

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC FOCUSING ON BUSINESS TRAVELERS



The Dominican Republic tries to attract business tourists attending congresses. Each business tourist participating on a convention is estimated to spend 200 and 300 dollars per day during a 3-day stay. Such tourist also generates income to people working in audiovisual services and excursions. Ellis Perez, ex-Tourism minister suggested building a great convention centre in the city of Santo Domingo.

The present Ministry of Tourism wants to start a national airline, Aerolíneas Dominicanas in 2008 and also plans to build 8,000 homes to improve living conditions in tourist areas like Puerto Plata, Samaná and Higüey. Tourism Minister Félix Jiménez says that these actions are necessary to ensure five million tourists to visit the country in 2008.

The executive vice-president of Viva Wyndham Resorts, Rafael Blanco claims that some investors could lose trust in the Dominican Republic, because of the increasing taxes. A new 5% tax on hotel, motel and apart-hotel rooms is proposed. There are also increased rates on products purchased by hotels, such as alcoholic beverages and cigarettes. Hotels make a plan for often 5 years ahead, but during the past four years, there have been three tax reforms representing three tax increases. This is causing real troubles to the hoteliers. On the other hand the crime rate is rather high in this country. The cases of theft, robberies, muggings and pickpockets are often. Another thing that scares off some travelers is hurricanes. They periodically destroy whole cities and tourist resorts. At the same time, the Dominican Republic is sometimes referred to as a poor man's Puerto Rico. There are nice beaches inexpensive resorts and also nice outdoors.

Nowadays is the Dominican Republic behind other countries in the region and it is not benefiting from hosting conventions and congresses. Principal receptors of business tourists are Puerto Rico, Cuba, Mexico and some Central American countries.

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