EDITORIAL

“IN THE ZONE”, is a publication of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism of the ACS designed to increase interaction and the level of cooperation among ACS Member and Associate Member States, International and Regional organizations as well as observer countries. It features destinations, events and activities in ACS Countries as well as from our partners.

ARTICLES BY:
♦ Dominican Republic
♦ Republic of El Salvador
♦ Guyana
♦ Guadeloupe
♦ Republic of Panama

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION OF:
♦ Republic of Peru
♦ World Tourism Organization (WTO)
♦ Organization of American States (OAS)

“Tourism for all, Promoting Universal Accessibility”

The Team of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) is pleased to present, our Twelve Edition of ‘In the ZONE’, focusing on “Tourism for all, Promoting Universal Accessibility”

Taking in consideration that the 27th of September is the World Tourism Day which will be celebrated under the theme “Tourism for all, Promoting Universal Accessibility”, The Directorate of Sustainable Tourism is pleased to present this topic, taking into account that “Accessible Tourism” or “Tourism for All” has made tourism destinations, products and information available, in particular for those who have some disability, whether visual, auditory, and in general for persons with some deficiencies in mobility, as well as for parents traveling with their children to various tourist destinations in the Greater Caribbean.

It is important to note that several studies show how the market for accessible tourism has been gaining strength. Tourist destinations, hotels and tour operators are ready to take note and make the respective changes to reach this important new market.

Therefore, in this Edition the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism wishes to showcase some of the initiatives developed by the National Tourism Authorities and Regional Organizations which utilises “Accessible Tourism” as a mechanism to increase more opportunities in tourism in the Greater Caribbean Region

We hope that you enjoy this issue and that it enriches your knowledge about the initiatives implemented, the opportunities for partnerships and the positive impact for the countries of the Greater Caribbean.

Julio Orozco
Director of Sustainable Tourism
Accessible Design is defined as the condition to be met by physical environments, infrastructure, processes, goods and services, to be understandable and usable by all people in equal conditions, safety and comfort, to improve their quality of life and active participation in society.

Accessibility to facilities, tourism products and services, is a basic component for the development of a responsible, inclusive and competitive tourism.

Given the level of tourism development that our economies show, it is time to make commitments, gradually and steadily, to make those changes that merit the rules and regulations that will help us continue on the right track, as well as counting with the support by the private sector on implementing relevant actions.

The Dominican Republic has adopted measures to facilitate accessibility for people with disabilities that range from: the inclusion of the rights of the disabled in the 2010 Constitution, the 2012 Law of National Development Strategy and the creation of the 42-00 Law of National Council on Disability (CONADIS), all in consonance with the guidelines of the World Tourism Organization (OMT) to promote the Accessible Design.

In the tourism sector, the country can showcase achievements in the Colonial City through the "Program for Tourism Development Colonial City of Santo Domingo", which incorporates the universal accessibility criteria suggested by the CONADIS, with actions such as single platform of movement, adaptation of access to infrastructure and speed limits of vehicular traffic. In addition, universal accessibility criteria were included as requirements for obtaining international certification of beaches "Blue Flag", granted to several beaches of our various destinations.
El Salvador is the first Central American country that is considering legislation that promotes accessibility in tourism for people with disabilities. This regulation has been based on the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Also the prestigious magazine "The Rough Guide", specialized in travel and tourism destinations of the United Kingdom, has positioned El Salvador among the top 10 destinations to visit in 2016 and highlights that it is accessible for tourism in the Central American region, because the beaches are very close to the capital, and the visitors can find the best waves in the world.

Also the magazine emphasizes the picturesque colonial towns, coffee plantations and rich cuisine, recommending the country for being a destination with lots of options for tourists to choose between visiting beaches, towns or mountains.

Article and Photos:
Ministry of Tourism of El Salvador
Guyana has been increasingly focusing on provisions and legislations that make tourism locations more accessible.

With recognition of the needs of our tourists, The Guyana Tourism Authority ensures that Accommodation facilities are equipped and conducive to visitors who need just that little more attention. Tour operators are asked through regulations to make situations easier for those customers who have special needs.

There is more improvements to be made and this has been initiated through the Persons with Disability Act of 2010 which was assented to in the Parliament of Guyana. The act caters for promotion, protection, full and equal enjoyment of rights, elimination of discrimination, provisions for welfare, rehabilitation and registration of persons with disabilities. The commission has continually advocated on the basis of regulations within the act.

More consideration is being placed for future developments on this subject through the National Tourism Policy which is expected to take effect in the year of 2017.

Article and Photos:
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana
With the aim of providing facilities for people with disabilities, many initiatives aimed at structuring an accessible supply are implemented. It commences with the airport which offers facilities and services tailored to the needs of persons in need of assistance. From the airport, a transport offered by taxis and buses is available. Furthermore, French regulations, very attentive to this topic, oblige all establishments receiving the public to be accessible.

Also, the islands of Guadeloupe offer a substantial range of hotels and other type of rental accommodations with facilities suitable for persons with disabilities.

This is also applicable to all visits to sites such as museums, parks and gardens. Some natural areas (trails, waterfalls), especially in the National Park, enjoy special facilities, which is also the case for some beaches. Finally, to reliably identify accessible sites, the Tourism and Handicap Label is available to tourism professionals whose list is available on the website: [www.lesilesdeguadeloupe.com](http://www.lesilesdeguadeloupe.com).

Article:
Directorate for Cooperation of the Region of Guadeloupe
Tourists with some degree of disability have become an important part of the tourism market, therefore, a commitment for all nations in the world to enable access to special areas for the movement of these people in places of recreation and also when they arrive to the country.

