



For Immediate Release

Source: Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

Contact: Adriana Serna, CHTA + 1 305 443-3040
adriana@caribbeanhotelandtourism.com

Greta Andzeng, Marketplace Excellence + 1 201 861-2056
greta@marketplaceexcellence.com



Karolin Troubetzkoy (third from right) with members of her leadership team and the media in Miami earlier this month.

CARIBBEAN TOURISM BUSINESSES MUST ADAPT TO SUCCEED

MIAMI (August 17, 2016) - The President of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), Karolin Troubetzkoy sees the upcoming Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum (CHIEF) as an opportunity for hotels and tourism-related businesses to take stock and to "open our eyes to the bigger picture, which is so important if we want to succeed

not only as individual businesses and destinations, but also as a region."

Speaking to reporters earlier this month in Miami, where CHTA is headquartered, Troubetzkoy stated the second annual forum, slated for the El Conquistador Resort in Puerto Rico from September 30 to October 2, 2016, will build on the success of last year's forum.

She contended the upcoming exchange is an especially important one since 2016 has proven so far to be a year of significant change and challenges for the Caribbean hospitality industry. As an example, she pointed to growth in travel to Cuba where approximately 2.1 million travelers visited the island during the first six months of 2016, an 11.7 percent increase over the same period in 2015.

"We have to ask what effect the opening of Cuba to U.S. travelers will have on the rest of the Caribbean. How will we deal with the shift of more American travelers going to Cuba and how will we make up for that?"

CHTA embraces the lifting of the Cuba trade embargo and the lifting of U.S. travel restrictions. At the same time, the association cautions in its policy paper on Cuba that this serves as a wake-up call for many destinations and hotel operators in the region to elevate their game and become more competitive.

At CHIEF, hoteliers will also be looking at another element of concern - the impact of the growing sharing economy led by Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway. With the Caribbean region poised to surpass the 30 million mark in visitor arrivals for the first time this year (although hotels are reporting mixed results in occupancies), Troubetzkoy believes the traditional accommodations industry must be prepared to understand shifting consumer motivations and to find creative ways to make the sharing economy work to its advantage.

High on the list of issues currently impacting the Caribbean tourism sector are: the effects of Zika, the Brexit outcome, increases in global terrorism risks, high fares, rising hotel operating costs, and ineffective marketing efforts. "At CHIEF there will be a healthy dose of peer-to-peer exchanges to flush out ideas and best practices. There is no doubt that Caribbean hotels and destinations which adapt to change and are prepared to deal with uncertainty are better positioned to come out ahead," said Troubetzkoy.

Sessions at this year's CHIEF conference will focus on Environmental Sustainability, Operations, Sales and Marketing, and Technology.

About CHIEF

CHIEF incorporates a variety of educational tracks led by experts from many travel, tourism and hospitality industry segments, and features round table panels with one-on-one discussions on Environmental Sustainability, Operations, Sales and Marketing, and

Technology. CHIEF is staged by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) in conjunction with host sponsors the Bonnier Corporation, Interval International and JetBlue Getaways; platinum sponsor Travelzoo; and gold sponsors Clear Channel Airports Division, Johnson Controls, OBM International, Oracle Hospitality, Rainmaker, SiteMinder, STR, TravAlliance Media, Tropical Shipping and TSA Solutions. For additional information about CHIEF, visit www.chtachief.com or call +1 305 443-3040.

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