INNOVATORS THINK TANK: Climate Change and Coastal & Marine Tourism

The Westin Puntacana Resort & Club
Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

July 22 – 24, 2015

www.innovators2015.com

www.responsibletravel.org
Dear Think Tank Participants,

Welcome to Punta Cana for first ever Innovators Think Tank on Climate Change and Coastal & Marine Tourism. Hosted by the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) and the Puntacana Ecological Foundation, this is a unique gathering of carefully selected sustainable tourism practitioners and climate change experts. We have come together to take stock of where the tourism industry is today in addressing climate change impacts, with special focus on island states and coastal and marine areas in the Caribbean.

The Caribbean is the most tourism dependent region in the world, and its island nations are also some of the most vulnerable places to climate change, including sea level rise and warming, coral and mangrove destruction, increasingly fierce and erratic storms, and a host of other human-induced phenomena. As an industry, tourism both contributes to and is a victim of climate change. This 2015 Think Tank is organized around a single critical theme: How coastal and marine tourism must be planned, built, and operated in this era of climate change. Collectively, we will explore the following five key questions:

- How do various sectors of coastal and marine tourism contribute to climate change?
- How are these various sectors currently experiencing the impacts of climate change?
- What measures have tourism businesses taken to date to try to address climate change?
- What are climate scientists predicting needs to be done to ‘survive’ climate change?
- What are the main gaps between current ‘best practices’ by tourism businesses in addressing climate change and what needs to be done based on the best forecasts of impacts on coastlines and oceans?

Our interactive discussions will be ably facilitated by Roger-Mark De Souza, Director of Environmental Security and Resilience at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, DC. Day One (Thursday) will focus mainly on coastal issues and Day Two (Friday) on marine issues.

By pooling our collective knowledge, we believe this Innovators Think Tank can play a key role in shaping the course of climate resilient tourism in the Caribbean and elsewhere in the Americas. We thank each of you for joining us in this important endeavor. As the host organizers, we look forward to spending a productive and stimulating several days with you!

Jake Kheel  
Executive Director  
Puntacana Ecological Foundation

Martha Honey  
Executive Director  
Center for Responsible Travel

Samantha Hogenson  
Program Associate  
Center for Responsible Travel

Our special thanks to the following individuals who have helped, in a variety of ways, to organize the Think Tank:

Roger-Mark De Souza  |  Mark Spalding  |  Patricia Nuñez Garcia  |  Umi Kim  |  Ariel Leuthard  |  Berenice Aguilar  
Allison Christensen  |  Yuebo Li  |  Zhengzheng Zhou  |  Nancy Rosano Vera  |  Michael Bray  |  Linda Rapp  
Frank and Haydée Rainieri  |  Oscar Imbert  |  Antonio Imbert

Cover photo courtesy of Roberto Alvarez
Climate Change and Coastal & Marine Tourism

The Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) is a non-profit, policy-oriented research institute in Washington, DC. Our mission is to promote responsible tourism policies and practices globally so that local communities may thrive and steward their cultural resources and biodiversity.

Founded in 2003, CREST stands alone in the areas of environmentally sustainable and socially responsible tourism. Its international network of highly trained experts provides research and interdisciplinary analyses and solutions, as well as publications, conferences, trainings and educational workshops.

CREST delivers programs and services through field research, feasibility and impact studies, market research, certification programs, travelers’ philanthropy and strengthening sustainable tourism and ecotourism.

With a specific focus on coastal and marine tourism, CREST has organized three highly successful Innovators Symposia in recent years at Stanford University; in Los Cabos, Mexico; and in Grenada. These Symposia brought together leading tourism innovators in the Americas who are charting new, more sustainable models of coastal and marine tourism.

OUR SERVICES INCLUDE:

• Consulting for Tourism Businesses & Governments
• Academically Rigorous Research, Publications & Films
• Development of Travelers’ Philanthropy Programs
• Climate Change Adaptation in the Tourism Sector
• Training and Education, Courses and Conferences

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jetBlue® THINK TANK SCHOLARSHIP

As part of their role in the Think Tank, JetBlue offered to sponsor two students from the Caribbean and/or the U.S. to attend as observers. We enthusiastically embraced this idea, and CREST agreed to handle the logistics of the application process. We asked applicants to explain their course of study, why they wanted to attend the Think Tank, and why they believe the tourism industry needs to be concerned about climate change. We were overwhelmed by the number and quality of the applicants. Despite a one week short turnaround time, we received 90 applicants from university students across the Caribbean and the U.S. We were so impressed and inspired by many of these applicants – their understanding of sustainable tourism and their commitment to devoting their careers to addressing climate change and other critical issues facing coastal tourism. Two CREST and two JetBlue staff reviewed the applicants and made the final decision. It was tough, but as you’ll see, our Think Tank is certainly to be enriched by the participation of the winners!

The JetBlue Foundation Scholarship Recipients are: Stefan Knights, Hugh Wooding Law School, Barbados and Katrina Khan, University of West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago. Thank you to JetBlue for making this valuable opportunity available to tomorrow’s leaders.
### SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

**Wednesday, July 22**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| 1:30pm – 4:30pm | Registration for all participants  
The Westin Lobby                                                   |
| 4:30pm – 6:30pm | Bus tour of Puntacana  
*Meet at The Westin lobby at 4:15 pm*  
*Tour ends at Rainieri Residence, location of opening reception* |
| 6:30pm – 8:30pm | **Opening Reception**  
Jake Kheel, Executive Director, Puntacana Ecological Foundation: Welcome  
Martha Honey, CREST Executive Director: Think Tank Objectives  
Frank Rainieri, President, Grupo Puntacana: Keynote Address,  
“The Puntacana Model: Is climate change changing it?”  
**Film Premier: “Caribbean ‘Green’ Travel”**  
Panel: Leading tourism practitioners from the film discuss sustainable practices & how they are addressing climate change  
Rainieri Residence |
| 8:30 pm | Bus returns to The Westin.  
Dinner unprogrammed. |

**Thursday, July 23**

Unless noted otherwise, all sessions take place in Yauya 1 Conference Room.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 am – 9:50 am</td>
<td>Opening Session: “Climate Change: Caribbean tourism as a contributor and victim”</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 am – 11:20 am</td>
<td>“Beach &amp; Shoreline Protection: Current best practices &amp; what needs to be done to address climate change impacts”</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 am – 12:50 pm</td>
<td>“Siting, Architecture, Design, &amp; Construction in the Era of Climate Change”</td>
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| 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm | Lunch & Plenary Session  
“Large Resorts & Hotel Chains: Adapting to climate change”  
*Anani Restaurant, The Westin* |
| 3:10 pm – 4:30 pm | “Climate Change, Tourism, & Community Linkages” |
| 4:40 pm – 6:00 pm | “What’s the Scorecard: Are current best practices in coastal tourism enough to address Climate Change?” |
| 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm | Evening Cocktail Reception & Plenary Session  
“Air Transport and Airports: Impact on climate change and ‘green’ innovations”  
*Oscar Imbert Residence* |
| 8:30 pm – 10:00 pm | Dinner unprogrammed. |

