



NATIONAL TOURISM CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

Theme 1: Promoting Sustainability and Environmental Protection in Curaçao's Tourism Sector

Preamble:

- **Noting** that tourism is a vital pillar of Curaçao's economy, contributing significantly to job creation, economic development, and cultural exchange;
- **Recognizing** that unchecked tourism growth and insufficient regulation have the potential to degrade the island's natural resources, infrastructure, and environment;
- **Emphasizing** the importance of sustainable practices in preserving Curaçao's unique biodiversity, natural landscapes, and cultural heritage;
- **Acknowledging** that previous experiences in the Caribbean region have demonstrated the adverse effects of over-commercialization and unsustainable tourism practices;
- **Appreciating** the support of stakeholders, local businesses, and community members, in promoting sustainable tourism initiatives, including private sector-led projects;
- **Reaffirming** Curaçao's commitment to aligning tourism development with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the SDGs prioritized by the Curaçao government as part of the agenda Curaçao 2030;
- **Encouraged** by the enthusiasm of focus group and pre-conference participants who have identified the potential for Curaçao to become a leading destination for eco-tourism and environmentally responsible travel;

The National Tourism Conference resolves to:

1. **Establish** sustainability as a core principle in all tourism development initiatives by embedding sustainable practices into infrastructure projects, tourism offerings, and cultural preservation efforts. A National Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism shall be developed and implemented through a collaborative effort involving the Curaçao Tourist Board (CTB), the Ministry of Economic Development, and the Curaçao Hospitality and Tourism Association (CHATA).
 - a. As a short-term priority, the plan will focus on implementing comprehensive waste management systems, including deposit-return programs for plastic bottles and accessible waste disposal stations in major tourist areas, such as beaches and nature reserves, and educational campaigns that promote recycling and reduction of single-use plastics among both tourists and locals.
2. **Update** and enhance regulations to promote sustainability and environmentally friendly practices in tourism development. These regulations will:
 - a. set clear eco-friendly infrastructure standards for new tourism projects, ensuring energy efficiency, water conservation, low-carbon emissions, and minimal environmental disruption.
 - b. design policies that regulate construction in environmentally sensitive areas, such as beaches, marine parks, and wildlife habitats.
 - c. Encourage sustainable business practices across all tourism stakeholders, ensuring compliance with environmental protection policies and promoting the responsible use of natural resources.
3. **Expand** eco-tourism initiatives to emphasize Curaçao's unique natural assets, including its biodiversity and marine life. These initiatives will focus on creating protected nature reserves, developing sustainable tourism packages, such as guided eco-tours, hiking trails, and wildlife viewing experiences while encouraging investments in eco-friendly businesses that adhere to sustainable practices.



NATIONAL TOURISM CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

Theme 2: Promoting and Preserving Authenticity and Cultural Heritage

Preamble:

- **Noting** that Curaçao's cultural, historical, and natural heritage forms the backbone of its tourism appeal;
- **Recognizing** the increasing risks of cultural dilution and over-commercialization that threaten the island's unique identity in the face of tourism growth;
- **Emphasizing** that authentic cultural experiences are a key differentiator for Curaçao in the global tourism market;
- **Acknowledging** that local communities must play a central role in preserving and promoting Curaçao's cultural heritage for both residents and visitors;
- **Appreciating** the contributions of Curaçao's diverse cultural influences in shaping the island's identity;
- **Committed** to ensuring that future tourism development aligns with the preservation of cultural integrity and authenticity;

The National Tourism Conference resolves to:

1. **Develop** a Cultural Preservation Framework under the guidance of the Ministry of Culture (OWCS) ensuring that all tourism projects respect and protect Curaçao's cultural, historical, and natural assets. This framework will guide the accreditation of local experts and tour guides who are trained and authorized to share authentic information about the island's heritage. The framework will also prioritize the preservation of historical sites, local traditions, and intangible cultural heritage, including music, festivals, and cuisine. Cultural education programs will be integrated into both the school curriculum and tourism platforms to raise awareness of Curaçao's rich cultural heritage among locals and tourists.
2. **Implement** a dedicated program to support job creation and small business development within the cultural tourism sector. This program will prioritize community involvement by supporting local artisans, musicians, and performers, ensuring they are fairly compensated and actively engaged in creating authentic tourist experiences. It will also focus on neighborhood development, offering resources and training to empower residents to contribute to cultural tourism initiatives.
3. **Invite** the private sector, including tour operators, hotels, and local businesses, to create and promote cultural tourism packages that offer visitors an immersive experience of Curaçao's true culture, history, and natural beauty. These packages should include guided tours of historical landmarks, participation in local festivals, traditional culinary experiences, and eco-friendly excursions, fostering a deeper connection between visitors and the island's unique heritage. Collaboration with local communities and cultural experts will ensure the authenticity and sustainability of these offerings.



