



Efforts focused on Regional Sustainability

The Caribbean Tourism Organization's main objective is the development of sustainable tourism for the economic and social benefit of Caribbean people. The CTO has more than 30 Dutch, English, French and Spanish country members along with a number of private sector allied members. The CTO is headquartered in Barbados and manages offices in New York and London.

Gail Henry, CTO sustainable tourism product specialist, and Carol Hay, CTO director of marketing for the U.K. and Europe, participated in an intensive course in tourism and international cooperation for development offered by the UNWTO.

How does the CTO differentiate the Caribbean experience from that of other sun and sand destinations?

"From a marketing perspective, we look at what's authentic about the Caribbean," Hay said. "It's so important that we look at what makes us unique: our people, our culture, our heritage, our music, and we really focus a lot on that."

Henry said the availability of unique regional products is a possible differentiator from other destinations.

"Because our membership is so diverse, we have to make sure that we promote the full range of products that the Caribbean has to offer," she said. "You find very different destinations such as Guyana, Belize, etc., that are very eco-centric, with eco- and nature-based types of products. And then you have some that are mainly the sun, sea and sand type of product with other natural and cultural heritage."