**Friday, July 24**

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<td>8:30 am – 9:50 am</td>
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<td>“Marine Recreation Infrastructure: Cruise ships &amp; port facilities and yachting &amp; marinas”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm | Lunch & Plenary Session  
“Sustainable Food Sourcing: Strategies for linking agriculture & fishing to tourism that helps mitigate and adapt to climate change”  
*Yauya One Conference Room* |
| 2:40 pm – 4:00 pm | “Climate Change → People Change: Communicating with the public” |
| 4:10 pm – 5:40 pm | “What’s the Scorecard: Are current sustainable practices in marine tourism enough to address climate change?”  
Summary, Takeaways, & Wrap Up with audience input |
| 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm | Beach Party & Networking Event  
*Playa Blanca Restaurant Beach Front* |
| 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm | Dinner unprogrammed. |
There are two planned products that will come in the wake of the Think Tank: a publication and a film. We anticipate other ideas may arise through discussions held during the event and we encourage and welcome the opportunity to explore other outcomes and next steps. Please take a moment to acquaint yourselves with details of the products already planned:

**PUBLICATION**

This publication will be designed to help coastal and marine tourism businesses better address climate change. In addition, we envision it will be useful to educators and students, development agencies, NGOs, and governments.

As a Think Tank Participant, you are being asked to contribute a short, 5-10 page analysis based on your area of expertise, your presentation, and discussion from the Think Tank. You should be guided by the five key questions posed in the Opening Letter on the inside cover of this program. Given the diverse array of participants and respective backgrounds and knowledge, we recognize that contributions can take various forms. We will discuss in more detail with each of you what format your submission should take. Some will be overview pieces, while others will be case studies.

The submission will be integrated into a PDF/print publication but it will also be placed on the web, so links, videos, photos, etc. – anything that will help get your message across – are encouraged. The publication may also incorporate other case studies and short papers from experts who could not attend the Think Tank but have considerable practical knowledge to share.

We also encourage collaborative writing with others you have met at the Think Tank and hope our shared conversations will allow you to reflect on your role in providing climate-resilient solutions. Submissions will be due within eight weeks of the end of the Think Tank (September 24, 2015).

**FILM: “Caribbean ‘Green’ Travel”**

The second planned outcome of the Think Tank will be CREST’s completed documentary film, “Caribbean ‘Green’ Travel” (working title) which was born of ideas shared at 2014’s Innovators Symposium in Grenada. Rather than portray the problems with large scale, mass market tourism, this 40 minute documentary depicts great examples of socially and environmentally responsible tourism in the Caribbean. We focus on four countries – Dominican Republic (Puntacana), Jamaica, Aruba, and Grenada. And we look at three broad themes: 1) environmental stewardship; 2) local benefits & linkages, and 3) travel philanthropy & community engagement.

The film has been shot by award winning Jamaican filmmaker Esther Figueroa. It is currently being edited in the US by Richard Krantz, who brings four decades of video production experience. We plan to release the full film this fall, following a robust social media, marketing and distribution campaign. The film is designed for multiple audiences: conferences and trade shows, film festivals, tourism programs and other academic institutions, tourism businesses, international agencies, and NGOs.

Funding has come from a variety of sources including: contributions from Ewald Biemans, Corporación Aeroportuaria Del Este, and Norcross Wildlife Foundation, an Indiegogo campaign, and in-kind donations. Though the film is still under production, at the Think Tank we will show a vignette of each country represented in the film. We welcome feedback as well as possible ideas about possible sources of funding as we move into final production and full post-production and distribution.
Today Punta Cana is by far the most popular tourist destination in the Dominican Republic. Its tourism growth began 45 years ago with Grupo Puntacana’s pioneering commitment to both environmental good practices and the surrounding communities. Among its many initiatives in corporate social responsibility, Grupo Puntacana has created the Puntacana Ecological Foundation and Puntacana Foundation as the instruments to protect and restore the natural resources of the region; to provide jobs, educational opportunities, and healthy livelihoods for the local community; and to promote the vibrant cultural past and present of the Dominican Republic.

PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

Puntacana Resort & Club is home to the Caribbean’s ultimate beach and golfing experience, with 3 miles of magnificent white sand beaches and 45 holes of championship golf, set on 15,000 acres of land. As a sustainable coastal resort, Puntacana understands the importance of water conservation efforts. Because of this, their Tom Fazio-designed Corales and P.B. Dye’s La Cana golf courses are both covered in paspalum grass which has an elevated salinity level, and they are watered with sea water, thereby saving millions of gallons a year.

Easy accessibility is via the resort’s own international ‘green’ airport – Punta Cana International Airport (PUJ) – which includes a design that maximizes natural air cooling and the management of all airport and airline trash at Grupo Puntacana’s Recycling Center and Incinerator. The airport’s commitment to sustainability, combined with its understated elegance, defines the unique Dominican experience of staying at Puntacana Resort & Club, and makes it a favorite amongst international leaders and world renowned personalities.

The 200 room Westin Puntacana Resort & Club offers restaurants, meeting facilities, an expansive outdoor pool, beachside grill, lobby bar, a 24-hour business center, the brand’s signature Westin Workout gym experience, as well as walking trails.

PUNTACANA ECOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

In 1988, Grupo PUNTACANA designated 1500 acres of land as the Indigenous Eyes Ecological Park and Reserve and designated the newly founded Puntacana Ecological Foundation (PCEF) to run the reserve. PCEF is a not-for-profit foundation established to protect and preserve the natural resources of the Punta Cana region, while contributing to the sustainable development of the Dominican Republic. This commitment can be seen today in our efforts to restore the population of staghorn coral; promote sustainable, organic farming; conserve the Ridgway’s Hawk; implement a Zero Waste program at Puntacana Resort & Club; and protect our sea turtles.

Three other signature initiatives of the Puntacana Ecological Foundation are:

The Puntacana Center for Sustainability, which was established in 1999 as a research and education facility devoted to creating solutions to environmental and social challenges related to tourism development. The Center was originally created through a pioneering partnership between the Foundation, Grupo Puntacana, and Cornell University and has since been expanded to include a diverse and growing coalition of national and international institutions. The Center for Sustainability is equipped with laboratories, offices, a library, classroom facilities, dormitory rooms, as well as laundry and kitchen facilities for extended stays.

The Partnership for Ecologically Sustainable Coastal Areas (PESCA) was launched in 2004 as a long-term collaborative effort that seeks to balance the continued growth and development of the region, the long-term health and sustainability of the coastal zone and coral reef, and the needs of local stakeholders. PESCA projects include coral reef and coastal ecosystem restoration, sustainable fisheries management, conservation of endangered species, water quality monitoring, and the development of alternative livelihoods for local fishermen.

