INFORMATION NOTE

1. PLACE AND DATES OF THE MEETINGS

The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Tourism Conference will be held at the Melia Nassau Beach Resort in the city of New Providence, The Bahamas. The Conference will build up on the conclusions of the Conference on Sustainable Development of Tourism in Islands held in Reunion Island in September 2013 and shall serve as guidance to National Tourism Authorities and the international community as an input to the Third International Conference on SIDS, scheduled to be held in September 2014.

Melia Nassau Beach Resort
West Bay Street
P.O. Box N-4914
New Providence, Bahamas
Tel.: (242) 327-6000
Fax: (242) 327-5066


2. CONFERENCE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW (Please refer to Provisional Programme for more details and updated information)

Wednesday, 19 February

0830-0900 Registration

0900-1000 Official Opening of the International Seminar: TOURISM AS A KEY FACTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT IN ISLAND STATES by the Prime Minister of the Bahamas, Hon. Perry Christie, followed by the Open Letter Ceremony.
1000-1130  **SESSION 1**: Maximizing the local benefits of tourism

1200-1330  **SESSION 2**: Transport and air connectivity as a major factor for SIDS’ destinations

1330-1430  Lunch

1430-1800  **Ministerial meeting on Air Connectivity (Closed meeting for Ministers and invited guests)**
- A technical visit will be provided by the organizers for those not participating in the meeting

**Thursday, 20 February**

0930-1100  **SESSION 3**: Regional integration. Building partnerships to compete globally

1130-1300  **SESSION 4**: Climate Change and Environmental Challenges

1300-1400  LUNCH

1400-1600  **SESSION 5**: Innovation in Tourism Product Development: High volume vs. high value tourism. Where do we want to go?

1600-1730  **SESSION 6**: Resilient tourism development

1730-1800  Conclusions and closing

3. **REGISTRATION**

To register for the SIDS Tourism Conference: Tourism as a Key Sector for Development in Island States, contact the secretariat at secretariat@sids-tourism.org or please visit the following link:

www.sids-tourism.org

Registration will be open online until **February 1, 2014**. For any questions or further information, please contact the following persons:
4. ENTRY FORMALITIES

To enter The Bahamas, visitors travelling to The Bahamas for vacation or business are required to present a valid passport which must be current up to your travel period. The possession of a Bahamian visa may also be required for some countries. You must also have a return, or onward journey ticket, hotel confirmation (if staying at a hotel, or name and address of residence) and proof of funds to support your visit. To view the entry requirements for your country of birth, please download the PDF below.


For further information, it is recommended that participants contact the corresponding embassy or consulate of The Bahamas, or consult the website of The Bahamas Ministry of Foreign Affairs.


5. RECEPTION AT THE AIRPORT

The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism working with its other government partners will provide a reception service for the delegation at the Lynden Pindling International Airport, on the island of New Providence upon your arrival.

To allow the local authorities to organize this service, delegates are requested to specify on the participation form (registration), indicating their arrival, departure and airline information.

For transportation to the hotels from the airport, participants may use the taxis available at the arrival terminal or contact any of the rental car companies. Taxi rates usually range between $11 and $30 depending on the distance. Below is a sample of the taxi rates for New Providence:

Nassau/Paradise Island Taxi Rates

Lynden Pindling International Airport to:
- Cable Beach: $18.00
- Downtown (Bay Street area): $27.00
- Paradise Island: $32.00 (add $1 bridge toll)
Cable Beach to:
- Downtown: $15.00
- Paradise Island: $22.00 (add $1 bridge toll)

Downtown to:
- Paradise Island: $11.00 ($4.00 per person group rate for 4 or more passengers)

Please note:
- Surcharges often apply for more than two persons and extra luggage.
- Each additional passenger is between $3.00 and $4.00 per person.

