



CARIBBEAN  
HOTEL & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION

For Immediate Release

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Contacts:

Greta Andzenge, Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association/ Marketplace  
Excellence [greta@marketplaceexcellence.com](mailto:greta@marketplaceexcellence.com) +1 201 861-2056

### **CHTA STANDS WITH CARIBBEAN LEADERS IN CALL TO BUILD CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE**

ST. LUCIA (September 21, 2017) - The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is backing calls by Caribbean leaders for the international community to keep the devastating impact of climate change on the global development agenda.

As the region's prime ministers and presidents gather in New York for the annual meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, CHTA President Karolin Troubetzkoy said: "We must continue to let the world know how parts of the Caribbean are beginning to be devastated by the effects of climate change and the urgent need to strengthen our resilience to such assaults."

Together with CHTA's Director General and CEO Frank Comito, Troubetzkoy expressed continued sympathy for the hardship following the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria and urged everyone in the projected path of Maria to take serious precautions. The tourism officials want to see a united front to bring immediate aid, calling on regional organizations, governments, relief organizations and multilateral organizations to pursue a more coordinated effort in responding to the needs of the region's people following these devastating weather events.

Addressing the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria on some of the islands in the Lesser Antilles, Puerto Rico and now the eastern part of the Dominican Republic, the CHTA President observed that "these are the very real consequences of humankind's inattention to climate changing excesses and it's time for the industrialized wealthier countries, which are major contributors to climate change, to recognize the need to help the region to strengthen our defenses against future disasters, including not only hurricanes but extreme weather events which bring flooding and landslides."

Let us not forget the fact, she said, "that we in our small island nations contribute the least to climate change - yet we suffer the most from it."

Building a more resilient Caribbean will require an assembly of the international community, but also the Caribbean countries themselves, she added. "We keep talking about the importance of public and private sector collaboration, but we need to do more, together, to address this momentous task. We need to be respectful of our ecosystem and find ways to strengthen the marine environment. We need to educate. We need to look at how and where we build and how we protect our people and their livelihoods."

Effective action is often hampered by lack of funds, she says. "Whilst it appears that there are various international funds to draw from," she continued, "there always is a lot of red tape attached and this has been a hindrance to move forward with many aspects of creating a more resilient environment, and this has also impeded the private sector from proceeding more effectively."

She echoed strong support for comments made by philanthropist and businessman Sir Richard Branson, who stated this week that "the world and its leaders can no longer pretend that increasingly shattering catastrophes like Hurricane Irma are some kind of accident or coincidence. There is absolutely no doubt that climate change is real and it's triggering the full extent of nature's fury. How much more destruction do we need to act? Rising ocean temperatures are likely to result in hurricanes with greater intensity."

The United Nations General Assembly this year, she asserted, "is an important time for our political leaders to issue consolidated messages to the rest of the world on the urgent need to help our region buttress our defenses against the very real threat of climate change."

The travel and tourism industry has launched the Caribbean Tourism Recovery Fund, uniting CHTA with the noted Tourism Cares organization, which has helped to lead private sector efforts globally following crises.

The fund allows tourism industry stakeholders and friends of the region throughout the world to pool their resources in support of vulnerable, devastated areas of the Caribbean that welcome millions of visitors in a region that supports 2.4 million tourism-related jobs. For further information, visit [www.tourismcares.org/caribbean](http://www.tourismcares.org/caribbean).

Additionally, CHTA is encouraging members to support the Recovery Fund through its One Caribbean Family initiative, pledging a portion of proceeds from bookings to the fund and making it easy for travelers to contribute as well.

CHTA is actively monitoring the region's weather forecasts, assisting with communications and support for relief and recovery from Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and will continue to share updates as they are received from affected destinations at [www.caribbeantravelupdate.com](http://www.caribbeantravelupdate.com).

#### About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean's leading association representing tourism interests for national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 50 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working together with 1,000 hotel and allied members and 32 National Hotel Associations, CHTA is shaping the Caribbean's future and helping members to grow their businesses. Whether navigating new worlds like social media, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, data and intelligence or looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on matters that matter most.

For further information, visit [www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com](http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com) .

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