NATIONAL TOURISM CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

Theme 3: Diversity in Curaçao's Tourism

Preamble:

- **Noting** that Curaçao's multicultural and diverse population is one of its greatest assets in attracting a wide range of tourists;
- **Recognizing** that diversity in tourism not only enhances the visitor experience but also strengthens Curaçao's position as a welcoming and socially responsible destination;
- **Acknowledging** the importance of catering to the needs of diverse tourist demographics, including but not limited to LGBTQ+ travelers, tourists with disabilities, and those seeking religious, cultural, medical, or adventure tourism;
- **Appreciating** the existing efforts to promote tolerance and acceptance across Curaçao's tourism offerings, while recognizing the need for further integration of these values into the tourism sector;
- **Committed** to ensuring that tourism in Curaçao reflects the island's rich cultural diversity and promotes equal access for all visitors;

The National Tourism Conference resolves to:

1. **Explore and prioritize** the development of niche tourism sectors that cater to specific groups, including LGBTQ+ travelers, people with disabilities, medical tourists, religious travelers, adventure seekers, and those interested in cultural tourism. These niches will be treated as priority growth areas, ensuring tailored tourism offerings that meet the unique needs and interests of each group. This initiative will be led by the Curaçao Tourist Board (CTB) in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to ensure that each niche is appropriately developed and promoted, strengthening Curaçao's position as a diverse tourism destination.
2. **Ensure** that accessible infrastructure development is a top priority, guaranteeing that public and private tourism facilities are fully accessible to all visitors. This will include upgrades to hotels, beaches, transport systems, and tourist attractions to accommodate visitors with physical disabilities and provide universal access to Curaçao's offerings.
3. **Encourage** the development of technology platforms that make information on local activities, services, and events easily accessible for all tourists. This includes creating a dedicated tourism portal that integrates local offerings, featuring multilingual access, online payments, and real-time updates on inclusive services and events.

NATIONAL TOURISM CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

Theme 4: Community Engagement and Local Empowerment

Preamble:

- **Noting** that community engagement is essential for the sustainable development of tourism and for ensuring that local populations benefit directly from tourism activities;
- **Recognizing** the importance of empowering local communities, particularly through entrepreneurship and youth involvement, in fostering authentic and inclusive tourism experiences;
- **Acknowledging** that the economic, cultural, and social contributions of tourism can only be maximized when local stakeholders are actively involved in planning, decision-making, and implementation processes;
- **Appreciating** the role that cultural tourism and local entrepreneurship play in preserving Curaçao's heritage while generating income for local residents;
- **Committed** to ensuring that the infrastructure, training, and support systems necessary for community engagement are strengthened to enable local communities to fully participate in and benefit from the tourism sector;

The National Tourism Conference resolves to:

1. **Expand and prioritize** educational curricula to include hospitality, tourism management, entrepreneurship, and sustainable tourism practices, ensuring the next generation of residents is equipped to engage with and benefit from tourism opportunities. This initiative will be developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the private sector, which will contribute through mentorship programs, workshops, and educational talks. These programs will empower young people with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the tourism sector, fostering entrepreneurship and leadership within the local community. Special focus will be placed on actively involving youth in decision-making processes and creating pathways for them to directly participate in and benefit from the tourism industry.
2. **Launch** public awareness campaigns targeting schools, media outlets, businesses, and tourists to promote environmental stewardship, sustainable tourism practices, proper waste disposal, and the preservation of Curaçao's natural and cultural heritage. These campaigns will emphasize the importance of both local and visitor involvement in maintaining the island's environmental and cultural integrity.
3. **Support** local entrepreneurship by simplifying bureaucratic processes, such as obtaining permits, and offering financial literacy and business training programs. Incentives will be provided to local businesses that contribute to the tourism sector, including creating a one-stop shop for tourism-related services to assist local entrepreneurs. This strategy will prioritize local stakeholders in tourism development to foster inclusive growth and ensure economic benefits remain within the community.



NATIONAL 4. TOURISM CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

Theme 5: Competitiveness and Innovation

Preamble:

- **Noting** that Curaçao's tourism industry operates in an increasingly competitive global market;
- **Recognizing** that maintaining and improving the island's competitive edge requires continuous innovation in service quality, product offerings, and infrastructure;
- **Acknowledging** the importance of leveraging Curaçao's unique cultural, geographical, and environmental attributes to differentiate it from other destinations;
- **Appreciating** the role of sustainability and technological advancements in shaping the future of tourism;
- **Committed** to ensuring that Curaçao remains a premier destination through strategic investments in innovation, workforce development, and infrastructure improvement;

The National Tourism Conference resolves to:

1. **Continuously** upgrade the skills of local tourism workers through targeted workforce development programs. These programs will focus on enhancing service quality, language proficiency, cultural knowledge, and hospitality management to ensure that Curaçao's tourism sector consistently meets global standards of excellence.
2. **Encourage** the adoption of technology in Curaçao's tourism product to enhance the overall visitor experience and operational efficiency. This includes integrating digital tools into destination management, improving customer service through technology, and supporting local businesses in leveraging data-driven strategies for targeted tourism promotion.
3. **Carefully** manage and enhance Curaçao's value proposition by ensuring it remains attractive to a wide range of travelers, from luxury tourists to budget-conscious visitors. This will involve balancing competitive pricing with delivering high-value services and experiences. Maintaining this balance will help to increase average daily rates (ADR) and revenue per available room (RevPar), ensuring the long-term profitability and sustainability of the tourism sector.



NATIONAL TOURISM CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

Theme 6: Infrastructure Development and Accessibility

Preamble:

- **Noting** that adequate infrastructure is essential for both the growth of Curaçao's tourism industry and the well-being of its residents;
- **Recognizing** that improving public transport, utilities, and digital connectivity will enhance the island's attractiveness as a tourist destination;
- **Acknowledging** the need for infrastructure that caters to all visitors, including those with disabilities, while also benefiting local communities;
- **Appreciating** the importance of embedding sustainability into infrastructure development to protect Curaçao's natural resources and ensure long-term viability;
- **Committed** to creating a safe, accessible, and sustainable environment for both tourists and locals through strategic infrastructure investments;

The National Tourism Conference resolves to:

1. **Upgrade** and prioritize transportation systems to provide reliable, affordable, and accessible services to the tourist and local community. This includes expanding routes, improving schedules, increasing the capacity of tour buses and taxis, and ensuring transport hubs and vehicles are accessible to all, including individuals with mobility challenges.
2. **Enhance** safety and security in key tourist zones, particularly those that cater to diverse tourist groups. This will involve improving lighting, clear signage, and security measures in public spaces to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all visitors.
3. **Collaborate** with private stakeholders and government entities to enhance and develop Curaçao's ports of entry. This includes improving infrastructure at airports and seaports to streamline the arrival process for tourists, ensuring efficient and secure entry, and supporting the long-term growth of the tourism sector.



NATIONAL TOURISM CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

Theme 7: A New Governance Model for Tourism Development in Curaçao

Preamble:

- **Noting** that the Strategic Tourism Destination Development Plan (STDDP) aims to guide the sustainable growth of Curaçao's tourism industry;
- **Recognizing** that previous governance structures have struggled with effective implementation, leading to partial completion of action steps from past Master Plans;
- **Appreciating** the insights from participatory processes, including focus group discussions and pre-conference sessions, which emphasized the importance of inclusive, data-driven decision-making and stakeholder coordination;
- **Acknowledging** the need to align tourism development with local needs, values, and stakeholder input;
- **Committed** to building a governance framework that ensures meaningful engagement from all stakeholders, including government ministries, private sector partners, NGOs, and local communities;

The National Tourism Conference resolves to:

1. **Establish and formalize** a Ministerial Steering Committee (MSC) with key ministers from the Ministry of Economic Development (MEO), Infrastructure and Environment (VVRP and GMN), Social Development and Welfare (SOAW), and Education, Culture, and Sports (OWCS). The MSC will align destination development, tourism strategy, and carrying capacity issues across sectors.
2. **Create** a Secretariat with three part-time implementation managers, each overseeing economic development, infrastructure, and human capital. The Secretariat will coordinate tourism initiatives, consult with experts, and report to the MSC.
3. **Develop** consultative platforms for Community Engagement & Competitiveness and Diversity & Authenticity, bringing together public and private stakeholders, NGOs, and local communities to gather input through surveys, focus groups, and forums. Insights will inform MSC decisions.
4. **Establish** an Industry Intelligence Unit within the Secretariat to collect and analyze key tourism data. This data will guide strategic, evidence-based decisions aligned with global tourism trends.
5. **Incorporate** accountability mechanisms into the governance model, with regular reporting to the MSC. Ministries and stakeholders will have clear responsibilities, ensuring efficient execution of tourism initiatives.
6. **Enhance** engagement with local businesses, residents, and NGOs to ensure that tourism development aligns with community needs and values.
7. **Set up/ Upgrade** monitoring and evaluation systems to track the progress of tourism initiatives, ensuring they are completed on time, within budget, and aligned with the STDDP. Corrective actions will be taken if needed.