International Labour Organization

Tourism sector in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean

An overview and the impact of COVID-19 on growth and employment

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Image courtesy pxhere.com

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Worker in the service industry - Image courtesy Andrea Piacquadio at pexel.com

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Acronyms

ABHTA	Antigua and Barbuda Hotel and Tourism Association
ABWU	Antigua and Barbuda Workers’ Union
BEST Cash	The Business Employee Support and Transfer of Cash
BHCAWU	Bahamas Hotel, Catering and Allied Workers’ Union
CARPHA	Caribbean Public Health Agency
CHTA	Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
NMT	Non-metropolitan territory
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

Tourist at a Caribbean resort - Image courtesy pxhere.com

Key findings

The tourism sector is the major source of revenue and jobs in the Caribbean region[1], and the key or one of the main sustainability oriented pillars for virtually all mid- and long-term national development strategies. The COVID-19 induced collapse of this sector is therefore an important factor behind projections of negative economic growth for the region for 2020.

On average, the tourism industry directly contributes up to about 33 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and over 52 per cent of export receipts. With approximately 30 million annual entries per year (the majority of which are cruise passengers, or from the USA), the industry provides direct employment to 413,000 workers in the Caribbean. This figure represents, on average, 18.1 per cent of total employment. If indirect and induced employment is considered, such figures could rise to 43.1 per cent (with a distribution markedly skewed upward in tourism-dependent Eastern Caribbean countries) - reaching up to 90 per cent in Antigua and Barbuda.

Caribbean tourism, which is traditionally a labour intensive industry, sees a predominance of female employment (between 50 and 60 per cent) with a non-negligible share of youth (10 to 20 per cent). Seasonality of arrivals and utilization of part-time employment or fixed-term employment is common but not universal across the region, while the utilization of a migrant labour force is a distinctive feature of the smallest island states and non-metropolitan territories (NMTs). Although data is scarce, available figures show that informal employment is, while perhaps less marked than in other sector of the economy, still accounting for over 40 per cent of total employment. This figure is particularly relevant considering cases where pre-existing social insurance measures are being relied upon to aid affected workers without new measures to catch those excluded.

The COVID-19 crisis has certainly impacted employment in the industry. However, the actual magnitude of this impact is still uncertain. Reduced sample surveys indicate that 71 per cent of hotels had laid off staff by April 2020 as a a way to address the revenue shortfall caused by the crisis; some 66 per cent had also reduced the work-week or hours worked; and 53 per cent had cut salaries. The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has produced a preliminary projection of a 50 per cent reduction in tourist arrivals for 2020. The ILO COVID-19 Monitoring Tool, while classifying industries by degree of vulnerability to the COVID crisis, includes “Accommodation and food service activities” amongst the most “high risk” in terms of loss of working hours and “Transport and storage” amongst those considered “medium-high”. Other evidence gathered from secondary sources suggests that during the (relative) peak of the crisis, layoffs reached approximately 75 per cent of the total tourism workforce (Jamaica) while 30 per cent of the total beneficiaries of stimulus relief in Belize belonged to the tourism sector. The delayed reopening of the cruise industry may further compound the situation. Generally speaking, increased unemployment and high pre-COVID-19 share of tourism on total employment indicate a sizable reduction in the workforce in the sector, or, at least a reduction in working hours and work-related revenue. The traditionally damaging and tourism-stopping hurricane seasons may worsen the situation.

The specifically collected and presented overview of COVID-19 relief measures shows that Caribbean countries have established systems capable of providing (at least some) relief to dismissed tourism workers via support measures that target the general population. These include, almost universally, food and utilities relief and income support.

1 For the purpose of the present report, the Caribbean region is limited to the 13 ILO member States and 9 non-metropolitan territories of the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean covered by the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean. Note that countries of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico) and Haiti are not covered in this report.

In terms of specific measures that benefit the tourism sector, the inventory indicates that governments in the region favour the channelling of resources to tourism-related businesses and employers rather than workers. Specifically, tourism-targeted business relief measures (some of which include financial support in exchange for job retention) are found in 15 out of 21 countries, versus in just eight for measures at the individual level. Lower administrative complexity involved in targeting businesses and employers were likely to have played a role in such a choice. Amongst the individual-targeting measures, those aimed at providing opportunities for retraining or upskilling play a minor role.

