

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**AIR TRAVEL IMPROVEMENTS (INCREASED CONNECTIVITY) EXPECTED  
FOLLOWING ROUTES AMERICAS 2023 CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO**

**Port of Spain, 29<sup>th</sup> March** – The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts (MTCA), Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (“the Authority”) and Tourism Trinidad Limited (TTL) are pleased to announce a successful and promising participation in the Routes Americas 2023 conference, held in Chicago over three days last week (21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023).

The delegation for this key conference in the global aviation industry was led by Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Senator the Honorable Randall Mitchell. This forum brought together decision makers from airlines, airports, tourism authorities, and other aviation stakeholders from across the Americas and beyond, to discuss air service development and network planning.

Being at Routes was important so as to create direct linkages with current and new partners in the industry as this country seeks to improve the state of airlift coming into Trinidad and Tobago, thereby increasing the number of visitors to our shores and by extension bringing more revenue.

Already there has been much interest in charters for Carnival 2024, with positive feedback and heightened interest in adding Trinidad and Tobago as a destination. These discussions are expected to continue beyond the conference as the team engaged in meaningful conversations about next steps and finalizing plans add and expand upon existing routes to our destination.

Additionally, the negotiating teams, in focusing on the North American market, sought to restore pre-pandemic connectivity and increase seat capacity.

Senator Mitchell expressed his enthusiasm for Trinidad and Tobago's participation in the conference. "Routes Americas 2023 was a prime opportunity for us to showcase Trinidad and Tobago as a destination with rich culture, diverse heritage, and a vibrant tourism industry," said Minister Mitchell. "We look forward to further talks to firm up some of the very fruitful discussions we engaged in as we seek to make air travel sustainable and create new routes to and through Trinidad and Tobago.

Minister Mitchell spoke about working closely with airlines to ensure that there are mutually beneficial outcomes keeping in mind present challenges. One such solution will come in the form of short term assistance to alleviate the issues with respect to crewing regulations that have been faced in North American markets to allow for ease of business for any interested airlines. There was also a provisional commitment from a Canadian Airline to begin flights in the Winter of 2024 to Trinidad with an average of three flights per week.

On the issue of regional travel, the team held productive talks that may lead to new direct regional routes and co-marketing activities to drive the demand for these new connections. One key announcement was a new Caribbean Airlines Limited's service to Martinique and Guadeloupe out of Piarco which would allow for connections to France and wider Europe giving Destination Trinidad access to new tourism source markets.

Latin America is also on the radar, specifically Colombia and Brazil. With these new routes Trinidad can be used as a connecting hub into the African continent and other destinations via the new regional partnerships. Fruitful discussions were also held with African-based airlines on the possibility of opening up the African continent to more direct or closer connecting flights.

Another notable development came in the category of long-haul carriers. There was serious interest from a Scandinavian airline, in destination Trinidad and Tobago. More will be said on this as the discussions continue particularly related to use of our local cargo facilities. It is expected that this would create two streams of revenue from both cargo and passenger business.

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