

REBUILDING HAITI'S TOURISM INDUSTRY



Haiti is undeniably one of the most fascinating destinations in the Caribbean. Unfortunately, the country's tourism industry suffered immensely from the earthquake that has ravaged its islands back in 2010. The said earthquake had caused the loss of a large number of properties, and worse the lives of hundreds of Haiti nationals. The world became witness to the debilitating tragedy which then triggered various movements and cause-driven initiatives, all in support of the country's recovery.

Now a couple of years after the aforementioned natural calamity which had destroyed much of the country's capital's infrastructure and livelihood, things are finally looking hopeful for Haiti and its people. This is the result of sustained and united efforts from the government, non-profit organizations, various corporate entities, and worldwide community. Moreover, this revival is also vastly attributed to the sheer audacity inherent to the Haitian people who have already seen various atrocities - whether political or natural - in the past.

A construction development is now underway in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. Amidst the rubbles, the Occidental Luxury Hotel has recently been completed. This hotel serves as a testament to Haiti's unwavering initiatives to rekindle its previous glory. The Occidental Luxury Hotel is replete with all the essentials for a five-star accommodation: comfortable rooms, lifestyle amenities, and even an infinity pool strategically situated on the building's rooftop. The Marriot is also set to be launched sometime in 2014.

Aside from the Occidental Luxury Hotel and The Marriot, other infrastructures are also in their conceptual phase. For instance, the worldwide organization, The Red Cross, is bent on emulating the project enacted by the Kenya Red Cross Society which had established the four-star accommodation The Red Court Hotel in Kenya. Haiti's Red Cross organization is planning to erect a hotel near the national airport. This prospect, as viewed by the organization, poses a lot of benefits both to tourists and Haitian residents.

Other tourism efforts are also being polished such as the so called Cruise with a Cause. This is said to be Port-au-Prince's first ever cruise vessel after more than two decades of cruise inactivity in the capital. According to several meetings and discussions, this project is set to "sail" in the year 2013.

In order to further reinforce the country's tourism revival, its major airports are also being rehabilitated. The Port-au-Prince International Airport is currently under reconstruction. This project is costing the country of Haiti millions upon millions of dollars, but the authorities believe that this expense is a rather practical investment. Another airport, Cap-Haitien International Airport, is also scheduled to be launched in 2013.

These rebuilding efforts will draw funds from the so called "tourist card" which will be mandated to all non-Haitian vacationers and tourists. This approach will incorporate tax levies on various tourism prerequisites such as plane ticket prices. Of course this would mean that tourists who wish to visit the country are expected to spend more than the usual, but the government and other tourism experts are convinced that this will eventually prove beneficial to all individuals and groups involved, especially for the people of Haiti.

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