

The Gleaner
HospitalityJamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2014



**JA TAPS INTO THE
DISABLED
TRAVELLERS
MARKET**

The Jamaica Tourist Board's Rosie Johnson (left) and a special needs Travel Agent, Denise Hangsleben.

CONTRIBUTED

ACCORDING TO the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), persons with disabilities are fast becoming an emerging segment in terms of tourism demand. The wide consensus is that the demand is growing, especially as each visitor with a disability tends to travel with a companion. The World Health Organization estimates that in 2011, about 15 per cent of the world's population, or nearly one billion people, had at least one disability. That number is on the rise due in part to persons living longer.

Research shows that this kind of travel has certain traits: It serves as an image booster for destinations, it is a year-round segment (especially as it relates to beach tourism), and it has the potential to generate higher than average income.

Travellers with disabilities tend to stay longer and spend more in the visited destination. Figures from Open Door Organization indicate that US citizens with disabilities spend more than US\$13 billion each year on travel. Other research shows that in Germany, these special-needs travellers generate up to €4 billion each year. Interestingly, two out of five Americans who travel outside the US head to Europe.

Many of these individuals have a passion for travel, but due to the lack of infrastructure to properly accommodate these travellers, many destinations, including Jamaica, miss out on tapping into this viable market. But if the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) is successful in its plans, the destination will begin to see benefits from this market segment.

Paul Pennicook, director of tourism, feels it is important for Jamaica to get ahead of the game in this area. "As a tourism-dependent country, we have to find ways to attract new groups of visitors," he said. "Both Barbados and Trinidad have begun to look at making their product more accessible, so we have to take it up a notch. Not only do we have to pay attention to the physical product, but our workers must also be aware of how to treat these special-needs guests."

The JTB and its industry partners are collaborating to change the level of accessibility in our tourism product. Just this past week, Jamaica hosted its very first Special Needs Travel Agent Fam trip. Representatives from four travel agencies which focus on special-needs travel spent days touring the island, evaluating the product's readiness to welcome guests with special needs. Several of the participating agents are themselves



Ja targets the lucrative travellers-with-disabilities market

The Jamaica Pegasus in Kingston, one of the special-needs-ready properties in the country.



From left (back row) are Iberostar's Kimberly Raynor, Erica Earle, Mark McDermoth, Michelle Montaque, Granville Morgan and Jerron Britton, all staff; Sidney Butner, operator of Butner Travel; Rosie Johnson, the Jamaica Tourist Board's (JTB) regional director; and Margaret Jones, guest relations manager at the JTB. From left (second row) are the JTB's Carlene Moore; Paul Hangsleben, operator of Travel Your Way; Joan and Brian Simms, managing partners of Access Holidays; and JoAnnette Byas. Seated (from left) are travel agents Denise Hangsleben, Joelle Butner and Carolyn Yates-Salami.

wheelchair-bound and travelling with a companion.

Paul Hangsleben from Travel Your Way in the US Midwest had high

praises for the JTB and the product.

"Everything is going well," he said, "and all the properties we have visited have met our needs. It is clear

that Jamaica is making an effort to make the product more accessible to persons who are wheelchair-bound."

In addition to experiencing the

facilities first-hand, these agents were exposed to a seminar presented by Brian Simms of Access Holidays in Toronto, Canada. Simms, whose agency has been selling packages to clients with special needs for 14 years, is currently assisting the Jamaican Government with implementing disability-friendly policies on the island, especially in the hotel sector.

According to Simms, he participated in a 2002 audit of the product, and he would love to revisit those properties to see the level of adaptability. But he was pleased that there is now a Disabilities Act in place. "The passing of the Act is a good thing. It will lead to a more accessible product," he said. "The destination must now manage the expectations of its guests. We have to determine what we are willing to sell and to whom we wish to sell. When we meet the needs of those we target, they will then become ambassadors for the programme and the destination."

The special-needs agents found that destination Jamaica already has a number of facilities which are



Devon House in Kingston.

equipped for special-needs clients. There are accommodation facilities in each resort area which are disability-friendly. These facilities include both large hotels and smaller budget-type properties. Attractions, transportation companies and tour operators are among those partners who are ahead of the game.

In a coincidental twist of fate, two guests have been checking into spending their next vacation here. The couple, both legally blind, use a guide dog to get around. The Browns (not their real name) are well travelled, having visited at least three other Caribbean islands and parts of Europe.

Their investigation took them to the Ministry of Agriculture's Veterinary Services Department where they found that Jamaica has established requirements including types of shots and specimen profiles for guide dogs to be able to enter the island.

The Browns then needed to find a hotel in their preferred area which would provide for the needs of the guide dog. "Several of our hotel partners have accessible rooms," said Sandra Scott, deputy director of tourism with responsibility for



Fort Charles at Port Royal is equipped to accommodate special needs tourists

marketing, "but not many will accept a service animal. Arrangements have to be in place to have the animal fed, watered, walked and other more delicate things. Thankfully, we do have a few properties which will accept service animals, and the Browns will be able to vacation here," Scott concluded.

UNWTO research shows that whole cities have made themselves more accessible to special-needs guests without altering their cultural value or negatively impacting safety

considerations. Communities in Spain, Switzerland, Germany, France and Argentina have all shown that it is possible to successfully make facilities accessible without diminishing the value for other guests.

One other aspect of the JTB's plan to make the destination more accessible to special-needs guests is to ensure that all workers in the industry are aware of what is acceptable in serving guests with special needs. During the recently concluded

DEALING WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- One quick rule to remember is that we also have to adjust how we speak about special-needs people. The recommendation is to refer to the person first, then the disability – the guest who is deaf rather than the deaf guest.
- And did you know that eye contact should be kept with a guest who communicates through an interpreter? Some persons may be tempted to look at the interpreter, but in this case, the interpreter is a facilitator, not the person engaging in the conversation.
- Then there is the person who speaks with a stutter or another speech disability, so may take a little longer to complete their sentences. We should not seek to rush the person, but rather, the special-needs guest should be given enough time to complete their thought.

JAPEX, an initial seminar was conducted and approximately 60 members attended.

The interest generated has propelled the JTB to plan further seminars within each resort area to continue the training. The training includes providing guidelines for dealing with specific disabilities.

