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ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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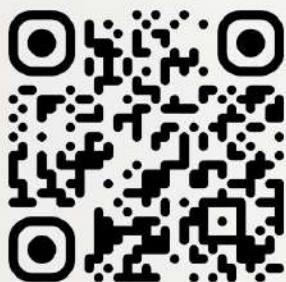
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Beyond Growth: **Tourism's Regenerative Impact**

Annual General Meeting 2025

**Annual Report Presented to the SLHTA Membership
on Friday, March 28, 2025**

CONTENTS



- 06** CEO's Welcome Remarks
- 07** President's Welcome Remarks
- 09** TEF Chairman's Welcome Remarks
- 10** AGM Agenda
- 12** SLHTA Board of Directors
- 14** TEF Board of Trustees
- 16** 60th Annual General Meeting Minutes
- 32** Stories of Change



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CEO'S WELCOME REMARKS

Noorani M. Azeez

Dear Esteemed Members and Partners,

As we convene for this pivotal Annual General Meeting, I am honored to present the Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association's (SLHTA) 2024 Report. This past year has been a testament to our unwavering commitment to advocacy, collaboration, and industry excellence, all aimed at enhancing the prosperity of our over 200 member companies.

Throughout 2024, the SLHTA has been at the forefront of lobbying efforts, diligently representing the interests of our diverse membership. We have actively engaged in policy formulation, providing critical input into government plans and proposals to ensure that the voice of the hospitality industry resonates in national decision-making processes.

Our association has also strengthened strategic alliances to bolster industry growth.

Regionally, the SLHTA has been an active participant in discussions shaping the future of Caribbean tourism. Our involvement in events such as Caribbean Week 2024 in New York City provided invaluable opportunities to engage with counterparts across the region, focusing on critical issues that influence the evolution and growth of our industry.

In our continuous effort to promote Saint Lucia as a premier destination, we celebrated the unveiling of the 2024 Saint Lucia National Culinary Team. This initiative not only showcases our rich culinary heritage but also highlights the exceptional talent within our island, reinforcing our commitment to cultural promotion and tourism excellence.

As we reflect on these accomplishments, we recognize that our strength lies in unity and proactive engagement. The SLHTA remains dedicated to advocating for policies and initiatives that benefit our members and the broader community. We are committed to fostering collaborations that drive innovation and sustainability within the tourism sector.

Looking ahead, we envision a future where Saint Lucia continues to shine as a beacon of hospitality and cultural richness. Our collective efforts will focus on enhancing the competitiveness of our members, advocating for favorable policies, and ensuring that our tourism industry thrives in an ever-evolving global landscape.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each member and partner for your unwavering support and dedication. Together, we will continue to elevate Saint Lucia's hospitality and tourism industry to unprecedented heights.

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME REMARKS

Erwin Louisy



Dear Members and Partners,

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I extend a warm welcome to you on behalf of the Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association (SLHTA).

As we gather under the theme 'Beyond Growth: Tourism's Regenerative Impact', we reflect on the profound impact of our industry on Saint Lucia's people, communities and economy.

As the first Tourism Services Provider to serve as President, I am honored to lead an organization that continues to be a beacon of excellence in Caribbean tourism, championing the interests of our diverse and dynamic hospitality sector.

Saint Lucia, our award-winning gem of the Caribbean, has once again been recognized on the global stage for its pristine beaches, world-class resorts, rich cultural heritage, and unmatched natural beauty. From being named the World's Leading Honeymoon Destination multiple times to earning accolades for our luxury accommodations, adventure tourism, and culinary experiences, our island stands as a testament to the dedication, passion, and resilience of our industry.

At the SLHTA, we remain committed to elevating Saint Lucia's tourism product, strengthening partnerships, and creating sustainable opportunities for our members. Whether you are a hotelier, restaurateur, excursion provider, or tourism service provider, our collective vision is to foster an environment where businesses thrive, innovation flourishes, and every visitor experiences the warmth and hospitality that define our island.

As we embrace the future, I invite you to stay engaged, share your insights, and be a part of the exciting journey ahead. The SLHTA is here to advocate for you, support you, and work together to ensure that Saint Lucia remains not only a top-tier destination but also a shining example of responsible and inclusive tourism development.

Thank you for your continued trust and collaboration. Welcome to the SLHTA – where the heart of hospitality beats strongest!



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TEF CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME REMARKS

Winston Anderson



Dear Partners and Stakeholders,

Over the past year, the SLHTA's Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) has continued to champion projects that enhance lives and contribute to a more sustainable tourism industry. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am proud to reflect on the initiatives and collaborations that have driven this progress.

In 2024, our impact was felt across twenty-two programmes and initiatives, with over EC\$1 million disbursed. The projects addressed a range of pressing issues, including youth empowerment, health and wellness, disaster relief, environmental sustainability, linkages, scholarships, human resource development and citizen security.

Among the standout initiatives were free prostate cancer screenings for 1,000 men, the Eileen Paul Scholarships for secondary school students, Hurricane Beryl relief efforts in St. Vincent and Grenada, after-school programs in the communities of Millet, Dennery, and Faux à Chaud, the annual Christmas Food Voucher Drive, and support for the development of Saint Lucian culinary professionals through participation in Taste of the Caribbean.

It is truly rewarding to see these worthwhile initiatives reach communities across Saint Lucia and beyond, providing vital support where it was needed most.

As part of our expansion efforts in 2024, we engaged in valuable dialogue with the duty-free retail sector. The diverse group of companies has embraced the transformative work of the TEF, and we are excited for their upcoming involvement in supporting the fund.

I wish to commend our contributing companies for their years of dedication to the fund. By partnering with the TEF you help to fund worthwhile projects and initiatives that impact current and future generations. Thank you, Anse Chastanet & Jade Mountain Resorts, Bay Gardens Resorts, Calabash Cove, Cap Maison, Hotel Chocolat, Ladera Resort, Sandals Resorts, Sea Spray Cruises, SunSwept Resorts, Sugar Beach – A Viceroy Resort, Windjammer Landing, The Landings Resort & Spa and Villa Beach Cottages for your generous support.

We are determined to continue positively impacting lives and building a better Saint Lucia. Companies looking to make a difference are encouraged to become contributors, joining us in supporting initiatives that drive meaningful change across communities. For more information on how to get involved, please contact us at tefadmin@slhta.info or visit saintluciatef.com

I wish all partners and stakeholders a successful 2025!

SLHTA AGM 2025



Friday, March 28th 2025, 8:30am

Harbor Club Ballroom

Beyond Growth: Tourism's Regenerative Impact

CLOSED SESSION

- 8.30: Prayer
- Call to order
- 8.35: Welcome Remarks - SLHTA President Erwin Louisy
- 8.40: Approval of the minutes of the 60th Annual General Meeting
- 8.50: Tabling of Audited Financial Statements – PKF
- 9.10: Elections
- 9.20: Presentation from Sponsor – Saint Lucia Tourism Authority
- 9.35: Presentation from Sponsor – Saint Lucia Air & Seaports Authority
- 9.50: Announcement of non-executive Board of Directors
- 9.55: Discussion – Next steps for the Secretariat 2025/2026
- 10.15: End of closed session

OPEN SESSION

- 10:15: Prayer
- National Anthem (Roseau Combined)
- Call to Order
- 10.25: President's Remarks – SLHTA President Erwin Louisy
- 10.35: Year in Review Video
- 10.45: Guest Remarks
 - Eileen Paul Scholarship recipient Stephanie Haynes
 - GHTA CEO Arlene Friday
 - Millet Combined School performance
- 11.00: Tourism Legends Awards
- 11.15: New Projects announcements:
 - Sea Island Cotton Shop
 - Lynch Caribbean Brokers
 - Marine Health Alliance
- 11:30: MoT Investment Presentation -Permanent Secretary Donalyn Vittet
- 11:45: Remarks from Minister of Tourism Hon. Dr. Ernest Hilaire
- 11:55: Feature Address – Dr. James Fletcher, CARICOM Climate Envoy
- 12.10: Q&A
- 12:30: Presentation from Sponsors
 - Republic Bank
 - Tourism Enhancement Fund
- 1:00: Close



We're invested in You going further.

Big ideas come from small businesses - we know that. We believe that YOU have the next big idea that revolutionises our island, the Caribbean and the world. Our goal is to empower businesses, providing you with free tools and resources like our SME toolkit to help move you forward.

We're invested in you.



Who We Are

The SLHTA began with an idea to bring together the players of an industry that was then viewed as crucial to this country's future. Since 1964 that idea and this organization has grown tremendously and the evolution of the SLHTA stands today as a testament of that commitment.

Board of Directors

Erwin Louisy - President

Karolin Troubetzkoy - Vice President

Noorani Azeez - SLHTA CEO

Marella Devaux - Representative for Luxury Villas and Vacation Rentals

Winston Anderson - Representative for Large Hotels

Christian Michael Gándara Klopfer- Representative for High-End Boutique Hotels

Cheryl Gustave - Representative for Small Properties (Small Hotels, Inns, Bed & Breakfast Establishments & Guesthouses)

Wadi Zakhour - Representative for Independent Restaurants & Food & Beverage Suppliers

Corey Devaux - Representative for Ground Transportation & Cruise Sub-sectors and Tour Service Providers (Automobile Rentals, National Taxi Union, Tourism Taxis & Cruise related businesses)

Sean Devaux - Representative for the Yachting and Maritime subsector

Daryl Raymond - Representative for Utility Companies, Statutory Corporations and Financial Institutions

Kirk Elliott - Representative At Large for Banks, Professionals, Educational/Training Institutions & Other Allied Members

Louis Lewis - Representative for the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority



Erwin Louisy



Karolin Troubetzkoy



Noorani Azeez



Marella Devaux



Winston Anderson



***Christian Michael
Gándara Klopfer***



Cheryl Gustave



Wadi Zakhour



Corey Devaux



Sean Devaux



Daryl Raymond



Kirk Elliott



Louis Lewis



Board of Management

Tourism Enhancement Fund

The Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) is a private sector initiative established on 1st October 2013, designed to allow the tourism industry a greater opportunity to play an integral role in the sustainable development of our destination. The TEF is managed by a board comprising representatives from the Public and Private Sectors who ensure that projects undertaken by the Fund continue to have a strong education, environmental and developmental impact.

Winston Anderson - Chairman

Noorani M. Azeez - Deputy Chair

Erwin Louisy - President of the SLHTA

Karolin Troubestzkoy - Honorary Lifetime Member

Corey Devaux - Floor Member Tourism Service Representative

Christian Gandara - Floor Member Accommodation Sector

Ann Margarat Adams - Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Tourism Representative)

Donette Ismael - Program Manager



Winston Anderson



Noorani Azeez



Erwin Louisy



Karolin Troubestzkoy



Corey Devaux



*Christian Michael
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Minutes of the 60th SLHTA Annual General Meeting

Date: Wednesday, February 28th, 2024

Theme: Tourism and Peace a Sustainable Strategy for Prosperity

OPEN SESSION

LIST OF HEAD TABLE DELEGATES

Hon. Dr. Ernest Hilaire, Minister for Tourism and Acting Prime Minister
Mrs. Dona Regis-Prosper, New Secretary-General, And Chief Executive Officer, Caribbean Tourism Organization
Mr. Noorani Azeez, CEO, SLHTA
Mr. Paul Collymore, SLHTA President
Mr. Sanovnik Destang, President-Elect, Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association
Mr. John Mathurin, 1st Vice President
Ms. Erwin Louisy, 2nd Vice President
Mrs. Karolin Troubetzkoy, Immediate Past President

1.0 CALL TO ORDER AND NATIONAL ANTHEM

The 60th Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association (SLHTA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at the Harbor Club St. Lucia under the theme “Tourism and Peace: A sustainable Strategy for Prosperity”. Ms. Herma Demacque was the Mistress of Ceremonies and called the morning’s proceedings to order at 9:45 am. The Saint Lucia National Anthem was played by pianist, Mr. Aimran Simmons.

2.0 INVOCATION

The invocation was read by Ms. Tamara Amos, TEF Project Officer, SLHTA.

3.0 WELCOME REMARKS – SENATOR NOORANI AZEEZ, CEO, SLHTA

Mr. Azeez began his remarks by welcoming everyone to the SLHTA’s 60th Annual General Meeting (AGM). Originally called the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association, he described the SLHTA as now being at a momentous stage developmentally and applauded the stakeholders accrued discoveries, innovations, and sheer resilience. He continued to say that on an equally exciting level the Association, grounded on the principles of sustainability, prosperity, and peace, now aims to undertake several additional, critical projects to showcase Saint Lucia’s beauty, enchanting landscapes, vibrant culture, captivating history, services, amenities and the warmth of the people. Whereas the global landscape has evolved dramatically since the Association’s establishment, he affirmed that the Association’s vision has always been to position Saint Lucia as a leading global destination. Furthermore, the Caribbean has been adversely affected by climate change, economic volatility, social inequality, and the recent global pandemic, Mr. Azeez asserted that the Association’s resilience and unwavering belief in the power of tourism, as a force for good, has been the perennial guide for the team.