The Sustainable Agriculture project, which takes advantage of organic waste from landscaping, kitchens, and golf courses, to create natural composts and fertilizers that can be converted into year-round production of vegetables and fruits. Currently the Ecological Foundation sells arugula, lettuce, chives, peppers, basil, cilantro, and other produce to local restaurants, residents of the Puntacana community, and the area’s hotels.
IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YOUR STAY

CURRENCY

US Dollar    1 USD = 44.99 DOP
The Dominican Peso is the currency of Dominican Republic. The currency code for Pesos is DOP, and the currency symbol is RD$. Coins consists of 1, 5, 10 and 25, and bills, known as RD$, of 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1,000 and 2,000 denominations. The U.S. dollar is also commonly accepted.

DRESS CODE

Business attire is recommended for the opening ceremony, and light weight, business casual attire for the rest of the Think Tank. A sweater or jacket is recommended while at Puntacana Resort and Club, as rooms can be cold. Gentlemen are asked to wear long trousers for dinner at hotels. Hiking shoes are useful if you’re planning on exploring the island. Umbrellas and/or rain gear is recommended.

ELECTRICITY AND SOCKETS/PLUGS

Electricity in the Dominican Republic operates at 110-120V olts/60 HZ, which is the same as in the United States. The plugs are also the same as in the U.S. Converters are not necessary for Americans and Canadians. Europeans will need adapters for their electronics.

TRANSPORTATION

The Westin Puntacana Resort & Club is just three miles from Punta Cana International Airport. Transportation to and from the airport and to events within the Think Tank is provided by Gray Line Dominican Republic. The hotel provides free transportation to the retail shops, international restaurants, financial institutions, medical facilities, and salons of Galerias Puntacana.

REGISTRATION

All Think Tank delegates are required to check-in prior to participating in Think Tank events and will be given programs, badges, and other materials. Registration will take place in The Westin lobby from 1:30pm – 4:30pm on Wednesday, July 22nd.

BADGES

Think Tank delegates are required to wear their name badges to all activities, including social functions. It identifies you as a registered participant and is needed to access all of the Think Tank programming. Participants arriving prior to official registration can contact Samantha Hogenson through the front desk to register and obtain badges.

AMENITIES

The Westin is located at the magnificent Playa Blanca area, just minutes away from the airport. This 200 ocean view hotel features restaurants, an expansive outdoor pool, beachside grill, lobby bar, hand rolled cigar bar, and walking trails. Additional amenities include a 24-hour business center and the brand’s signature Westin WORKOUT gym experience.

DISABILITY ACCESS

The Westin Puntacana Resort & Club is committed to making their facilities, amenities, and services accessible to guests with disabilities. Please note, certain areas of the hotel are not fully accessible to guests with disabilities. Questions about the accessible facilities and services offered should be directed to the hotel at (1)(809) 959-2222.

INTERNET ACCESS

Wireless internet access is provided free of charge in the conference facilities. Wireless and high speed internet are provided in-room for an extra cost. Please inquire at the front desk to obtain in-room WiFi.

MEALS

Breakfasts: Included for conference participants registered with The Westin Puntacana Resort & Club. Inquire at the front desk for further information.

Lunches: Lunch will be provided for participants on Thursday, July 23, and Friday, July 24.

Receptions: Cocktail receptions will take place on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings. Programming will take place during the Wednesday and Thursday receptions, and transportation will be provided.

Dinners: Separate dinners are not provided, but all receptions will include food. A set discounted menu will be available for participants at select restaurants.

Participants will be responsible for all lunches and dinners outside of the official program.

HOTEL INCIDENTALS

Incidentals including in-room bar, telephone calls, internet access, and other hotel services will be paid by participants.

WEATHER

The weather is tropical with high humidity, with an average temperature of 79°F (26°C), although most of the year the temperature rises as high as 95°F (35°C) during the day. August is the hottest month of the year and January the coolest one.
4:15 PM  
Meet in lobby of The Westin for bus: Puntacana tour and opening reception

4:30 PM – 6:30 PM  
Bus tour of Puntacana, highlighting sustainability initiatives  
Led by Jake Kheel, Executive Director, Puntacana Ecological Foundation  
Tour ends at location of opening reception,  
the Rainieri residence

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
Opening Cocktail Reception, the Rainieri residence  
Brief welcoming remarks: Jake Kheel & Martha Honey, purpose of Think Tank  
Keynote Address: Frank Rainieri, President, Grupo Puntacana, “The Puntacana Model: Is climate change changing it?”  
Film Premier: Short segment from CREST’s new documentary “Caribbean ‘Green’ Travel,” a portrait of sustainable tourism in Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Grenada, and Aruba  
Conversation with Jake Kheel, Frank Rainieri, Ewald Biemans, and Russ Fielden  
Facilitated by Roger-Mark De Souza

8:30 PM  
Bus returns to The Westin  
Unprogrammed dinner
Climate Change and Coastal & Marine Tourism

Thursday
JULY 23

8:30 AM – 9:50 AM
Opening Session:
“Climate Change: Caribbean coastal tourism as a contributor and victim”
A facilitated conversation about the linkages between climate change and coastal tourism in the Caribbean. The panel will explore how the Caribbean is experiencing climate change, what actions and initiatives are underway to address climate change, and the role of tourism in both contributing to impacts and improving resiliency.
PANEL: Ambassador E. Angus Friday, Eva Näeher, Rodrigo Gallegos

10:00 AM - 11:20 AM
“Beach & Shoreline Protection: Current best practices & what needs to be done to address climate change impacts”
Panelists will examine the viability of techniques being used by private developers, government agencies, and local communities to prevent erosion of beaches, shorelines, and coastal ecosystems and protect tourism resorts, vacation homes, and other ocean front properties. What is working and what isn’t? What types of policies and strategies are needed to effectively ‘save’ beaches and shorelines from impacts of accelerating development and climate change?
PANELISTS: Robert Young, Judi Clarke, Esteban Biondi

11:30 AM – 12:50 PM
“Siting, Architecture, Design, & Construction in the Era of Climate Change”
Panelists will examine how a leading architectural firm is integrating climate change realities and projections into coastal tourism projects, how an individual resort has adapted design and building features to try to address climate change impacts, and how ‘green’ certification programs have helped individual properties and whole destinations implement sustainable practices that also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other contributors to climate change.
PANELISTS: Denaye Hinds, Ewald Biemans, Rodrigo Gallegos

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Lunch and Plenary Session at Ananí Restaurant, The Westin
“Large Resorts & Hotel Chains: Adapting to climate change”
Panelists will discuss how larger coastal resorts are being impacted by climate change, what changes they have already made in their construction and operations, and what they believe they will need to do in the future.
PANELISTS: Andrea Pinabell, Loreto Duffy-Mayers

3:10 PM – 4:30 PM
“Climate Change, Tourism, & Community Linkages”
Panelists will look at some innovative strategies for how coastal communities in the Caribbean are preparing for and addressing climate change. They will also discuss ways in which tourism businesses can work with coastal communities to develop collective efforts to address various causes and impacts of climate change.
PANELISTS: Sofia Perazzo, Eva Näeher, Paul Guggenheim

