

# GUYANA: CRIMINALITY CAUSES PROBLEMS TO TOURISM



The co-operative Republic of Guyana is a former British colony and it is the only English-speaking country in South America. The country occupies the area of 214,969 sq km. The capital is Georgetown.

There live some 751,000 people of which approximately one third is descended from African slaves. Some 50% of the population is made up by Indian agricultural workers brought in by the British after slavery was abolished.

Guyana is a densely-forested country with spectacular waterfalls, wonderful plants and trees. Its scenic beauty as well as many remarkable animals makes this country a very attractive destination for eco tourists.

There are many issues that worry people of Guyana such as environmental threats to the coastal strip and rainforests or the problem of poverty. Among other things, a big problem is criminality and the drug trade, which make the situation very difficult for the tourism industry as it scares tourists off. There are also other problems within the tourism industry. For instance, the new Value Added Tax that has made tourism products 16 percent more expensive has been lately imposed.

Nevertheless, there are also positive things about the tourism in Guyana. The country hosted the Cricket World Cup that led to some improvements in the tourism industry. The Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana (THAG) says its priorities are training and retraining of staff within the industry and the improvement of the tourism products.

Cathy Hughes President of the Tourism Hospitality Association of Guyana said: "Untapped opportunities such as international marketing of fishing competitions and good music festivals as I am intimately aware of, all offer massive potential but this must be carefully planned, well researched as you would any serious business proposal and implemented urgently."

In 2006 there were huge direct financial investments in the accommodation sector and now, as Ms. Hughes says, it is important to get as much profit from these investments as possible.

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