- AFTER 14 STCs., WE HAVE TO START WALKING THE TALK!!!!!!!!!!
- “As we continue to define sustainable tourism, we have to find ways to create opportunities to convert rhetoric into bankable projects so as to encourage real sustainability (Hon Ag PM of TT)”

**TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO THANKS YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT
AND PARTICIPATION**

