

MEXICAN MINISTRY ACKNOWLEDGES THE IMPORTANCE OF LGBT TOURISM



Cancún, Mexico City, and Puerto Vallarta are among the friendliest Mexican destinations for gay travelers, stated a representative from the Ministry of Tourism. According to him, the LGBT tourism is an important market for Mexico and needs further support.

Carlos Joaquín González, Undersecretary for Innovation and Tourism Development in the Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR), was sworn in as a member of the new Board of the National Association of Trade and LGBT Tourism of Mexico AC (CANCOTUR) which is chaired by Osoreo Mariano.

During the ceremony, the Undersecretary acknowledged that **lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender tourism (LGBT) has become an important market that can bring huge benefits to the industry by offering a variety of services, inclusiveness and respect for this tourism niche.**

He further said that SECTUR and the Mexican Government have carried out a Diagnostic Study of Potential at Mexico's tourism destinations with respect to the LGBT segment. Cancún, Mexico City, Puerto Vallarta, Cuernavaca, Oaxaca and Guadalajara, among others, have been identified as Gay Friendly.

He said that a workshop was also held focusing on LGBT tourism and it involved the participation of 15 states interested in entering this niche market and in updating their range of tourism products.

Carlos Joaquín also mentioned that the Ministry of Tourism supported the LGBT Fairs held in Guadalajara in 2013 and in Puerto Vallarta in 2014, and will be supporting the next one to be held on September 18 and 19 in the city of Mérida.

Working with the CPTM, SECTUR promoted the Accreditation Scheme for the Supply of Information on Destinations and Training of Tourism Services Providers for the LGBT market in the states of Guerrero, Veracruz and Morelos, as well as some communication strategies geared towards the sector. These include institutions posting messages on social networks, which have been called "network friendly".

Globally, this type of tourism is growing at an annual rate of 10.3 per cent, compared with the 4.7 per cent overall growth in tourism, according to data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

In Mexico, this sector accounted for three million international visitors last year, with an average consumption valued at approximately \$1,550, almost double the \$780 average consumption of the traditional visitor in Mexico. The official said, in conclusion, that internationally this represents a potential market of 180 million people, with an annual spending of about \$200 million in the tourism sector, which is 55 per cent higher than that of the world's main source market, China, with \$120 million.

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