Studies in the United States, our main market in the region, show that adults with disabilities or reduced mobility spend an average of 13.6 billion dollars a year on travel and about 1,200 million people leave their countries seeking touristic destinations; In addition, 70% of the world population that are demanding accessibility has the financial resources to travel. These numbers indicate that the tourism sector has a great opportunity to serve a market that is growing. For example, touristic destinations such as the Amador Convention Center, the Border post of Paso Canoas (currently both in constructions), the Ecological Green Convention Center (project to develop); all these areas will be enabled for the movement of people with psychomotor difficulties.

The Tocumen International Airport, one of the best air terminals in the region (position #5 in Latin America and # 86 of the 100, best evaluated in the world), currently its making adjustments to its infrastructure to make the transit of passengers more accessible. The airport provides elevators, private parking lots, strategically located ramps, bathroom facilities for disabled people, screens that provide written information, telephonic, vertical /horizontal for people with hearing impairing.

Also people with visual impairments have access to brailed phones, signalling in height relief among other facilities. In this regard the new terminal (T2) is supposed to start operating in the 2018 with the same facilities.

It is important to note that the Tourism Authority of Panama (ATP) is part of the National Council on Disability and has appointed technical liaison with the National Secretariat for Disabilities to discuss issues of tourism to coordinate actions with other institutions through the Committee of Accessibility.

The World Tourism Day, celebrated the 27th September, addressed “Tourism for All-Promoting Universal Accessibility” an initiative that was launched to promote and motivate the countries to reach and contribute better tourist accessibility for people with disabilities.
With its diverse landscapes and cultural richness, Peru has an adventure in store for all tourists regardless of gender, age, race or physical condition.

Prom Perú, as brand ambassador and charged with the promotion of brand Peru, has renewed its commitment to making the tourism sector accessible to all. Stemming from the project “Peru: Making Tourism Accessible,” integration plans have been developed and broken down barriers in this sector, allowing for the enjoyment of persons with disabilities. Likewise, both national and foreign organisations have consolidated efforts to transform Peru into an ideal destination available to everyone.

In an effort to achieve this objective, the Manual for attending to tourists with disabilities was produced and is designed to train those involved in tourism to provide the appropriate attention to tourists based on the nature of their disability (visual, intellectual, physical and auditory).

Link for Manual: [http://media.peru.info/catalogo/Attach/1677.PDF](http://media.peru.info/catalogo/Attach/1677.PDF)

Article: The Embassy of Peru in Trinidad and Tobago
Photo: Adapted Tourism
Tourism has experienced a revolution in the past 50 years.

In 1950 there were nearly 25 million international tourists crossing boarders in a single year; today there are around 1.2 billion people travelling the world. Travelling has become a huge part of many people’s lives.

When we travel, we come across new people, new sights, and new ideas. Often our perception of the world changes as we see more of it. We definitely become better people.

However, we must not forget that for many of us, travelling can be quite a difficult process.

15% of the world’s population is estimated to live with some kind of disability or another. This is, my friends, about 1 billion people around the world who may be unable to enjoy the privileges of knowing other cultures, experiencing nature at its fullest and experiencing the thrill of embarking on a journey to explore new sights and new places.

Accessibility for all should therefore be at the heart and at the center of tourism policies and business strategies. Not as human rights only which is important on its own, but also as a great market potential and as a great business opportunity.

With the world’s population ageing, all of us will benefit sooner or later from universal accessibility in tourism. As we celebrate World Tourism Day today, let us recall that all of the world’s citizens have the right to experience the incredible diversity of our planet and the beauty of the world we live in.

We thus urge all countries and destinations, as well as all the industry stakeholders, to promote accessibility for all in the physical environment, in the transport systems, in the public facilities and services and in the information and communications channels.

I wish you a very happy World Tourism Day and a future full of enriching and compelling travel experiences to be enjoyed by all.

Article:
Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
Tourism for All and the notion that the sector's products and services should be equally enjoyed by all are entirely consistent with the OAS' motto of *More Rights for More People*. To make these products and services available and accessible to more people it is critical that they be provided and enjoyed in a safe and secure environment.

Tourism safety and security is one of the six priority areas of the OAS' Inter American Committee on Tourism's Medium Term Strategy and seeks to contribute to enhancing safety, security and protection in the tourism sector, through the exchange of best practices, training and capacity building efforts.

Through the Sustainable Destinations Alliance for the Americas initiative the OAS is supporting member states' efforts to enhance how their destinations are managed so that they are enjoyed not just by visitors but by local residents and future generations. OAS initiatives broadly incorporate the notion of accessibility consistent with the *Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities*.

Moreover, the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities 2006-2016 includes as a central part of its objectives to promote public policies to foster culture, sports leisure and tourism as instruments for human development.

**Article:**
Richard Campbell , Chief Officer of Tourism , OAS
EVENTS HELD

The Workshop for the Verification of The Implementation Progress of The Indicators in The Destinations of The Sustainable Tourism Zone of The Greater Caribbean (STZC) was held in the Republic of Guatemala, September 22, 2016.

The Workshop for the Implementation of the Regional Framework for Technical Vocational Education and Training in Tourism was held in the Republic of Guatemala, September 23, 2016.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Directorate of Sustainable Tourism will be developing the following workshops:

Workshop for the Formation of a Regional Strategy for Tourist Safety will be held in Panama City, **October 24, 2016**

The 2nd Meeting of the Regional Network of Artisans in Tourism in the Greater Caribbean, and 3rd Regional Workshop for Strengthening Capacity Building will be held in the Republic of Nicaragua, **October 28-29, 2016**

THANK YOU

The Directorate of Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States expresses its gratitude to all the contributors of this Newsletter and look forward to your continued support as we work together to develop sustainable tourism in the Greater Caribbean Region.

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