In reflection, Mr. Azeez stressed the relevance of the Meeting’s theme as the Association inherently accepts tourism as not just an economic activity, but a bridge between cultures, a catalyst for peace, and a vehicle for sustainable development. As Saint Lucia’s touristic appeal is intrinsically linked to the health of its environment, vitality of its communities, and strength of its economy, he also highlighted that sustainable practices must be broadly practiced, and encouraged renewable energy investments, and natural resource protection. This commitment to sustainability is explained as both an ethical consideration and strategic imperative as today’s travelers are seeking destinations that align with their values. Resultantly, Saint Lucia is pivotally positioned to benefit from the establishment of systems that ensure that others can contribute to and benefit equally from said opportunity. Thus, Mr. Azeez advocated for the formation of new and expansion of old partnerships between government, private sector, communities, civil society, and individuals to support the success of this vision. A notable partner for the SLHTA in this journey has been the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association; and some special (and longstanding) tourism champions include Mrs. Regis-Prosper, Mrs. Troubetzkoy, Mr. Destang and Mr. Mathurin.

In transition, Mr. Azeez lamented the effect of the specter of violent crime on the Association's current and future plans, the nation as a whole, and its ultimate effect on the nation's quest for peace within our communities. Of additional concern, he referred to the reality of various forms of institutional violence, and the poor examples set by some national leaders when they engage, resolve conflict, and attempt to build consensus. Thus, he urged greater synergy between the state, community and private sector to mitigate and overcome this menace regardless of wherever and however it presents itself. Open and equitable communication, shared strategies and united (and strategic) efforts were stressed as critical additions to the optimal national outcomes. Notwithstanding even now, Mr. Azeez highlighted some new (emerging) sector (Association) champions including Mr. Andre Dan Paul (SEEDS Resource Centre, Vieux Fort), Mr. Winston Anderson, Mr. John Mathurin, Dr. Jolin Hunson, Mr. Mark Adams, Mr. Sean Devaux, Mr. Matthew Beaubrun, Mr. Andy Bernard, and Mr. Kirk Elliot. Based on all current contributions and outcomes, the SLHTA Secretariat was highlighted as currently being engaged to craft a work plan to support the Association's intended efforts.

Penultimately, Mr. Azeez expressed profound appreciation for the level of volunteer leadership which thrives within the SLHTA. In conclusion, he affirmed the Association's plans for longevity and commitment to the prosperity of Saint Lucia's tourism industry, and peace and safety of our communities, and collectively expressed profound gratitude for the dedication, passion and commitment portrayed by all stakeholders as this is critical to the Association's success.

4.0 PRESIDENT'S REMARKS – MR. PAUL COLLYMORE

Mr. Collymore expressed profound appreciation for the opportunity to address the gathering and, on behalf of the SLHTA, welcomed everyone to the AGM. He deemed this period a momentous one, as the Association simultaneously gets an opportunity to highlight its successes, forge stronger and more sector partnerships (with, inter alia, the MoT and Saint Lucia Tourism Authority), and discusses its lessons learnt and future plans. He assured members that the Association, over the last year, also remained true to its core mission of advocacy, and expressed excitement about the slew of upcoming national tourism investments, for instance, the enhancement of the Hewanorra International Airport. Thereafter, Mr. Collymore endorsed direct investments in our people, for instance, the reintroduced Gimme's Awards which celebrates excellence, innovation, quality and sustainability in the tourism sector; and provides the benchmark for industry best practice. The advocacy and support from the CHTA, on regional and international markets, was also emphasized and former Presidents (Berthia Parle and Karoline Troubetzkoy) and incoming President, Mr. Destang, were thanked for contributions and commitment to the development of the sector.

Subsequently, Mr. Collymore thanked all Association members who, over the years, facilitated the successes and efforts of the SLHTA, their contributions allowed the transition from a small association with a handful of members in 1963 to a thriving organization and voice of the Saint Lucia hospitality sector in 2024. Moreover, he acknowledged the dedicated individuals who work and uphold the standard of excellence within the tourism sector as they make an invaluable contribution to shaping the trajectory of our industry. He reaffirmed the Association's commitment to always working with their interests in mind and solicited their continuous support as dynamic, new opportunities come our way.

President Collymore acknowledged that the role of volunteer leadership on any board is never easy when attempting to balance several other full-time commitments. As such, he expressed heartfelt gratitude to all those who supported him during his tenure as SLHTA President, especially during the oscillating conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Penultimately, Mr. Collymore lamented some areas of concern that continue to plague the tourism industry, including crime, road infrastructure and the water crisis, but confirmed the Association's commitment to supporting efforts that will make Saint Lucia an even more sought-after global destination of choice for all. Further, he stressed the need for increased advocacy (for the Association at the Tourism Advisory Committee level) and urgent corrective attention.

Finally, he thanked the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Saint Lucia Tourism Authority (SLTA), Saint Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority (SLASPA) and the Saint Lucia Manufacturers Association (SMA), and the many public and private sector agencies who support the SLHTA. Gratitude was also expressed to the Association's sponsors over the year, especially Republic Bank as the major AGM sponsor, plus the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF), Hyperbaric Society, National Conservation Society and the Marine Health Alliance (MHA).

5.0 YEAR IN REVIEW AND SLHTA/TEF VIDEO – MR. NOORANI AZEEZ

Mr. Azeez began this presentation by acknowledging that the prior year's successes were facilitated by a series of stakeholder contributions, then he made special mention of the critical role played by the core SLHTA staff, Philanthropic Arm and Saint Lucia Hyperbaric Society Leads, SLHTA Board of Directors, TEF Board of Trustees, Sub Committee membership (including Marketing and Product Development, Tax and Policy, environmental, Duty Free Retail Sector, HRD advisory

Committee, Events Committee, Executive Committee, Chefs Committee, TSP Group and Hidden Gems Small Hotels), Association volunteers and other key partners. To complement his delivery, a PowerPoint presentation illustrated some of the Association's membership engagement and development, advocacy, community engagement, and sponsorship (including the Saint Lucia Hyperbaric Society, and Citizens for Peace and Prosperity) initiatives. The delivery concluded with a summary of the Association's tentative 2024 undertakings.

In 2023, the SLHTA served on the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority (including two of its sub committees), St. Lucia Solid Waste Management Authority, Tourism Advisory Committee, Export Saint Lucia and Saint Lucia National Conservation Fund). Concerning membership, a more than 10% membership growth trend was realized (comprising accommodation, F&B, sites and attractions, consulting services and tourism transportation representatives). In the area of human capital development, approximately 430 individuals were trained, and an investment of more than XCD\$350,000.00 was made in the areas of Lifeguard Certification, CHTAEF Service Training, Introduction to AI, RSLPF Training in Professional Conduct and Youth Apprenticeship Programs. Additionally, the SLHTA Group Medical Insurance Plan was offered by Sterling Insurance Services, as four packages to approximately 1,800 employees at 85 member companies and for 253 independent members.

The SLHTA supported and participated in long service employee and industry leader recognition awards ceremonies where, most notably, staff at Coconut Bay Resort, The BodyHoliday Resort, Ladera Resort, Windjammer Landing and Anse Chastanet were recognized for their tenure and performance. Concerning advocacy, he contributed to deliberations on the Tourism Development Act, Plastic Export Project, Tax Administration and Procedure Bill, Criminal Code Amendment Bill-Noise Pollution, and Labour Laws amendments. Regarding Community Engagement, the SLHTA spent approximately XCD\$460,000.00 to support, inter alia, the renovation of six homes in Wilton's Yard and the park next to the Derek Walcott Museum, distribution of Christmas food hampers to underprivileged individuals, training of community volunteers, and the expansion and facilitation of the South Vision of Hope Project, Ubuntu Seeds Resource Centre, and the Rotary Club's Portable X-ray Machine Mission. Furthermore, approximately XCD\$340,000.00 was invested for about 370 participants to undergo Community Based Training for, inter alia, five Community After School Programs; BCF Safe Spaces Football Competition; Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) Training in Dennerly; Saint Lucia Fire Service Training Camp; and JUMP Metacognitive Awareness Program.

Afterwards, the TEF was featured as having been established on October 1, 2013 as a private sector initiative to permit the tourism industry to assume a more integral role in Saint Lucia's development, as a sustainable tourism destination. Its micro secretariat was housed at the SLHTA in 2023, is currently being incorporated and continues to advocate for violent crimes reduction. As such, to the tune of XCD\$1,500,000.00, the TEF has funded about 27 diverse projects nationally, and notable beneficiaries include the Citizens for Peace and Prosperity (CPP), the 2023 Koudmen Initiative, various Violence Interruption Strategies, and the Vieux Fort SEEDS Resource Center. The TEF's eight-member board of trustees was highlighted at that point.

In 2024, the SLHTA intends to collaborate with the Embassy of Mexico to, among other things, provide internships for students pursuing maintenance and engineering qualifications and Spanish language training; help individuals acquire Food and Beverage Service Certification with AHLAIE, and participate in CHTA Youth Leaders Programme. They also plan to expand and strengthen the TEF's partner and donor system; support/host the Rhythm & Spice Festival, and Miss SLHTA Pageant; establish a National Culinary League and advocate on matters including crime, national infrastructure projects, water supply, West Coast Bay Management, HRD strategy to meet industry growth needs, and launch the Virtual Agricultural Clearing House (VACH) 2.0.

5.1 VIDEO PRESENTATION

A short video then ensued to surmise the SLHTA's 2023 efforts and milestones.

In 2023, the Association recorded its highest number of state, civil society organizations, and private sector collaborations so much so that it was able to address some long-standing social and environmental issues. Largely funded by the Association's membership, these projects were even extended to directly support inner-city communities.

The event featured a video presentation of the year in review. Some of the key initiatives featured included the Saint Lucia Fire Service camp, The SLHTA Afterschool Program (which includes the Millet Primary School, Roseau Combind School, and the Faux A Chaux community), Junior Under Mentorship Programme (JUMP), the Citizens for Peace, and Prosperity (CPP), and New Leaf Wellness Program providing free counseling services to vulnerable. In closing President Collymore congratulated the Association's various members and TEF contributors for their stellar contributions to the sector in 2023, and expressed great excitement about the year ahead.

6.0 BRIEF REMARKS – MR. SANOVNIK DESTANG, PRESIDENT ELECT, CHTA

Mr. Destang began by conveying greetings to the quorum on behalf of the CHTA. Reminiscing, he informed that he first officially sat on the SLHTA's Tax and Finance Committee in 2018, thanks to Mr. Azeez's encouragement. Since then, he reported his years of involvement as being enjoyable, progressive and fulfilling; and feeling a profound sense of pride and gratitude to have been part of the 60th journey of the SLHTA, one of the best, preeminent regional private sector institutions. He also affirmed his humility, dedication and appreciation to serve as President Elect of the CHTA.

Reflecting on the day's theme, Mr. Destang noted the concurrent national concern about the recent spate of regional crime, lawlessness and violence; but applauded the SLHTA, through the TEF, for its innovation and successful responsiveness to this scourge via a series of national and community development projects, such as the Seeds of Justice Project at Wilton's Yard. Of equivalent concern to him, however, was the prevailing narrative that tourism is a form of modern-day slavery, and he highlighted the two years of no to little tourist arrivals (and even so now, during a period of economic recovery) when the significance of sustainable tourism development to our island's socioeconomic development should have been noted. Thus, he lobbied for further and strengthened stakeholder collaboration on efforts that ensure that the sector's benefits and opportunities are understood and pursued. For instance, he reminded/informed attendees about the Virtual Agricultural Clearing House (which remains a best practice regionally). He continued to state that whereas regional hospitality partners import vast amounts of produce, seafood, and other items, a local clearing house does not exist to produce these same items at lower costs and generally higher quality. Thus, he recommended that fair consideration be given to strengthening old and establishing new linkages with key partners to support sustainable job creation, our survival, and public relations/marketing. Such investments would directly benefit the tourism industry (and young entrepreneurs) yet they remain largely unexploited. Notwithstanding the challenges of climate change and prevailing attitudes towards the agricultural sector, he noted that these things have not stopped local and foreign investors from pouring into the industry. Thus, he advocated for initiatives to support information symmetry on such matters to cause young entrepreneurs to see and take advantage of these massive business opportunities. By doing so, there would also be less youth predisposed to engaging in criminal and violent activities due to lack of viable economic alternatives.

In furtherance, Mr. Destang informed that as the CHTA President Elect, he hopes to, among other things, launch the Association's first Linkages Taskforce which will focus on identifying, collating, educating and advocating stakeholders on these progressive opportunities and best practices with respect to linkages and sustainable business prospects for local and Caribbean entrepreneurs, especially in the areas of agriculture and manufacturing, arts and culture, culinary arts, the blue and orange economies, sports and much more. By doing so, he asserted that more people would truly benefit from the tourism dollar and this would contribute to transformative societal outcomes.

Concerning the reinvigoration and expansion of the SLHTA's Executive committee, He informed that the CHTA stood ready to support related efforts. By extension, he stressed the need for some issues to be urgently and strategically tackled as they can impact our industry's sustainable development. For instance, he lamented climate change and the global shortage of human resources as presenting real medium to long-term threats to our industry, sustainability, and survival. As such, he informed of some key CHTA responses including the:

1. CHTA People Development Committee, chaired by President Collymore, whose mandate it has been to develop partnerships with educational institutions such as the University of the West Indies and Caribbean Maritime Association; and
2. CHTA's Young Leaders Programme which is slated to enroll its second cohort of trainees later this year, a great example of a SLHTA and CHTA collaboration.