Nadine Vogel, CEO of Springboard Consulting, an expert in mainstreaming disability in the global workforce, recommends that hotel staff are not to pet, feed or

otherwise distract a service animal. "As a working animal, doing anything to engage the animal can make them unable to appropriately meet the needs of their owners," Vogel says.

Potentially, the special-needs niche is a huge market, with significant populations in the US, Canada and Europe. It is up to destination Jamaica to respond to this potential by developing an appropriate strategy to target this market.



Local suppliers of goods and services at the recently held Jamaica Product Exchange (JAPEX) 2014 trade show.

Linkages Hub scores high at JAPEX 2014

DOZENS OF Jamaica's producers of goods and services made a tremendous impact on the tourism sector and the general public through their participation in the recently held Jamaica Product Exchange (JAPEX) 2014 at the Montego Bay Convention Centre.

Participants, especially those getting this wide exposure for the first time, were overwhelming in their praise for the Tourism Linkages Hub and JAMPRO, which partnered in facilitating their presence at the premier travel trade show.

The Tourism Linkages Hub is an arm of the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment and is charged with facilitating trade among players in tourism, agricultural, manufacturing, entertainment and other sectors of the economy.

More than 80 local suppliers of



CONTRIBUTED

Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill (second right) and Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association president, Nicola Madden-Greig (right), admire a package of potpourri made from local wood shavings, spices, herbs, and fragrances. Looking on are managing director of Bartley's All In Wood and Jamaica Business Development Corporation Entrepreneur of the Year 2014, Lacey-Ann Bartley (left); and wood builder at Bartley's All In Wood, Odain Evans.

goods and services, including manufacturers, participated in the 2014 trade show. The ministry, through the hub, organised booths for the participants.

PLEASSED WITH THE OUTCOME

Tourism Linkages Hub project manager, Carolyn McDonald-Riley, is also pleased with the outcome from the three-day event. She said there were more than 36 manufacturers and more than 40 individuals on show. "Also, separate and apart from sales on the floor, we got the purchasing managers to visit and they paid special attention to the products being offered," she said.

McDonald-Riley said, "A major thrust was to get the purchasing managers interested in doing business with the Linkages Hub participants, not only now, but also in the future so that when, for instance, hotels are refurbishing,

manufacturers can engage them with a view to supplying their needs."

"The outcome was fabulous. We walked the floor and spoke to every participant. Some said it was wonderful, some said it was the first time they were having that experience, and some who were selling did very well," she disclosed.

Also, while some businesses already had good deals with hoteliers, others secured leads that they would be following up on.

McDonald-Riley said it also emerged, that "they need a lot of training in how to sell and market their products", and this would be dealt with going forward, as "now we're not just looking at the Jamaican market, but we're looking at how some of our businesses can get into hotels internationally."

She noted that "whatever it



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Perry's Manufacturing and Hotel Supplies is moving to strengthen its linkages with the local tourism sector.

takes to generate more employment, earn foreign exchange and grow our local companies then that is what we're going to do".

President of the Jamaica Manufacturers' Association (JMA), Brian Pangelley, welcomed the involvement of the Tourism Linkages Hub. "The whole linkages initiative is absolutely what we've been talking about for years, and finally, we're seeing it happen. We've been working very hard between tourism, manufacturing and agriculture to get things going because the hub could come and be the icing on the cake," he said.

Pangelley added, "Once we get that going and we have all the other things active in those sectors I talked about, it's just added benefit to the country and to the

economy, and we so badly need that."

The Rural Agricultural Development Authority's chief executive officer, Lenworth Fulton, believes "the growth in the sector must be dependent upon the tourist coming here and eating more of our food, our ground provisions, our spices, our meats. It's as basic as that".

PARTNERSHIP

He said as a partner on the Tourism Linkages Council, "we are trying to link our farmers and our processors with the hotel industry. Some of them are well embedded in it already, but we're trying to get even the smallest farmers to find a way to get his produce out there."

Fulton feels that the Linkages Hub is an ideal vehicle to achieve



The Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment's Tourism Linkages Hub has been partnering with JAMPRO and other entities to strengthen linkages among tourism, manufacturing, agriculture, entertainment and other sectors of the economy.

that objective "because one has to have the critical mass and have the players in the industry, and on that council, you have the hoteliers, the representatives from the private sector, and you have the permanent secretaries from the various ministries – Tourism and Agriculture – so we hope we will get people closer and build business out of it."

Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce Sharon Ffolkes-Abrahams welcomed the partnership with the linkages hub, pointing to it as a good example of what the concept of joined-up government can achieve.

"This is the way to go because when you have the joined-up government approach, you're able to accomplish more," she said.

With JAMPRO, which falls under

her ministry, accustomed to making deals for foreign direct investment, she said, "This gives us an opportunity to do what we do best with tourism."

Ffolkes-Abrahams added, "This linkages programme is the way to go."

The Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association is a major partner in the linkage hub initiative, and President Nicola Madden-Greig thinks "it's working very well".

She disclosed that, "We have been developing partnerships not only with the suppliers to the industry, but also with small and large hotels." There are collaborations within the industry on linkages, and "we're working with suppliers to the industry", she added.

Through JAPEX, Madden-Greig noted, "We continue to work to

ensure that they are aware of the new products that are coming on stream into the market when they are refurbishing, and the suppliers are aware of the kind of services that we need."

She further explained that, "It helps Jamaican manufacturers and suppliers understand our business better and also to custom-make products to ensure that we are able to buy more easily because we are being targeted by overseas suppliers, and they are very aggressive in pushing products and services to local hotels. We want our local partners to have an equal chance to present products to us so that we can continue to grow our country through the benefits of what tourism brings."



GraceKennedy was among the more than 80 local suppliers of goods and services which had a strong presence at the JAPEX 2014 trade show, through the coordinated efforts of the Tourism Linkages Hub and other partner entities.

Decriminalising GANJA a form of tourist attraction?

David Jessop
Contributor

A DEBATE is just beginning that is unlikely to reach a conclusion anytime soon. It relates to ganja and tourism and follows from the decision by Jamaica and in time, possibly others in the Caribbean, to decriminalise the holding of small quantities of marijuana and its use for medicinal and religious purposes.

The measure, which, in Jamaica, is domestic in its intent, responds to long-standing pressure for change, but may well for a variety of reasons come to be a form of tourism attraction.