Consultations with employers' organizations and the general involvement of the social partners in the discussion of recovery and stimulus packages is common in all the countries of the region. However, for what concerns tourism-specific responses, most of the measures implemented to date seem to have been undertaken exclusively by governments or in conjunction with employers' associations, particularly national hotel and tourism associations (with exceptions in Barbados and Antigua and Barbuda).

For the coming months or years, while the principles underlined in the "ILO policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis" should lead any human-centred recovery process, few key elements stand out. In line with the already developed country and industry-specific protocols for the resumption of activities, occupational health and safety for workers and customers will remain paramount. In addition, there may be room to further advance the agenda set in longer term national (tourism) development strategies and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, by combining COVID-prompted sector support with strategies aimed at enhancing sustainability, energy efficiency, and more generally, bolstering the innovation content and diversification of future supply. To conclude, special attention shall be warranted to the dismissed workers to ensure the shortest and most productive spans of labour market detachment, accompanied with measures aimed to enhance their human capital.

Introduction

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global tourism industry has been devastating. It has been described by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as the "worst crisis that international tourism has faced since records began in 1950".[2] In 2020, between US$910 billion to US$1.2 trillion are expected to be lost in export revenues from tourism and 100 to 120 million direct tourism jobs are at risk as a result of international travel restrictions and reduced global demand.[3]

The heavy dependence of the Caribbean on the tourism industry means that the region's economies have been hit especially hard. Almost half a million tourism workers face the prospect of decent work deficits in the form of job loss, reductions in working hours, and loss of incomes, while the worsening of working conditions and the move to informal employment (in tourism or in another industry) appear as a concrete possibility.

This report seeks to assess and, where possible, quantify this impact of COVID-19 on employment in the tourism industries in the region.[4] Transmission channels will (or have already) consist(ed) in a reduced supply of tourism services and consequent lower employment due to lockdowns, health risk and social distancing and travel restraining measures, and in the dampened demand from the main tourism source markets of North America and Europe. In addition, lowering of tourism revenue will negatively impact related national and regional value chains, starting from the agri-food chain. The nature of the pandemic means that workers who are directly employed in businesses that rely on cruise tourism are likely to be most affected, relative to other types of tourism, as this sector is likely to recover the slowest. In terms of government responses, we find that multipronged approaches have generally been pursued, with direct transfers being most common at the individual level, and loans, grants, and tax relief being the most common for businesses. There is room, however, for sustainability enhancing and greening mechanisms to be pursued in a tripartite setting.

The report is structured as follows. After an overview of the tourism sector and the general crisis impact on the industry and subject to data availability, we examine patterns and trends in tourism employment. This includes the distribution of employment in tourism subindustries, employment demographics, and employment features such as occupation groups, informality, seasonality, and migrant status. We then look specifically at existing evidence of the crisis impact in terms of unemployment, underemployment, and income loss, followed by our own projections of resulting unemployment in the sector. This is then followed by an inspection and analysis of government responses to the employment crisis, focusing on individually targeted and business-targeted stimulus and relief measures. The final section seeks to present some of the major issues to be considered moving forward.

2 UNWTO (2020). World Tourism Barometer. Volume 8, Issue 2, May 2020. Madrid: UNWTO.

3 Ibid.

4 This report covers the 13 member States and 9 non-metropolitan territories of the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean covered by the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean. Note that countries of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico) and Haiti are not covered in this report.

Worker in the hotel industry - Image courtesy Ketut Subiyanto at pexel.com

Overview of the tourism sector in the Caribbean

Tourism is vital to the Caribbean economy, with several of the region's countries being among the most tourism-dependent in the world. On average, the industry directly contributes 13.3 per cent to GDP, and an additional 20.2 per cent indirectly, with total GDP contributions reaching around 40 per cent in countries like Belize, Antigua and Barbuda, and the Bahamas, and as high as 73 per cent in the British Virgin Islands and Aruba (see Table 1). Data on tourism receipts, as a share of total exports, further illustrate this dependency, with tourism accounting for more than 40 per cent of exports in 14 out of the 21 countries examined, and more than 70 per cent in eight (see Table 1). The main exceptions to the regional trend are the commodity-producing countries of the southern Caribbean; namely, Suriname, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, with tourism contributing an average of just 4.9 per cent in total to GDP.