Concerning people development, Mr. Destang stressed the need for more people to be encouraged to join the industry (especially early on in life), that they be given appropriate and progressive training opportunities to build critical/transferable life skills, be allowed fair opportunities for promotion and foster entrepreneurship. In support, he alluded to two of the unofficial findings from the inaugural 2023 CHTA Employee Pulse Survey: hospitality workers yearn to benefit from many more supported training opportunities, and hospitality workers desire to move to other islands and work elsewhere for various reasons. Thus, he surmised the need for improved human resource development engagement and that attention be placed on the high cost and low ease of movement between our islands, and other determinants surrounding interregional travel, as these contribute to Caribbean Islands' inability to now reach pre-COVID-19 arrival rates, especially for non-UK and non-US dependent properties or businesses. At the CHTA level, they continue to advocate for the easing of self-imposed obstructions to regional travel. The Association also remains committed to assisting with advocacy efforts for its members and HTAs, and so robust data management systems comprising best practices, comparative information, and various laws will be collated to assist with various advocacy efforts.

Concerning technology and its critical role in regional development, the unofficial findings of the 2023 CHTA Performance Survey suggest that 2/3 of respondents make relatively little use of AI, 1/3 may use it in the future and 1/3 have zero intention to use AI. Thus, he indicated there remains a time sensitive opportunity to educate and expose members to AI which is arguably the most life changing technology seen since the internet. Case in point, in 2023, the CHTA organized the 2023 Caribbean Study Tour to allow its members to attend the Hospitality Technology and Finance Professionals High-Tech Trade Show in Toronto, Canada. This tradeshow is twinned with a Sales and Marketing Revenue Optimization Conference and participation for members was made possible due to CHTA's negotiation for a reduction of fees from USD\$2000.00 to USD\$399.00, and about 20 members attended. The show will be repeated in Charlotte and the same deal was secured for CHTA members. Such engagements ensure that the Caribbean Region remains the most desirable place in the world to visit, live, work, and do business. In closing, Mr. Destang reaffirmed his availability, passion and gratitude to serve the Association's membership and the Caribbean Region.

7.0 SPECIAL PRESENTATION – MR. PAUL COLLYMORE

Mr. Collymore introduced the SLHTA's intention to celebrate the exceptional contribution of a remarkable individual who has been described as leaving an indelible mark on the regional hospitality and tourism landscape: Mr. Winston Anderson, Chairman of the SLHTA's Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF). He went on to describe Mr. Anderson as being an insightful, experienced, dedicated, visionary, beacon of excellence and leadership, who has been instrumental in positioning Sandals as the Fund's largest contributor, and whose strategic guidance and unwavering support continue to sustainably and effectively grow the Fund for positive change and tangible impact. Notably, Mr. Anderson was defined as a strong advocate for human resource and community development, and shaping the decisions that impact the accessibility and connectivity of our destination as an active member of the SLTA Airlift Committee. Further, Mr. Anderson was described as having a demonstrated understanding of the value of sustainable tourism to uplift communities and improve livelihoods.

That said, through his longstanding advocacy and hands-on approach, Winston has championed initiatives that involve local residents, fostered entrepreneurship, and preserved our cultural heritage. Further, his insightful advice to the SLHTA has supported strategic policy development and (effective and responsive) decision making, and underscores his great commitment to advancing the best interests of our dynamic and evolving industry. For these reasons, Winston was described as being more than just a Chairman, but also as an on the ground community influencers and a true champion of tourism whose contributions have touched the lives of many communities and the industry as a whole. In celebration of his tenacity, dedication, leadership and achievements, the SLHTA provided Mr. Winston Anderson with a Crystal Award.

Mr. Anderson was deployed to work in Saint Vincent at the time of the AGM so he was unable to attend the meeting, however, he had strong representation from his team from Sandals who collected on his behalf. All the same, he addressed the quorum in a brief prerecorded video.

Mr. Anderson first expressed shock but appreciation for this recognition, and used the opportunity to sincerely thank his SLHTA colleagues for their support. By extension, he congratulated the SLHTA on its landmark anniversary celebration this year, and recommitted himself to working closely to ensure that our special destination/industry continues to thrive.

Winston continued on to state that he genuinely and thoroughly enjoyed doing his work, so being bestowed this award indicated to him that the work that he does is valued throughout the tourism sector. As such, he expressed great elation and humility in acceptance of the award, and indicated that this was effectively a collective recognition. By that, he explained that the award basically recognized all of those who shared his (and the Association's) vision, supported the cause, and provided valuable criticism. In conclusion, Mr. Anderson expressed thanks to Sandals' Executive Chairman, Adam Stewart, and the entire Sandals team as all that he was able to achieve was because of their friendship, support, commitment and encouragement.

8.0 BRIEF HISTORY OF SLHTA – MS. ERWIN LOUISY, 2ND VICE PRESIDENT, SLHTA

Ms. Louisy welcomed everyone, especially the Minister of Tourism, Dr. Hilaire, to the AGM; and informed that being a part of the Association's 60th milestone celebration meant that attendees would now get to enjoy a glimpse of the evolution of the SLHTA over the years.

This presentation was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation, and Ms. Louisy first explained that the SLHTA was originally formed as the Hotel Association in 1963, when our tourism industry was in its infancy stages and membership

comprised a handful of hotels and restaurants. Then, in 1988, as the sector and Association's membership grew, the name was changed to the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association. Thereafter, in 2019, as 2/3 of the membership comprised tourism service providers, the name was changed to the Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association. Today, the SLHTA has over 240 members.

Ms. Louisy then highlighted the Association's 21 past presidents including Leonard Headley, Ione Erlinger Ford, Alfred Taylor, Kendall Dunn, Jack Hudson, Harnish Watson, Bernd O. Ludwig, David Gorman, William "Bill" Stewart, Gregory Glace, Petter Kouly, William Schanefelt, Michael Bevan, Craig Barnard, Richard Michelin, Noel Cadasse, Anthony Bowen, Berthia Parle, Allen Chastanet, Colin Hunte, Karolin Troubetzkoy (Dual Presidency Stints), Sanovnik Destang and Paul Collymore (Sitting President). Holistically, she acknowledged the fact that the Association's efforts and accomplishments were simultaneously supported by the tireless effort of every past president, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (including Hilary Modeste, Rodinald Soomer, Mc Hale Andrew, and Roderick Cherry), team members, Directors and Committee Chairs.

Subsequently, Ms. Louisy informed that Honorary Members were individuals who added significant value to the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Saint Lucia and have also served on the SLHTA Board of Directors, events, and/or committees. She used the opportunity to identify notable SLHTA honorary members including Edward "Chef Harry" Joseph, Ilene Paul, Emmanuel Kingsley Poyotte, Lavern Spencer, Nina Compton Miller, Ronald "Boo" Hinkson, Teresa Hall, Veronica Smith, and Cheryl Skeete. Most importantly, she stated that critical success factors for the Association consisted of the current, exceptional SLHTA Secretariat team which is led by the solution-oriented Mr. Collymore, the longstanding and innovative Mrs. Troubetzkoy, and the conscientious, result-oriented, and dynamic Mr. Azeez. In summary, Ms. Louisy surmised that the SLHTA had done a lot over the years and remains dedicated to raising the bar, experiences, and standards within the tourism and hospitality industry.

Finally, Ms. Louisy spoke of the Association's gratitude for the contributions of some Tourism Pioneers which were people who helped build the Saint Lucian tourism product, accrued remarkable achievements, and propelled the Association forward. Randomly five of the island's Tourism Pioneers were recognized in her closing.

Firstly, Esmeralda Fletcher, Fletcher's Touring Service, was once the premier and largest bus touring company on the island. They, inter alia, provided transportation services to all the major cruise ships and local weddings, funerals, and tours. She grew a dependable, courteous, and knowledgeable staff complement, and passionately managed the business even after her husband's passing. Mrs. Fletcher passed away in 2023. The award was collected by Corey Devaux, Director for Transportation.

Secondly, Heidi St. Claire, career Tour Guide, was the brainchild of the now popular and iconic Land and Sea Tour which she eventually developed with her colleague, Gilland Adjodha. She worked with Carib Touring Limited for over a decade and was instrumental in ensuring that visitors had educational and enjoyable experiences. Heidi served as a tour guide for over 35 years, even after her retirement. In 2021, she was awarded the Employee of the Year Saint Lucia Par Excellence Award. The award was collected by Heidi.

Thirdly, Gilland Adjodha, alongside his friend, Heidi St. Claire, developed the Land and Sea Tour. He was a pioneer in the tourism, music, and entertainment industries and formed Carib Touring Limited in the early 70s with a colleague, Mr. Charlemagne. It was Saint Lucia's first destination management company and provided transportation services and site seeing tours to hotel guests, staff transportation for team members, and services to several other international tour operators. The company was the sole provider of transportation services for the Cunard ships and he eventually extended the company to include car and scooter rental services, excursions, and ventured into the airline business when he launched an airline carrier. Sadly, he is deceased but his sister collected on his behalf.

Fourth, Paul John is described as the architect of authenticity. He started his career in the tourism industry at 16 years of age and has worked in food and beverage departments for his entire working life, he overtime grew in professional responsibility and authority in restaurants locally and regionally. His invaluable accrued expertise and experience led him to establish the Naked Virgin, with his wife, where they hosted visitors in their space-constrained kitchen at their home in Marchand. It was a very popular venue (for locals and foreigners) and an eating-out experience. The award was collected by Paul.

Fifth, Lenox Dupal is deemed a multi-talented son of the soil who has rendered his services to the tourism industry for over 4 decades locally, regionally, and internationally. He started his career in the tourism industry as a Night Auditor and later became General manager at various resorts. He holds a Degree in Hotel and Business Management from a prestigious German university and even mastered the art of the German language. Lennox led Sandals Halcyon to be deemed one of

the leading hotels in the Sandals chain, with a high repeat guest factor and excellent services. He also gives his time freely to nurturing persons in the industry and is a member of the Saint Lucia Tourism Advisory Board. The award was collected by Lennox.

At this juncture, past SLHTA Presidents were also celebrated and awarded tokens of appreciation, more specifically to Gregory Glace (collected by his daughter, Debra Glace); Richard Micheline (in-person collection); Craig Bernard (collected by Yasmin); Anthony Bowen (collected by daughter, Makella, and wife, Candy); Collin Hunte (in-person collection); Berthia Parle (in-person collection); Sanovnik Destang (in-person collection); and Karolin Troubetzkoy (in-person collection). Some past presidents were not able to attend (Peter Kouly, Allen Chastanet, and Noel Cadasse) the AGM due to prior engagements, but were also recognized for their contribution and dedication over the years.

9.0 FEATURE ADDRESS - MRS. DONA REGIS-PROSPER, NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANIZATION

Mrs. Regis-Prosper greeted everyone, and expressed special greetings to the 'Saint Lucia's hospitality and tourism royalty' and Dr. Ernest Hilaire, Minister of Tourism and Acting Prime Minister. She expressed elation in being allowed to be a part of the SLHTA's 60th Anniversary AGM, and, on behalf of the CHTA, wished the SLHTA a successful meeting. In furtherance, she expressed Belated Happy Independence Anniversary greetings to Saint Lucia and congratulated Mr. Destang on his appointment to President-Elect of the CHTA.

Mrs. Regis-Prosper deemed the AGM's theme as being interesting and unusual, but relevant as the Caribbean region has a lot to offer the largely conflict-consumed world. Additionally, she shared that there are common threads (our history, music, food, festivals, cricket, languages and tourism industry) that connect us and promote our peaceful regional existence. Further, she stressed that these important assets must always be used strategically and collaboratively and monetized to optimize our tourism product. She also categorized tourism activity as a local catalyst for peace as it thrives on harmony and mutual understanding and promotes sustainability and growth for all.

In support, Regis-Prosper provided a sneak peak into some preliminary findings of the soon to be published 2023 CTO Performance Report:

- In 2023, an estimated 1.2 billion tourists travelled internationally, 33.9% more than in 2022. Also, in the Caribbean region, an estimated 32.2 million persons visited the Caribbean region, 4 million more than in 2022. Even now, during the ongoing COVID-19 recovery period, the Caribbean region outperformed many other regions and surpassed its pre pandemic arrival rates by 8%; and
- Research indicates that tourism accounts for over 7.6% of global GDP, however, within the next ten years tourism is expected to account for 12% of global GDP. With so many emerging global destinations, she urged everyone to do their part to ensure that the Caribbean region remains one of the strongest travel and tourism brands, and highlighted the need for all stakeholders to reimagine how tourism is positioned.

Thereafter, Mrs. Regis-Prosper applauded the hard work of the SLHTA and its positive contribution to the development of the Saint Lucia hospitality and tourism sector over the years. In observation of the Association's anniversary celebrations, she also advised members to pay attention to the level of involvement, responsiveness, dedication and awareness of the general public (as critical stakeholders) about tourism development and peaceful engagement. She also encouraged them to identify and fully exploit the benefits across sectors (locally and regionally), and to set the stage for future generations to build on this industry. Mrs. Regis-Prosper insisted that with intentional planning, a thriving tourism sector can strengthen the resilience of local economies, and proactively reduce crime.

