

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **Port St. Maarten Seatrade Cruise Global Conference a Success. Royal Caribbean to Increase Pax by 13 Per cent**

**March 19, 2017 PORT ST. MAARTEN** – Port St. Maarten officials returned from a successful Seatrade Cruise Global Conference & Expo that took place at the Broward County Convention Center from March 13-16 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Acting Minister of Tourism & Economic Affairs Rafael Boasman who led the Sint Maarten delegation to the conference and expo, received a first-hand experience of who are who and the dynamics of the cruise sector.

“In our discussions with our strategic cruise partner Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., the destination will see a 13 per cent increase in cruise passengers or approximately 100,000 for the 2017-2018 season. In addition to the 13 per cent increase, we are busy looking at the trends in order to increase the numbers further.

“Management has been working aggressively with its direct marketing approach. The port is busy compiling all brand numbers for the 2018-2019 season and will step up its marketing approach as additional ships currently under construction come online.

“In our discussions with Royal Caribbean, our performance as a port has increased substantially where it concerns ratings for safety and security as well as in several other categories. The port is busy with a survey and we are studying this very closely in order to further enhance and improve the destination experience for our guests,” Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mark Mingo said on Sunday.

During the conference and expo, Port St. Maarten Management and stakeholders received an update at the State of the Global Cruise Industry which was a highlight on the calendar for all executives in the maritime world that took place on Tuesday, March 14.

The 2017 State of the Global Cruise Industry also set the course for the week-long cruise industry’s premier global business-to-business event. Port St. Maarten Management also renewed relations with cruise line executives and other cruise stakeholders, and was able to give them an update about current destination developments, the home porting facility, and other port-cruise related and destination matters.

Seatrade Cruise Global is the leading annual global business-to-business event for the cruise industry, which brings together buyers and suppliers for a four-day conference and three-day exhibition.

Port and Government officials learnt that 2016 was an exciting year for growth of the cruise industry with over 30,000 berths and a total investment of close to US\$7.5 billion being invested. Over 10-ocean-going cruise vessels set sail in that year adding capacity to the global cruise market.

The 2017 State of the Cruise Industry Outlook, by Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), the world’s largest cruise industry trade association, says an increase in cruise travel is expected to continue throughout 2017,

with an estimated 25.3 million passengers expected to sail in 2017, a strong surge from 15.8 million just 10-years prior (2007).

More ships are to set sail in 2017, with cruise lines set to debut 26 new ocean, river and specialty ships in 2017 for a total investment of more than US\$6.8 billion in new vessels. From 2017-2026 the industry is expected to introduce a total of 97 new cruise ships totaling an estimated investment of US\$53 billion through 2026.

Cruise industry expenditures generated US\$117 billion in total output worldwide, supporting 956,597 full-time equivalent employees who earned US\$38 billion in come in 2015.

Officials were also informed about the trend in alternative fuels. The Aidaprima features dual-fuel engines for direct supply of LNG to fuel hotel energy needs while in port. New orders of luxury and upper premium ships are a trend as the market continues to grow.

The conference annually draws more than 10,000 registered attendees, over 700 exhibiting companies from 93 countries and more than 300 international journalists. Experts, leaders and thought-makers of the cruise industry from the world's largest cruise companies are the highlight of the conference.

The conference programs offered attendees a comprehensive roster of panel discussions and workshops featuring experts, leaders and thought-makers from the cruise industry.

The next Seatrade Cruise Global conference and expo will take place from March 5-8, 2018.



**PHOTO OUTLINE:** Acting Minister of Tourism & Economic Affairs Rafael Boasman (7th from left) along with Port St. Maarten Supervisory Board Members, Management and Staff as well as stakeholders from the Sint Maarten cruise sector at Seatrade Cruise Global.

**For further questions, please contact:** [comments@portofstmaarten.com](mailto:comments@portofstmaarten.com)