Table 1

Tourism dependence - Tourism contribution to GDP (%) (2019) and tourism receipts as share of total exports (%) (2018) in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs

Country	Tourism Contribution to GDP			Tourism Receipts Share of Exports (%)
	Direct (%)	Indirect (%)	Total (%)	
SUR	1.1	1.5	2.6	3.2
GUY	1.4	2.9	4.4	1.8
TTO	3.0	4.8	7.8	4.8
BMU	6.2	12.5	18.7	36.9
CYM	8.8	16.6	25.5	19.9
VCT	10.6	17.9	28.6	76.3
KNA	10.7	17.5	28.2	60.6
JAM	12.0	19.1	31.1	53.4
BRB	12.5	18.4	30.9	43.5
BLZ	13.8	23.4	37.2	45.2
DMA	14.6	22.3	36.9	68.5
ATG	15.4	27.3	42.7	84.3
AIA	15.8	21.3	37.1	n.a
GRD	16.8	23.7	40.5	84.3
LCA	17.1	23.7	40.7	81.3
BHS	23.3	20.0	43.3	77.2
VGB	25.8	47.4	73.1	79.6
ABW	30.4	43.2	73.6	79.6
CUW	n.a	n.a	n.a	31.5
SXM	n.a	n.a	n.a	57.8
TCA	n.a	n.a	n.a	95.2
Average	13.3	20.2	33.5	52.9

Low
High

Source: World Travel and Tourism Council (2019) and World Bank World Development Indicators (2018)

*Share of exports data for CYM and BRB are for 2017 and 2016, respectively.

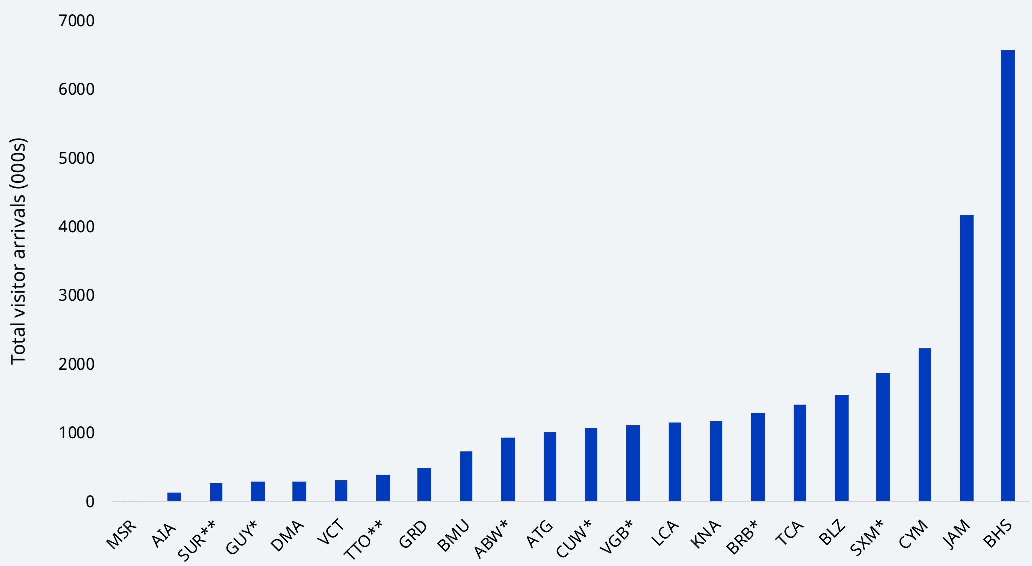
Country codes applied to all Figures and Tables: AIA – Anguilla; ATG – Antigua and Barbuda; ABW – Aruba; BHS – Bahamas; BLZ – Belize; BRB – Barbados; BMU – Bermuda; CUW – Curacao; CYM – Cayman Islands; DMA – Dominica; GRD – Grenada; GUY – Guyana; JAM – Jamaica; KNA – Saint Kitts and Nevis; LCA – Saint Lucia; SUR – Suriname; SXM – Sint Maarten; TCA – Turks and Caicos Islands.

