



CARIBBEAN  
HOTEL & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION



November 27, 2015

**The Honourable Dr. James Fletcher**  
**Minister of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology**  
**Chairman, CARICOM Task Force on Climate Change**  
**Graham Louisy Administrative Building**  
**Castries, Saint Lucia**

**Dear Minister:**

**Re: Caribbean Position on Climate Change**

The deliberations over the next two weeks at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris to seek a binding and universal agreement on climate change from all the nations of the world must consider the weight of research which points to the immediate vulnerability facing the Caribbean.

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) supports the position being advanced by the CARICOM Task Force on Climate Change calling for a binding agreement by the world's nations which:

1. Recognizes the special circumstances of the Caribbean and Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
2. Seeks to mitigate the impact of climate change by adopting measures aimed at restricting a rise in global temperature below 1.5 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels
3. Provides for technical and financial resources supporting research and mitigation measures to mitigate and counter losses

Significant research has been conducted demonstrating trend lines and the forecasted impact of climate change and rising sea levels. A two degree temperature rise by 2025 could cost the Caribbean's twenty CARICOM member states US\$10.7 billion dollars due to:

- Increased Hurricane and Weather-Related Damages
- Loss of Tourism Revenue
- Infrastructure Damages

Tourism is the lifeline for many of the Caribbean's economies and a major contributor to GDP throughout the region. It is our understanding that many developed and newly industrialized countries are prepared to settle for a two degree increase. This is insufficient to prevent catastrophic damage to the socio-economic fabric of the region.

For the region's 20 CARICOM member states alone, this could mean a rise in sea level that would result in approximately 1,300 square kilometers of land area being lost, equivalent to the combined areas of Antigua & Barbuda, Anguilla, Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Factor the impact to 15 additional Caribbean





Basin non-CARICOM states and dependencies, including the region's largest economies, Cuba and the Dominican Republic, and the impact is far greater.

Based on interviews with Dr. Kenrick Leslie, Executive Director of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, and Dr. Ulric Trotz, the CCCCC's Deputy Director and Science Advisor, the following was stated about sea level rise within the Caribbean:

*"In 50 years, if the [models] are correct, the entire [Caribbean] landscape will be changed," says Ulric Trotz, the CCCCC's deputy director. "Our beaches will have disappeared, our coastal areas eroded, our infrastructure degraded. It would certainly wreak havoc on the way we live."*

A report conducted by CARIBSave for CARICOM estimates that a two degree rise in global temperature would result in a major displacement of coastal and urban population centers. Many tourism resorts would disappear or incur significant damage. Airports, seaports, power plants, and roads would be lost or severely damaged.

The strain on Government budgets and resources throughout the region, many which already face vulnerable high debt-to-GDP ratios, would lead to massive unemployment and a realignment of limited financial resources to shore up lost or damaged infrastructure.

Even considering a conservative impact based upon the above estimations, the social-economic consequences to our region would be devastating.

CHTA, with the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism and our members in the region is working on several fronts to help create a more sustainable tourism industry. In recent years, we have seen a growing number of hotels put in place energy efficiency measures. With the support of multi-lateral organizations like the Inter-American Development Bank, detailed energy efficiency audits have been conducted on over 150 regional hotels.

The industry has advanced training, policies and incentives which support greater efficiencies and lower our industry's carbon footprint. We have developed and promoted readiness and response plans throughout the region to minimize the impact from weather-related disasters.

While these measures have helped, much more must be done by the region's public and private sector stakeholders and the global community.

As a region, the Caribbean's impact on climate change is minimal. Yet the Caribbean is disproportionately negatively impacted by climate change. The world's major contributors to climate change must demonstrate a greater commitment towards minimizing its impact, particularly on the world's most vulnerable countries.

The Caribbean basin and other small island developing states simply cannot absorb the consequences anticipated from a two-degree temperature rise.



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The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association appeals to the global community to adopt and support a 1.5 degrees centigrade threshold and measures which recognize and mitigate the immediate and potentially devastating impact which climate change and sea level increases can have on our people, our economies and our countries.

Sincerely,

Karolin Troubetzkoy  
Acting President  
Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association

cc: The Right Hon. Freundel Stuart, Q.C. M.P.  
Chairman, CARICOM and Prime Minister, Barbados

His Excellency Ambassador Irwin LaRocque  
Secretary General, CARICOM

The Hon. Richard Sealy M.P.  
Chairman, CTO, and Minister of Tourism, Barbados

Mr. Hugh Riley  
Secretary General, Caribbean Tourism Organization

Mr. Sylvester Clauzel  
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology

