

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**TOURISM INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS MEET VIRTUALLY TO DISCUSS PLANS FOR ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TOURISM RE-OPENING**

**ST. JOHN’S, ANTIGUA (May 8, 2020) –** As Tourism Officials prepare for the restarting of tourism activity in Antigua and Barbuda, the Ministry of Tourism is meeting with tourism stakeholders to discuss the development of protocols required to ensure the safety of the Antigua and Barbuda population and future visitors.

“The impact of covid-19, has been felt directly by most if not all of our tourism partners. Going forward it will change the way that we have traditionally done business. Health and safety will come under close scrutiny as we put in place additional measures to protect those who reside in Antigua and Barbuda, our tourism workforce, and those who visit our shores, while balancing this with ensuring that we continue to provide the same personable service, and warm hospitality that we are known for”, said the Minister of Tourism.

“And, at this time, it will take all of our collective efforts to restore the industry”.

On Thursday, a ‘Tourism Recovery Task Force’ set up by the Antigua and Barbuda Minister of Tourism, The Hon, Charles Fernandez, addressed possible courses of actions for creating a safe environment, across their respective sectors.

The taskforce is presently comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Health, the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority, the Antigua Port Authority, The Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association, The Antigua Airlines Association, Global Ports Holding – Antigua Cruise Port and The Antigua Workers Union.

The tourism taskforce is expected to meet regularly to discuss re-opening measures and will be responsible for ensuring stakeholder interests are factored into future plans.

The Ministry of Tourism, and the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority will also discuss the re-opening of the destination for tourism, with tourism industry stakeholders during a virtual industry meeting to be held on Monday May 11, 2020.

The Tourism Industry meeting, which is open to all tourism sector partners, will allow for private-public sector dialogue, as the discussion focusses on readying the destination.

“Antigua and Barbuda’s successful re-opening for tourism, will require industry buy-in and collaboration. Our aim with the meeting, is to provide our stakeholders with information that they need; to have them share their ideas, and to allow us all to go through the various phases of re-opening together”, said the Tourism Minister.

Joining Antigua and Barbuda’s Minister of Tourism, the Hon. Charles Fernandez as speakers at the meeting will be CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority Colin C. James, and travel industry experts from the USA, United Kingdom and Canada.

Agenda topics for discussion will include, ‘The consumers expectations as travel resumes’, ‘Best practises for tourism businesses’, and tourism/health protocols.

Tourism industry stakeholders wishing to participate in the May 11 meeting, taking place from 10:00 a.m. – 11: 00 a.m. should [**register ahead of the online meeting being held on Zoom here.**](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_it6aJ3AnQEOZTI0gl86CZQ) Over one hundred industry partners, have registered for the event as of Friday afternoon. There is no cost to register.

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**Zoom meeting registration link:** [**https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\_it6aJ3AnQEOZTI0gl86CZQ**](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_it6aJ3AnQEOZTI0gl86CZQ)

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