

DOMINICAN TOURISM IS STILL DOWN -8.6% COMPARED TO 2019.



Tourism is one of the pillars of foreign exchange income for the Dominican Republic, along with national and free zone exports, foreign direct investment and remittances sent by Dominicans living abroad.

Tourism activity also has in its favor that it's part of a broad economic chain that generates direct jobs in hotels and indirect jobs through the various companies that supply services around tourism.

Hotels, bars and restaurants are part of something known as the "entertainment industry" and **everything around it implies economic opportunities and the generation of foreign currency.**

When talking about the recovery of Dominican tourism, which was the hardest-hit industry by the restrictions and quarantines imposed during the covid-19 pandemic, it is necessary to compare the current results with those of 2019, the year prior to the virus outbreak.

The 2020 figures were not very positive, while those of 2021 showed the beginning of a recovery trend, but nothing near the 2019 levels. Bearing that in mind, 2022 is expected to be the year of full recovery.

The authorities of the Ministry of Tourism pointed out that the arrivals of foreign visitors and non-resident Dominicans to the country in the first three months of this year far exceed those of the same period of 2020 and 2021.

However, it would be a mistake to ignore the indicators of 2019, the year prior to the pandemic, which was not good either, since in that year the Dominican tourism sector did not grow more than 1% compared to 2018. Even so, 2019 should be the year of reference.

The Dominican tourism sector is on the path of recovery, but still far from the desired goal. In March 2022, 617,756 tourists arrived to the country, a much higher number than the 313,289 arrivals during the same month of 2021 and the 270,049 arrivals registered in 2020.

However, that number is 8.2% lower than the 672,969 foreigners and non-resident Dominicans who came in March 2019, when there was no pandemic. The same is true for the entire first quarter, a period of the year when more visitors are expected to arrive. In the first quarter of this year the country received 1,714,947 tourists. That amount implies a drop of -8.6% compared to the 1,876,144 visitors received during the same quarter of 2019.

Minister of Tourism, David Collado, who is recognized for his high efficiency and constant work towards the recovery of the sector, highlights in his monthly presentation of Dominican tourism indicators the growth of this year by comparing it to the first quarter of the years 2020 and 2021.

The war between Russia and Ukraine has caused cancellations of flights of tourists from those nations who visit the country every year. In addition, there are other related elements that affect or limit traveling from other nearby nations in Europe and even from the United States as an indirect

result of this situation.

Tourism is doing well, it is in the process of improvement, but it is not yet in good shape. **The industry has still not recovered to the levels before the pandemic and even when such a goal is reached, then the country will have to work much harder to start the path of real growth.**

Nothing or little is done by presenting statistical half-truths when the reality is that, so far, tourism decreased by 8.6% compared to 2019.

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