4:40 PM – 6:00 PM
“What’s the Scorecard: Are current best practices in coastal tourism enough to address climate change?”
In this interactive discussion, three experts will sum up the main points from the day’s discussion of coastal tourism and highlight areas where there are gaps between current practices and what needs to be done to address the expected impacts of climate change. Input will be solicited from all Think Tank participants.
Panelists: Michelle Rutty, Scott Curtis, Jake Kheel

7:00 PM – 8:30 PM
Evening Cocktail Reception & Plenary Session at Oscar Imbert’s Residence
Meet in the lobby at 6:45pm. Bus departs from The Westin at 6:50. Brief welcoming remarks by architect Oscar Imbert
‘Air Transport and Airports: Impact on climate change and ‘green’ innovations’
Panelists will discuss how a major airline is working to address climate change through reducing greenhouse emissions and other techniques, as well as how Puntacana’s innovative ‘green’ airport is designed to ‘reduce, recycle, and reuse’ resources.
PANELISTS: Sophia Mendelsohn, Oscar Imbert, and Antonio Segundo Imbert

8:30 PM – 10:00 PM
Unprogrammed dinner

Unless noted otherwise, all sessions will take place in Yuya 1 Conference Room.
Coffee/tea/water is provided morning and afternoon in the back of the room.
The Facilitator for all sessions is Roger-Mark De Souza.
Bios of panelists follow this section.
8:30 AM – 9:50 AM

Opening Session: “Overview: State of the Caribbean’s Ocean: Impacts from tourism and climate change”

This facilitated conversation will discuss decline in Caribbean fish stocks, coral reefs, mangroves, and other marine ecosystems. They will look at regional initiatives to address these issues which are caused in-part by unsustainable types of tourism and climate change.

PANELISTS: Ambassador E. Angus Friday, Mark Spalding, Ruben Torres

10:00 AM – 11:20 AM

“Marine Recreation & MPAs: Fishing, diving, surfing”

Panelists will discuss the role of the most popular marine recreational activities in contributing to climate change, as well as their potential to help mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. They will also discuss the role of MPAs in protecting fish and coral stocks, providing sustainable recreational activities, and reducing climate change impacts.

PANELISTS: Mark Spalding, Rick MacPherson, Chiara Zuccarino-Crowe

11:30 AM – 12:50 PM

“Marine Recreation Infrastructure: Cruise ships & port facilities and yachting & marinas”

Panelists will examine various ways in which cruise tourism – the Caribbean’s largest tourism sector – contributes to climate change and strategies to reduce these impacts, as well as the comparative impacts of yachts and strategies to make marinas more sustainable and more resilient to climate change.

PANELISTS: Esteban Biondi, Ross Klein

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Lunch & Plenary Session

“Sustainable Food Sourcing: Strategies for linking agriculture & fishing to tourism that help mitigate and adapt to climate change”

Panelists will highlight expanding efforts by tourism businesses to source food locally and sustainably and to promote local cuisine. They will discuss how climate change is disrupting agriculture and fishing, the impacts on the tourism sector, and innovative strategies in the Caribbean to improve resilience.

PANELISTS: Todd Comen, Scott Curtis, Dawn Martin

2:40 PM – 4:00 PM

“Climate Change → People Change: Communicating with the public”

Panelists will discuss how tourism businesses and the travel media can help to educate consumers about climate change and the imperative for sustainable tourism. The experts will look at how the brain processes messages, the astonishing growth and influence of travel blogs, and the increasing effectiveness of certification programs in highlighting both the risks of climate change and opportunities to create more deeply sustainable types of tourism.

PANELISTS: Victoria Anstead, Bret Love, Rodrigo Gallegos

4:10 PM – 5:40 PM

“What’s the Scorecard: Are current sustainable practices in marine tourism enough to address climate change?”

In this interactive discussion, three experts will sum up the main points from the day’s discussion, with a focus on oceans and marine tourism, and highlight areas where there are gaps between current practices and what needs to be done to address the expected impacts of climate change. Input will be solicited from all Think Tank participants.

PANELISTS: Robert Young, Rick MacPherson, Martha Honey

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Beach Party & Networking Reception

Playa Blanca Restaurant, The Westin Puntacana Resort & Club

7:30 PM – 9:30 PM

Unprogrammed dinner
Victoria Anstead, LEED-AP

As the founder and president of Tactical Aesthetics, Victoria Anstead conceives, produces, and manages international multimedia projects that spotlight innovative places around the world. By identifying and harnessing preeminent talent in art, design, science, and technology, she creates vehicles that engage the hearts and minds of audiences. At the heart of this work is the belief that it is people who make places and determine if they thrive — and people live through stories.

She uses the power of story to give voice to clients through exhibitions, film, the written word, and place-making through cultural and scientific programming. She advises on major master plans for the creation of and reimagining of districts and cities throughout the world, including New York City’s Water Street and East River Esplanade, Arlington County's Courthouse Square (Washington DC metro area), and Bahrain Bay in Manama, Bahrain.

Anstead is fluent in the language and practice of both the business and creative worlds and holds a MBA from the Kellog School of Management / Northwestern University. She has extensive experience in international management consulting and years of work as a curator and advisor in modern and contemporary art. Victoria attained LEED-AP accreditation from the US Green Building Council and was a member of New York City’s Benchmarking Committee.

Ewald Biemans

Ewald Biemans is founder and owner of Aruba’s Bucuti & Tara Beach Resorts, and he was one of the first to create a successful luxury resort with the environment in mind. A pioneer of the green movement in the Caribbean, Biemans has become known throughout the hospitality industry for his grassroots efforts promoting sustainable tourism. Since 2003, Biemans has led Bucuti Beach Resort to achieve yearly the ISO 14001 environmental certification. Biemans opened Bucuti Beach Resort in 1987 and has kept an average yearly occupancy of over 90%. He is also on the Board of the Aruba Tourism Authority, Chairman of the Board of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA), and a member of the Board of the Aruba Tourism Authority. In addition, he is President of Aruba’s SKAL club chapter, creator and long-time Chairman of AHATA’s Environmental Committee, Director of the island’s Arikok National Park Board, and a member of CREST’s Honorary Advisory Board.

The environmental honors Biemans has received include the Caribbean Hotel Association’s award for Environmental Stewardship (1997) and the International Hotel & Restaurant Association Award for Innovation in Environmental Best Practice (2004). Born in Austria, Biemans started his hospitality career with Hilton and Intercontinental hotels in South America. He now lives in Aruba, where he appreciates its natural beauty and personally takes great care of ten rescue dogs at his home.

Esteban Biondi

Esteban Biondi is the Associate Principal of Applied Technology & Management (ATM), specializing in marina and coastal development consulting services. His professional experience includes marina market and feasibility studies; marina site analysis and planning; environmental impact studies for a variety of coastal tourism projects; and environmental and coastal engineering resiliency design. He has directed over 70 consulting assignments for marinas in the last 15 years. He is actively involved in implementing marina design criteria that specifically address social sustainability issues, proactive environmental design, and sea level rise adaptation.

