



For Immediate Release

Source: Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

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The Caribbean is gearing up for the 2016 edition of CHIEF.

## GLOBAL TRAVEL EXPERTS LINING UP FOR CHIEF CONFERENCE IN PUERTO RICO

MIAMI (August 30, 2016) - Some of the world's leading travel, tourism and hospitality experts will be participating in the upcoming Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's (CHTA)

Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum (CHIEF) slated for the El Conquistador Resort in Puerto Rico from September 30 to October 2, 2016.

"There is a tremendous amount of expertise, ingenuity and talent within our industry and we are tapping into that at CHIEF," said Frank Comito, CEO of the regional private sector organization. Conference presenters include Marriott Hotels' Diana Plazas, Vice President Brand, Marketing & Digital for Latin America & the Caribbean, as well as Veronica Stoddart, the former Travel Editor of USA Today who serves as Executive Editor in Residence at Percepture Travel whose President René Mack will also attend the regional parley.

In addition to Gerard "Jerry" Inzerillo, CEO of Forbes Travel Guide, who will keynote the opening of the event, CHIEF attendees will hear from Duane Vinson, STR Vice President and Assistant Director of the STR SHARE Center; Sanovnik Destang, Executive Director, Bay Gardens Resorts and President, St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association; Shawn Sullivan, Policy Lead for Central America and the Caribbean for AirBnB; and Ting Ting Yan, Senior Marketing Strategist at Google.

Umang Gupta, President of JetBlue Getaways and Sara Lindenfeld, Sustainability Analyst with JetBlue Airways also join the line-up of speakers along with Kerry Cannon, Managing Director, MMGY Global. Some of the regional industry leaders who will share their expertise and best practices are: Ewald Biemans, Managing Director/Owner, Bucuti and Tara Beach Resorts in Aruba; Stuart Bowe, Sr. Vice President & General Manager, Atlantis, Paradise Island in the Bahamas; Scott Hart, General Manager, Peter Island Resort & Spa in the British Virgin Islands; Roseanne Myers, General Manager of Atlantis Submarines and Chairman of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association; and Karen Whitt, General Manager, The Palms in Turks & Caicos.

"We have an incredible line-up of presenters to take us through three days of educational discussions aimed at making businesses better," said Vanessa Ledesma, Chief Operations Officer of CHTA. "Throughout the sessions at CHIEF, we will provide all the tools that you can take back to your property, to your business, to your destination, and activate them immediately," she assured.

At the general sessions, CHIEF will review the state of the Caribbean's lifeblood industry and provide valuable insight about the future focused on trends, consumer interest, and expectations. One general session topic on the sharing economy will help hoteliers understand consumer-driven dynamics that are at play and changes to the accommodations sector with the rapid rise of companies like Airbnb.

Exemplary companies and individuals will be recognized for hospitality-related accomplishments at the CHIEF Awards. "This is very important in one of the words that describes CHIEF: Exchange. It's all about the opportunity to share best practices and have peers learn from others," said Ledesma.

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

To encourage attendance at the annual gathering, CHTA has priced registration fees at an affordable level, and the host hotel and airlines have extended special industry rates and discounts.

#### About CHIEF

CHIEF incorporates a variety of educational tracks led by experts from many travel, tourism and hospitality industry segments, and features round table panels with one-on-one discussions on Environmental Sustainability, Operations, Sales and Marketing, and Technology. CHIEF is staged by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) in conjunction with host sponsors Interval International and JetBlue Getaways; platinum sponsor Travelzoo; and gold sponsors Bonnier Corporation, CaribbeanJobs.com, Choice Hotels International, Clear Channel Airports Division, Johnson Controls, Lutron Electronics, OBM International, Oracle Hospitality, Rainmaker, SiteMinder, Sojern, STR, TravAlliance Media, TravelClick, Tropical Shipping, and TSA Solutions. For additional information about CHIEF, visit [www.chtachief.com](http://www.chtachief.com) or call [+1 305 443-3040](tel:+13054433040).

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