In the United States, where the states of Colorado and Washington have legalised the narcotic, reports in the local and national media suggest that this is resulting in a surge in visitor arrivals and an upturn in tax revenues. Although it is clear that events like Hempfest in Seattle attract around 30,000 participants to sample products competing for an annual cannabis cup, officials argue that interstate marijuana tourism remains a myth.

ONLINE TOURISM VISITOR TRENDS

However, recent interviews by NBC with industry analysts who measure online tourism visitor trends suggest that there has been a 10 per cent increase in hits on hotel and destination sites when there are ganja-related events in the two states.

In The Netherlands, there is no doubt, with up to two million tourists a year visiting licensed coffee shops where cannabis is available. This is despite recent court rulings and pressure from neighbouring states to ban the use of the product by visitors – a decision many coffee shops and some big cities have decided to ignore on the basis of the nation's *laissez faire* approach to social issues, and out of concern for the negative impact on tourism.

What all this suggests is that news of the decriminalisation of the possession of ganja in Jamaica may spur the arrival of additional visitors.

Opinions are, to say the least, mixed.

At the Caribbean Tourism Organisation's (CTO) recent state of the industry conference held in the

United States Virgin Islands (USVI), a panel discussed the issue of marijuana tourism, partly in a wellness tourism context.

Hugh Riley, CTO's secretary general, said that there was need to debate the facts. "We can pretend it doesn't exist and the rest of the world isn't talking about it. At the end of the day, we have to make decisions that are in the best interest of the people of the Caribbean," he said. "It is entirely up to destinations within and outside of the Caribbean to determine whether they want to use marijuana as a magnet to draw tourists," he added. "It is a factor, we have to discuss it, and we are going to study it further."

One voice urging caution, however, was that of Dr James Hospedales, the executive director of the region's Caribbean Public Health Agency. In a careful evidence-based presentation, he summarised: "Proceed with an abundance of caution, given the significant adverse effects of cannabis smoking on health and social and occupational functioning, and especially so among youth."

In contrast, Terrence Nelson, a member of the USVI legislature, advocated that the region "should adopt and adapt cannabis as a Caribbean commodity" and called for the creation of a Caribbean cannabis trade organisation "to market Caribbean marijuana tourism," the proceeds of which could finance infrastructure upgrades and enable the region to compete with other health and wellness destination markets.

The issue of ganja tourism, whether for medicinal purposes or for personal enjoyment, will remain controversial as its use raises many other questions that the authorities in the region's tourism feeder markets also have to consider. These range from accidental possession by a returning visitor, to the confused message that consumption is alright, but production remains illegal because of its links to major organised crime networks and its use to fund criminal or terrorist acts.

No one would deny that some visitors partake when they visit, or that the legal availability of ganja may be an additional attraction. However, tourism as an industry needs a much broader understanding. Until then, it should proceed warily.



JESSOP



Sandra Daley François

New director of Global Sales for the Montego Bay Convention Centre

SANDRA DALEY FRANÇOIS has been named director of global sales for the Montego Bay Convention Centre (MBCC).

Daley François, who returned to Jamaica after residing for 30 years in the United States, has led a professional career with several impressive hospitality organisations.

She previously worked for the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB), covering the market segment of Latin America, the Caribbean and South-east USA and the Partnership Development Divisions. She oversaw GMCVB's partnership outreach which included approximately 1,500 industry stakeholders.

"Daley François brings more than 20 years of distinguished experience in management positions in convention sales/services – servicing numerous meetings and conventions with economic impact of well over one billion in the tourism sales and marketing industry, and is well positioned to understand customer needs and propose effective sales and marketing management solutions," said Dittie Guise, general manager of the Montego Bay Convention Centre.

Daley François describes the

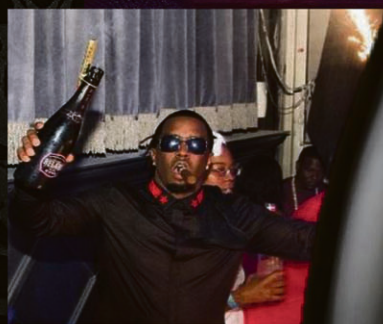
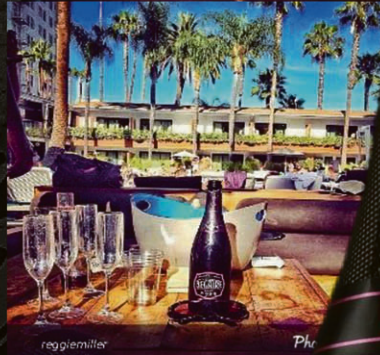
position as one she felt honoured to fill, playing a leadership role in the sales and marketing and public relations team.

"I look forward to bringing innovative solutions to the market that I have spent most of my life serving."

In her new capacity, Daley François will be responsible for developing and executing MBCC's market development, sales, public relations and new business plans.

She will supervise US sales and marketing, identify market opportunities and fulfil market needs, ensure delivery of quality solutions, and meet short- and long-term business goals. The convention centre executive will maintain strong working relationships with current customers and prospects, and will be pivotal in team building and sales-force management, said a media release from the MBCC.

"My plan is to utilise my experience in leveraging and securing international meetings and conventions for the centre in an effort to accomplish business growth, to communicate the vision for the brand, to establish brand recognition with a wider range of meeting professionals, and to be instrumental in its continued success," said Daley François.



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Jamaica Tourist Board team members Lucretia Green (front) and Chaniek Lewis smile as they make their way through the cave.



Participants show off their dirt-stained hands and clothing upon exiting the cave.



Small fissures provide the adrenaline rush.



Participants navigating the cave. **At right:** Participants making their way inside the cave.

Adventure in the CAVE

HOSPITALITY JAMAICA'S Karrie Williams recently took our quest for adrenaline-pumping adventure to another level when she visited the Printed Circuit Cave, commonly known as Rock Springs Cave, located in Trelawny's Cockpit Country.

Williams found herself navigating through a series of limestone fissures, some of which were large and provided minimal difficulty, but there were others so small, that she had to get down on her hands and knees and crawl or squeeze her way through.

