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**CHTA Hails Success of 3rd Annual Caribbean Travel Forum**

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica (May XX, 2024) – The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) declared the 3rd annual Caribbean Travel Forum a resounding success. The event featured insightful presentations and high-level panel discussions that explored Caribbean tourism performance, emerging trends, and future industry prospects.

Nicola Madden-Greig, CHTA’s President, presented key insights from the joint ForwardKeys and CHTA Caribbean Trends Report, which provided a thorough analysis of the region’s performance and identified critical trends shaping the industry's future.

The report highlights a significant milestone for Caribbean tourism, with international arrivals to surpass 2019 levels by an impressive 13% in the first half of 2024. Nevertheless, with the global reopening of destinations, especially in Asia, the Caribbean faces intensified competition for market share.

In terms of performance, Puerto Rico leads, followed by the Dominican Republic and Cancun. Mid-tier destinations like Belize and Curaçao also show notable growth, fueled by improved connectivity and rising demand from key markets.

During the Forum, the CHTA honored destinations committed to resilience and sustainability with the Destination Resilience Awards. These awards recognize efforts aligned with the World Tourism Organization’s sustainable development goals, emphasizing collaborative approaches and innovative, needs-driven strategies to tackle climate change and broader sustainability challenges.

**The Bahamas** received the Category A Award for destinations with total stopover visitor arrivals greater than 500,000. The Abacos in The Bahamas have demonstrated remarkable resilience and a commitment to sustainable tourism post-Hurricane Dorian. Establishing the Abaco Stewardship Council marks a significant milestone, fostering collaboration among residents, businesses, NGOs and government agencies to promote sustainable tourism, cultural heritage preservation and community engagement.

**St. Lucia** received the Category B Award for destinations with total stopover visitor arrivals under 500,000. St. Lucia stands out with strategic initiatives and legislative frameworks under the Tourism Development Act of 2023, driven by collaborations among the Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association (SLHTA), Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Saint Lucia Tourism Authority (SLTA), and Community Tourism Agency (CTA). Initiatives focused on sustainable legislation, marine conservation and women empowerment have enhanced St. Lucia’s socioeconomic development, highlighted by projects like the Rodney Bay City Centre, Saint Lucia Carnival, and the Saint Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival.

Recognizing the critical link between health and tourism, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) received the **President’s Award for Caribbean Tourism Excellence** for its outstanding contributions to the region’s health security. CARPHA's pivotal role in safeguarding public health within the Caribbean tourism sector has been instrumental, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its comprehensive approach to health security includes rigorous health monitoring, prompt outbreak response, and extensive public health education campaigns.

CHTA applauded the efforts of The Bahamas, St. Lucia, and CARPHA in fostering a thriving, resilient, and sustainable tourism industry. Their exemplary initiatives demonstrate a robust commitment to creating a sustainable future for Caribbean tourism, benefiting local communities while preserving the region’s natural and cultural heritage.

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