Biondi has experience in consulting services for coastal development, including sea level rise adaptation. As a practitioner, he has been involved in beachfront studies and coastal resort construction risk analysis in Latin America and the Caribbean, and has participated in urban waterfront planning for municipal project in South East Florida.

Judi Clarke, M.S.

Judi Clarke is a climate change adaptation specialist and has been the Caribbean Regional Director of CARIBSAVE since July 2010. She is responsible for general oversight of the organization’s projects being implemented throughout the Caribbean, and has specific management and technical responsibility for some. Clarke has a special interest in community-based adaptation, and her work has focused on the intrinsic relationships between climate change and livelihoods, gender, poverty, and development in vulnerable coastal communities in the Caribbean. Clarke has also worked with private sector stakeholders and the Government of Barbados to develop and implement coastal protection and marine conservation projects.

She holds a Master of Science Degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Management, with specialization in Climate Change and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Economics, both from the University of the West Indies. She was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of East Anglia, where she conducted research on climate change impacts and adaptation in the Caribbean and contributed to the publication Surviving Climate Change in Small Islands: A Guidebook, published by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Research. She has also published on other topics related to climate change.
BIOS

Todd Comen, Ph.D

Todd Comen is a Professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Johnson State College in Vermont, and teaches courses in environmental entrepreneurship and ecotourism in the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. He holds a Ph.D from the University of Vermont in the School of Natural Resources with an emphasis on food systems and multifunctional land management. He received his Bachelor’s degree in economics from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, and his Master’s Degree in Hotel Administration from Cornell University.

Comen has spent over thirty-five years in the tourism and hospitality sectors with broad experience, including developing and managing an integrated farming and agritourism attraction, a vegetarian fast food brand on college campuses, and a country inn on a 140 acre farm. He has recently launched a tour company with tours designed to feature small scale organic farms, artisanal food processors, and rural life ways with tours in Vermont and select international destinations.

Comen was born and raised in southern California within view of the Pacific Ocean and currently lives in Vermont. Over the years, he has travelled to numerous coastal regions of the world.

Scott Curtis, Ph.D

Scott Curtis is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, Planning and Environment at East Carolina University (ECU). He earned his Ph.D in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, in 1998. Curtis has been Assistant Director of ECU’s Center for Natural Hazards Research since 2006 and an affiliate faculty of ECU’s Center for Sustainable Tourism since 2008 (now Center for Sustainability). As an affiliate faculty, he has led the Climate, Weather, and Tourism initiative and consistently contributed to both the Center’s research and outreach activities and to the learning experiences of students in the M.S. in Sustainable Tourism. This activity earned him the 2013-14 Outstanding Affiliate Faculty Member of the Year award. Curtis has also published on weather and climate impacts to coastal tourism in the Outer Banks of North Carolina, in particular the differences in perceptions of climate change between local residents and second-home owners and the value and use of forecasts by tourism businesses. Finally, Curtis has researched Caribbean climates for many years and was recently funded by NSF to study small farmer vulnerability and resilience to climate change, market stress, and the role of water management.

Roger-Mark De Souza, M.A.

Roger-Mark De Souza is the director of population, environmental security, and resilience for the Woodrow Wilson Center, in Washington D.C. He leads programs on climate change resilience, reproductive and maternal health, environmental security, and livelihoods. Previously, De Souza served as vice president of research and director of the climate program at Population Action International. From 2007 to 2010, he was the director of foundation and corporate relations at the Sierra Club. For 10 years previously, he designed and implemented research, communications, and capacity-building projects in the USA, Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean at the Population Reference Bureau. Prior to that, he worked at the World Resources Institute. He is a member of the Global Resilience Academy and serves on the U.S. National Science Foundation Advisory Committee for Environmental Research and Education. De Souza has graduate degrees from George Washington University and the University of the West Indies. He is originally from Trinidad and Tobago.

Loreto Duffy-Mayers

Loreto Duffy-Mayers is currently the Regional Program Manager for the Caribbean Hotel Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Action (CHENACT). This IDB funded project is designed to improve the competitiveness of small to medium sized hotels in the Caribbean through greater energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy and micro - generation. Duffy-Mayers has held the position of Environmental Manager in several green hotels, including Coconut Court Resort, Casuarina Beach Club, and the Almond Resorts in Barbados and St. Lucia. Under her direction, these resorts received a number of prestigious international awards.

In addition, Duffy-Mayers has received many personal awards for her contribution to the promotion of sustainable tourism, including the Barbados Youth Environmental Programme award for contribution to the Environment, Barbados Governor General’s Award for Contribution to Green Tourism, Global Green Globe Champion award, EAST Award of Excellence, Barbados Minister of Environment award, and the Barbados Hotel & Tourism Association’s (BHTA) Environmental Award.

Duffy-Mayers was born in Dublin, Ireland and moved to Barbados in 1985. She was educated at University College Dublin where she completed a higher Diploma in Education. She also holds a Diploma in Marketing at the UK Institute of Marketing.
Russ Fielden, OBE

Russ Fielden is co-owner of True Blue Bay Boutique Resort, a Green Globe certified, 4 star hotel in Grenada. Originally from England, Fielden, a trained engineer, sailed to the Caribbean over 35 years ago and has worked in the hospitality sector ever since. He and his Mexican-born wife Magdalena, who is an architect, bought True Blue Bay in 1998. As owners, they encourage Grenadian youth to learn firsthand about the tourism industry. They offer in-house training and organized tours of True Blue for school children, which allows them to spend time in each department learning what it is like to work in the tourism industry. In addition, Fielden teaches a hospitality and tourism class in the rural Vendome School, which was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and never rebuilt. Several years ago, Fielden undertook the task to have the school reopened by fall of 2013 — and he successfully raised US $100,000 to fulfill this pledge on time. Fielden is committed to protecting Grenada’s environment and has lobbied hard to reduce the Grenada’s reliance on carbon fuels. In 2014, he was awarded the honor of Order of the British Empire (OBE) from Queen Elizabeth II for his contribution to Grenada’s tourism industry.

E. Angus Friday, Grenada’s Ambassador to the United States & Mexico

Dr. E. Angus Friday, a qualified medical doctor and MBA, is Grenada’s Ambassador to the United States and Mexico, Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS), and former Ambassador to the United Nations. Prior to his current role, he served at the World Bank for four years, during which time he also held the post of the Bank’s Oceans Representative, playing a key role in the development of the Global Partnership for Oceans and a critical role in developing a $30 million fund for renewable energy for island states. As Grenada’s UN Ambassador, he chaired the Alliance of Small Island States. He was instrumental in coordinating the group’s climate negotiations in Bali and presented the group’s position to the G8 meeting of Foreign Ministers held in Berlin in December 2007.

Prior to his UN role, Friday worked closely with the private sector and with the Grenada Government in developing strategies for national growth and in attracting investors to Grenada in the wake of Hurricane Ivan, which devastated the island in 2004. Prior to this, as an entrepreneur in London, Friday helped to pioneer the development of internet technologies in the National Health Service and attracted venture capital funding for IntegriSys, a company he founded in 1997. Ambassador Friday is an avid reader of current affairs and sustainable economic development issues and enjoys gym training, cycling, oil painting and master planning. He is a certified yacht skipper and SCUBA diver.