To say that she had fun is an understatement, she had a blast! And the best part about this tour is

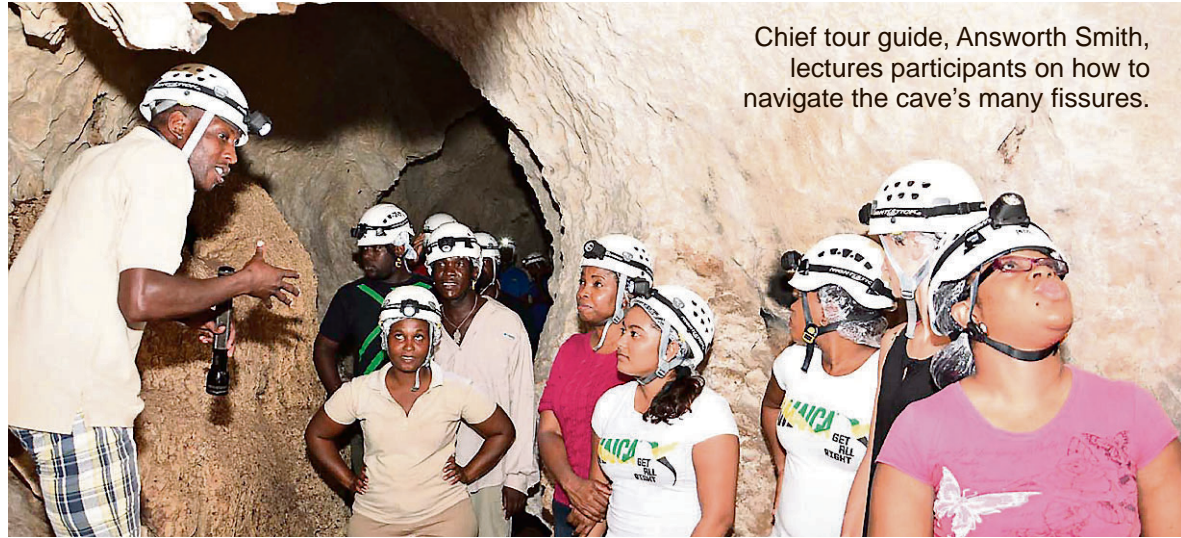
that no caving experience is necessary, thanks to a team of seven well-trained and qualified guides who provided expert monitoring all the way through.

For those concerned about being bitten by mosquitoes, you will be happy to note that these critters are completely absent inside the cave, which is actually very cool with high oxygen levels. However, do ensure that your footwear is very comfortable and also bring along a change of clothing as this adventure will take you through water at some points along the journey.

Here now are some highlights of the day from Karrie and the Di Foto Shoppe team!



Team members of the Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency and Printed Circuit Cave tour guides pose for the camera.



Chief tour guide, Answorth Smith, lectures participants on how to navigate the cave's many fissures.



Tour guide Sudeen Nichol-Clarke fixes a safety helmet on the head of a participant.



Team members of the Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency and Printed Circuit Cave tour guides.



Answorth Smith tells the group about the many landscape features found along the trek to the cave.

JTB adds dedicated volunteer initiative page to website

PLAN A wedding, an adventure tour, and now, volunteer, on Jamaica Tourist Board's official website, VisitJamaica.com.

The JTB has added a dedicated page to its website for visitors who desire to volunteer during their vacation trip to the island. Visitors can now easily plan volunteer experiences through this voluntourism initiative. The combination of voluntary service with the traditional elements of a vacation has become increasingly popular in Jamaica and the website page is in response to this growing trend. The first of its kind in the Caribbean, the webpage offers a database of faith, health, and education-based volunteer programmes, with more categories to appear as they become available.

"The Jamaica Tourist Board is focused on allowing our visitors to have an enriching experience while they vacation on the island," said Paul Pennicook, Jamaica's director of tourism. "While our Jamaican people will surely benefit from the assistance of altruistic travellers, we hope that they take home an experience of a lifetime and share the celebrated Jamaican spirit and warmth with their friends and family."

From the home page of VisitJamaica.com, visitors can go to the 'Feel the Vibe' tab and click 'Volunteer in Jamaica'. There are a host of activities for travellers to choose from, along with an FAQ

section and guide to volunteering in Jamaica.

A sampling of volunteer opportunities includes: Girls' Brigade is one of the available programmes that travellers can integrate into their trip to Kingston. Volunteers will participate in empowerment sessions with girls, imparting values and principles which equip them for the future. To find out about available opportunities, email girlsbrigadeja@yahoo.com.

The health-based volunteer programme, Angels of Love, provides voluntary services for critically ill, underprivileged children of Jamaica. Whether it is a visit to the hospital to play with the children or helping plan a fundraising event, visitors are encouraged to donate some of their time. Email angelsofloveja@gmail.com for more information.

Children First is an organisation that caters to the needs of children through education. Volunteers can participate by helping out at the youth wellness centre, the mobile health clinic, or through a variety of empowerment and educational programs. Please email kidz@cwjamaica.com for more information on opportunities to help. For further information on volunteering in Jamaica, please visit <http://www.visitjamaica.com/Volunteer>.



JAMAICAN STUDENT EXCELS IN REGIONAL FLORIDA-CARIBBEAN CRUISE ASSOCIATION (FCCA) POSTER COMPETITION

Tatyana Harvey of Anchovy High School is the second-place winner in the 2014 FCCA Foundation Children's Environmental Poster Contest. Her poster titled 'Make a Change: Increasing Environmental Awareness to Make a Difference', depicted ways in which the destination can make a difference in preserving the environment. Among the best practices she highlighted are proper garbage disposal, preservation of trees and reduction in environmental pollution. For her efforts, she and her school received a cash award from the FCCA. Here, Tatyana is collecting her congratulatory certificate from Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook (right). Among those offering their congratulations are members of staff at the Anchovy High School from left: Elisabeth Bowen-Barrett, art teacher and head of department; Lambert Robinson, principal; and Donovan Hart, art teacher. The Jamaica Tourist Board's Tourism (JTB) awareness officer, Shauna Housen (second right); also shared in Tatyana's special moment. The JTB organises the national contest from which Tatyana emerged the winner to represent Jamaica. The competition is open to all primary and secondary-school students and seeks to promote and stimulate environmental awareness among students.



Bon Voyage: Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook recently met with High Commissioner-designate to Canada Janice Miller as she prepares to take up office. As part of the orientation programme, Miller called on the director of tourism to find out the latest in Jamaica's strategy to woo Canadian visitors. Miller takes up the High Commissioner's post in mid-October.

