

TOURISM IN COSTA RICA TO SUPPORT LGBTI TRAVELERS



The National Chamber of Tourism (CANATUR) in Costa Rica emphasized the importance that the country respects the rights of LGBTI population (lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex). According to the chamber the LGBTI travelers represent an important part of tourism in Costa Rica.

According to Sary Valverde, president of the chamber, said that the numbers of visitors depend not only on the arrival of **LGBTI travelers, who represent a 10% of the total foreign arrivals in the country**, but they are linked to the business sector.

Valverde said that many companies over the world only hold conventions or send their employees as part of incentive programs or rewards, to countries that respect human rights.

“The (LGBTI) tourism that arrives to the country represents 10%, but not only the LGBTI tourism arrival is important, but the inclusion part of the LGBTI population in our society and the respect for human rights. There are many companies in the world that plan their incentive programs, conventions, and rewards to take place in countries that respect human rights and are LGBTI inclusive, it really isn’t just about the tourism arrivals,” said the president of CANATUR.

This was stated by the president of CANATUR after a meeting with the members of the chamber, joined by the candidate for the presidential election, Carlos Alvarado.

For his part, the politician said: “We are committed to nation branding, which is the main intangible asset that tourism in Costa Rica has to offer and we don’t want to compromise its credibility from the perspective of democracy, particularly its credibility in human rights. 10% of the country’s arrivals are represented by LGBTI population and following the threats that my opponent has made and the discrimination he boasted against that population, **then we are driving away 10% of those tourist arrivals that is so vital for our economy.**”

This isn’t the first time that Sary Valverde has referred to the risk of a possible fall in foreign arrivals to the country. She also expressed her concern about the idea of removing Costa Rica from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. That day, she stated, the country was seen worldwide as homophobic and against the rights of the LGBTI population.

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