

Jamaica Steps Up Jamaica's Promotion In China

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Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, becomes his country's first cabinet minister to address the prestigious Chinese Outbound Travel and Tourism Market (COTTM) in Beijing.

Minister Bartlett is in Beijing with a delegation of Jamaican tourism representatives to promote travel to Jamaica from China. COTTM welcomed 250 organisations from 60 countries, 400 hosted buyers and 2,000 travel trade professionals.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the COTTM, Minister Bartlett drew upon the long history shared between these two nations. He underscored the fact that Chinese visitors first came to Jamaica in 1854 and established a significant community on the island, one that has contributed an important element to the fabric that makes up the Jamaican people.

In his remarks, Minister Bartlett went on to explain that Jamaican-Chinese relations 'have grown steadily since 1972 ushering in a period of sustained contact and friendship, underpinned by our firm commitment to the 'One China' Policy. Jamaica is fully committed to the growth and development of the Chinese Market.' Relations took a big step forward in 2005 when Jamaica was granted Approved Destination Status and the island country has been active in engaging outbound travel trade from China, a critical part to Jamaica's strategic tourism plan.

In 2007, Jamaica recorded its best year of stop over arrivals, welcoming over 1.7 million stay-over visitors and an almost equal number of cruise passengers. This growth is of significance as it has signalled growth in some non-traditional or emerging markets to which China has increasingly made a significant contribution. Chinese arrivals to Jamaica grew 10.3% in 2007 over 2006, so arrivals are continuing to grow and it is expected that this trend will continue. This expectation is consistent with the World Tourism Organisation projection of Chinese outbound tourism numbers being over 100 million in 2015. Jamaica recognises the efforts of the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and COTTM and congratulates them on China remaining Asia's largest source of outbound tourism with 40.9 million people travelling abroad in 2007.

Jamaica welcomed 142,861 visitors in the first month of this year, an increase of more than 10 percent over January 2007. Preliminary figures for February 2008 showed an increase of 17 percent and early indicators for March were trending 13 percent higher than March 2007.

With its geographic position, Jamaica is posed to become the strategic hub to the Caribbean and America from Asia and the Middle East. Jamaica is dedicated to being the centre of the projected expansion in the region and will start by providing a gateway for Airbus A-380s and 787 mega-lines in its part of the world.

As a result of its efforts to increase tourism, the Jamaica Tourist Board has been recognized for Marketing at the fifth annual CTW Awards. The Jamaica Tourist Board received a Gold Chinese Tourist Welcoming (CTW) Award for Marketing. The award was presented at a special CTW Awards ceremony during the China Outbound Travel and Tourism Market (COTTM) and was bestowed by the German-based COTRI (China Outbound Tourism Research Institute) and was recognised inside and outside of China as the most important quality sign for the international Chinese Outbound market, with wide coverage in the media. After submitting information about their product, as suited to the Chinese market, Jamaica was honoured with this award which recognises the efforts of international organisations that have adapted their product to cater for the Chinese traveller.

'We are honoured to receive this award, especially because it recognises Jamaica's continued focus on providing a tourism product that appeals to visitors from all over the world, including the important Chinese market,' said Jamaica's Minister of Tourism the Hon. Edmund Bartlett. 'China is a market of great importance to Jamaica, and we will continue to work to strengthen the ties between our two countries.'

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