6. ACCOMMODATION

Participants should make their own reservations with the hotels listed below and indicate that they will be participating in the SIDS Tourism Conference: Tourism as a Key Sector for Development in Island States.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotels</th>
<th>Rates BSD or US $</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Distance from venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melia Nassau Beach Resort</td>
<td>Ocean view Single or Double Rooms 144.00 per night*</td>
<td>Direct to bookings at the hotel through the Sales and Marketing Department, Melia Nassau Beach Resort Tel: (242) 327-6000 Fax: 327-5066 Or by emailing the following individuals: Felicianna Williams <a href="mailto:Felicianna.williams@melia.com">Felicianna.williams@melia.com</a> ext 860194 Lenora Greene <a href="mailto:Lenora.greene@melia.com">Lenora.greene@melia.com</a> ext 860191 Charmaine Smith <a href="mailto:Charmaine.smith@melia.com">Charmaine.smith@melia.com</a> ext 860138</td>
<td>Conference Host</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Towne Hotel</td>
<td>Superior or Junior Rooms with wifi (most with balcony).</td>
<td>Reservations can be made by contacting Ms. Ethel McPhee at the Hotel</td>
<td>7 miles from the Conference location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
$128 inclusive of taxes and breakfast.

(242) 322-8450

or by emailing

reservations@townehotel.com

Mention the SIDS Tourism Conference to access the special rate.
7. **HEALTH**

There are no mandatory vaccinations.

It is recommended that participants verify if the transit countries require any vaccination certificate of yellow fever or other vaccine.

8. **REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION BADGES**

Delegates can register at the desk located at the entrance of the conference room of the Melia Nassau Beach Resort, on Tuesday, 18 February, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

On the 19th February registration will be carried out at the information desk located at the entrance of the conference room from 8:00 a.m. onwards.

Participants are requested to wear their identification badges in a visible manner in the area reserved for the conference meetings and sessions as well as at the social events.

9. **WORKING LANGUAGES**

The working language of the SIDS Tourism: Tourism as a Key Sector for development in Island States will be English only.
10. WORKING DOCUMENTS

All delegates are informed that a conference booklet will be provided for their reference.

11. ABOUT THE BAHAMAS

The Bahamas is comprised of 700 islands spread over 100,000 square miles of ocean starting just 50 miles off the coast of Florida. The archipelago is an ecological oasis featuring 2,000 breathtaking islands and cays, and boasts the clearest water on the planet—with a visibility of over 200 feet. There are 16 major islands that are populated by the nation’s approximately 360,000 citizens.

As a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, The Bahamas recognises Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as the Head of State. Her Majesty’s representative is the Governor-General. The Cabinet constitutes the executive branch and has control over the Government. The Cabinet is comprised of at least nine Ministers inclusive of the Prime Minister and Attorney General.

Parliament constitutes the Legislative Branch, which is made up of a Senate and a House of Assembly. Subject to the provision of the Constitution, Parliament may make laws for peace, order and good government.

The tourism industry makes up the majority (approximately 60 percent) of the Bahamian economy. In 2014, the country will celebrate 50 years since the establishment of the Tourism Act, which enabled this industry to grow as successfully as it has. The second largest contributor to the Bahamian economy is the financial services industry. This industry accounts for approximately 15 per cent of Gross Domestic Product. The Government has offered several incentives to encourage foreign financial investment and the Central Bank administers restrictions and controls on capital and money market instruments.

12. OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

The official language of The Bahamas is English.

13. CURRENCY

The Bahamian dollar is held on par with the US dollar and both are accepted interchangeably throughout the islands. Credit cards and travellers checks are accepted at most locations on Nassau/Paradise Island and Grand Bahama Island. PLUS and Cirrus ATMs can be found at banks on Nassau/Paradise Island, Grand Bahama Island and on most of the major Out Islands.

14. CLIMATE

The low latitude and elevation of The Bahamas makes the weather a tropical one. With only 12 degrees Fahrenheit difference between the warmest month and coolest month in most of the Islands of The Bahamas, the trade winds bless us with warm weather, with winter lows averaging at 70
degrees Fahrenheit and summer highs with a humidity of approximately 80 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit.

15. LOCAL TIME

The Islands of The Bahamas is in the Eastern Standard Time Zone.

16. BANKING

Banking hours are Monday through Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. In Nassau/Paradise Island there are ATMs at both Paradise Island and Cable Beach casinos, and commercial banks. In Grand Bahama, they can be found at major banks, the casino and Port Lucaya and on The Out Islands, ATMs are at banks on all of the major islands. Most are equipped with +PLUS and Cirrus ATM systems.

