

2016

REMARKS

**Delivered by Warren Solomon
General Manager
Tourism Development Company Limited
of Trinidad and Tobago**

**2015/2016 End of Cruise Season Assessment
and Presentation ceremony
June 29th 2016 @ 2:00pm
Cruise Ship Complex**



- **The Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe, Minister of Tourism**
- **Mrs Samdai Rampersad Acting Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Tourism**
- **Mr. Stephen Williams, Acting Commissioner of Police**
- **Mrs Charmaine Lewis Acting General Manager Port
Authority of Trinidad and Tobago**
- **Members of the Management and Staff of the Ministry of
Tourism and the TDC**
- **Heads of Stakeholder Organizations**
- **Cruise stakeholders**
- **Specially Invited Guests**
- **Members of the media**
- **Ladies and gentlemen**



Good afternoon everyone.

On behalf of the Chairman and Board of Directors of the Tourism Development Company, it's my pleasure to welcome you to the Assessment of the recently-ended Cruise Season for Trinidad.

We are pleased to report that Trinidad and Tobago experienced growth in the 2015/2016 cruise season and it is indeed a pleasure to be in the midst of the men and women who have managed the various elements of the local cruise industry to ensure that our visitors enjoy the best that our destination has to offer in a relatively safe and secure environment.

It's a well-known fact that Caribbean cruises are the most popular vacation choice for passengers searching for discovery and relaxation, and the industry itself continues to be in growth mode internationally. Earlier this year the Caribbean Tourism Organization reported that Trinidad and Tobago achieved the highest percentage increase in cruise passenger visits in the Caribbean for 2015. Our captivating stories, rich culture and the carefree charm of our people have enticed some of the world's most popular cruise lines to include Trinidad and Tobago on



their itineraries. To ensure that we take away the learnings derived during the season, it is imperative that all stakeholders are involved in a post season evaluation. And this is why we're here today: to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the sector and to continue to chart the way forward for the cruise industry.

The vast skills and expertise that make up this group gathered here today underscores the fact that we all have a part to play in preserving, protecting and promoting our country. At the Tourism Development Company, we have been privileged to receive unrelenting support from all tourism stakeholders... in particular our partners in transportation, tours, law enforcement, retail and other entrepreneurs and port management, including the pilots. Your support has helped to position Trinidad as an increasingly popular port of call. And as the amount of visiting cruise lines grow in number, so too will the variety of on-shore activities and tours available for cruise passengers, both in and beyond the city of Port of Spain. Our statistics show very positive results - 7,000 passengers participated in pre-booked excursions, while another 3,000 enjoyed the free line tours.



Two significant moments that defined the strength, exuberance and talent of our stakeholders come to mind when looking back at the last season:

In November 2015 the World Odyssey visited our shores with a group of over 700 students, teachers and crew members on the Semester at Sea Programme. This is essentially a university on the ocean, and our team was challenged to host hundreds of young students, anxious to absorb everything Trinidad and Tobago.

The Tourism Development Company, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism were able to execute a Pan Yard Experience at the Silver Stars Pan Yard, where they were exposed to a truly rich Trinbagonian cultural experience. We've received such positive feedback that we're convinced that some of these students have put us back on to their bucket lists.

Another highlight of the 2015/2016 Cruise Season was the inaugural visit of the NYK Asuka II. Recognized as the largest cruise ship registered in Japan, the visit by the award-winning vessel was doubly significant. Not only was it the ship's first visit to Trinidad and Tobago, but it also came on the heels of a tragedy that lingered in the minds of everyone on our team and indeed, many in the local community at the end of the Carnival season. However, as the true strength of



the Trinbagonian spirit was tested, our collective team worked together to host arrival and departure presentations that exhibited our culture and demonstrated the warmth, vitality and natural friendliness of our people. We were pleased to see many of the visitors smiling and engaging with the Carnival characters and other performers, taking the “selfie” to a whole new level. In the midst of adversity, we all managed to smile and deliver a truly memorable experience.

Through the ups and downs, what we all know for sure is that we are a strong, committed and hardworking unit that has proven to be the backbone of our islands’ burgeoning cruise industry.

Trinidad & Tobago has the opportunity to manage a controlled growth of its cruise market segment in the medium and long terms, not just by putting our best foot forward, but by learning from our competitors and by constantly reviewing our performance. And that, my friends, is where all of us in this room come in. If we work together, we get to develop the trajectory for this industry.

So again, thank you all for your support and collaborative efforts during the 2015/2016 cruise season. You have demonstrated your commitment to the



industry and also to national pride and by extension, national service, as we continue to welcome the world to this unique part of the planet.

Thank you very much and do enjoy the rest of the afternoon.