



The Caribbean Tourism Organization

# **Regional Tourism Youth Congress**

## TOPICS



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# Regional Tourism Youth Congress 2026

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## About the Caribbean Tourism Organization

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) is the region's tourism development agency, comprising 25 Dutch, English and French country members along with a diverse network of private sector allied members. The Organization's mission is to position the Caribbean as the most desirable, year-round, warm-weather destination. Guided by its purpose of Leading Sustainable Tourism – One Sea, One Voice, One Caribbean, the CTO works to drive sustainable development, strengthen regional competitiveness, and support tourism stakeholders at all levels.

The mission of the CTO is to provide young Caribbean nationals with opportunities to shine on national, regional, and international stages, inspiring their dreams and ambitions. By ensuring they gain valuable exposure and experience, we aim to nurture the next generation of tourism leaders and innovators, contributing to the sustainable growth of Caribbean tourism.

Over the years, the CTO has actively engaged the region's educational institutions at various levels (primary, secondary, and tertiary) through events and activities such as:

- The Caribbean Primary School Creative Writing Competition
- The Regional Tourism Youth Congress
- The Caribbean Students Colloquium

## About the Regional Tourism Youth Congress

The Regional Tourism Youth Congress was established by the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) in 1999 as a forward-thinking initiative to cultivate greater awareness, enthusiasm, and engagement with tourism among Caribbean youth. Held during the State Of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC), the Congress serves as a dynamic platform that encourages secondary school students to explore key issues in the tourism sector, conduct research, and present innovative ideas and perspectives on the future of Caribbean tourism.

Through their participation, students not only deepen their understanding of the economic and social importance of tourism to their respective countries but also gain valuable insights into the sector as a viable and rewarding career path.

The inaugural Congress was hosted in Barbados in 2000 and was notably won by two students representing St. Maarten. The 20th edition of the Congress was recently convened in Barbados during SOTIC from 28 September - 03 October 2025 and saw 16-year-old Jolé St John of Tobago emerge as the winner.

## The State Of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC)

The Caribbean Tourism Organization's (CTO) State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC) is the premier annual event for Caribbean tourism leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss trends, challenges (like climate change, outline connectivity), and future strategies, with the latest 2025 event in Barbados focusing on "Reimagining Caribbean Tourism: Research, Relevance and the Road Ahead" through data, innovation (AI/VR), and regional collaboration for a sustainable, resilient sector. It includes high-level forums, research insights, the Youth Congress, and showcases new tech to drive growth beyond simple recovery.

## 2026 Regional Tourism Youth Congress Topics

At the 2026 Regional Tourism Youth Congress, students are required to prepare and come ready to present their ideas on **ONE** of the four topics outlined below. Each student will be given **three (3) minutes** to express their ideas on the chosen topic. The students are also required to answer a mystery question.

### Topic 01: Multigenerational Travel Product Development

Multigenerational travel is a continuing trend in today's day and age of travel. This type of travel involves families travelling with at least three generations, usually being grandparents, parents and children.

Driven by the need to uphold traditions and deepen connections, this trend is further driven by socio-economic factors, including higher disposable income among older adults and a growing preference for family-focused leisure activities. In addition, studies have shown that multigenerational travel is not only motivated by leisure and relaxation but often includes educational, cultural and heritage-based experiences.

As Junior Minister/Commissioner of Tourism, share your thoughts with your fellow ministers on three (3) key strategies or innovations that can transform multigenerational travel in your destination.

### Topic 02: Social Media & Sustainable Destination Management

Even though social media can accelerate and concentrate tourism flows, contributing to overtourism, it is one factor among many. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Tourism Trends and Policies 2020 report notes that social media can amplify "must-see" trends and place-specific photo behaviours, sometimes encouraging visitors to treat communities as "photo opportunities" rather than living places.

However, evidence also suggests that the direct relationship between social media use and overtourism can be relatively weak in some settings, meaning it interacts with other drivers like access, amenities, and existing popularity. At the same time, many destinations also face undertourism in certain communities or seasons, where low visitor demand limits local income and leaves tourism assets underused.

As Junior Minister/Commissioner of Tourism, share your thoughts with your fellow ministers on three (3) key strategies or innovations that can transform how social media is used to manage overtourism or undertourism and promote responsible travel in your destination.

### Topic 03: Cultural Industries & Tourism Innovation

Music, film, and the wider entertainment industry have become major “pull factors” in tourism because they shape destination image, create cultural interest, and motivate travel around live events and media-linked places. Research and destination planning work, such as the Barbados Tourism Master Plan 2014–2023 (Report V, Part 2), notes that festivals and cultural events can increase airlift demand, visitor arrivals, and hotel occupancy, while creating spillover benefits for transport and food and beverage businesses.

At the same time, these benefits are not automatic: as entertainment tourism grows, destinations need stronger professional standards for event production, better safety and crowd management, and clearer linkages so that local artists, youth talent, and small businesses can earn fairly and consistently from visitor spending.

As Junior Minister/Commissioner of Tourism, outline three (3) key strategies or innovations that you would advance to your ministerial delegates to transform the music, film and entertainment industry into a stronger tourism driver in your destination.

### Topic 04: The New Age of Tourism Professionals

Labour shortages and skills mismatches within the Caribbean tourism industry are well documented, including in the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, Regional Human Resource Development Knowledge & Skills. Audit report 2022. While strides have been made through the introduction of new education and training programs, as well as innovative human capital development initiatives across both the public and private sectors, persistent gaps remain on the supply and demand side of the tourism labour market.

Against this backdrop, and in your capacity as Junior Minister/Commissioner of Tourism, outline three (3) key strategies or innovations that you would advance to your ministerial colleagues to close critical skills gaps and reposition tourism human capital for sustainable transformation across the Caribbean.

### Contact Details

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