Jamaica to wow brides-to-be at Bluewater Bridal Fair

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) is set to wow brides-to-be at this month's Bluewater Bridal Fair, in Kent, south-east England, where local representatives will be on hand to share the many reasons Jamaica is one of the world's favourite and most unique wedding and honeymoon destinations.

From October 17-19, 2014, the JTB in partnership with Jewel Resorts will be at Bluewater Shopping Centre, Kent, for one of the UK's largest wedding fairs. Jamaica has the reputation for being a great place to tie the knot, and JTB officers will be available at the fair to discuss wedding options with prospective brides and grooms on getting married in the Caribbean's most appealing wedding destination. The team will also offer



exclusive wedding packages to attendees. There will also be information on must-do honeymoon experiences, from climbing Dunn's River Falls to cycling through the breathtaking Blue Mountains as well as options on romantic resorts or locations where children can come along and be part of the big day.

Couples can marry just 24 hours after arriving on the island, with hotels like Jewel Resorts providing their guests with all-inclusive wedding packages for a stress-free occasion. At Bluewater, Jewel

Resorts will share information about their celebrated wedding packages, available at each of their three Jamaican resorts.

Whether it's an intimate ceremony or a larger celebration, brides at Jewel Resorts can pick from wedding packages ranging from 'Precious Gem' to 'Diamond', which allows them to combine their dream honeymoon with their nuptials. In addition to the beautiful ambience and luxurious accommodation, Jewel Resorts also offers complimentary honeymoon registry, and allows friends and family of the wedding party to treat newly-weds to special wedding gifts, such as upgrading to a honeymoon suite or a couple's massage. To book tickets for the Bluewater Bridal Fair, visit <http://theweddingfairs.com/>.

JAMAICA Sport launched to develop sports tourism locally

EFFORTS TO position Jamaica as the leading sports tourism destination in the Caribbean got a major boost last Wednesday with the official launch of JAMAICA Sport at the Courtleigh Hotel & Suites, New Kingston.

The technical working group is a spin-off of the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment's Sports Tourism Implementation Committee (STIC), which was established in 2012 to provide the framework to sustainably develop sports tourism as well as leverage local and international sports events to increase visitor arrivals to the island. The STIC will now be replaced by JAMAICA Sport.

Addressing tourism and sports stakeholders, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill said Jamaica has an abundance of assets that need to be harnessed and marketed for the greater good of the country and its people. "Sport is one of those assets," he emphasised.

McNeill pointed out that his ministry "is committed to ensuring that all areas that complement our growing tourism industry are tapped to reap maximum benefits. This forms part of our ongoing effort to diversify our tourism product".

VIABLE MARKET SEGMENT

McNeill emphasised that the potential for developing sports tourism as a viable market segment in Jamaica is tremendous, especially in light of Jamaica's dominance in track and field at successive Olympic Games and World Championships. "Now is the time to capitalise on this potential," he added.

Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sport Natalie Neita Headley said, "It is the synergies between tourism and sport which will drive us to attain new heights and allow each sector to make greater contributions to Jamaica's GDP." She added that "this is the hallmark of joined-up governance! A true reflection of partnership and

collaboration and a proud moment for Jamaica!"

JAMAICA Sport, chaired by businessman and former managing director and CEO of ICC Cricket World Cup 2007, Christopher Dehring, will explore the commercial opportunities provided by sports tourism; leverage Brand Jamaica and sporting events held locally and internationally to ensure that Jamaica maximises marketing and promotional opportunities; and attract additional visitors to our shores.

SPORT-TOURISM DESTINATION

In addition, the entity will anchor and execute the objectives of a Major Events Attraction Programme, which was commissioned by Jamaica Trade and Invest and outlines the blueprint for establishing Jamaica as the major sports-tourism destination in the region. It will also spearhead the implementation of the National Sport Policy of Jamaica.

JAMAICA Sport will focus on several key areas including working in tandem with the National Council on Sport to develop mechanisms to bid on or host strategically important sporting events. It will focus, too, on developing a methodology and system to identify and select indigenous sporting events to be endorsed and facilitated by JAMAICA Sport with the aim of boosting tourist arrivals and raising the stature of Jamaican athletes and Jamaica as a major sporting destination in the region.

In endorsing JAMAICA Sport, president of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), Nicola Madden-Greig, described sports tourism as a natural fit for Jamaica. "It leverages all our built facilities, our long proven talents in the field, the expertise of our support staff who have honed their skills locally, regionally and internationally, and provides the opportunity for visitors to Jamaica to enhance their vacation experience either as a participant and/or spectator," the JHTA president said.

In declaring JAMAICA Sport officially open for business, Dehring emphasised that "content is king, sports is the king of content, and Jamaica is the king of sports".



Craft vendor Esteline Jack shows off some of her creations at the Falmouth pier.

'Craft gave me independence'

Karrie Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

FOR CLOSE to four decades, Esteline Jack of Martha Brae in Falmouth has been creating a name for herself, making and selling her unique brand of handcrafted items to tourists who vacation on the island.

Using straw as her primary raw material, Jack makes a wide variety of products such as bags, purses, handheld fans, hats and place mats, all of which are uniquely decorated and accessorised to reflect her artistic flair.

Currently, she trades her wares at the Falmouth Cruise Ship Pier on ship days. Prior to being at the pier, Jack spent years at the former Bamboo Village in Trelawny, where she operated a small shop. When *Hospitality Jamaica* caught up with the vendor in Falmouth, she was busy attending to several visitors who appeared fascinated with her wares.

INNATE

Jack explains that her love for craft is simply innate and there is nothing else that she would rather do.

"I just love doing craft," a smiling Jack told *Hospitality Jamaica*. "Through craft, I have become independent and I have had the benefit of gaining exposure to people from all walks of life ... it's fun, there is nothing else I enjoy more and I will continue making craft for as long as I can."

Jack, who posited that the ability to make craft is a good life skill for anyone to have, has for several years been passing down

her talent to the younger generation through an art and craft training programme carried out at the Cedric Titus High school, also in Trelawny.

However, the vendor explained that she was unable to participate in the programme this year due to the fact that she, along with some of her colleagues, has become dislocated from the sale of Bamboo Village. This has left her and many others without a fixed location to carry out their trade on a consistent basis.

