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# USVI and Jamaica Explore Caribbean Tourism 'Coopetition'

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**USVI Commissioner of Tourism Joseph Boschulte (right) presented a portrait to and exchanged ideas with Jamaica's Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett in Jamaica last week. By. THE V.I. DEPT. OF TOURISM**

The V.I. Department of Tourism this week expressed interest in collaborating with its Caribbean neighbors on tourism-enhancing initiatives as the region's bread-and-butter sector rebounds from the adverse impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

According to a release issued Wednesday, speaking in the wake of a recent visit to Jamaica to meet with public and private sector stakeholders, D.O.T. Commissioner Joseph Boschulte reported successful talks with Jamaica's Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett and other private sector officials about the potential for regional economic revitalization with the unleashing of pent-up tourism demand.

Part and parcel of the recovery Mr. Boschulte affirmed will be embracing “coopetition”, a concept Minister Bartlett supports. “The Caribbean is the most desirable warm weather destination, and we know how to deliver world-class experiences for our discerning guests,” said Mr. Boschulte, who believes it is important to connect the best brains across the region to advance Caribbean brand marketing in the global marketplace.

The tourism commissioner and Mr. Bartlett agreed about the need to leverage the strengths of regional destinations to overcome any weaknesses, and both observed trends that had emerged over the past 15 months, such as the loyalty and resilience of urban African American professionals who have been key to the travel recovery in both destinations.

“Regional collaboration is important to our success and we must continue to share best practices, especially as they relate to public health safety protocols even as the traveling community becomes vaccinated,” Mr. Boschulte said.

He added that “while we have made great strides curbing the spread of COVID-19, variant strains remain a cause for concern, and we must be vigilant on all fronts to keep our communities and travelers safe.”

According to the release, although summer bookings to the USVI are robust, the Department of Tourism continues to push forward on its marketing and promotional initiatives. “Even with this strong demand, we need to go to market and make the case that we can compete with the rest of the world any day, any week, any month of the year,” Mr. Boschulte said.

The tourism chief reported that the USVI is stepping up its marketing efforts this summer to remain top-of-mind among travelers, many of whom are already planning their fall and winter leisure and business trips.