



**INTERNATIONAL
TRANSPORT
WORKERS'
FEDERATION**

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Secretary-General Dona Regis-Prosper
Caribbean Tourism Organization
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Our ref: OGS/RJ/rs

Via email: dregis-prosper@caribtourism.com

12 November 2024

Dear Ms Regis-Prosper and Members of the Caribbean Tourism Organization,

Open Letter to the Caribbean Tourism Organization

On behalf of the Tourism Workers' Alliance – a joint initiative of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and the International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) and its Caribbean affiliates – we would like to share our vision for “ONE CARIBBEAN: Building a Resilient Future”.

We are at a critical moment for a shared commitment to fostering a thriving and resilient tourism workforce across the Caribbean. Despite the economic and employment power of the sector, major issues threaten the industry and its workforce.

In the pursuit of creating a robust, sustainable, and resilient tourism industry for the economic and social benefit of the Caribbean people, decent work and workers' voices are essential. As a crucial stakeholder, workers' unions serve as advocates for fair working conditions, equal opportunities, adequate benefits, training opportunities, and improved job security, all of which are key elements of a resilient workforce and destination. Tourism thrives when workers are safe, secure, motivated, and protected, with the opportunity to actively contribute to and participate in the industry's evolution.

As the CTO celebrates Caribbean Tourism Month in November 2024, we urge you to uphold and strengthen our shared vision and commitments to decent work that underpin unity, resilience, and sustained economic growth as outlined in The Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy and Development Framework (CSTPDF).

Our recent report '[Why the S in ESG matters: Social Sustainability and Labour and Human Rights in Travel and Tourism](#)' highlights the risks associated with poor labour conditions and precarious work. We also make a strong business case for fair and decent work in tourism, where collaboration with unions is essential for:

- **Enhancing the sector's attractiveness** as a source of decent work and meaningful careers, so that the Caribbean tourism workforce delivers high quality service and is globally competitive.
- **Increased financial investment:** Responsible investors increasingly base their decisions on businesses' social sustainability and decent work performance.

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- **Responding to customer demand** for more ethical and sustainable tourism products and services.
- **Retaining licence to operate** from local communities as decent work supports local livelihoods and career progression, providing real economic and social benefits.

The CTO's Caribbean Tourism Month offers an ideal platform to formalise partnerships with unions across the region. Specifically, we advocate for the CTO to:

- **Strengthen collaborations and partnerships** to ensure that national and regional government, labour representatives and the tourism private sector jointly address issues related to conditions of work in the tourism sector, for example through Destination Framework Agreements or memorandums of understanding (MoUs).
- **Create a CTO Advisory Council** that includes union representatives to ensure workers' perspectives are integrated into national and regional tourism policies and initiatives.
- **Build capacity to improve monitoring, measuring and reporting** of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues. With new Modern Slavery and ESG regulations coming into place, unions can support businesses in developing indicators, monitoring, auditing, and reporting on direct and supply chain impacts on workers.
- **Support and implement ambitious regulatory and monitoring frameworks** with bold targets that protect people and the planet, including workers and human rights through the tourism supply chain. The UN Tourism's Statistical Framework, and the newly developed ESG Framework for Tourism Businesses lead the way to fully integrate social sustainability and engagement with unions, and we call on CTO to follow their lead.
- **Develop and promote guidelines and training** for fair employment practices within the tourism sector, encouraging businesses to adopt practices that contribute to a resilient, motivated, and sustainable workforce, particularly for youth and women. Encourage tourism employers to support and integrate the International Labour Organization's (ILO) decent work agenda in their business and across the supply chain.
- **Establish a sustainable transport committee for a just transitions and safe destination** comprising representatives from the Ministry of Transport, ITF and IUF affiliated trade unions, and tourism transport employers. The committee will identify key elements of a just transition to a zero-carbon transport sector, which has direct implications for destination and community resilience.

The Caribbean tourism's resilience and prosperity will be determined by the ability to tackle climate change and undignified work, where people working in tourism are living a day-to-day reality of precarious work, low pay and unsafe working conditions. Recognising the role of unions as allies and collaborators in CTO's initiatives can ensure a resilient labour market, with a skilled, agile workforce capable of delivering exceptional service. Unions can help to adapt to challenges collaboratively and develop solutions for a more resilient future for all in Caribbean tourism.

We would greatly value the opportunity to meet and discuss these recommendations further and explore how we can strengthen our partnership to build a more resilient future for Caribbean tourism and its workers.

Yours Sincerely,

David Massiah, ITF Tourism Services Section Chair
Sue Longley, IUF General Secretary