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WICO to Resume Regular Cruise Ship Activity Sept. 8 With Arrival of Norwegian Gem

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Phillipsburg, St. Maarten-October 30 , 2019- Passengers from the Norwegian Gem disembark the NCL Norwegian Gem as it is docked for the day at the Cruise Ship terminal in Phillipsburg. By. GETTY IMAGES

The West Indian Company on Tuesday announced that it will resume regular cruise ship activity at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, September 8 — eighteen months since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic — with the arrival of Norwegian Cruise Line's Norwegian Gem.

"Since the imposition of the CDC's March 2020 No Sail order, our team has been working diligently behind the scenes with our cruise partners to provide residents and the business community with the familiar and now reassuring sight of ships at our dock," said Anthony A.

Ottley, WICO president and CEO. "It is an understatement to say that we are elated to now welcome our first ship after more than eighteen months of inactivity."

Department of Tourism Commissioner and WICO Board Chairman Joseph B. Boschulte added that ships returning to WICO represents a positive step for the USVI economy.

"Now that there is a path forward for the cruise industry to resume sailing safely, it is significant that we will once again have cruise ships at the territory's three major cruise ports, and it is especially gratifying to see ships berthed at our port," he said. "Our overnight guest arrivals have been impressive, but we certainly cannot overlook cruise tourism's contributions to our economy, even with ships arriving below capacity."

WICO said the Norwegian Gem will deploy with 100 percent of its passengers and crew fully vaccinated, exceeding what WICO said is the territory's "85 percent" vaccination requirement. Signage interspersed along the WICO dock will remind visitors to comply with local health and safety Covid-19 protocols, according to the release. WICO Security and Marine Division personnel also will observe all protocols when interacting with passengers and crew.

Two new ships, MSC's Seashore (November 14th) and Carnival Cruise Line's Mardi Gras (December 23rd) are expected to be among the 211 cruise calls scheduled for the upcoming 2022 ship season, WICO said.

On July 6, the V.I. Port Authority welcomed the first cruise ship to dock in the USVI since March 2020, when VIPA [welcomed the Celebrity Edge cruise ship to Crown Bay](#).

The most updated cruise ship schedule can be found at www.wico-ltd.com.