

EDITORIAL

■ *ARA Journal of Tourism Research / Revista de Investigación en Turismo* which you are now holding is the result of the fruitful cooperation between the Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo (FUNGLODE) and the Escuela Universitaria de Hotelería y Turismo CETT attached to the University of Barcelona

Its objectives are to be a tool and source of investigation and dissemination of tourism and travel from all its angles and in all its disciplines. It aspires to exchange national and international experiences that contribute to raise tourism research at a higher level, to enhance the mechanisms for decision making, to improve the tourism product in every sense of the word and finally to give a boost to sustainable tourism.

Taking into account that this new publication is initiated and produced in the Dominican Republic, it will in the first place pay special attention to the tourist development of this country, but it will extend its scope of work and study much further, to the rest of the Caribbean Basin, to Latin America, to North America, to Europe, in short, to the whole world. As a result it will have a global outlook, instead of a strictly local one.

In current tourism scenarios it is necessary to identify the main actors and players to facilitate and promote cooperation. It is necessary to join forces within a harmonized and coordinated framework in order to conserve biodiversity and habitat and to solve the most serious problems which affect the communities.

The social and economic importance of tourist activity in the Dominican Republic is evident. Each year we receive four and a half million tourists and income from tourism generates nearly four billion dollars.

The tourism industry began to develop in the country in the 70s stimulated chiefly by government initiatives. However from the 80s the tourism sector started to include greater private investment, converting tourism to one of the fundamental pillars of the Dominican economy.

Around 55% of the tourist infrastructure belongs to Dominican investors and 45% to foreign investors. The

Dominican Republic has more than 60,000 hotel rooms for tourists who originate chiefly from Europe and North America.

The Dominican Republic has exceptional and unique characteristics for the development and practice of tourism. The country provides an incomparable climate, the historical and cultural interest of all of our villages and cities, the competitiveness of our prices and the juridical and physical security of all its visitors.

With regard to the Caribbean, the international recognition of its tourism growth and development comes to light through various international organisations and fora, like recently at the World Economic Forum in Davos (Switzerland). In one of its studies, which included 124 countries, the Dominican Republic, Barbados and Jamaica were placed amongst the 50 most competitive tourist countries.

The high number of people who provide their services to the different segments of tourist activity, the volume of income which this generates and the significant role which this has in the creation of the image of our country are some of the factors which cause our governments to dedicate a significant part of their efforts to the creation of a high quality and internationally recognized tourism sector.

ARA Journal of Tourism Research / Revista de Investigación en Turismo is now a reality available for the participation of all those from universities, public or private institutions linked to tourism entrepreneurship and management who wish to work together in the research and dissemination of all facets of this complex but always fascinating world of tourism.

Welcome on board!

Dr. Leonel Fernández

Presidente de la República Dominicana
Presidente Honorífico de la Fundación
Global Democracia y Desarrollo