But the loss of a permanent location to display her wares is not the only challenge Jack currently faces. She further revealed that visitors are being taken away from the Falmouth pier by taxi drivers to conduct their shopping in other areas, and that this has significantly lessened sales revenue for herself and many others.

"It used to be very good back in the early days, but now the taxi operators are causing us to lose business because they come in and befriend the tourists and then take them away to Ocho Rios or to Montego Bay, robbing us of any potential sales and making business very slow for us," she said.

Despite this, Jack maintains that the industry has a lot of potential and remains hopeful that revenues will once again return to the status of the early days.

"I am optimistic that things will go back to the good old days when everyone could make a decent living from craft. I will not give up this trade because it is what I love, so I am just asking someone, somewhere, to help us with getting back a fixed location," she said.



President of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) Nicola Madden-Greig (right) and Deputy Director of Tourism at the Jamaica Tourist Board Jason Hall listen intently as Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with Responsibility for Sport Natalie Neita-Headley discusses prospects for the growth of sports tourism in Jamaica. The occasion was the official launch of JAMAICA Sport on October 1 at the Courtleigh Hotel & Suites, New Kingston.

Unplugged travel to rise as travellers seek escape from the pressures of modern living

Lonely Planet experts reveal their top 10 predictions for the future of travel



FILE

An American Airlines passenger plane takes off at Miami International Airport in Miami.

LOVELY PLANET, the world's leading travel media company, and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) have joined forces to celebrate the 100th anniversary of commercial air travel by revealing Lonely Planet's top 10 predictions for the future of world travel. According to Lonely Planet's team of travel experts, holidaymakers are set to demand more 'unplugged travel' and secret escapes as the fast pace of modern life continues to grow (the full list of top 10 predictions can be found below).

Top of Lonely Planet's list of predictions is that travel will soon become fully integrated into our lives as opposed to a special event. Data from the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG) forecasts that 6.6 billion passengers will fly worldwide by 2032, growing an average of 4.4 per cent annually from 2014. The increasing volume of commercial flights has brought a large shift in travellers' mindsets and Lonely Planet argues that the concept of travel as a rare treat is disappearing, replaced by travel as

- Travel to become an increasingly integrated aspect of people's everyday lives.
- True escapes and remote hotels to increase in popularity as stressed travellers seek an escape from work.
- Travellers' to favour face-to-face recommendations instead of online reviews.

a lifestyle choice.

Lonely Planet also predicts that green travel is also on the rise as a new generation of travellers builds sustainability into every step of their journeys. Seventy per cent of travellers expect companies to demonstrate commitment to preserving the natural environment, prompting a boom in ecotourism and volunteering abroad. The aviation industry in particular has set its own objectives for carbon neutral growth and cutting CO₂ emissions in half.

Sourcing online reviews remains second nature for travellers, but hunger for secret coves and local

secrets is emboldening them to embrace face-to-face or local recommendations. Lonely Planet experts suggest that online reviews will remain part of a traveller's toolkit, but a local recommendation – whether from a taxi driver, an in-the-know café owner or an Airbnb host – has never been more highly prized.

'UNPLUGGED TRAVEL'

The pressures of modern life are also recognised, as Lonely Planet suggests we can expect an increase in 'unplugged travel'. With no emails or mobile signal, guests can immerse themselves in their destination and truly forget about work and everyday life.

Lonely Planet's predictions also bode well for economy fliers, as increased competition on well-trodden flight paths is encouraging airlines to improve the experience for everyone. As true comparison shopping for air travel increases choice and competition, the future looks bright for economy flights – perhaps lie-flat seats, high quality food and more luxurious touches are not too far away.

Technology is also going to play

an increasingly significant role, with more airlines offering paperless travel and integrated smartphones key to planning and tracking your travels. Soon, technology will mean suggested tweaks to travellers' itineraries based on weather conditions and local events will be sent directly to travellers' smartphones or tablets during a flight – creating an ever more-tailored travelling experience.

Airports are also due for an overhaul as innovative departure lounges are a key part of any future travel landscape. With airport spas, art galleries, green areas and even cinemas now a common site at most departure lounges, Lonely Planet suggests that we can expect bigger and bolder leisure activities soon, maybe even a pre-flight rollercoaster.

Other future travel predictions include the rise of experience hotels and event travel, as travellers explore the globe in search of memorable experiences and once-in-a-lifetime sights.

Speaking about Lonely Planet's findings, Tony Tyler, IATA's

director general and CEO, said: "One hundred years after the first passenger flew on a scheduled flight, the predictions from Lonely Planet clearly show that millions more people are set to enjoy the opportunity to travel and particularly travel by air as the world becomes a smaller and more accessible place than ever before. It is amazing to see how far we have come over the past 100 years and even more so to think of what we can expect from the next century. Air travel connects us to the world and reminds us of the importance of being there, whether it is the places or the people we love."

Tom Hall, Lonely Planet's editorial director, explained: "Travel has changed dramatically since the first commercial flight 100 years ago, and the next 100 years has endless possibilities. At Lonely Planet, we're constantly monitoring trends and developments in travel as we seek to find emerging destinations, hot topics and what is really getting travellers excited. This selection highlights some of the big trends that we predict for the next few years."



Royal Caribbean International's Oasis of the Seas, the worlds largest cruise ship.

FILE

St Kitts projected to welcome one million cruise passengers

ST KITTS CONTINUES to grow its cruise tourism sector at an impressive rate, with a projected rise in cruise passenger arrivals for the 2014-2015 season to more than one million for the first time in the island's history. This represents a 31.5 per cent increase over the 2013-2014 season and a total growth over the last eight years of more than 500 per cent.

"The fact that we will be welcoming this record number of cruise passengers to St Kitts is a testament to the high quality of our tourism infrastructure and to the partnerships that our destination has forged with industry stakeholders," said Senator Ricky Skerritt, minister of Tourism & International Transport. "Our performance must be examined against the backdrop of the development of a wealth of onshore activities based on our nature, rich history, and friendly people who help provide an authentic Caribbean

experience for all of our visitors."