17. DRESS CODE

For meetings, women usually wear business attire and men jacket and tie. For social events the attire is usually semi-formal or cocktail wear.
18. CONFERENCE TOURS

Conference attendees may choose to participate in pre or post conference tours courtesy of Bahamas Experience. To book any of the following tours, attendees may contact Mr. Michael Symonette or Ms. Megan Mounts at Bahamas Experience via telephone (242) 397-5000 or via email megan@smgbahamas.com.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exuma</td>
<td>199.00 per person inclusive of: Hotel transfers, Stops at Allen Cay and Ship Channel Cay, Fresh cooked lunch “buffet island style” (Grilled fish, grilled steaks, hot dogs, pasta salads, individual salads, veggies, fruits and cheeses) All inclusive bar, Iguana feedings, shark feedings, a conch show, guided nature walks etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Island</td>
<td>$80.00 per person inclusive of: Specialty Welcome Drink Upon Arrival, Full local buffet lunch: grouper fingers, hot dogs, peas n rice, mixed green salad, chicken pasta salad, fresh baked rolls, Daily Guided Snorkeling Tour w/ Basic Snorkeling Instruction, Snorkel Rental Gear (with a $10.00 refundable security deposit), Beach games and activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbour Island</td>
<td>$190.00 per person inclusive of: Guided walking tour (12 stops at historical sites), $20-food voucher for local restaurant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleuthera Overnight Trip</td>
<td>Round-trip airline ticket to Rock Sound, Eleuthera (Bahamasair): $171.00 each adult (inclusive of taxes and fees), Round-trip transportation from Rock Sound to Resort: $60.00 each adult Cape Eleuthera Marina &amp; Villas (14 rooms available) Room rate: $340.00 per night (inclusive of taxes and fees)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DAW Excursion Package Includes:
- Hotel pickup for DAW guests
- Public access to pink sand beaches
- $20 lunch voucher
- Guided golf cart tour and all day golf cart use (4) persons per cart – availability contingent upon group size.
ADDITIONAL HARBOUR ISLAND INFORMATION: Nassau – Harbour Island (High Speed Ferry) Departs Nassau – Every day except Tues. @ 8:00am Arrives HBI @ 11:00am
Departs HBI – Every day except Tues @ 3:40pm Arrives Nassau @ 6:45pm

Group Discounts: 15 – 29 persons 10% 30 – 44 persons 15% Min 45 persons 20%
19. TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN NEW PROVIDENCE

The Retreat Gardens

The Retreat Gardens is an 11-acre property that houses one of the largest private collections of rare and exotic palms in the world—about 170 species. It is one of four national parks in New Providence and headquarters of The Bahamas National Trust (BNT).

Harold and Wilson Ponds National Park

A stone’s throw from the nation's capital and tourism hub, Harold and Wilson Ponds host the island's highest concentration of herons, egrets, ibises and cormorants as well as the endemic Bahama Swallow. As an Important Bird Area, the Park is considered to be an indispensable habitat.

Bonefish Pond

A 600-foot boardwalk and viewing platform provides ample access to the Bonefish Pond on the south central coast of New Providence. It is an important marine nursery area for the island, providing a protective, nutrient rich habitat for juvenile stocks of fish, crawfish, and conch. This area supports a wide variety of waterfowl and Bahamian flora. The wetland also provides critical protection from storm surges for the island’s southern shore.
Ardastra Gardens, Zoo and Conservation Centre

This unique attraction is home to the well trained, world famous marching flamingos. Its mini zoo has more than two hundred mammals, birds and reptiles that are nestled in over five acres of plush, tropical landscape.

Clifton Heritage Park and Tours

At Clifton Heritage you can find remnants of the historical and cultural legacy of three important groups that had an impact on the country: the Lucayans, the Loyalists and Africans. Managed by the Clifton Heritage Authority, Clifton Heritage Park was established in June 2004 to preserve this important area for the use and benefit of the people of The Bahamas. A walk along the winding trails throughout the park will reveal a variety of ecosystems, such as native coppice, cliffs, coastal wetlands, dunes, rocky shorelines, sandy beaches, and offshore coral reefs. Local fauna include songbirds, wading birds, seabirds, and other wildlife. You can enjoy swimming, fishing, hiking, camping, snorkeling, birdwatching, and picnicking in the Park, plus the Sacred Space is perfect for wedding ceremonies and spiritual retreats, and the panoramic views from the cliffs provide perfect photo opportunities. The Park is closed for all activities after dark except boat launching and pickups.

