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**CHTA PRESIDENT EMIL LEE UNDERSCORES NEED FOR COLLABORATION
ON TOURISM TO STRENGTHEN REGION'S ECONOMIES**

Visit, Meetings in The Bahamas Open Path to Successful Cooperation

NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS (April 8, 2015) – “Commitment and collaboration between the public and private sectors at an unprecedented level is essential if the Caribbean is to realize the potential which tourism presents in elevating and transforming the economies of the region and generating employment at all levels,” stated Emil Lee, president of the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA).

These observations were reaffirmed during a recent visit to The Bahamas by CHTA President Emil Lee where he addressed members of the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA) and met with leaders from the public and private sectors.

Commenting on his visit, President Lee stated: “CHTA believes in the value which National Hotel Associations can

bring to the table in helping to drive economies through tourism. Our visit to The Bahamas is part of a deliberate effort to learn from the successes and the challenges at the local level as we



CHTA President Emil Lee and CHTA CEO Frank Comito (pictured left) attended a recent meeting of the Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association.

seek to broaden public-private sector collaboration locally and regionally and identify issues and best and worst practices which can assist public and private stakeholders in our improvement efforts.”

Addressing BHTA members, Lee advised that the foundation for a viable and sustainable public-private sector effort must be grounded in transparency, trust, dialogue, common measurable goals, and a recognition that the currencies which motivate the public and private sectors differ. He emphasized that through collaboration the end common goals of building strong and competitive tourism driven economies, creating employment, and increasing tax revenue can be realized.

“The Bahamas has distinguished itself in the region as a model for points of public-private sector collaboration,” according to Lee. “CHTA and all of the region’s stakeholders need to learn from one another and our successes and challenges, with CHTA serving as an information and change broker,” he added.

During the membership meeting BHTA President Stuart Bowe and others led discussions on key areas of the association’s work including taxation, airlift, energy efficiency, education and training, and culinary development, all points where some level of public-private sector collaboration underpins the success of the organization’s initiatives and the destination’s value.

President Bowe commented: “We were pleased to share our work with CHTA. The Bahamas welcomes the opportunity to learn from our regional counterparts, best practices and challenges. In that regard, CHTA is a key channel for connecting us to information and resources.” stated Bowe.

Lee also met with Bahamas Tourism Minister The Hon. Obie Wilchcombe. A second meeting was scheduled during his visit at the Minister’s invitation to discuss in detail and expand upon areas of mutual interest from their first visit. Lee said: “Our discussions were very fruitful. The Minister’s enthusiasm and commitment to regional collaboration is encouraging. CHTA looks forward to continuing to draw upon his ideas and leadership.”



Pictured (l-r) CHTA President Emil Lee, Bahamas Tourism Minister The Hon. Obie Wilchcombe, and CHTA CEO Frank Comito.

Looking ahead, all parties committed to work together to improve the industry's competitiveness.

Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association

The Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) facilitates the full potential of the Caribbean hotel and tourism industry by serving members' needs and building partnerships in a socially responsible and sustainable manner. CHTA is the voice of the Caribbean hospitality industry for the development of the region in the highly competitive and sophisticated environment of international tourism. Today, tourism is widely recognized as a pivotal industry in the economy of the region – and CHTA functions as the common denominator for this industry in a region of diverse nationalities, languages and styles, identifying mutual problems and marshaling the resources of the active and allied members to devise solutions. CHTA represents all facets of the hospitality industry with more than 600 member hotels and over 300 allied members.

CHTA, including the events staged by the association, is supported by Strategic Partners MasterCard, Interval International, OBM International, HVS, Tambourine and TravelZoo.

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