



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Tourism

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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minister of Tourism meets with British Airways Holidays on marketing Tobago as a Premier Travel Destination

PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD (May 3, 2017) – The Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe, Minister of Tourism, met with executives of British Airways Holidays at the Coco Reef Resort and Spa, Tobago. This meeting was arranged by John Jefferies, Managing Director of Coco Reef Resort and Spa to explore opportunities for promoting Tobago as a premier travel destination for international travellers.

British Airways Holidays provides an entire combined holiday package to the island from booking the British Airways flight to Hotel Accommodation and Transportation at affordable prices to travellers. Representatives Rikki Partridge, Destination Executive and David Weatherson, Destination Manager discussed ways in which travel to Tobago can be further improved.

According to Weatherson, “Tobago is currently one of their travellers’ top five chosen destinations in the Caribbean.

Minister Cudjoe spoke candidly about her passion for tourism and Tobago. Minister Cudjoe stressed, “marketing and educational awareness is paramount to making tourism an important driver of diversification for our economy. The Ministry is focused on improving our Tourism product and positioning Tobago as a preferred leisure destination. Through, continued collaboration with the Tobago House of Assembly - Division of Tourism, Culture and Transportation, Tobago Hoteliers and Stakeholders and the development of a strategic marketing approach within a customer-oriented environment will greatly enable the sector’s development.”

Minister Cudjoe took the opportunity to inform the British Airways Holidays executives on the proposed 're-tooling and re-engineering' of the Tourism strategy for Trinidad and Tobago. This new strategy will comprise two separate entities with one specific to Tobago, and the other to Trinidad. This approach will enable each island to be marketed specifically according to their differing target markets. The introduction of a Tourism Regulatory and Licensing Authority will also facilitate the standardisation of the Tourism industry.

Weatherson viewed these proposed developments as a significant means of "positioning Tobago as a prized destination" and commented on British Airways Holidays and British Airways commitment to continued partnering with the Tobago Hoteliers and Stakeholders and the Ministry of Tourism towards advancing the sector."

"Tobago is a '*fertile*' and '*fresh*' travel market with relatively cheap rates compared to other Caribbean islands; a boost in the promotion of the island will greatly position Tobago in the minds of the UK traveller" Weatherson added.

Rikki Partridge, Destination Executive indicated that British Airways Holidays currently has over 5000 booked rooms so far for 2017 compared to 2016 which ended the year with 7500 booked room. Tobago has been showing continuous double-digit growth for British Airways Holidays in spite of the devaluation of the GBP£ since June last year. Weatherson added, British Airways Holidays has seen exceptional growth [in Hotel Accommodations] from Tropicist, Magdalena, Grafton and Mount Irvine this year. They view this as a positive sign as this growth has not been seen with any other Caribbean island; in the absence of a heightened and specific marketed approach to the United Kingdom traveller. The British Airways Holidays executives are confident of the growth possibilities for tourism on the island.

Tourism and specifically Tobago, is vital to the nation's overall economic diversification drive. In this regard Minister Cudjoe concurred with the British Airways Holidays executives that a more focused and deliberate marketing strategy is needed. Tobago is currently recognised internationally for its plethora of leisure experiences such as its beautiful beaches and waterfalls, its impressive rainforest reserve, and diving attractions, to mention a few. The standardisation of the Tourism product is needed to further position Tobago as a premier destination of choice for visitors to the island.



Minister Cudjoe is pictured with Mr. John Jefferies, Owner of Coco Reef Resorts and Spa:

Minister of Tourism, The Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe is pictured with the Coco Reef Resort and Spa, Owner John Jefferies at Coco Reef Resort and Spa on April 25, 2017.



Minister Cudjoe meets British Airways Holidays executives:

Minister of Tourism, The Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe (centre), is pictured with British Airways Holiday Destination Executives, David Weatherson (left) and Rikki Partridge and Destination Manager (right), at Coco Reef Resort and Spa on April 25, 2017.



Minister Cudjoe listens attentively to British Airways Holidays executives:

Minister of Tourism, The Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe (middle), is pictured during discussions with British Airways Holidays Destination Executive, Rikki Partridge and Destination Manager, David Weatherson at Coco Reef Resort and Spa on April 25, 2017.

For additional information, please contact:

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