Balcony House

A free standing balcony gives this 18th century wooden Loyalist-style, architectural gem its name. Charming Balcony House is believed to be Historic Nassau’s oldest standing residence; it was
fully restored as a period museum in 1992 and appointed with stately furnishings and unique objects. Daily Guided Tours

**Historic Heritage Sites**

New Providence is home to Gambier, Adelaide and Fox Hill—three historic villages settled by liberated slaves in the 1800s. The villages still maintain their rich African heritage and culture and sightseeing tours can be arranged by appointment.

**Fort Charlotte**

Fort Charlotte is by far the largest and covers 100 acres. Located on a hill overlooking the far west end of the harbour, it commands an impressive view of Paradise Island, Nassau and the harbour. Built in 1788 by Lord Dunmore the fort was named after the wife of King George III, Queen Saharia Charlotte. The middle bastion, Ft. Stanley and the western portion, Ft. D'Arcy were added later. This fort has a moat, dungeons, underground passageways and 42 cannons, which have never been fired in an act of aggression. Tour guides (working for tips) are happy to give you a complete history of the fort. It is one mile west of downtown Nassau, just off West Bay Street.

**Fort Fincastle**

The Fort was constructed of cut limestone 1793 and strategically placed atop Bennet's Hill to protect historic Nassau town and harbour; it was built under the governorship of John Murray, also called Viscount Fincastle, in the shape of a paddle-wheel steamer. Daily guided tours.

**Fort Montague**

Built in 1741 of local limestone, Fort Montagu is the oldest fort still standing on the island of New Providence. It is at the eastern end of Nassau harbour along the waterfront. Tours are conducted Monday through Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There is no admission charge.

**Queen's Staircase**

The Queen's Staircase, commonly referred to as the 66 steps, is a major landmark that is located in the Fort Fincastle Historic Complex in Nassau. It was hewn out of solid limestone rock by slaves between 1793 and 1794 and it is said that it provided a direct route from Fort Fincastle to Nassau City. These steps were later named in honour of Queen Victoria, who
reigned in Britain for 64 years from 1837 to 1901. There are only 65 steps visible because the pathway that leads to the steps was paved and the bottom step is buried under the asphalt. Free admission - open every day.

Arawak Cay

Arawak Cay offers the authentic atmosphere of the Bahamian Fish Fry with vendors selling made to order conch salad, fried fish and other Bahamian dishes. Arawak Cay was artificially built from the sand when the harbour was dredged in 1969. There is a Police Station, a storytelling porch for special events, an old Bahamian rock oven, an open stage and an open grassy area with seating for the audience where concerts and other productions are held. Sunday nights is when the majority of locals can be seen at Arawak Cay or Fish Fry as the locals would say. Dress: Casual

Straw Market

Straw vending is considered one of the country's oldest industries with organized markets in Nassau, Cable Beach, Paradise Island and a number of The Family Islands. Stroll down to the famous native Straw Market where you can find bustling activity with vendors who are willing to bargain with buyers. Open 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Bay Street

Bay Street, the main street of the city of Nassau, is the premier shopping mecca for millions of tourists who visit New Providence every year. The island's oldest thoroughfare, it was constructed on
reclaimed coastal land. The buildings lining both sides of Bay Street reflect the architecture of the country's history as a British Colony. Friendly police officers wearing attractive uniforms provide great photo opportunities and will not mind if you ask to take a picture with them.

Cable Beach

Cable Beach is another major shopping strip located on the western end of the island. It is recognized as “the hotel district of Nassau”. A new super hotel complex called BahaMar is under construction and is projected to open at the end of 2014. This resort will have five hotel brands and cater to the luxury market. In addition to the hotels, various shops and restaurants line the streets of Cable Beach.