Rodrigo Gallegos, MPP

Rodrigo Gallegos is the director of Climate Change and Technology for the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness (IMCO). He heads research on technology, green growth and tourism, where in the past 10 years he has led more than 20 in depth studies, including the crafting of Mexico’s current climate change program and the first independent evaluation of the previous one.

Gallegos holds a Master’s Degree in Public Policy (MPP) from Harvard University and a Bachelor’s Degree in Economics from ITAM. Previous to his position at IMCO, he worked at the Office of the President, UNDP Bhutan, and Mexico’s Central Bank. Gallegos has written op-eds for El Economista newspaper and is invited to contribute to Foreign Affairs, Este País, and Expansion regularly.

Paul Guggenheim, M.S.

Paul Guggenheim is the Country Representative of Counterpart International, in the Dominican Republic. Guggenheim has more than 10 years’ experience in managing institutional and community capacity-building programs focused on environmental conservation, education, and health in Latin America, and the Caribbean. After receiving his degree in Cultural Anthropology in 1994, he worked as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras organizing communities protecting their watershed. After finishing his Master degree in Urban and Environmental Policy, he joined the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wetlands Division, also working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service coordinating the Ramsar Convention in the U.S. with the State Department and the National Committee.

In 2014, Guggenheim joined Counterpart International’s initiative to open a new office in the Dominican Republic to continue working on programs aimed at creating resilient coastal communities and find environmental solutions through innovative approaches to partnership, quality programming, and participatory activities. Counterpart International is supporting programs oriented to community development, youth opportunities, coral reef restoration, sustainable fisheries, and mangrove conservation.
K. Denaye Hinds, M.S.

As the head of OBMI’s Green Matters Studio, Denaye Hinds leads OBMI’s initiative within the sustainability sector. With her extensive experience in sustainable infrastructure, tourism operations, training and regulations for international standards and systems, she is responsible for building and leading OBMI’s Design and Planning sustainability policy and projects.

As a native Bermudian and engineer/project management graduate, Hinds has experience in sustainability planning at the destination and operations level, working with governments to produce sustainability plans for the tourism sector, and guiding sustainable development in various island-nations. Her role within tourism plans involves sustainability infrastructure, planning, and resource forecasting of islands to prepare for the future. She has provided guidance and developed plans to ensure longevity of industries with the goal of improving and implementing sustainable development.

Hinds is currently the Co-Chair of the Sustainable Tourism & Hospitality Initiative for the USGBC South Florida. She is the Technical Director of CAST (Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism), working to ensure sustainability resources for the region. Spearheading OBMI’s Social Responsibility, giving back to communities where she resides continues to be a driving force both personally and professionally.

Samantha Hogenson, M.A.

Samantha Hogenson serves as the program associate in the Washington, DC, office of the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST). At CREST, she is a lead consultant on climate change and tourism projects. She also manages the organization’s Travelers’ Philanthropy and internship programs and provides research and consultancy work on a wide variety of topics related to sustainable tourism. Prior to joining the CREST team, Hogenson worked on the American Society of Travel Agent’s (ASTA) Green Program, and as one of the first graduates with a degree in Geotourism, supported by National Geographic’s Center for Sustainable Destinations. She received her B.S. from Missouri State University and completed a Master of Tourism Administration with a concentration in sustainable destination development at The George Washington University School of Business. Hogenson is a trained Climate Reality Leader.

Martha Honey, Ph.D

Martha Honey, is co-founder and Executive Director of the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST). Over the last two decades, she has written and lectured widely on ecotourism, Travelers’ Philanthropy, cruise and resort tourism, and certification issues. Her books include “Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?” (Island Press, 1999 and 2008) and “Ecotourism and Certification: Setting Standards in Practice” (Island Press, 2002). She is currently writing a book on coastal and cruise tourism (Selling Sunshine, Island Press, 2016). Previously, Honey worked for 20 years as a journalist based in East Africa (Tanzania) and Central America (Costa Rica). She holds a Ph.D. in African history from the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. She was Executive Director of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) from 2003 to 2006. Honey was profiled in Branded!, Michael Conroy’s book on certification (New Society Publishers, 2007) and was named one of world’s top 10 eco- and sustainable-travel “watchdogs” (CondeNast Traveler, 2008).

Antonio Segundo Imbert Pellerano

Antonio Segundo Imbert Pellerano is the president of Simples Arquitectura, a Dominican architectural firm which he founded in 1998. Prior to launching this company, Imbert worked in architectural design and construction site supervision for Imbert-Domínguez, a firm owned in part by his uncle, Oscar Imbert. Many of his projects have been within the tourism industry, adding his expertise to projects such as the Punta Cana International Airport and various hotels and restaurants. Antonio Segundo Imbert has held positions as a design professor at both the Parsons School of Design in New York and Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña (UNPHU) in the Dominican Republic. He has been published in various specialized magazines about architecture in the Dominican Republic and abroad. Imbert holds degrees in architecture from Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña (UNPHU) and interior design from Parsons School of Design.

Oscar Imbert, M.Arch

Oscar Imbert Tesson is a respected Dominican architect with extensive experience in architectural design and supervision, specializing in tourist services, hotels, and residences. His designs pay homage to his Caribbean roots and have allowed him to obtain recognition both nationally and internationally, as well gain as an important position of influence in Dominican architecture. He has lectured at multiple universities, including his alma mater, Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña (UNPHU), Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) and Harvard University.

In 1984, Imbert and Eduardo Domínguez created the firm Imbert-Domínguez and Associates and completed many projects of note,
including Punta Cana International Airport, which has become a regional symbol for his great contribution to Caribbean architecture. Imbert has also gained recognition for a number of prominent residential projects. Joining forces with his nephew Antonio Segundo Imbert in 1998, the pair is known for their signature design of simple architecture.

Imbert is a graduate of the UNPHU School of Architecture and Planning and obtained a Master of Architecture at Pratt Institute in New York. He is known for their signature design of simple architecture. Also gained recognition for a number of prominent residential projects.

Ross Klein, M.S.W, Ph.D

Ross A. Klein is a Professor in the School of Social Work at Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada. He is an international authority on the cruise industry. He has lectured around the world, has worked extensively with grassroots and community groups concerned with the growth and impacts of cruise ships and cruise tourism, and is frequently contacted as a resource by the media. Klein has published four books, six monographs/reports for nongovernmental organizations, and more than three dozen articles and book chapters. More information about his work can be found online at www.cruisejunkie.com.

Klein completed a B.Sc. (Sociology) from Arizona State University in 1972. He received his M.S.W. designation in 1974 from the University of Maryland, moving on to earn his M.A. in 1979, and then his Ph.D. in 1982, from Syracuse University.

Jake Kheel, M.S.

Jake Kheel is Environmental Director for Puntacana Resort & Club, one of the most successful development companies in the Dominican Republic, with a distinguished history in sustainable development. For the past ten years, Kheel has overseen the Corporate Environmental Affairs for the resort, including solid waste management, environmental quality control, environmental permitting and energy and water conservation.