Concerning commercial approaches, she inquired about the robustness of our marketing approaches, for example, whether we were doing proper storytelling, selling the right product or service, and pricing properly, and whether our decision-making and programming are based on timely and proper data collection outputs. Concerning job creation, Mrs. Regis-Prosper stressed the need for more entrepreneurs, especially youth entrepreneurs, and instantaneously congratulated the Government of Saint Lucia on the work done in the youth economy and community tourism development. These critical investments will empower our youth to capitalize on opportunities such as smart destinations, tourism linkages and promoting green initiatives. By extension, she encouraged stakeholders to embrace social inclusion for all, and recommended that revenue from tourism be reinvested into social programmes, education, health care and to generally enhance the quality of life of all citizens. Importantly, the CTO has led several initiatives towards sustainable tourism product development,

and as its members, the quorum was reminded to take advantage of their numerous training programmes and educational tools, including their Sustainable Tourism Conference in Grenada from April 22-28, 2024. In closing, Mrs. Regis-Prosper encouraged attendees to embrace and protect the Caribbean region's peaceful nature and see it as a sustainable strategy for prosperity for all citizens and global market share retention.

10.0 BRIEF REMARKS – DR. ERNEST HILAIRE, MINISTER FOR TOURISM, INVESTMENT, AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Dr. Hilaire greeted attendees and expressed elation at the opportunity to attend and contribute to the SLHTA's 60th Anniversary AGM. The Minister then stated that he was in full alignment with the views expressed by the prior presenters, and congratulated Mrs. Regis-Prosper and Mr. Destang on their recent appointments. He pledged his continued support to the work of the SLHTA, CTO and CHTA moving forward.

Dr. Hilaire then indicated his love for his job which allows him to objectively and impartially engage various stakeholder groupings; learn about their activities, progress and concerns; reflect on things and work with his team to devise the optimal response strategies moving forward. The aforementioned he deemed as important factors as the primary purpose of government is to improve the welfare of its citizens (especially the disadvantaged, vulnerable, dispossessed) by creating an enabling environment for prosperity. He compared that primary mandate to that of the private sector (whose primary consideration is profit generation and steady considerations for the environment, corporate social responsibility, climate change, et cetera) but surmised that the government must work and build key partnerships with the private sector to create macro level enabling environments. That said, he expressed gratitude for the fantastic relationship that he has been able to build with the SLHTA management and membership, over the past 2 years. He went on to explain that they competently advocate on behalf of their membership, and this often results in a series of agreements and disagreements over time. However, there is mutual agreement on both sides that this industry is critical for Saint Lucia's economic development, and plans, mechanisms and appropriate/available resources are always put in place to ensure its optimal function. For instance, Dr. Hilaire highlighted the SLHTA's critical involvement in the progressive iteration and development/review of the Tourism Development Act. The bill has now gone through the lower and upper house and, as a critical stakeholder, the Minister expressed full confidence and expectation that the SLHTA will continue to advocate for its necessary refinement. Importantly, he noted that the Act supports indigenous tourism investment enterprises so that every sector can benefit from key privileges as the major hotels did in the past. The minister then used the remaining time to speak about some key issues which he believed may have been of concern to attendees.

Concerning the crime situation, the Minister expressed appreciation for prevailing concern about it and lamented that despite his early years of youth advocacy on a National Commission on Indiscipline in Saint Lucia, in the 80s and several other engagements, that we are still now suffering from decades of missed opportunities to ensure that past problems were properly dealt with. He further acknowledged the complexity of criminal activity with its business-like model and how some of the regulations were put in place to control some of these fundamental societal deficiencies fueling crime and social deviance. That said, he acknowledged the need for strategic and collective decisive steps by key local and international stakeholders to deal with the problem of transnational crime in its totality. Whereas the government tactically implements hard responses through its law enforcement officers, Dr. Hilaire applauded the SLHTA for its fantastic soft responses to the problem of crime and violence in Saint Lucia. That said, he also encouraged additional support and initiative from civil society associations and affirmed that the government was doing its best to establish the supportive legislative and policy frameworks and provide the resources needed by the police to do their jobs.

Concerning the condition of the road infrastructure, Dr. Hilaire indicated that the recent weather patterns and operational deficiencies have, in part, affected some of the intended road works, but affirmed the Government's intention to make the 2024/2025 financial year as a year of profound infrastructural investment (including road way, community, youth and sports, health, judicial system and educational infrastructure) in the shortest possible time once the programme starts.

Concerning tourism-related investments, the next 2-3 years will be exciting years for the country as there will be some major investments including the Dreams Hotel at Canelles Bay, Dreams by Hyatt Resort at Cas-En-Bas beach, Cabot, Reduit Beach Development (where Starfish and Mystique Resorts will be replaced by three new hotels by the Atlas Group from Texas plus a beach park and an enhanced hiking trail with an observatory at the peak), Grand Hyatt in Choiseul, Black Bay lands Vieux Fort development by Rosewood property, Canelles, and Praslin Bay developments, Marriott at Pointe Seraphine (to include Marriott residences), upgrade of the St. James Club to a five-star couples resort by Secrets, etcetera and all of this will be complemented by various community tourism initiatives to create more experiences and opportunities for the visitor to spend more and allow more locals to grow in, appreciate, develop and benefit from tourism activity.

Concerning the annual forecast for 2024, in 2023, Saint Lucia started the year very well but, during the summer of 2023, we had a dip in numbers although numbers ultimately increased at year-end. This year, the Ministry of Tourism is working hard to ensure that what happened last summer does not happen in 2024, so much so that they have even increased daily flights to Saint Lucia. He noted anticipated accommodation deficits once Mystique and Starfish hotels are closed and then several rooms are off the market but noted the great opportunity to market other options and benefit more longstanding accommodation partners. Already, January 2024 figures show an 8% higher arrival rate than in 2019, and the marketing and promotion of Saint Lucia will be sustained to ensure that we keep our numbers up and bring in more visitors. To remedy last year's shortfall, the Government of Saint Lucia has planned and is marketing an exciting summer comprising the Jazz Festival in May, cricket in June, carnival in July, Emancipation Day observations in August, CPL Cricket in September and Creole Heritage Month in October. Concerning regional connectivity, Dr. Hilaire acknowledged its great reduction and reiterated his administration's commitment to supporting any public or private sector solutions to this problem.

Finally, concerning the Hewanorra International Airport Construction Project, the Minister indicated that the Government was now trying to do it properly by finalizing and costing the drawings, preparing the bill of quantities, and the next step is to go out to tender. Soon the Tourism Advisory Committee will make a related presentation to all stakeholders to update them on progress and plans to date as they do their best to speed up this process.

11.0 MOU SIGNING – SLHTA DUTY-FREE RETAIL SECTOR AND THE SLHTA TOURISM ENHANCEMENT FUND MR. NOORANI AZEEZ, SLHTA, AND SHERMA FLAVIUS, CHAIRPERSON, SLHTA DUTY-FREE SUBCOMMITTEE

The memorandum of understanding was signed between the SLHTA Duty-Free Retail Sector and the SLHTA Tourism Enhancement Fund. The duty-free retail sector has agreed to contribute to the TEF and the agreement comes into effect on October 1st, 2024. Signing on behalf of the parties were SLHTA's CEO and Deputy Chair of the TEF, Mr. Noorani Azeez, and Chairperson of the Duty-Free Committee, Ms. Sherma Flavius.

12.0 BRIEF REMARKS – MS. TRACEY-ANNE BARTHOLOMEW, MANAGING DIRECTOR, REPUBLIC BANK (EC) LIMITED, SLHTA SPONSOR

Mrs. Bartholomew expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the morning session on behalf of Republic Bank (EC)Limited, a proud sponsor of the SLHTA. She was informed of the Bank's sustained commitment to supporting the growth and realization of excellence of the association and the importance of events such as the annual general meeting which brought together the sector's positive and progressive minds.

Additionally, she highlighted that the Bank recognizes that successful businesses have sound financial practices so, across the region, they provide a suite of dynamic, diverse, customized, and innovative financial solutions to meet the needs and visions of the businesses within this dynamic sector. The recent addition of their convenient digitization services are testament to that and it continues to support the development of a modern, sustainable, resilient tourism sector in Saint Lucia which we can all be proud of.

In closing, Mrs. Bartholomew underscored that Republic Bank (EC) Limited was a leading indigenous regional bank that consistently supported key causes. During her delivery, an accompanying PowerPoint presentation provided pictorial illustrations of some of their key corporate social engagements including the Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association, Caribbean Premier League (as their title sponsor and official bank), Saint Lucia International Bill Fish Tournament, Saint Lucia Power to make a Difference (PMAD) initiative (as their official partner), and Saint Lucia National Conservation Fund.

13.0 SPECIAL PRESENTATION TO THE FEATURE SPEAKER – PRESIDENT PAUL COLLYMORE

On behalf of the SLHTA, a token of appreciation was delivered by Mr. Collymore (and joined by the other members of the head table) to the feature speaker, Mrs. Dona Regis-Prosper. On receipt, she expressed profound appreciation for the gesture.

14.0 VOTE OF THANKS - MR. JOHN MATHURIN, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT, SLHTA

Mr. Mathurin began his address by expressing profound gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the board and directly influence the success of the SLHTA over the last eight (8) years. Additionally, he expressed appreciation for the efforts of the SLHTA's current and past executives, core staff, and members of the various voluntary committees. Also, he congratulated

the CHTA President-Elect, Mr. Destang, and thanked him for his commitment to local and regional hospitality and tourism development; and the CTO President and CEO, of the CTO, Mrs. Prosper, for her support to the Association over the years and delivery of the feature address. Thereafter, he reiterated the need for governmental support and collaboration and thanked the Government of Saint Lucia for its support over the years, especially the Minister for Tourism, Dr. Ernest Hilaire. Critically, he expressed gratitude for the support of various stakeholders and partners within the tourism economy, enabling an environment where tourism-dependent people thrive.

In summary, he congratulated SLHTA on its milestone observation, reiterated his transitioning to personal life but willingness to support where possible, and wished the incoming executive team a successful tenure where every saint Lucian can participate in the luxuries and bounties of the tourism and hospitality sector.

15.0 END OF THE OPEN SESSION

With that, the Open Session concluded at 1:15 pm and effectively marked the opening of the Saint Lucia Manufacturers Trade Show (of about 20 products and services) and the lunch break.

CLOSED SESSION

LIST OF HEAD TABLE DELEGATES

Mr. Noorani Azeez, CEO, SLHTA
Mr. Paul Collymore, SLHTA President
Mr. John Mathurin, 1st Vice President
Ms. Erwin Louisy, 2nd Vice President
Mrs. Karolin Troubetzkoy, Immediate Past President
Mr. Deale Lee, Legal Representative
Ms. Cathy Bennett, Auditing Rep from PKF Professional Services

1.0 CALL TO ORDER, SENATOR NOORANI AZEEZ

The closed session was called to order by Mr. Collymore at 2:50 pm.

2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF (57TH) AGM 2023

Mr. Collymore put forth the motion for the approval of the minutes of the 57th AGM. A motion to adopt the minutes was moved and seconded by Mr. Kerris Smith. President Collymore asked whether there were any questions coming out of the minutes from the 57th AGM. No questions were raised.

3.0 TABLING OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2020/2021 AND 2021/2022

Ms. Cathy Bennett, a representative from PKF Professional Services Inc., presented the independent auditors report on the audited financial statements for the SLHTA Inc. She focused/presented on the Statement of Financial Position for the year ended September 30, 2021 and 2022; and Statement of Income and Expenditures, the Statement of Changes in Members' Deficit and the Cash Flows Statement for the year ended, and notes to the financial statement including the summary of significant accounting policies.

The PKF Professional Services Inc. team concluded that the Association's financial statements present fairly in all material respects and its financial position, in all respects, as of September 30, 2021, and 2022, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year just ended, in accordance with international, financial reporting standards for small and medium-sized entities.

Emphasis of Matter

The financial statements have been prepared on a very constant basis which suggests that the Association will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Without qualifying our opinion, we draw your attention to Note 2B to the financial statements with respect to going concern matters raised. Note 2B read as follows:

1. In 2020, the Association incurred a net loss of XCD\$10,502.00 and has an accumulated deficit of XCD\$334,852.00;

2. In 2021, the Association incurred a net loss of XCD\$18,987.00 and had an accumulated deficit of XCD\$324,300.00; and
3. These matters raise significant doubt about the Association's ability to continue at a growing concern, independent of its attainment of profitability and support from its members and other committed lines of credit.

Basic of Opinion:

Ms. Bennett in conclusion indicated the following:

"The audit was conducted in accordance with international standards unaudited. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's report for the audit of the financial statement section of the report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board For Accountants Ethics, for professional accountants for professional accountants together with the professional requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements of the SLHTA, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESDA Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion."

President Collymore then introduced the individuals sitting at the head table (comprising the SLHTA's Executive Committee; the Association's Legal Representative, Mr. Deale Lee; and CTA Solutions Inc.'s Representative, Mr. Robert Emmanus, responsible for completing the association's financials on a monthly basis); and welcomed participants to lodge related queries and observations.

Question 1 (Ms. Agnes Francis, SLHTA Member, Accela Marketing Saint Lucia) – The 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 financial statements were presented. What is the status of the 2022/2023 financial statements?

