

TOURISM IN CENTRAL AMERICA HELPS THE ECONOMY AND REDUCES POVERTY



According to the Nicaraguan head of the Ministry of Tourism Integration (SICA), Anasha Campbell, tourism in Central America has had a positive and steady growth for over 10 years and it became the primary sector reducing poverty in the region.

Tourism reduces poverty since it has cross-sector links including health, education and security. **The industry provides many opportunities to generate revenue in Central America.**

In 2013 the region welcomed more than 9 million tourists, 4% more than in 2012, which resulted in foreign exchange revenues increase by more than \$11,000 million, according to Ms. Campbell.

The data from the Dominican Republic show that last year the country attracted 13.7 million tourists. The expenditures of tourists reached \$16.024 million which highly benefited the economic development in Central America and Dominican Republic.

According to Ms. Campbell, tourism sector generates significant amount of jobs all across the region. **Currently there are 200,000 jobs in tourism not taking into account indirect jobs.**

However she pointed out that the high prices of air travel is a serious factor limiting further development of tourism in Central America. Currently, 30 to 40 minute long flight between Central American countries usually costs \$500- \$700, depending on the occupancy of flights.

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