Kheel is also Executive Director of the not-for-profit Puntacana Ecological Foundation. Since its inception 15 years ago, the foundation has successfully implemented innovative solutions to numerous social and environmental issues in the Punta Cana region, ranging from implementation of the largest recycling operation in the country, conservation of endangered species, and coral reef restoration and marine management.

Under Kheel’s leadership, Puntacana Resort & Club has received numerous international awards, including the prestigious World Tourism and Travel Council “Tourism for Tomorrow” award for Destination Stewardship, the Conde Nast Traveler “World Saver’s Award,” and the “Global Vision” award by Travel & Leisure magazine. Most recently, Puntacana Resort and Club was recognized with Platinum Award in the HSMAI and National Geographic Traveler “Leader in Sustainable Tourism Award” category.

Kheel has a Master’s in Environmental Management from Cornell University and Bachelor of Arts in Spanish literature from Wesleyan University.

Rick MacPherson, M.S.

Rick MacPherson is Senior Advisor to The Pew Charitable Trusts Global Shark Conservation Campaign in the Caribbean and has a particular interest in the intersection of conservation and marine tourism. He is a coral reef ecologist, conservationist, and strategist with three decades of experience in helping local coral reef communities solve environmental challenges.

As a PADI certified diver for over 35 years, he has witnessed the decline of coral reefs during his lifetime. In response, MacPherson has become a passionate advocate and thought leader on the role of sustainable tourism as a lever for coral reef conservation. Achievements have included development of the world’s first standards for scuba diving, snorkeling, and boating; designer of the Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Marine Tours for the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), and founder of the Mesoamerican Reef Tourism Initiative—the longest-running sustainable tourism project in the Americas. With a belief and expertise in collaborative solutions, MacPherson has brokered partnerships across governments, corporations, NGOs, private sector, and local communities to arrive at pragmatic solutions to complex environmental problems. In 2013, he was awarded the Oris/Scuba Diving Magazine Sea Hero of the Year Award in recognition of his achievements in ocean conservation. He holds a MS in Environmental Theory; History and Philosophy of Science from Harvard University.

Bret Love

Bret Love is a journalist/editor with 21 years of print and online experience, managing writers, coordinating editorial, meeting deadlines, and delivering compelling copy that engages readers.

As a blogger, Love has built a niche ecotourism/conservation site, Green Global Travel, into one of the Top 50 Travel Blogs in the world by combining inspiring storytelling, sound SEO practice, and innovative approaches to social media. He’s become increasingly in-demand as a speaker and thought leader, covering topics ranging from branding and social media marketing to responsible travel and how DMOs can work with bloggers.

Love has also made a name for himself as a consultant, advising companies such as the Adventure Collection and International Expeditions. Love oversees all Green Travel Media projects personally, ensuring quality control, punctuality, and professional execution throughout every stage of our campaigns.

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Dawn Martin, J.D.

Dawn M. Martin joined SeaWeb in 2004, first as its Executive Director and then was appointed the organization’s President and Chair of the Board. For more than 25 years, Martin has utilized creative communication strategies to advance policy and conservation goals. Previously she has served as Chief Operating Officer for Oceana, Associate Deputy Administrator at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Political Director for American Oceans Campaign.

Martin brings a multidisciplinary approach that builds on her organizational management experience and skills as an attorney, strategic policy professional and communications specialist. She serves as a principal for the Communication Partnership for Science and the Sea (COMPASS), on the advisory board of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School, as a member of the Ocean Portal Editorial Board for the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, and a founding member of the steering committee for the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands. Martin sits on the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Board as a trustee, its Vice-Chair and Treasurer.

Martin has a degree in Political Science and received her Juris Doctorate from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles and studied international human rights and humanitarian law at the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, and the Henri Dunant Institute in Geneva, Switzerland.

Sophia Mendelsohn, LEED AP

Sophia Mendelsohn is currently the Head of Sustainability at JetBlue Airways, where she is shaping policies and practices that enhance JetBlue’s competitive advantage and reduce environmental impact. Prior to JetBlue, Mendelsohn was Head of Sustainability, Emerging Markets for Haworth Inc., a multinational manufacturer in the corporate real estate industry, where she was responsible for increasing sustainable product offerings in emerging markets, including Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Previously, Mendelsohn worked for the Jane Goodall Institute, an international NGO, in Shanghai, China, helping spread education about the environment to local and international schools in China. She is accredited in the Leadership in Energy, Environment and Design (LEED) green building rating system and certified to perform Life Cycle Analyses (LCA) and lead Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) reports. She speaks, reads and writes Mandarin, lived in China for over seven years, and is a passionate rock climber and traveler.

Brandon Nelson, J.D.

Brandon Nelson is the Vice President, Associate General Counsel at JetBlue Airways Corporation. Nelson joined JetBlue’s Legal Department in 2005. Prior to JetBlue, he practiced corporate and business litigation law at law firms in California and New York, including Shearman & Sterling.

Nelson was lead in-house counsel on Lufthansa’s purchase of 19.0% of JetBlue’s outstanding common stock. He has also handled various corporate governance matters and has drafted and negotiated a variety of important maintenance agreements and Aircraft Purchase Agreement Amendments with Airbus and Embraer, including amendments that modified aircraft delivery stream. Nelson is responsible for oversight of Corporate Contract Review Policy and has drafted and negotiated several sales and marketing agreements, including Dunkin Donuts and Bliss Partnership Agreements and all online distribution agreements.

Born and raised in Southern California, Nelson headed to the nation’s capital in August 1992 to attend Howard University. At Howard, Nelson majored in International Business, with a concentration in Finance. During his second semester junior year, he studied abroad at the prestigious University of Paris—La Sorbonne. Because of such early travel experiences, he continues to enjoy traveling abroad every chance he gets. Nelson holds a J.D. from New York University School of Law.
Sofia Perazzo, M.S.

Sofia Perazzo is Executive Director of Fundación Tropicalia, a nonprofit foundation in the Dominican Republic focusing on sustainable tourism real-estate development in partnership with the local community. With her Argentine roots and California upbringing, she says she is definitely a product of this globalized, chaotic and beautiful world. She has lived in eight cities in three continents; studied, lived and breathed international development for more than 10 years; and became part of Fundación Tropicalia’s conception and development in 2008. She advises Tropicalia on sustainability strategy, and together with her team, designs programs and seeks the right partners to help support the socio-economic development of the Miches community, located in northeast Dominican Republic on Samaná Bay. Perazzo obtained her B.A. in Political Science and Global Studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara; an M.S. in Global Affairs: International Business, Economics and Development from New York University’s Center for Global Affairs, and a Certificate in Corporate Social Responsibility from Harvard Business School.

