



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAINT LUCIA INTRODUCES A TOURIST ACCOMMODATION FEE

Accommodation Fee takes effect April 2020.

(CASTRIES, SAINT LUCIA) January 6, 2020 – Following consultations with stakeholders in the industry, Government will be introducing a tourist accommodation fee to be used for destination marketing and development. As of April 1, 2020, stayover visitors to Saint Lucia will be required to pay an accommodation fee on their nightly stay on the island. All accommodation providers on the island (hotels, guest houses, villas, apartments etc.) will be required to collect from their stay over guests **US\$3.00** and **US\$6.00** respectively on a nightly rate below or above **US\$120**. The fees will be paid by the stayover visitor and collected by accommodation providers who will remit the fees collected to Government via the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority. Guests at accommodation services sourced through sharing platforms such as Airbnb and VRBO will be subject to an accommodation fee of **7%** on the full cost of stay.

The tourist accommodation fee will be used to finance the destination marketing activities undertaken by the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority (SLTA) as it promotes Saint Lucia's tourism product worldwide and particularly in key markets within the US, Canada, the Caribbean, the United Kingdom and Europe. The fee will also be used to support village tourism development, and destination management and development of the local product in Saint Lucia. The intention is to strengthen the SLTA's ability to increase its marketing of the destination and to support tourism development in Saint Lucia with the collection of a fee that correlates to visitor arrivals.

Saint Lucia attracts up to 350,000 stay-over visitors to its shores every year. SLTA has set a target of 541,000 stay-over visitors by 2022. SLTA wants to increase airlift seat capacity and load factor on all flights into Saint Lucia to 85%. SLTA is also working towards increased awareness of brand Saint Lucia. The SLTA's annual budget for marketing and promotion is approximately **EC\$35 million**.

The business of promoting a tourism destination is becoming increasingly challenging and highly competitive as countries worldwide try to capture a greater share of the growing tourist market. Given this, it is now a common practice for countries to finance the marketing of their tourism product through an accommodation fee or levy paid for by stayover visitors to the destination.

More established destinations with far greater resources than Saint Lucia such as Canada, the US and Italy all make use of accommodation fees for destination marketing purposes. In addition, many Caribbean countries such as Jamaica, Barbados and Belize and those within the OECS including Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, have implemented accommodation levies. These levies are often applied on a per room, per night basis and are sometimes scaled (tiered) based on the type of property. As configured, Saint Lucia's Tourist Accommodation Fee is among the lowest in the OECS and CARICOM, and other well-established tourist destinations globally. Saint Lucia's fee structure is similar to the Maldives.

The Saint Lucia Tourism Authority is establishing a process to allow accommodation providers on island, international tour operators and booking websites to easily remit the fees they collect from stayover guests. The system has built-in mechanisms to verify that the information being provided is accurate. Given that an automated system for remitting the fees collected from guests will be utilised, the cost to accommodation providers will be negligible.

Tourism Minister Hon. Dominic Fedee says destination marketing benefits all players in the industry – accommodation providers, airlines, tour operators, travel agents, ground handlers, sites and attractions. He said: “We are committed to enhancing Saint Lucia’s image on the global tourism market. However, we cannot do it alone. We need the support of our industry partners. With their support, we can keep Saint Lucia ahead in the highly competitive global tourism market.”

For more information about Saint Lucia, visit www.stlucia.org or call 020 7341 7000.

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About Saint Lucia

One of the Windward Islands of the West Indies’ Lesser Antilles, Saint Lucia (pronounced Saint LOO-sha) is nestled halfway down the Eastern Caribbean archipelago. The “Helen of the West Indies,” Saint Lucia is known for its natural beauty and diverse attractions, including the signature Piton Mountains – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – a tropical rainforest and one of the world’s few drive-in volcanoes. Culturally rich offerings include the bustling marketplace in the capital of Castries, quaint fishing villages along the coastline, and the annual Soleil Saint Lucia Summer Festival. Saint Lucia’s wide range of accommodations includes world-class five-star resorts, all-inclusive resorts, intimate inns and value-oriented properties. Saint Lucia is also home to world class cruise and yachting facilities. The island is continually recognized as one of the leading Wedding and Honeymoon destinations worldwide.