The economic and social role of tourism in the Caribbean is set, pending major hindrances, to grow. In the recent past, virtually every country in the region has approved national tourism development policies or has included tourism as one of the priority sectors in existing mid- and long-term development plans. In addition, promotion and further development of tourism have been pursued via supranational initiatives. For instance, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) established a specialized support agency (the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO)) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Member States developed a Common Tourism Policy in 2011. In the Caribbean, the industry also plays a fundamental role as earner of much coveted foreign currency and provides a solid platform for the development of local supply chains (notably the food chain).

In terms of the size of their tourism sectors as reflected by total annual visitor arrivals[5], Caribbean countries differ considerably (see Figure 1). The Bahamas leads the region with around 6.5 million visitors annually, followed by Jamaica with over four million, and the Cayman Islands with over two million. The majority of Caribbean countries, however, welcome on average, around one million visitors annually, if we exclude these top three tourist destinations, the commodity-based economies of Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, and the smallest economies, the British overseas territories of Anguilla and Montserrat.[6]

▶ Figure 1

Average annual visitor arrivals in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs 2016-2019 (000s)



Source: National Statistical Offices, Tourism Authorities, Central Banks and UNWTO (for VGB, CUW, and SXM only)

*Figures are based on 2018 only for Guyana, 2019 only for Aruba, 2016 only for VGB, 2016-2018 for Curacao and Sint Maarten, 2016-2018 for Suriname, and 2016-2018 and Jan-Sep 2019 for Barbados.

**TTO figures are for non-resident arrivals.

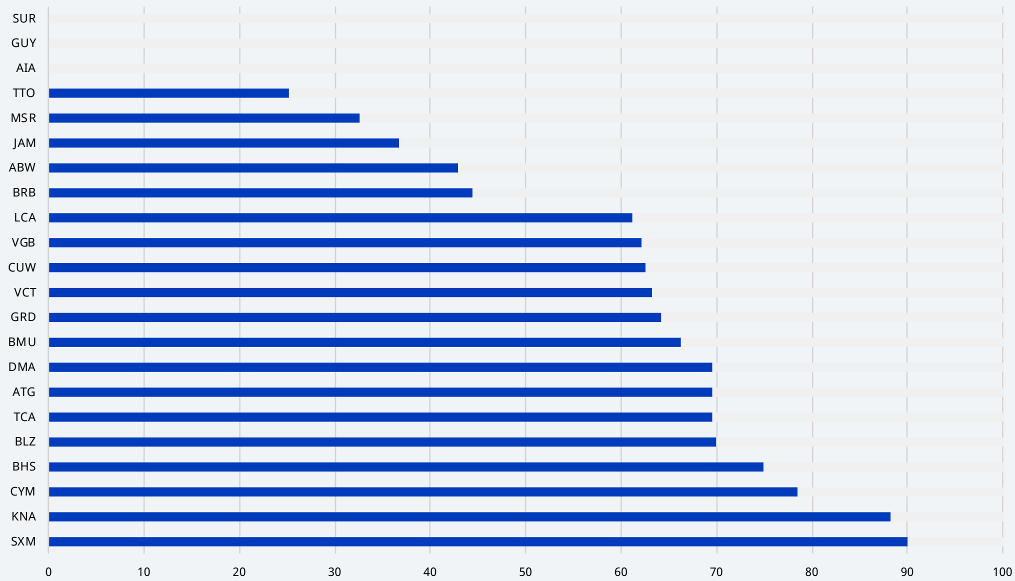
5 Visitor arrivals comprise both stop-over arrivals i.e. overnight tourists, and excursionists or day-visitors. This latter group includes, and in many countries exclusively comprises, cruise passengers.

6 Estimates of the total number of visitor arrivals to the region are to be interpreted with some caveats, possibly referring to "total entries" rather than total headcount. Indeed, as the data presented include cruise visitors, the same passenger may visit more than one country during a single trip.

Figure 2 reveals that the vast majority of these visitor arrivals to the region are cruise passengers, accounting for over 60 per cent in 14 of the countries studied and 70 per cent or more in eight. It is worth noting that cruise passengers in the Caribbean have been found to generate 11.5 times less revenue than stay-over tourists.[7] This has particular implications for the speed of revenue recovery of the respective tourism industries after the COVID-19 crisis and will also reflect on relative employment recovery (see next section).

