

PRESS RELEASE

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Port St. Maarten attends Cruise World at Dutch Vakantie Beurs. Working to attract Luxury Cruise Lines

January 16, 2017 – PORT ST. MAARTEN – Representatives from Port St. Maarten attended in early January the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) Platinum Associate Membership Advisory Council Conference (PAMAC) meeting which took place on board Carnival Victory cruise ship, where Port St. Maarten received the Distinguished Strategic Partner Marketing Award 2016 from the FCCA and Cruise Line Executives.

Port St. Maarten was represented by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mark Mingo.

“I must say thank you to all, especially the staff of Port St. Maarten, and stakeholders with respect to the recognition that we received from the cruise industry by receiving this award. Despite the challenges we went through in 2016, growth for 2017 and beyond looks very good. Port St. Maarten continues to rank Number 1 in the Region, and this is due to the hospitality of our local stakeholders and the people of this island.

“One of the key points discussed with cruise lines was extending the strategic agreements with cruise line partners and the destination in order to protect our long term economic stability especially taking into consideration the opening up of Cuba. This will not happen overnight, but we must deliver every year a premium product for our cruise passengers and crew. Regional competition is at our heels and we need to continue to keep ahead and this can only be achieved by being innovative and reinventing our cruise sector.

“These meetings with key cruise industry leaders at the beginning of the year allow us to plan for 2017 and beyond. We are focused on strengthening our strategic agreements between the port and our cruise partners. This will result in increased numbers and quality passengers whose disposable income is higher. Based on our achievements in ratings as a destination, we are at the forefront and will continue to do what is necessary to protect our destination achievements which sustain our economy when we look at the impact the cruise industry has on our island.

“Discussions also took place with itinerary planners who determine cruise ship fleet deployments around the world including the Caribbean. 2020 is going to be a vital year for the Caribbean where the cruise industry is concerned and we have to be prepared. We are going to see a large number of new cruise ships being launched as cruise lines have made considerable investments in building new vessels as more people around the world plan to take a cruise as the industry continues to grow. Today, the Caribbean remains the top cruise destination with Sint Maarten Number 1.

“We have to continue to build upon our performance and satisfaction ratings. This is one of the key determinants for our destination. Marketing and promotions onboard cruise ships is still vital in order to make sure cruise line yields are met when they call at Port St. Maarten. New ventures and product developments must continue. Every year we must see something new being developed and opened. We welcome the new development of Rainforest which will come online later this year.

“As a cruise destination we have much to be thankful for, but we need to continue to make the necessary investments and offer new products and experiences in order to remain ahead and continue to grow,” Mark Mingo, CEO of Port St. Maarten pointed out.

Some of the executives that were present in one of the PAMAC meetings were: Carlos Torres de Navarra – Vice President, Commercial Port operations – Carnival Cruise Line (FCCA operations chairman); Russell Daya – Executive Director, Global Port Operations & Development Itinerary and Strategic Planning – Disney Cruise Line; Albino Di Lorenzo – Vice President, Cruise Operations – MSC Cruises (USA) Inc; Matthew Sams – Vice President, Caribbean Relations & Private Island Operations; Colin Murphy – Senior Vice President, Destination & Strategic Development – Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings; Federico Gonzalez-Denton – Associate Vice President, Government Relations, Latin America and the Caribbean – Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.; and Michele M. Paige – President – Florida Caribbean Cruise Association.

More than 100 attendees, including FCCA Platinum Members-key cruise tourism stakeholders-and over 30 high-ranking executives from the FCCA’s 19 Member Lines, were onboard Carnival Victory for the FCCA PAMAC Conference. Adam Goldstein, President and Chief Operations Officer (COO) of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. will be the incoming Chairman of FCCA.

The three-day event that took place from Friday, January 13 to 16 featured a series of meetings, workshops and networking events connecting with senior cruise industry leaders to discuss industry trends and standards and develop relationships and mutual benefits for the cruise lines and members' companies and destinations.

The PAMAC event is one of many that the FCCA coordinates for its Platinum Members and Member Lines to stay at the forefront of information about both the industry and destinations while finding ways to maximize the benefits for all.

The FCCA is a not-for-profit trade organization composed of 19 Member Lines operating over 100 vessels in Floridian, Caribbean and Latin American waters. Created in 1972, the FCCA’s mandate is to provide a forum for discussion on tourism development, ports, safety, security, and other cruise industry issue and to develop bilateral relationships with destinations’ private and public sectors.

By fostering an understanding of the cruise industry and its operating practices, the FCCA works with governments, ports and private sector representatives to maximize cruise passenger, crew and cruise line spending, as well as enhance the destination experience and increase the amount of cruise passengers returning as stay-over visitors.



PHOTO OUTLINE: L to R: Matthew Sams, Vice President, Caribbean Relations & Private Island Operations; Albino Di Lorenzo, Vice President, Cruise Operations – MSC Cruises (USA) Inc.; Colin Murphy, Senior Vice President, Destination & Strategic Development – Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings; Mark Mingo, Port St. Maarten CEO holding the award; Federico Gonzalez-Denton, Associate Vice President, Government Relations, Latin America and the Caribbean – Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.; Russell Daya, Executive Director, Global Port Operations & Development Itinerary and Strategic Planning – Disney Cruise Line; Carlos Torres de Navarra, Vice President, Commercial Port operations – Carnival Cruise Line (FCCA Operations Committee Chairman); and Michele M. Paige, President of the FCCA. These executives form the FCCA Operations Committee.

For further questions, please contact: comments@portofstmaarten.com