Response (Mr. Emmanus) – We presented the available/completed audited financial statements, and are currently auditing the 2022/2023 financial statements, so they were not presented today.

Question 2 (Ms. Francis) – The Auditor deemed the SLHTA as probably not viable. Do you have concerns about this because we all want the Association to remain viable?

Response (Mr. Azeez) – 2020 was not the best year for the Association financially. The demands on the operations of the organization continue to grow annually, despite the prevailing, significant resource constraints. Membership dues were identified as a key revenue stream yet it has not increased over a number of years as the Association acknowledges the increased operational costs being absorbed by its members in recent years. Additionally, some old revenue streams have dried up (including the ball, and traditional training and development initiatives), which are now being considered for reintroduction. As the Association is simultaneously monitoring its spending habits, the Board is now exploring the option of owning its own property to reduce rental expenses and possibly attract additional revenue streams. Further, the net portfolio of TEF (between XCD\$3.7 and \$3.8 million) is currently stored on a non-interest-bearing facility and the Board is exploring an improved investment strategy for those funds. All the ideas/strategies are being eagerly explored to reduce the prevailing deficit, especially as the Board is not keen on the dependency, they developed on the TEF post-COVID-19 pandemic.

Response (Mr. Destang) – During his tenure on the TEF Board, TEF fund reinvestment options had also been discussed, and a somewhat promising proposal was even received from at least one financial institution. Further, the average balance on that account, over the years, if reinvested before, may have easily eliminated the current deficit, since those funds were not reinvested into scholarship programs, for instance. TEF Board was encouraged to decisively advance related efforts to reap the relevant rewards, hopefully before or by the next AGM.

Response (Mr. Collymore) – Some other regional HTA own assets and some now no longer indebted to any bank. Whereas, we have to date been facilitated by a good landlord, it is time that the Association seriously considers acquiring its property. Even a partial reinvestment of TEF funds over the past decade would have secured us some good returns, so action is necessary now. Concerning value creation and advocacy for the Association's membership, the last two years have been the most challenging for the Association as the rate of recovery has not been as was hoped. Internally, we have attempted to minimize several expenses, including utilities, and currently the only exempted area is our human resources as the SLHTA's core staff membership is critical to our survival.

Response (Mr. Azeez) – Additionally on the matter of membership dues, the Board wants to increase membership dues but is now attempting to properly rationalize the changes across the various membership categories to create a "more level

playing field". Once finalized, the revised schedule will be circulated for feedback.

Question 3 (Mr. Sean Devaux, Director) – Do we have an idea as to when the audited 2022/2023 financial statements will be available to the Board and possibly Association membership? Can we move with a sense of urgency to have the 2022/2023 audit completed at the soonest and have the derivative formal report appropriately circulated well in advance of the next AGM?

Response (Mr. Azeez) – The requested report will be made available to the SLHTA Board for review within four weeks.

Additionally, he informed that many members requested debt forgiveness which was considered on a case-by-case basis during the recovery period. Whereas the accommodation sector seems to be recovering relatively well, smaller properties are still struggling. Historically, the SLHTA has not pressured members to honor the bye laws prescriptions of due payment by a certain time and this has also affected the Association's monthly operational expenses.

4.0 LEGALITIES - SENATOR NORANI AZEEZ

All Board members were thanked for their tenure and service, and those who were up for election to the SLHTA Board were asked to excuse themselves from the head table.

At that point, Mr. Azeez indicated that the appointment of directors to the SLHTA Board have, for years now, been alternated. Every other year a new batch of elections are held, so this year, the Executive Committee positions are up for election and next year the rest of the Board (non-Executive Committee positions) will become open for nominations. Some months ago, the Business Development Officer, under the guidance and instruction of the SLHTA Nominating Committee (comprising Winston Anderson, Corey Devaux, and Wadi Zakhour) oversaw the nomination process. The process yielded nominations for the post of President and Vice President which represents the revised, streamlined SLHTA executive structure.

For the position of President, Mr. Paul Collymore was nominated and seconded by members. No further nominations were offered for this post during the AGM. So, a motion was moved for the closure of that nomination category, and which was supported by Mrs. Berthia Parle and seconded by Mr. Destang. Thus, Mr. Collymore was identified as the SLHTA's President for the next two years.

For the position of Vice President, three nominations were received but two of the nominees indicated that they were no longer able to serve in said position. Ms. Erwin Louisy vied for the post unopposed as no further nominations were offered for this post during the AGM. So, a motion was moved for the closure of nomination for that category and this was supported by Ms. Maria Thom, Managing Director Spice Travel Ltd, and seconded by Mr. Kirk Elliot, SLHTA Director. Consequently, Ms. Louisy was acknowledged as the SLHTA's Vice President for the next two years.

The incoming SLHTA Presidents were then welcomed to take their seats at the head table, and as there was no transition in the presidency, Mrs. Karolin Troubetzkoy was also invited to return to the head table as she will remain as the Immediate Past President of the SLHTA. The incoming Executive Committee was then officially introduced to quorum.

REMARKS FROM PRESIDENT COLLYMORE

Mr. Collymore thanked the CEO and all members for their vote of confidence, and committed his sustained integrity, commitment, and tenacity as President of the SLHTA. He also stated some preliminary thoughts:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the local sector but as the recovery phase has begun, he believes that an evaluation of the Association's performance is timely. Similar to the CHTA, he asserted that frank membership feedback will support the move towards a more robust, results-based, client driven, proactive process and outcome improvement plan for Association. With the support of the Secretariat, he explained that a survey tool can be finalized and dispatched, and the feedback received could be collated and analyzed to strengthen advocacy, improve membership experiences, and bolster Association outcomes. The survey can, inter alia, be designed to ascertain the membership's beliefs concerning the prospect of all SLHTA members being expected to also join the CHTA. Personally, he believed that this would be an excellent move for the SLHTA as the key/hierarchy to our advocacy is to work with CHTA, which has contributed to positive changes in Saint Lucia and outcomes for Saint Lucians, especially during the pandemic;

2. He proposed a consultation with some key investors to ascertain (qualitatively and quantitatively) areas for improvement in membership attraction and retention, and other member related businesses;

3. He stressed the need for an even closer working relationship with the CHTA which is also in the process of collating, analyzing and providing critical, meta data on its member countries to support improved programming, stakeholder engagement and results-based management;

4. He informed that the CEO recently attended a navigation training course with the CTO in Barbados, and described it as a good opportunity to engage with international airline experts and inform them about how we have now evolved in our engagement with airline executives since the pandemic.

REMARKS FROM VICE PRESIDENT ERWIN LOUISY

Ms. Louisy began by thanking her colleagues for giving her another opportunity to serve on the SLHTA executive and committed to doing her best while in office. She then listed the following preliminary thoughts:

1. Relative to the prevailing industry staff shortfalls and other service delivery concerns, Ms. Louisy asserted that the SLHTA needed to focus on employee training and human resource development. These staff will be required to manage and serve at the existing and newly constructed hotels, and the other resorts currently earmarked for construction. By extension, she informed that a similar facility existed in Martinique and that their learners (hospitality workers) received technical training and sound orientation topics including culture and history;

2. She reflected on the timeliness and sentimentality of the earlier gesture of recognizing five pioneers of the hospitality industry and deemed it an essential initiative. Ms. Louisy recommended the establishment of a system and supporting processes to identify the contributions of other key players in the sector; and

3. She strongly endorsed the continuous development of the places where the most vulnerable people reside and congregate as a means of social development in disadvantaged communities and spaces.

5.0 SPONSOR PRESENTATION - CO-FOUNDER, FUN TO SEE ISLAND AND SPONSOR, SLHTA AGM – MIKE STEINBERG

Mr. Steinberg congratulated the incoming executive board and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to attend the gathering and address the quorum.

Mike stated that he first visited Saint Lucia in 2019, and had to endure the long, winding drive from Hewanorra Airport to Sandals Grande Saint Lucia. He immediately realized that a north to south boat transfer would be a lucrative transportation substitute for tourists and locals alike. As such, Fun to See Island was then established as an all-service, all-inclusive, tour/airport transfer service that handles everything from the airport to resort and resort back to airport for guests. He now partners with five main local taxi companies that handle the ground transportation, and at least two taxi drivers benefit from each one-way trip (from the airport to Port Vieux Fort then from another designated departure spot along the West Coast route to their accommodation). The company also works with some independent operators. Guests are transported via a 47ft catamaran and the transfer lasts for about 1.5 to 2 hours long and provides some complimentary beverages and light snacks. The knowledgeable, tight-knit and warm Fun to See Island staff all underwent official hospitality training with the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC) and for 3 years now they have secured a 99% ranking on Tripadvisor.

Fun to See Island pays commission for referrals and is currently open to additional partnerships with relevant tourism stakeholders including all hotels, restaurants, and Airbnb. Members of the audience were also encouraged to spread the word about the experience and to engage the team if interested in the aforementioned collaborations.

6.0 OPEN MIC SEGMENT - SENATOR NOORANI AZEEZ

Mr. Azeez used this opportunity to also extend a hearty thank you to Mr. John Mathurin (Former Vice President) for his devotion and guidance over the years. The tenured Mr. John was now demitting office, after having moved up the ranks within the Association, to pursue personal business endeavors.

Notably, a panel discussion was initially slated as the next agenda item, to allow members to share their thoughts and discuss suggestions about the ideal future for the SLHTA, but that session was replaced with an open mic segment to allow participants to candidly raise any of their concerns and or recommendations (that were not already captured in the preceding discussions), and highlight best practices for continuation.

Contribution 1 (Matthew Anderson, Co-owner of the Enchanted Kettle Tea Company) – The Wellness Industry is the biggest growing industry internationally. Saint Lucia also has a high global ranking for non-communicable diseases which can all safely be healed or treated with natural remedies. Thus, the Company officially started with 26 teas at Cap Maison in 2016 in response to market demand for locally made teas. That said, Mr. Anderson indicated the Company's intentions to introduce new wellness beverages including ice teas, cocktails, and mocktails, and expressed excitement about being the newest member of the SLHTA family.

Contribution 2 (Karolin Troubetzkoy) – In full alignment with Dr. Hilaire's prior contributions, Mrs. Troubetzkoy reiterated the need for a dependable workforce, and for an immediate and conclusive discussion on how a hospitality training school can be established locally to avoid properties from competing for the same small pool of trained hospitality workers.

By extension, she highlighted that the SLHTA was well poised and positioned to lead critical discussions on destination stewardship, tourism retreats, renewable energy sources, sustainability and resilience building (for our future generations) and the ongoing water and waste management crises. Mrs. Troubetzkoy also referred to Global Ports Holdings, the agency slated to undertake various port development projects locally, as being a critical partner in the positive development of the sector as several of the SLHTA's members rely heavily on a good cruise industry. More specifically, she lamented the over 20 years of user conflicts along the west coast beaches (from Rodney to Sugar Beach Resorts) and stressed the need to resolve it and create a hospitable environment for all. She suggested that regulations and schedules for vendors and operators may also contribute to efficiency, and for the incorporation of community tourism to take the pressure off the precious marine resources. Thereafter, Mrs. Troubetzkoy said that membership development was critical, and that consideration should be given to liaising with other regional hotel and tourism associations to ascertain and compare their fee structures, and to use that information (with support from the CHTA) to make necessary changes locally.

Finally, Mrs. Troubetzkoy discussed the Marine Health Alliance (MHA) and its relevance as climate change is a growing vulnerability for the Caribbean Region. Whereas, as a destination we focus on marketing, she insisted that Saint Lucia must also focus on conserving its biodiversity. As a marine hub, the sector partners were advised to pay attention to and mitigate adequately to protect marine resources including coral reefs, recreational water quality, and water pollution (especially the plastic waste problem). Mrs. Troubetzkoy informed that despite some successful collaborations with key agencies the COVID-19 pandemic affected some of the Alliance's plans. The National Conservation Fund created the Marine Health Alliance to allow visitors and other individuals concerned about our marine biodiversity and health to make monetary contributions to its upkeep. They also have a website and are establishing an online payment system with Republic Bank. The Alliance got seed funding from the TEF which supported key endeavors and additional opportunities for corporate sponsorship are being explored now. She did, however, state that additional sensitization of the efforts is important to attract increased contributions and general stakeholder awareness. To wrap up, she informed the broader quorum that the SLUNCF is a charity that raises funds and has calls for proposals for any projects with related mandates (i.e., marine health and biodiversity).

Contribution (Mr. John) – Mr. John encouraged the quorum to pay close attention to the true cost of tourism on the local geographical and economic landscape as a result of the increasing (internal and external) pressures to create new experiences to attract more tourists and allow more Saint Lucians to participate in the tourism sector. He continued to say that although our geography is fixed, the ecosystem is growing, but there has been greater global demand on our physical infrastructure. For instance, despite the major investment in Saint Lucia's water systems over the years, Saint Lucia has not proportionately eliminated some decade-old problems. He thus stressed the need for a proper evaluation of the cost of tourism on people and the environment, and to work towards remedying it accordingly. Key discussions and recommended considerations include matters such as optimal national tourism capacity and requirements.

Contribution (Mr. Sean Devaux) – Mr. Devaux noted that, for sustainable national development, an improved culture of continuation must be adopted in Saint Lucia, instead of the current pattern of four-year projects which start and stop as administrations change, and terms of engagements are assessed and renegotiated. He continued that as a country/destination, we miss out on a lot of quality infrastructural and social development opportunities. In sum, he stressed that the SLHTA can probably focus on bringing key sector partners together to discuss key projects which should not come to a dead halt because of a change in administration, and Las Palmas was highlighted as having successfully run some 20-plus year long projects that support their sustainability goals.

Response (Mr. Azeez) – Mr. Azeez indicated that Mr. Dominic Fedee, former Minister of Tourism, during his tenure in office, advocated for and established the Saint Lucia Tourism Advisory Committee to foster collaboration and permit timely interaction between key tourism sector (private and public sector agency) representatives. The then Committee comprised over 40 diverse sector officials and the SLHTA was represented by the President, Mr. Collymore. Thereafter, the current MoT found value in that arrangement and converted the body to a council with its independent operating budget, and the SLHTA remains

a member of that committee. That said, he asserted that the SLHTA must continue to represent well and that equally the Association's key stakeholders and members must diligently track and share their critical observations, ideas, and concerns to serve as speaking notes to support the President's continued advocacy. Concerning the idea of the government adopting a long-term approach to, particularly infrastructural project management, Mr. Azeez applauded that recommendation. However, he highlighted the need for a robust system of sensitization of, collaboration from, and change management agreements between technocrats across the board, if this is to be a success. As politicians traditionally think in these stopgap measures relative to their private sector counterparts who practice more medium to long-term planning and solutions, the SLHTA will have to advocate along those lines, and the Tourism Advisory Committee soon to be Tourism Advisory Council is a good point of contact for this advocacy.

Contribution (Mr. Elliot) – He expressed greetings to all attendees, and sincerest congratulations to and confidence in the incoming SLHTA Executive Committee. He referred to Saint Lucia as being at a pivotal point in tourism development and the critical role of the SLHTA in carrying key efforts forward. He then highlighted the following:

- 1. Cost of Tourism:** He explained that based on his extensive experience in community work he was, last year, offered a scholarship by Cornell University to pursue qualifications in Destination Tourism Management. The eight-week-long and expansive training program introduced several new ideas to the enrollees, including the concept of the Burden of Tourism which includes the hidden costs of tourism. He stated that countries may never pay attention to these costs but they have the potential to derail us. For instance, he highlighted that our water supply must be carefully monitored as, on average, a visitor uses approximately eight times the amount of water typically used by the locals. He asserted that Saint Lucia must make adequate provisions for this and other critical matters and that the SLHTA is ideally poised to table such matters;
- 2. Community Tourism:** He highlighted that Saint Lucia offers a range of accommodation and experience options, and the authenticity of every experience makes a difference. It is imperative that some innovative and sustainable practices, as practiced by the Jade Mountain team, for instance, be replicated in other establishments; and
- 3. Caring Entrepreneurship:** Whereas communities may lack the ability and full resources to create successful tourism businesses, he suggested that the established sector partners (like the SLHTA) should/can partner with various communities in a caring way. By doing so, visitor experiences will be enhanced, communities will benefit, businesses can expand and everyone will win.

Contribution (Mr. Martin James, ECCO Representative) - Mr. James began by congratulating SLHTA on a well-implemented AGM. He then applauded the team for their community work (especially in vulnerable communities) which help manage the national crime situation that adversely affects the tourism sector. Concerning his agency, Mr. James highlighted the subliminal aspect of music and its effect on the county and our culture and stressed that stakeholders (especially within the tourism sector) must be vigilant concerning this and advocate where necessary for improved social outcomes. In sum, he indicated that the ECCO team remains keenly excited to work with the SLHTA and support positive youth and national development efforts.

Mr. Collymore thanked everyone for their contributions and called the open mic session to an end.

7.0 CLOSING REMARKS, SLHTA PRESIDENT

Mr. Collymore indicated that most of the day's discussions tie into and will shape the tourism master plan which, inter alia, considers our capacity, tourism infrastructure and services, training and development. The stakeholder survey instrument will also be finalized and reflect some of the aforesaid deliberations, and the findings will be used to update or augment what is already there

He then thanked everyone for attending and participating; and specially expressed profound gratitude for the hardworking team at the SLHTA. The team was in succession asked to join him at the front of the room, and they were each handed tokens of appreciation by the President, Immediate Past President and Vice President. The CEO was also given a token of appreciation. In conclusion, Mr. Collymore expressed appreciation for the CPA Solutions team members, Association's legal representatives and PKF staff.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT OF AGM

Mr. Collymore moved to adjourn the SLHTA's 60th Annual General Meeting at 4:25 pm, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Corey Devaux.



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Cultivating a Culture of Sustainability: Encouraging a Shift in Mindset Among SLHTA Members, Partners, and Communities Toward Embracing a Sustainable Future in Tourism



Over the past year, the SLHTA has intensified efforts to embed sustainability across all aspects of the island's tourism sector, from environmental conservation and responsible resource management to community engagement and sustainable economic development. Through collaborative initiatives, targeted education, and the promotion of best practices, the SLHTA is creating an enduring shift in mindset that recognizes sustainability as central to tourism success.

Leadership Through Member Initiatives

SLHTA members have increasingly demonstrated their commitment to sustainability, providing powerful examples for peers and partners alike. Anse Chastanet and Jade Mountain Resorts, for example, have set new benchmarks in environmental management. Both properties have pioneered innovative water conservation systems, eliminating millions of gallons of municipal water use annually through comprehensive rainwater harvesting. Their proactive steps to eliminate single-use plastics by joining the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative further underscore their dedication to environmental stewardship.

Similarly, Barefoot Holidays has seamlessly integrated sustainability into its destination management services, showcasing how luxury experiences and sustainability can coexist harmoniously. The company's approach not only enhances visitor satisfaction but also ensures minimal environmental impact,

As the global tourism industry increasingly recognizes the critical importance of sustainability, the Saint Lucia Hospitality & Tourism Association (SLHTA) continues to lead the way in cultivating a meaningful culture of sustainability among its members, partners, and surrounding communities. Embracing sustainable practices is no longer just an ethical choice but a strategic imperative for long-term growth and resilience.



(Left to right) SLHTA Communications Officer Joshua Saint Aimee, Tourism Enhancement Fund Programme Manager Donette Ismael, SLUNCF CEO Craig Henry and SLUNCF Chair Karolin Troubetzkoy.

thus exemplifying sustainable tourism management.

Kirk Elliott Photography also represents the profound impact that individual entrepreneurs can have on sustainability. Through responsible tourism workshops and authentic cultural experiences, Elliott emphasizes the significance of cultural preservation, environmental responsibility, and sustainable storytelling in tourism.

Collaborative Actions and Strategic Partnerships

Recognizing the transformative power of collaboration, the SLHTA continues to foster strategic partnerships designed to amplify sustainability efforts. The establishment of the Marine Health Alliance, in collaboration with the Saint Lucia National Conservation Fund (SLUNCF), demonstrates the effectiveness of collective action in protecting Saint Lucia's marine biodiversity and ecosystems. Supported by the Tourism Enhancement Fund, this initiative encourages communities and tourism stakeholders to actively participate in marine conservation, reflecting

the SLHTA's commitment to holistic environmental stewardship.

Educational Outreach and Capacity Building

Sustaining a cultural shift towards sustainability requires ongoing education and capacity building. Throughout the past year, the SLHTA has prioritized educational initiatives, organizing seminars, workshops, and conferences designed to equip members with practical tools for implementing sustainable practices. Platforms such as the Global Tourism Insights Conference have provided invaluable opportunities for knowledge exchange and networking, significantly enhancing members' capacity to adopt and sustain environmental and social governance (ESG) standards.

Recognizing member accomplishments remains essential to driving continued progress. Celebrating milestones such as Sandals Regency La Toc Golf Resort's longstanding EarthCheck certification helps motivate other organizations to prioritize and excel in sustainability.

Looking Forward: Sustaining Momentum

To further embed sustainability into Saint Lucia's tourism DNA, SLHTA members and partners are encouraged to deepen their commitment through the following recommendations:

- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Foster deeper collaboration among members to exchange sustainable practices and innovations continuously.
- **Recognition Programs:** Establish robust recognition frameworks that publicly reward outstanding sustainability achievements.
- **Community-Based Initiatives:** Strengthen the focus on community-based tourism projects, ensuring broad participation and equitable benefits.
- **Youth Engagement:** Increase investment in youth programs aimed at fostering the next generation of sustainability-minded tourism professionals.
- **Sustainable Supply Chains:** Promote greater use of local, sustainably produced goods and services within the tourism industry, thereby reinforcing the local economy and minimizing environmental impacts.

As we reflect on our achievements and plan for the future, the journey toward sustainability is ongoing. However, the commitment and enthusiasm demonstrated by SLHTA members, partners, and communities position Saint Lucia to continue leading by example, showcasing that a sustainable tourism future is not only achievable but also beneficial for all stakeholders involved.

OUR ROLE IN AN ECO-CONSCIOUS WORLD



Team members from SLHTA member companies Sea Spray Cruises and the Landings Resort & Spa participate in a beach clean up activity.

Sustainable tourism has emerged as a key pillar of economic and environmental stability, particularly in small island developing states (SIDS) such as Saint Lucia. As tourism remains a primary driver of economic activity, it is imperative that policies promoting sustainability are integrated into national and regional strategies. The Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association (SLHTA) has positioned itself as a leading advocate for legislative initiatives that foster environmentally responsible and socially inclusive tourism practices.

Advocacy for Sustainable Tourism Policies

The SLHTA plays a crucial role in influencing government policies to ensure that sustainable tourism principles are embedded in national legislation. Through strategic partnerships with governmental bodies, environmental agencies, and international organizations, the SLHTA champions regulations that balance economic growth with ecological preservation. These advocacy efforts include lobbying for policies that promote resource

efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable land use, and community engagement in tourism.

Environmental Stewardship and Green Practices

One of the key focus areas of the SLHTA's advocacy is environmental stewardship. The organization actively promotes policies that encourage the hospitality sector to adopt green practices, such as:

- **Renewable Energy Initiatives:** Supporting incentives for hotels and resorts to invest in solar, wind, and other renewable energy sources.
- **Waste Management and Recycling:** Advocating for regulations that reduce single-use plastics, implement comprehensive recycling programs, and promote composting in the tourism sector.
- **Water Conservation Measures:** Encouraging legislative frameworks that mandate water-efficient fixtures and rainwater harvesting systems in tourism facilities.

By endorsing these measures, the SLHTA ensures that the tourism sector operates with a reduced environmental

footprint while maintaining high standards of service and visitor experience.

Strengthening Climate Resilience

The Caribbean is highly vulnerable to climate change, making resilience-building a key advocacy area for the SLHTA. Legislative support for climate adaptation strategies, such as coastal protection programs and disaster risk management planning, is essential for the long-term sustainability of the tourism sector. The SLHTA collaborates with stakeholders to push for policies that strengthen climate resilience, ensuring that the industry remains robust against the increasing threats posed by hurricanes, rising sea levels, and changing weather patterns.

Promoting Community-Based Tourism and Social Responsibility

Sustainable tourism is not only about environmental conservation but also about fostering social inclusion and equitable economic benefits. The SLHTA advocates for policies that empower local communities by integrating them into the tourism value chain. This includes:

- **Local Sourcing and Supply Chain Integration:** Encouraging legislative incentives for hotels and restaurants to procure goods and services from local farmers, artisans, and small businesses.
- **Employment and Workforce Development:** Promoting policies that prioritize the training and certification of local talent, ensuring that residents

benefit from employment opportunities in the tourism sector.

- **Cultural Heritage Protection:** Supporting initiatives that safeguard Saint Lucia's cultural and historical sites, ensuring that tourism development does not compromise the island's unique identity.

Engaging in Regional and Global Sustainability Frameworks

Beyond national advocacy, the SLHTA actively participates in regional and international discussions on sustainable tourism. The association collaborates with the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, and other global entities to align Saint Lucia's tourism policies with international sustainability standards, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) principles.

As the tourism industry continues to evolve, the SLHTA's advocacy remains critical in ensuring that sustainable tourism is at the heart of legislative decision-making. By championing policies that promote environmental protection, climate resilience, social equity, and economic sustainability, the SLHTA not only safeguards Saint Lucia's natural beauty and cultural heritage but also secures a thriving tourism industry for future generations. The organization's ongoing commitment to policy advocacy serves as a model for other destinations seeking to balance growth with sustainability in an increasingly eco-conscious world.



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Harnessing the Potential of Tourism: Key Developmental Issues for Saint Lucia

Saint Lucia continues to strengthen its position as a premier Caribbean destination, having set a new visitor arrival record last year. As we look forward to another year of growth, it is imperative that we address key developmental challenges to ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of our tourism industry. While increasing arrivals signal economic opportunities, strategic interventions are necessary to maximize the benefits of tourism for all stakeholders.

A strong legislative framework is critical to regulating and guiding the growth of the tourism sector. Policymakers must focus on enacting and enforcing regulations that:

- **Ensure Sustainable Development:** Updated environmental and zoning laws can mitigate the negative impact of tourism-related expansion on fragile ecosystems, ensuring a balance between economic development and conservation.
- **Strengthen Labour Laws:** Protecting the rights of tourism industry workers and improving employment conditions will help attract and retain skilled professionals.
- **Enhance Taxation Policies:** A well-structured taxation system can ensure that tourism revenues contribute directly to national development, including infrastructure improvements and social programs.
- **Improve Business Facilitation:** Streamlining investment regulations will attract foreign direct investment (FDI) while ensuring that local businesses and entrepreneurs remain competitive in the industry.

Saint Lucia's ability to accommodate increasing tourist arrivals hinges on modern and efficient infrastructure. Priority areas include:

- **Transportation Networks:** Upgrading roadways, expanding public transportation options, and improving air and sea ports will enhance accessibility for visitors.
- **Waste Management:** With more visitors comes increased waste generation. Investing in recycling initiatives and sustainable waste disposal methods will protect the environment.
- **Water and Energy Security:** Ensuring a reliable supply of clean water and promoting renewable energy

sources are crucial for sustaining the tourism sector and local communities alike.

- **Digital Connectivity:** High-speed internet and digital payment systems must be expanded to cater to the growing demand for seamless travel experiences.

The human capital behind the tourism sector must be continuously developed to meet international standards. Key strategies include:

- **Vocational Training and Certification:** Expanding hospitality and tourism training programs will equip Saint Lucians with the skills needed to provide world-class service.
- **Public-Private Partnerships in Education:** Collaborations between government, academic institutions, and industry stakeholders can ensure training programs align with industry needs.
- **Capacity Building in Emerging Niches:** Training individuals in areas such as eco-tourism, wellness tourism, and digital tourism services can create new opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship.

To remain competitive, Saint Lucia must diversify its tourism offerings beyond traditional sun, sand, and sea experiences. Potential areas for growth include:

- **Cultural and Heritage Tourism:** Investing in historical preservation and promoting Saint Lucia's rich cultural heritage can attract new visitor segments.
- **Agro-Tourism Linkages:** Strengthening the connection between tourism and local agriculture will benefit local farmers while offering visitors authentic culinary experiences.
- **Eco and Sustainable Tourism:** Encouraging investment in eco-friendly accommodations and nature-based attractions will appeal to environmentally conscious travelers.
- **Sports and Wellness Tourism:** Developing sports tourism infrastructure and wellness retreats will help position Saint Lucia as a destination for health-conscious travelers.

A safe destination is fundamental to tourism success. Saint Lucia must invest in:

- **Community-Based Policing and**



Guests enjoy the I-Tal experience at The BodyHoliday.

Surveillance: Strengthening police presence in key tourism areas and leveraging technology, such as CCTV monitoring, can enhance visitor safety.

- **Public Education on Safety:** Educating both locals and visitors on best practices for safety and security will contribute to a safer environment.
- **Collaboration Between Security Forces and the Private Sector:** A joint approach between law enforcement and tourism businesses will help mitigate security risks and build confidence among travelers.

As a small island developing state, Saint Lucia faces climate change threats that directly impact tourism. To mitigate these risks, we must:

- **Implement Coastal Protection Measures:** Addressing beach erosion and coral reef degradation through conservation efforts will preserve natural attractions.
- **Promote Renewable Energy in Tourism Operations:** Encouraging hotels and tour operators to adopt solar, wind, and energy-efficient technologies will reduce the sector's carbon footprint.
- **Develop Disaster Preparedness Strategies:** Climate resilience planning, including hurricane preparedness and emergency response protocols, is crucial for maintaining business continuity in the tourism sector.

Tourism remains a vital pillar of Saint Lucia's economy, but its sustainable growth requires proactive planning, legislative support, infrastructure investment, workforce development, security enhancements, and environmental stewardship. By addressing these key developmental issues, Saint Lucia can harness the full potential of its tourism industry, ensuring long-term prosperity for the nation and its people.

The time to act is now—let us work together to shape a resilient, competitive, and inclusive tourism sector that benefits both present and future generations.



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Saint Lucia's Culinary Talent Shines at TASTE

In 2024, the Saint Lucia National Culinary Team delivered a stellar performance at Taste of the Caribbean (TASTE), the region's premier culinary competition. Hosted by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), the event returned for the first time since 2019, taking place in North Miami from November 18–20. Competing against top culinary professionals from across the Caribbean, Team Saint Lucia secured multiple medals and accolades, reinforcing the island's reputation for exceptional cuisine and talent.

The team's impressive achievements included:

- Silver Medal in the Caribbean National Team category
- Gold Medal & Caribbean Pastry Chef of the Year – Emmany Hippolyte (Jade Mountain)
- Silver Medal in the Senior Chef category – Neville Joseph (Anse Chastanet)
- Silver Medal in the Junior Chef category – Kayla Joseph (Sir Arthur Lewis Community College)
- Bronze Medal in the Bartending category – Ninus Charlouis (Ladera Resort)
- Tony Mark Spirit of the Competition Award – Team Manager Chef Fabian Vigee (The BodyHoliday)

Beyond the medals, the competition served as a platform for professional development, networking and industry recognition.

The expert management team

behind the scenes included Chef Fabian Vigee, SLHTA Director Wadi Zakhour, Consultant Chef Eike Lauff, and Mixologist Alva Preville, whose leadership and guidance were instrumental to the team's success. Chef Elijah Jules also played a key role, offering critical support throughout the competition.

Saint Lucia's participation in TASTE was made possible through the generous support of sponsors, including the Tourism Enhancement Fund, Republic Bank, Saint Lucia Tourism Authority, Nick Troubetzkoy's Anse Chastanet and Jade Mountain Resorts, Ladera Resort, The BodyHoliday, and Uniforms & Accessories.

Kayla Joseph's participation in TASTE is a testament to the SLHTA's



commitment to nurturing young talent. In 2019, as a student at Soufriere Comprehensive Secondary School (SCSS), she emerged as one of the winners of the SLHTA's Chefs in Schools Competition. At the time of TASTE, she was completing her degree at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, and following the competition, she accepted a job offer from Caille Blanc Villa & Hotel.

Kayla's story is one of determination and growth, and she shares her experience at TASTE and what's next for her in the interview below.

SLHTA: Tell us about your upbringing.

KJ: I am from Soufriere and I attended the Soufriere Comprehensive Secondary School. I got into cooking at a very young age with my stepfather. We cooked together on Sundays. After lunch, we would just try deserts we saw



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on Food Network and that's where it started.

SLHTA: *What was the experience like?*

KJ: I decided to take part in the competition because I felt it was a great opportunity to showcase my skills, gain more experience in the industry and grow. I feel really proud of myself. Just the fact that I got chosen to represent my country. It's so near and dear to my heart.

SLHTA: *What is your favourite meal to cook?*

KJ: My favorite meal to cook? I don't have a favorite meal to cook because I like to try a lot of different things, especially desserts.

SLHTA: *What's next for KJ?*

KJ: I want to get as much experience as I can become an executive chef or pastry chef. I've never wanted to own a restaurant. I also want to work



as a private chef so that I can bring experiences to people. I want food to tell a story.

SLHTA: *What advice would you give other young aspiring chefs?*

KJ: Keep going! I know it can be tough, especially in the culinary

industry. There will be times when you wonder, 'So many people are going for this—how are they getting these opportunities?' I used to feel the same way. But if you truly want something, and you put in the effort, the opportunity will find you. Just keep going, do your best, and the best will come to you.



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TOURISM AND PEACE: *A Pathway for Saint Lucia*

Tourism is often celebrated for its economic contributions, job creation, and cultural exchange. However, one of its less explored but equally significant roles is its potential to foster peace and social cohesion.

In a world where conflicts—whether social, economic, or political—can disrupt societies, tourism presents an opportunity to build bridges, encourage understanding, and contribute to sustainable peace. In the context of Saint Lucia, leveraging the industry as a tool for peace can yield both immediate and long-term benefits.

Tourism has the capacity to unite people across cultural and social divides. It encourages interaction among individuals from different backgrounds, fosters mutual respect, and promotes tolerance. Moreover, tourism provides economic opportunities that can help mitigate social tensions and inequalities. When communities benefit from tourism, they are more likely to support social stability. Sustainable tourism models that emphasize local participation and equitable wealth distribution can prevent social exclusion and economic disparities, which are often at the root of conflict.

Like many destinations, Saint Lucia also faces challenges that could undermine the peaceful environment necessary for tourism to thrive. Issues such as crime, economic inequality, and environmental pressures must be addressed to sustain the industry's growth and reputation.

A peace-centered approach to tourism in Saint Lucia could involve:

1. Community-Based Tourism

- Encouraging local ownership of tourism enterprises ensures that economic benefits reach grassroots communities. Programs that integrate local artisans, farmers, and small



businesses into the tourism supply chain can foster inclusive growth and reduce socioeconomic disparities.

2. Cultural Exchange and Understanding

- Promoting cultural heritage experiences, such as Creole music, dance, and storytelling, can provide visitors with deeper insights into Saint Lucia's traditions while fostering national pride among citizens. Events like the Saint Lucia Jazz Festival and Creole Heritage Month already serve as platforms for cultural exchange and could be further leveraged to promote peace.

3. Training and Education in Tourism for Social Harmony

- Strengthening education and training in hospitality and tourism can instill values of respect, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship. Programs that train young people and marginalized groups for careers in tourism can reduce unemployment, social unrest, and crime.

4. Tourism and Law Enforcement Collaboration

- Enhancing collaboration between the hospitality sector and law enforcement agencies can contribute to a safer environment for both visitors and locals. The SLHTA's initiatives with the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force to improve customer service and professionalism among officers are excellent examples of how tourism and peacekeeping can intersect.

5. Sustainable and Responsible Tourism Practices

- Implementing sustainable tourism policies, such as environmental conservation efforts and ethical business practices, can ensure that tourism development does not lead to social tensions or ecological degradation. By protecting the island's natural and cultural assets, future generations can continue to benefit from a peaceful and thriving tourism sector.

Tourism and peace are interconnected, and Saint Lucia has the opportunity to harness this relationship for national development. By fostering inclusivity, strengthening community ties, and ensuring sustainable tourism practices, the country can create a more peaceful and resilient society.

Investing in peace through tourism is not just a moral imperative—it is a strategic necessity for the long-term sustainability of Saint Lucia's most vital industry. By prioritizing peace, the island can enhance its global reputation, attract responsible travelers, and secure a prosperous future for all its citizens.

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Tourism as a Catalyst for the Circular Economy in Saint Lucia

Saint Lucia's tourism sector is not only the island's economic lifeline but also a powerful driver of sustainable business practices. As global sustainability efforts gain momentum, Saint Lucia is increasingly aligning its tourism model with circular economy principles—minimizing waste, maximizing resource efficiency, and fostering economic linkages that benefit local communities.

Understanding the Circular Economy in Tourism

A circular economy moves away from the traditional linear “take, make, dispose” model and instead emphasizes resource regeneration, reuse, and recycling. Within tourism, this means reducing environmental impact while simultaneously creating local economic opportunities.

Saint Lucia's tourism industry is well-positioned to integrate circular economy principles by:

- **Strengthening Local Supply Chains:** Hotels, restaurants, and resorts are increasingly sourcing fresh produce, seafood, and artisanal goods from local suppliers, reducing dependency on imports while keeping money circulating within the economy.
- **Waste Reduction and Resource Efficiency:** Businesses in the hospitality sector are implementing waste management solutions such as composting organic waste, reducing single-use plastics, and using water and energy more efficiently.

- **Sustainable Employment and Skill Development:** By fostering local entrepreneurship and training programs, the tourism industry helps create green jobs in areas such as sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, and waste management.

Tourism-Driven Circular Economy Initiatives in Saint Lucia

1. Farm-to-Table and Locally Sourced Goods

Many hotels and restaurants in Saint Lucia have adopted farm-to-table programs, sourcing fruits, vegetables, meats, and seafood from local farmers and fishers. This reduces food miles, enhances food security, and supports local livelihoods. The Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association's (SLHTA) award-winning Virtual Agricultural Clearing House was one such initiative that connected hotels directly with local producers, ensuring a steady market for homegrown goods.

2. Recycling and Upcycling in the Hospitality Sector

Several resorts are implementing waste diversion programs that turn organic waste into compost for gardens and landscaping. Some properties repurpose used linens and furniture, donating them to schools, charities, or upcycling them into new products. These initiatives extend the

lifespan of materials and reduce landfill waste.

3. Sustainable Energy and Water Management

Hotels are increasingly investing in solar energy, rainwater harvesting, and wastewater recycling systems. By reducing their reliance on imported energy and freshwater resources, these businesses lower operational costs while contributing to environmental conservation.

4. Eco-Tourism and Regenerative Travel

Community-based tourism initiatives promote immersive experiences such as cocoa farm tours, Creole heritage walks, and sustainable fishing excursions. These experiences generate income for rural communities while preserving Saint Lucia's cultural and environmental assets. Additionally, efforts to restore coral reefs and protect marine ecosystems through eco-tourism contribute to both environmental and economic resilience.

The Way Forward: Scaling Up Circular Economy Practices

To fully harness the potential of the circular economy within tourism, Saint Lucia must:

- **Encourage Policy Support:** Government incentives, such as tax breaks for businesses implementing sustainable practices, can drive greater adoption.
- **Expand Training and Awareness:** Hospitality stakeholders, employees, and guests need continuous education on the benefits of circular economy models.
- **Foster Greater Public-Private Partnerships:** Strengthening linkages between tourism operators, local producers, and policymakers will ensure long-term sustainability.

Tourism is more than just a revenue-generating industry for Saint Lucia—it is a driver of sustainable economic transformation. By adopting circular economy principles, the tourism sector can help create a self-sustaining ecosystem that benefits local communities, conserves natural resources, and strengthens economic resilience. With continued investment and collaboration, Saint Lucia's tourism industry can serve as a model for integrating circular economy strategies into island economies worldwide.

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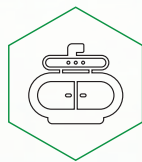
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Smart Island, Smarter Tourism

Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including Saint Lucia, increasingly recognize Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an essential tool for optimizing operational efficiencies across various sectors of tourism beyond traditional hotel accommodations.

Non-accommodation operators such as tour guides, transportation providers, excursion companies, and cultural experience curators have significant opportunities to leverage AI-driven solutions to enhance their services, streamline operations, and improve customer satisfaction.

Drawing on best practices from regional experiences in the Caribbean, SIDS can integrate AI applications in several impactful ways:

1. Smart Visitor Management:

AI-powered tools can predict



In 2024 SLHTA member Caille Blanc Villa & Hotel received the CHIEF Award in Technology Transformation for its AI-powered chatbot “Jacqbot,” designed to assist guests even during off-hours. Pictured (left to right): Carl Gordon, Director – Government | Strategic Growth – English Caribbean, Mastercard, Alisa Coleman, Owner/President, Caille Blanc Villa & Hotel, Sanovnik Destang, President, CHTA and Executive Director, Bay Gardens Resorts, and Vanessa Ledesma, CEO, CHTA.

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peak visitation times, enabling non-accommodation operators to effectively schedule staff, manage resources, and improve visitor flow. For instance, in Barbados, tour operators use predictive analytics to anticipate tourist foot traffic at popular attractions, optimizing staffing and resource allocation.

2. Enhanced Customer

Engagement: Chatbots and virtual assistants, successfully deployed by tour operators in Jamaica and The Bahamas, allow businesses to manage reservations, respond instantly to customer inquiries, and provide personalized recommendations. This ensures consistent customer service, increases efficiency, and enhances visitor experience without significantly increasing operational costs.

3. Efficient Transportation and

Logistics: AI-driven routing software adopted by transportation services in Antigua & Barbuda optimizes travel

routes based on real-time traffic and weather data, reducing fuel consumption, enhancing safety, and ensuring timely arrivals for guests. Saint Lucia's transportation operators can similarly benefit from these solutions, particularly in navigating challenging island terrains and weather conditions.

4. Sustainable Resource

Management: AI tools support sustainable tourism initiatives by monitoring and managing environmental impacts. Operators of natural and cultural attractions in Dominica have used AI-enabled sensors and drones for ecosystem monitoring, helping manage visitor capacity sustainably while preserving sensitive ecological sites.

5. Safety and Security:

AI-enhanced safety monitoring, already utilized by water sports providers in Aruba, can track real-time conditions

such as weather, ocean currents, and visitor activities, enhancing safety measures and allowing swift response to emergencies, thereby minimizing risks for operators and guests alike.

To effectively implement these AI-driven efficiencies, Saint Lucia's tourism operators can benefit from collaborative frameworks, sharing knowledge and resources through the Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association, to ensure broad access and training in these technologies.

Embracing these AI applications positions Saint Lucia and similar small island nations to become more resilient, efficient, and competitive, providing unique, high-quality tourism experiences that are both economically beneficial and environmentally sustainable.

For more insights on leveraging AI in the region's tourism sector, explore the Artificial Intelligence Transformation Guide for Caribbean Tourism released by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, available at CHTA.com.



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In 2024, the SLHTA demonstrated its commitment to regional solidarity by mobilizing over EC \$100,000 in essential supplies for Hurricane Beryl relief efforts in Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

Following the hurricane's impact, the SLHTA swiftly activated its Disaster Relief Committee and engaged with regional partners—including the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association (GHTA), the St. Vincent & The Grenadines Hotel & Tourism Association, and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association—to coordinate the delivery of critical supplies. A supply drive was held from July 4th to 12th, with SLHTA member companies and private citizens contributing hygiene supplies, non-perishable food items, pediatric supplies, water, beverages, clothing, and linen. On July 19th, the SLHTA's



donation reached Grenada, where GHTA CEO Arlene Friday facilitated distribution efforts. She emphasized the invaluable role of regional partnerships, stating, "The significant value of cultivating relationships and the role of our regional private sector partners cannot be understated. The support we have received from our friends in St. Lucia has been truly remarkable. This collaborative effort highlights the strength of Caribbean unity and solidarity in times of crisis. We are truly stronger together."

This initiative was made possible through the generous support of SLHTA members, including

Anse Chastanet, Barefoot Holidays, Bay Gardens Resorts, Blue Sky Luxury, Cabot Saint Lucia, Calabash Cove Resort & Spa, DSL Yachting, Exodus Boat Charters, Harmony Marina Suites, Hotel Chocolat, IGY Rodney Bay Marina, Jacques Waterfront Dining, Jade Mountain, Ladera Resort, Lazy Lagoon, Peter & Company Distribution, Rainforest, Ramco Chowmein, SLHTA's Tourism Enhancement Fund, Stoney Hill, Spice Travel & Tours, SunSwept Resorts, SunTours Caribbean, The Reef Beach Cafe, and The Landings Resort & Spa.

This disaster underscored the vulnerability of small island developing states and reinforced the importance of collaboration and regional cooperation. The SLHTA remains committed to supporting its neighbors in times of crisis and ensuring that the spirit of Caribbean solidarity remains strong.

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Empowering Girls and Women in Hospitality

In March 2024, the inaugural Influential Women in Hospitality Panel Discussion brought together a powerful gathering of women from Saint Lucia's tourism sector. Hosted by Blue Diamond Resorts in partnership with the SLHTA, the event, held at Royalton Saint Lucia, celebrated International Women's Day (IWD) under the theme Invest In Women: Accelerate Progress.

The dynamic panel featured influential leaders:

- Erwin Louisy, SLHTA Vice President
- Della John, General Manager, Royalton Saint Lucia
- Nella Alcide, Resident Manager, Royalton Saint Lucia
- Patti Chan, Chief Legal Officer and General Counsel, Royalton Saint Lucia
- Yhasmine Remy-Hylton, General Manager, The BodyHoliday
- Sherma Flavius, Managing



Director, Sea Island Cotton Shop

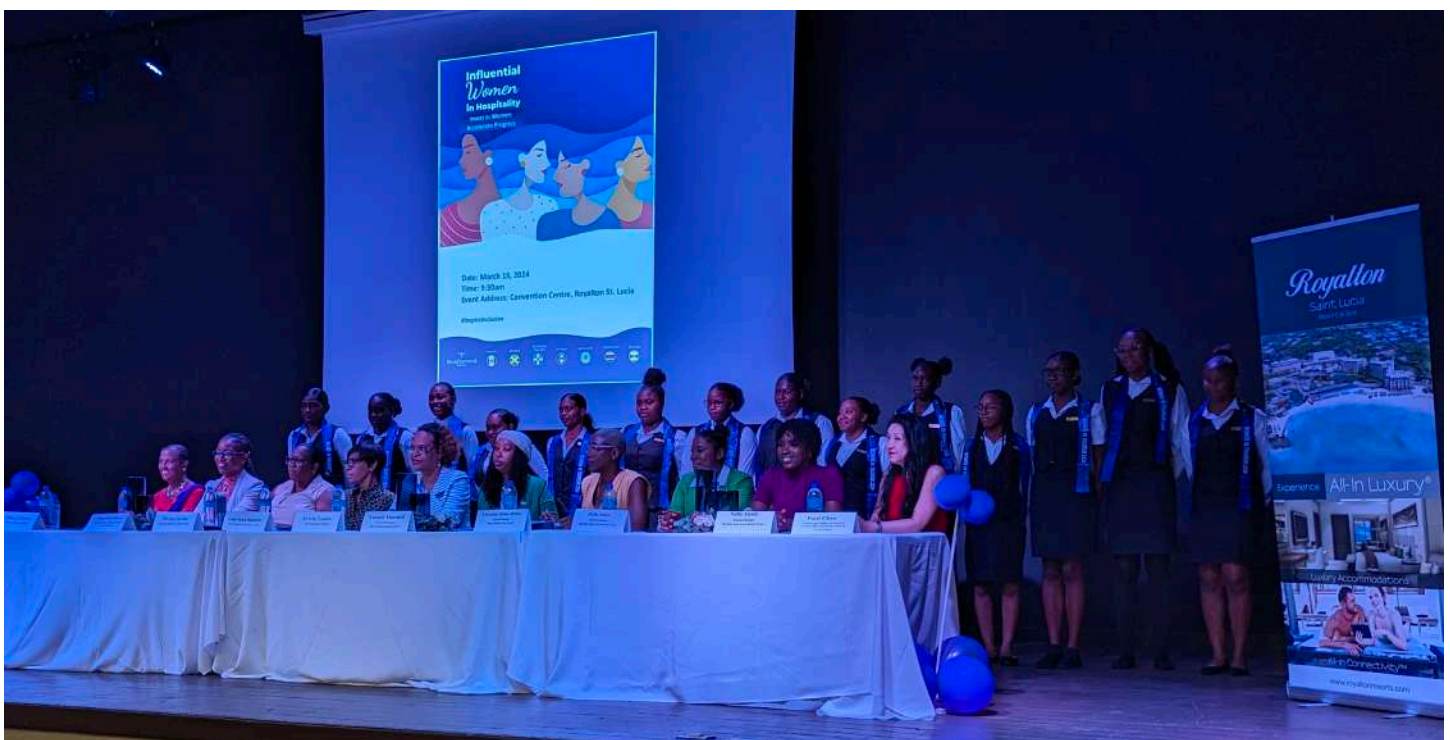
- Yatsuri Marshall, General Manager, Bay Gardens Marina Haven
- Cheryl Skeete, Tourism Stalwart and SLHTA Honorary Member
- Gale Jean Baptiste, VP of Talent & Culture, Cabot Saint Lucia
- Genny Dixon, Corporate Director of Human Resources & Learning, SunSwept Resorts

The panelists shared their personal journeys, discussed the challenges and rewards of the tourism sector, and offered invaluable insights for aspiring women in hospitality. This year's IWD theme resonated

deeply throughout the discussion, emphasizing the importance of empowering women to accelerate progress in the industry.

Among the attendees were fourteen female students from the Hospitality Department of the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College. The SLHTA was honored to facilitate their participation, offering them an opportunity to engage with industry leaders, network, and draw inspiration for their future careers.

The SLHTA will continue to champion initiatives that empower women in the hospitality sector, foster professional growth, and build a more inclusive and dynamic industry for future generations.





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Taking Action on Health

In September 2024, the Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association (SLHTA), through its Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF), collaborated with the Lions Club of Gros Islet and Laboratory Services Limited to provide free prostate cancer screenings to 1,000 men in Saint Lucia.

This initiative, part of Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, offered men aged 40 to 70 access to Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) tests—a quick and simple blood test used to screen for the disease. Health professionals

have noted that Caribbean men have the highest rates of prostate cancer in the world, with the disease being one of the leading causes of death in men in the region.

The initiative was officially launched on September 5th, 2024, at Sandals Halcyon. As part of the project, vouchers for the free PSA tests were distributed to men in the target age range through workplaces and community outlets. Men who received these vouchers were able to redeem them at any Laboratory Services outlet for a free screening.

The SLHTA's Tourism Enhancement Fund, in alignment with its commitment to positively impact both current and future generations, contributed EC \$20,000 towards the initiative. This funding directly supported the screening of hundreds of hospitality and tourism industry team members.

The SLHTA is proud to support initiatives like this that help raise awareness of critical health issues affecting the community, and is grateful for the partnerships with the Lions Club and Laboratory Services Limited in bringing this vital service to Saint Lucians.

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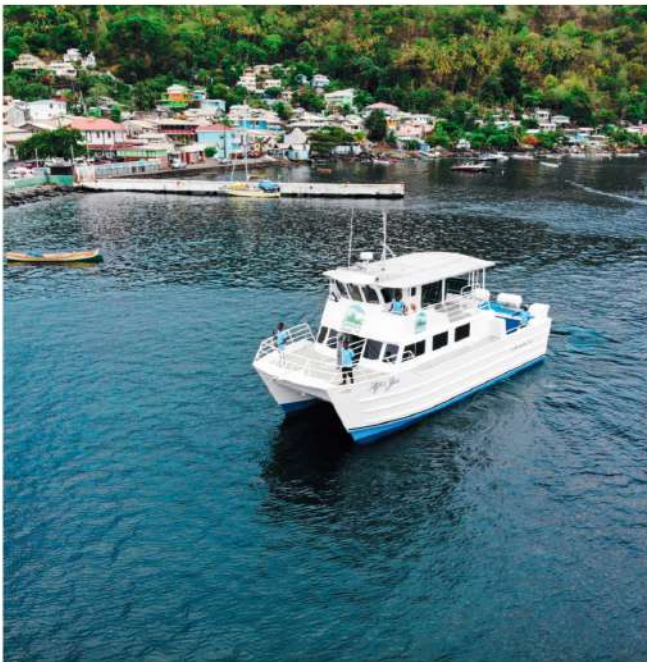
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