

PANAMA LAUNCHING A NEW PROMO CAMPAIGN



The international marketing of Panama as a destination for shopping, culture, beaches and nature is central to the short-term plan coming out of the local Tourism Authority.

Speaking to the press, the director of the agency, Gustavo Him, said the marketing campaign will be in effect until December and is aimed primarily at Europe, South America and United States.

The initiative, for which about eight million dollars have been earmarked, is intended to slow the marked downward trend recorded for the sector in the country over the last three years. In this regard, president of the Panamanian Hotel Association, Sara Pardo, put the decrease in the average rate and profitability since 2012 at nearly 30%, and she reported a 15% decline in the occupancy levels, due to an oversupply of rooms.

The union leader said that every business operates according to the supply-demand link, which is difficult to control, but there has to be a sustainable tourism plan. She said that each hotel chain that opens to the public spends between 10 and 15 per cent of its budget on international marketing.

According to Him, the influx of tourists is growing due to the variety of facilities in the sector, which has to deal with the significant impact of private accommodation. Because of this, she said, a strategy is expected to be implemented at the Tocumen International Airport **to capture at least 10% of the number of visitors to the country, which is six million annually.**

According to the official data, tourism accounts for around 10% of the country's Gross Domestic Product.

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