

## Global Tourism Resilience conference ends on a high note

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The historic Global Tourism Resilience Conference, which was held from February 15-17, 2023 at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Regional Headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica, ended with a major declaration recognizing the importance of building tourism resilience to safeguard the sustainability of the industry globally.

The declaration, among other things, formally recommends the establishment of a global tourism resilience fund to support tourism-dependent nations in periods of disruption. The fund was proposed by Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett as global tourism stakeholders and policymakers commemorated the first official Global Tourism Resilience Day on February 17.

Outlining the 'Kingston Declaration for Tourism Resilience and the Future of Tourism,' Mr. Bartlett as host minister listed three recommendations adopted in the Kingston Declaration:

"1. To reignite global South - South relations using tourism as the driver beginning with Africa and the Caribbean and thereby promote mutual understanding, cultural exchange and sustainable economic growth in the tourism sector.

2. To establish a global tourism resilience fund that will provide support to individual destinations in responding to their own crises and disasters. Each country will manage their own Tourism Resilience Fund and employ the fund to enforce its tourism resilience, thus guaranteeing the sustainability of international travel and tourism.

3. To urge labour markets to reignite recovery that does not leave the tourism workers behind.”

The declaration outlined that the COVID-19 pandemic would always serve as a stark reminder “of the indispensable necessity to build tourism resilience” and that despite its reputation for being a highly resilient segment of the global economy simultaneously the industry would always be vulnerable to various internal and external shocks.

Also, having been actively engaged in promoting tourism resilience in the Americas, Africa and the Middle East, the work of the Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre (GTRCMC) “revealed an urgent need to consolidate learnings and build resilient strategies that will enable us to prepare for the next major disruptions to the travel and tourism space,” the Minister noted.

The recommendations came out of the conference participants’ deliberations and recognition of the challenges facing the tourism industry and the importance of building tourism resilience.

In the closing session of what Minister Bartlett and others hailed as a very successful conference it was disclosed that the 2024 conference would be held in Málaga, Spain, which signed a communiqué with Jamaica’s ministry of tourism.

The signing of the document which encompasses various aspects of tourism development, has been described by Minister Bartlett as “a momentous occasion for us here in Jamaica and the Caribbean,” being the first time that an agreement of this nature has been formalized.

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