Andrea Pinabell, LEED-AP

Joining Starwood in 2011, Andrea Pinabell, VP of Sustainability, is responsible for the company’s sustainability strategy, integration, operation and leadership across its ten brands and vacation ownership portfolio. She oversees Starwood’s efforts to reduce its environmental footprint and risk, increase its financial value through efficiency and top line growth, and positively impact the communities in which it operate. This includes aggressive environmental goals including 30/20 by 20. Starwood’s commitment to reduce its energy and carbon emissions by 50% and water consumption by 20% by 2020 and external CSR and CDP (Investor & Water) reporting. In this integrated role, she leads various operational & brand initiatives, programs and partnerships to address Starwood’s critical areas of focus including emissions, energy, water consumption and risk, sustainable food and beverage, supply chain, indoor environmental quality, waste reduction and diversion, and green building. Finally, she leads the Hotel of the Future project, a multi-disciplinary and integrated approach to sustainable design and development.

Pinabell, LEED-AP, brings a global perspective and over 20 years of engineering, sustainability, philanthropy, and environmental management experience. Prior to Starwood, she most recently managed the Sustainable Cities Institute and the Sustainable Community Development program at The Home Depot Foundation.

Michelle Rutty, Ph.D

Michelle Rutty is a Research Fellow at the Interdisciplinary Centre on Climate Change at the University of Waterloo, Canada. She has worked on the implications of climate change for the tourism sector for the past eight years, bringing together social and natural scientific approaches to examine the interactions of the environment and tourism sector. She has authored over 25 publications, presented at 26 conferences, including several invitations to speak at industry conferences, translating scientific knowledge into relevant information to aid businesses and government with climatic adaptation. Rutty’s research has received international recognition, including the Travel and Tourism Research Association Dissertation Award, the World Tourism Forum’s Young Talent Award, and the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario Award of Excellence.

Frank R. Rainieri Marranzini

Frank Rainieri is the President & CEO of Grupo Punta Cana, the Punta Cana Foundation and the Punta Cana Ecological Foundation. Rainieri is recognized as a visionary leader of the tourist industry in the Dominican Republic and the pioneer of the Punta Cana tourist destination. In 1971 Rainieri inaugurated the Punta Cana Club, along with American entrepreneur, Theodore Kheel. This project, consisting of 10 small bungalows, has developed into one of the Caribbean’s most exclusive, complete and elegant tourist complex: Punta Cana Resort & Club.

His contributions to the community have earned him several recognitions locally and internationally, including the “Presidential Citation Award”, given in 1985 by US President Ronald Reagan for Rainieri’s social work in San José de Ocoa, Dominican Republic, together with Father Luis Quinn.

In 1999, he was named “Hotelier of the Year” by the Caribbean Hotels Association and he also received the “5 Diamond Award” by the American Academy of Hospitality Science (AAHS) for his lifetime achievements.

He is also a member of the Directors Committee of the Caribbean Hotels Association, CHA and Founding Chairman of the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, CAST. He is also a member of the Clinton Global Initiative and the World Travel and Tourism Council.

Currently he is President of the Dominican Airport Association and Fundación Carso Los Haitises, (FUNKARST, INC.), a non-profit institution created to preserve Los Haitises National Park’s extensive biodiversity and aquifers. His company runs with the Catholic Church, a Polytechnic Institute in Punta Cana, which prepares more than 500 students for technical careers.
Mark Spalding, M.A., J.D.

Mark Spalding has been President of The Ocean Foundation since its founding. Under his leadership, it has grown from a $200,000 to $6 million/year budget, and he has prioritized its focus on steering the human relationship with the sea to a brighter future through diverse, carefully chosen strategies and projects. Spalding drove the design and establishment of the Alaska Oceans Program, the Shipping Safety Partnership, the Loreto Bay Foundation, and the St. Kitts Foundation. He advises the Rockefeller Ocean Strategy (an unprecedented ocean-centric investment fund), and designed the first-ever blue carbon offset program, SeaGrass Grow! He is currently a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Blue Economy, at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies. From 1994 to 2003, Spalding was Director of the Environmental Law and Civil Society Program, and Editor of the Journal of Environment and Development, at UCSD’s Graduate School of International Relations & Pacific Studies. He was a research fellow at UCSD’s Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, a Sustainability Institute – Donella Meadows Leadership Fellow, and a SeaWeb Senior Fellow. He holds a B.A. in history with Honors from Claremont McKenna College, a J.D. from Loyola Law School, and a Master in Pacific International Affairs from UCSD.

Ruben Torres, Ph.D.

Ruben Torres is the Regional Coordinator for Reef Check International /Fundación Propagas and the Founder and President of Reef Check Dominican Republic. In addition, he is the Director and Chairman of his own firm, Torres Environmental Consultant (TEC UNLIMITED). Torres serves as a member of the Regional Committee on Lion Fish of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN). He is also a mentor of the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers Network (CaMPAM) of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). Prior to joining Reef Check International, Torres was the conservation director of the National Aquarium of Santo Domingo. Torres holds a Ph.D. in Marine Biology from the University of Miami and an undergraduate degree in Biology from Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo.

Rob Young, Ph.D.

Robert Young is the Director of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, a joint Duke University/Western Carolina University venture. He is also a Professor of Geosciences at Western Carolina University and a licensed professional geologist. The Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines (PSDS) is a research and policy outreach center serving the global coastal community. The primary mission of PSDS is to conduct scientific research into coastal processes, storm impacts, and sea level rise and to translate that science into management and policy recommendations through a variety of outreach mechanisms. The Program specializes in evaluating the design and implementation of coastal engineering projects and helping communities develop coastal adaptation strategies. Young received a Ph.D from Duke University, where he was a James B. Duke Distinguished Doctoral Fellow. He is an elected Fellow of the Geological Society of America. Recently, he was a Fulbright Senior Scholar guiding coastal management planning along the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria. Young is a frequent contributor to the popular media. He has written articles for outlets like the New York Times, USA Today, and Architectural Record. He regularly appears on programs like PBS Now, CNN’s Anderson Cooper, and National Public Radio.

Chiara Zuccarino-Crowe, M.S.

Chiara Zuccarino-Crowe is the Tourism and Recreation Coordinator for the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries within the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In this role, she promotes sanctuaries as iconic destinations that conserve marine resources, while also allowing compatible recreational activities. This outreach provides a venue to raise awareness about the program’s ocean etiquette messages, as well as build partnerships in support of sustainable coastal tourism and responsible ocean recreation practices. Chiara also serves on working groups of the U.S. Tourism Policy Council and the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation.

Originally from the Great Lakes region, and a migratory transplant to multiple coastal areas, Chiara has always enjoyed living, working, and playing within a few miles of a major body of fresh or salt water. Chiara’s background is in aquatic ecosystem monitoring and assessments, environmental education and outreach, fisheries science, and the use of protected areas as a fisheries management tool. She holds a M.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife from Michigan State University and a B.A. in Biology from Boston College.
The combined emissions of small islands represent less than 1 per cent of global emissions. Yet these islands are the most vulnerable to changes in climate patterns, and rising sea levels can cause loss of land along coastlines of low-lying islands, disrupting economies and livelihoods.

—United Nations Environment Programme
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20 INNOVATORS THINK TANK: