

MEXICAN CARIBBEAN TO OFFER DISCOUNTS DUE TO SARGASSUM SEAWEED



Because of the Sargassum seaweed problem, hotels in the Mexican Caribbean will offer discounts of 15 to 25 percent, with the aim of attracting a greater number of visitors in this summer season, reported José Manuel López Campos, the president of the Confederation of National Chambers of Commerce, Services and Tourism (Concanaco-Servytur).

He also said that with this measure is expected to maintain a hotel occupancy about 80 percent during this holiday season, similar to the last year.

The brown seaweed has been invading the white sand beaches of the Mexican Caribbean for several years. This year, the coasts of Mexico seem particularly affected. Today, more than 995 km of beaches in Mexico are affected by visual pollution as well as its very unpleasant smell of rotten eggs. Naturally, the algae is no attraction for potential visitors. Thus, the hoteliers take care of removing the algae daily.

Mr. Lopez Campos trusted that the companies of the tourism sector reach sales up to 397 billion pesos (about US\$21 billion), a figure representing 5% increase compared to the 378 billion pesos (about US\$20 billion) that were achieved last year.

Lopez Campos estimated that during the holiday period from the mid of July up to end of August, 69.3 million tourists will come for their vacation in Mexico, which means an increase of 3.0 percent compared to the number of visitors of the same period of the previous year. **It is expected that 50.8 million tourists will be domestic travelers and 18.5 million will be foreign tourists** from different areas of the world, mainly from the United States, Canada, and Europe.

The expert was optimistic in spite of the persistent problems, such as the Sargasso pollution in the beaches of the Mayan Riviera, the security issues in some regions and the inadequate air connection with some tourist destinations.

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