This season's phenomenal growth is partly because the island will receive six calls from the Royal Caribbean International's *Quantum of the Seas*, in its inaugural 2014-2015 season. St Kitts will also see the return of Disney Cruise Line for the first time since 2009, with the Disney Magic scheduled to make a total of four port calls to the island in 2014-2015. Inaugural calls are also being made in 2014-2015 by Oceania Cruises' *Insignia* and Norwegian Cruise Line's *Norwegian Gem* and *Norwegian Pearl*, which together will make 17 calls.

HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS

Commenting on the island's exceptional growth, Federico Gonzalez-Denton – director of Government Relations for Royal Caribbean International and Celebrity Cruises – said, "The Royal Caribbean family would like to express our most sincere and heartfelt congratulations to the people of St Kitts for reaching one

million cruise guests for the first time in their history. Clearly, this memorable milestone would not have occurred without the friendly smiles and hard work of the Kittitians themselves, the unique and breathtaking beauty of the island, and the positive cruise initiatives and policies established by the Government. Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd feels extremely proud of our contribution to this historic achievement."

In addition to increasing passenger arrivals from traditional ports of origin of the USA and UK, the geographic markets from which the cruise passengers originate have also been expanding to include Germany, Italy, France and Spain. The cruise lines that are scheduled to make calls to St Kitts in the 2014-2015 cruise ship season include Carnival, Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, Holland America, Norwegian, Princess, P&O, Cunard, Oceania, Seabourn, Aida, Silver Sea, Windstar, Thompson and TUI Cruises.

CTO's Education Foundation gets big boost

INTERVAL INTERNATIONAL, a prominent worldwide provider of vacation services and an operating business of Interval Leisure Group, and its participating member resorts, recently made a US\$20,000 donation to the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) Education Foundation.

Panna Utpaul, general manager of Marriott's Frenchman's Cove, presented the cheque to foundation executives during the CTO State of the Industry Conference in St Thomas, United States Virgin Islands (USVI).

"Over the past 15 years, our Marriott Vacation Club resorts in the Caribbean have been honoured to collaborate with Interval and its other resort partners to raise funds for the education of Caribbean nationals," said Utpaul. "We are committed to making a difference in the lives of others and giving back to local communities here in St Thomas and throughout the region, and are extremely proud to help generate scholarships for young professionals who represent the future leaders of the tourism industry."

"It's been a real pleasure for Interval to work in partnership with its member resorts throughout the region to support the important initiatives of the CTO Foundation," said Neil Kolton, Interval's director of resort sales and service for the Caribbean and Florida. "In 2014, the shared ownership industry is once again one of the largest contributors to this cause, which would not be possible without the generosity of our industry partners."

Jacqueline Johnson, chairman of the CTO Foundation said, "The foundation is extremely grateful for the enduring commitment of Interval and its resort clients. Their unfailing loyalty has meant a great deal to us and has had a direct impact on our ability to provide Caribbean nationals with the

opportunity to develop the skills to pursue a career in hospitality."

Nearly 30 resorts across 13 countries made donations to this year's fundraising efforts, including:

- Antigua – Tranquility Bay Antigua
- Aruba – Caribbean Palm Village Resort, La Cabana Beach Resort and Casino, Marriott's Aruba Surf Club, Paradise Beach Villas, and Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino
- The Bahamas – Island Seas Resort
- Bermuda – The St George's Club
- Cayman Islands – Morritt's Tortuga Club, Seven Mile Beach Resort
- Curaçao – The Royal Sea Aquarium Resort
- Dominican Republic – VIK Hotel Cayena Beach
- Jamaica – Sunset Beach Resort & Waterpark, The Oasis at Sunset
- Mexican Caribbean – Laguna Suites Golf & Spa, Ocean Spa Hotel, and Westin Lagunamar Ocean Resort
- Puerto Rico – Aquarius Vacation Club at Boquerón Beach, Aquarius Vacation Club, Dorado del Mar Beach and Golf Resort, ESJ Towers, and Hyatt Residence Club
- St John, USVI – Grande Bay Resort & Residence Club
- St Lucia – Bay Gardens Beach Resort and Spa
- St Maarten – Oyster Bay Beach Resort, Simpson Bay Resort & Marina, and The Westin Dawn Beach Resort and Spa
- Turks and Caicos – The Alexandra Resort and Spa.

The CTO Foundation was created in 1997 as a not-for-profit corporation exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, with its first scholarships and study grants conferred in 1998. Since 1998, the CTO Foundation has provided over 200 scholarships and grants totalling nearly US\$1 million to deserving Caribbean nationals.



Understanding the youth traveller of today

WORLD TRAVEL Market (WTM), the leading global event for the travel industry, is launching a new youth tourism programme looking at trends in the sector.

Youth travel has become an increasingly important part of the global tourism industry, with youth, student and educational travel accounting for more than 20 per cent (207 million) of all international arrivals in 2012, with expected continual growth. The sector is also estimated to have huge economic potential with a predicated market value of £193 billion by the year 2020.

The WTM Youth Tourism sessions, organised by the World Youth & Student Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation – a global community serving 30 million young travellers worldwide each year, will take place November 4 and 5 – with some of the leading executives and experts from the youth travel sector, sharing their experience and insights.

The Tuesday, November 4 session, moderated by director of Starboard Hotels and chair of STAYWYSE, Philip Houghton, will feature a panel of industry experts discussing the emergence of brands within the hostel sector and how new players are entering the market and challenging established operators.

SESSION SPEAKERS

Speakers include Generator Hostels executive chairman Carl Michel, hostelling international head of sales and marketing Stephen Lane, and MENINGER hotels managing director, Eric van Dijk. The Wednesday, November 5 session looks to explore the wants and needs of the millennial traveller. Four different players from the youth travel space, including Generator Hostels's Michel and WYSE director general David Chapman, will discuss how to

create a dialogue with youth consumers via research, social media, loyalty programmes or customer relations management.

World Travel Market, Senior Director, Simon Press said: "Youth travel has long been one of the industry's fastest growing sectors and I'm delighted that we have a dedicated programme for it at WTM for the first time this year. "WTM have teamed up with WYSE as they look to promote and develop the multibillion-pound industry by encouraging governments to actively support and develop youth tourism products and services. I believe WTM is the ideal platform to reach out to these segments.

"The programme will bring a new audience to World Travel Market while also offering existing participants vital information to help grow their businesses."

World Responsible Tourism Day to tackle two of tourism's most controversial issues

THE TWO flagship events at World Travel Market's (WTM) World Responsible Tourism Day programme, which takes place on Wednesday, November 5 at WTM in Excel, London, will address two of the most controversial and challenging issues confronting the tourism industry today – wildlife poaching and child protection.

Regular host of World Responsible Tourism Day, BBC **Hardtalk's** Stephen Sackur, will open the day by interviewing co-founder of Wilderness Safaris Colin Bell, and CEO of conservation charity Tusk, Charlie Mayhew. They will discuss how Africa, the tourism industry and the world at large respond to a crisis that has already this year seen more than 618 rhino killed in South Africa.

The figure is more than were poached in the Kruger Park, the epicentre of the problem, during the whole of 2013. Elephant and lion numbers are also being drastically reduced to the point that the very viability of perhaps the three most iconic animals of safari's Big Five – at the heart of Africa's tourism draw – are at risk of extinction in the wild in many countries.

The panel will discuss what can be done to change this, exploring approaches such as whether legalising the trade might work to suppress prices and demand, and Colin Bell's current proposal that a one per cent levy be charged on all tourism accommodation and related services in South Africa to support a 'Natural Capital Fund' directed at addressing the issue.

The opening debate is followed by the World Responsible Tourism Awards at WTM. Later that day, the panel for the day's central Responsible Tourism Debate on Child Protection includes Willem Niemeijer, the founder & CEO Khiri Travel Bangkok, Bharti Patel CEO, ECPAT UK, and Elise Allart, manager, Sustainable Tourism

TUI Benelux. Elise Allart spearheaded the company's hard-hitting anti-child trafficking campaign, working with the Dutch border police to encourage travellers to look out for and report child trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children. It won the overall World Responsible Tourism Award in 2013. The WTM put child protection on the agenda back in 2011 when they discussed the internal trafficking of orphans in Cambodia to populate orphanages.

BROAD SCOPE OF ISSUES

Every year, we have sought to broaden the scope of the debate, covering issues ranging from child labour and the sexual exploitation of children, to the safety of young people gap-yearing abroad and the issues of child abuse and neglect which arise in outbound families. These issues have also been addressed at WTM Responsible Tourism panels now taking place at regional events WTM Latin America and WTM Africa. This year, the debate will look at the full range of issues relating to child protection and tourism and address the moot: "This house believes that the tourism industry could do a good deal more to take responsibility for child protection and urges it to do so."

World Travel Market, senior director, Simon Press, said: "I am delighted to welcome both Colin Bell and Charlie Mayhew to WTM 2014. The issue of wildlife poaching is a critical one as a number of animals are at risk of extinction. The tourism industry has a responsibility to protect animals as well as their natural habitat." The programme for WTM's World Responsible Tourism Day is once again sponsored by BBC World News. For the first time, this year WTM's Responsible Tourism programme will run across all four days of WTM London (Monday, November 3 to Thursday, November 6).

CHTA appoints regional vice presidents

EMIL LEE, president of the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA), has enhanced his executive committee by adding three Caribbean tourism industry professionals who will serve as regional vice-presidents during his presidency. Lee has appointed Sanovnik Destang, executive director of Bay Gardens Resorts in St Lucia, Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace, founder of Bedford Baker Group in The Bahamas, and Warren Binder, president of Creative Travel Consultants in Florida.

These three individuals will hold their posts for the 2014-16 biennium along with Lee. The new slate of officers who were elected in July 2014 will join two other regional vice-presidents Lee appointed in July 2014 – Clarisa Jimenez, president & CEO of the Puerto Rico Hotel & Tourism Association (PRHTA), and Jose Rivera Campos, vice-president of development for AM-Resorts in Cancún.

“The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association is enhanced



Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace

by the addition of Sanovnik Destang, Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace and Warren Binder, as each gentleman brings extensive knowledge of the operations of the



Emil Lee

Caribbean hotel industry to their position as regional vice-presidents,” said Lee. “Their experience will prove vital to the future of the association as we

strive to make it a more relevant Caribbean resource and visionary association,” added Lee.

A chartered accountant and chartered financial analyst by profession, Destang has served since 2008 as the executive director of Bay Gardens Resorts, an award-winning locally owned hotel chain in Rodney Bay Village, St Lucia. Under Destang’s watch, the property group has won several awards from TripAdvisor, Virgin Holidays and Wedding Wire, and was rated as one of the top “100 Hotels in the World” by Fodors and Expedia.

Vanderpool-Wallace’s Bedford Baker Group is a collection of independent professional advisors who provide services in travel, tourism and hospitality. Previously, his work in the Caribbean tourism industry included minister of tourism of The Bahamas as well as the country’s director general, secretary general and CEO of the Caribbean Tourism Organization and co-president of Resorts International, which at the time was the largest private company in the Bahamas. His tenure with the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism covered the best performing

years for the destination under a number of barometers including total visitors, hotel visitors, cruise visitors, tourism revenues and visitor satisfaction levels.

Binder formed Creative Travel Consultants in 1970 and his experience includes more than 40 years of active involvement in the tourism industry, including senior sales, marketing and management positions in both large and small organisations operating in the Caribbean, The Bahamas, the United States and other international markets. He has been contracted by the private and public sectors to assist in the evaluation, development, implementation and managing of resort development, sales, marketing, reservations and communications programmes for hotels, resort properties, destinations, airlines and tour operators.

Binder was intimately involved in the design, development, and implementation of the sales and marketing programme, including budgeting, staffing and supervision of the Comfort Suites Paradise Island, a successful and profitable small Caribbean hotel.



Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill (left) greets president of Palace Resorts, José Chapur (right), and the all-inclusive resort operator’s executive vice-president, Gibran Chapur, during a courtesy call paid to the minister at his New Kingston offices recently, to give an update on the renovation and expansion of the former Sunset Jamaica Grande in Ocho Rios. The landmark property, which was acquired by Mexico’s Palace Resorts in July of this year, is set to be officially opened as Moon Palace Jamaica Grande in March 2015. The US\$40 million investment will mark Palace Resorts’ first step outside of Mexico, expanding their signature ‘awe-inclusive’ brand standards to the Jamaican market. Palace Resorts currently owns and operates seven oceanfront properties in Mexico, including Moon Palace Golf & Spa Resort, one of the most successful resorts in Cancún.



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