▶ **Figure 2**

Cruise passengers as % of all visitors (Most recent year available pre-2020*) in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs



Source: Author's calculations based on data from National Statistical Offices, Tourism Authorities, Central Banks and UNWTO (for VGB CUW, ABW, TTO and SXM only).

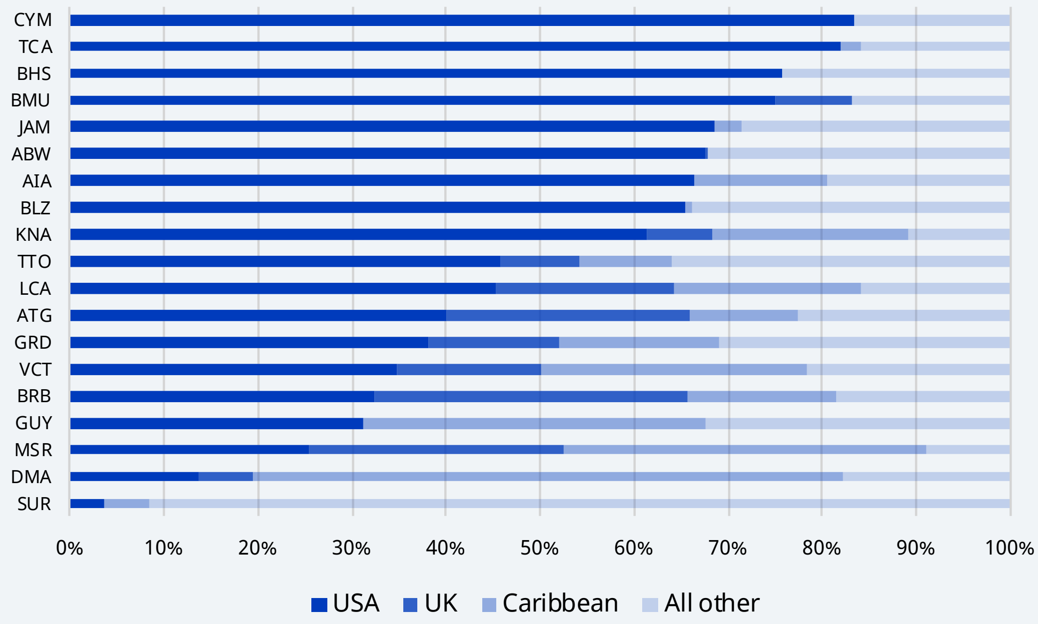
*Data is for 2019 except for Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curacao, and Sint Maarten (2018) and VGB (2016). Figures for Barbados are calculated on the basis of data for Jan-Sep 2019.

Also having direct implications for the recovery of regional tourism, are the countries from which visitors and tourists originate. Overwhelmingly, Caribbean visitors come from the United States (see Figure 3); the top source country/region for all but four out of the 19 Caribbean countries for which data was available. For countries like the Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos, the Bahamas, Bermuda, Jamaica, Aruba, and Belize, this is almost exclusively so with no other single destination accounting for a substantial share of visitors, and between 60 and 80 per cent of all visitors either residing in or being citizens of the United States.

7 This refers to both tax revenue and visitor expenditure. M. Honey (ed.) (2019), Cruise Tourism in the Caribbean: Selling Sunshine. New York: Routledge.

▶ Figure 3

Stop-over arrivals by visitor country of origin / residence in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs (Most recent year available)* (%)



Source: National Statistical Offices, Tourism Authorities, and Central Banks

*Data is for 2019 except for TTO, ABW, CUW, SUR, and SXM (2018), VGB (2016) and BHS (Jan 2020). Data for BRB is for Jan-Sep 2019. Note: data for TTO are for non-resident arrivals.

The United Kingdom accounts for a sizeable share of visitors for only a few countries like Barbados, Montserrat (a British overseas territory), Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Lucia, at 33 per cent, 27 per cent, 26 per cent and 19 per cent, respectively. Similarly, visitors from within the Caribbean play a significant role in the tourism industries of select countries like Dominica, Montserrat, Guyana and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

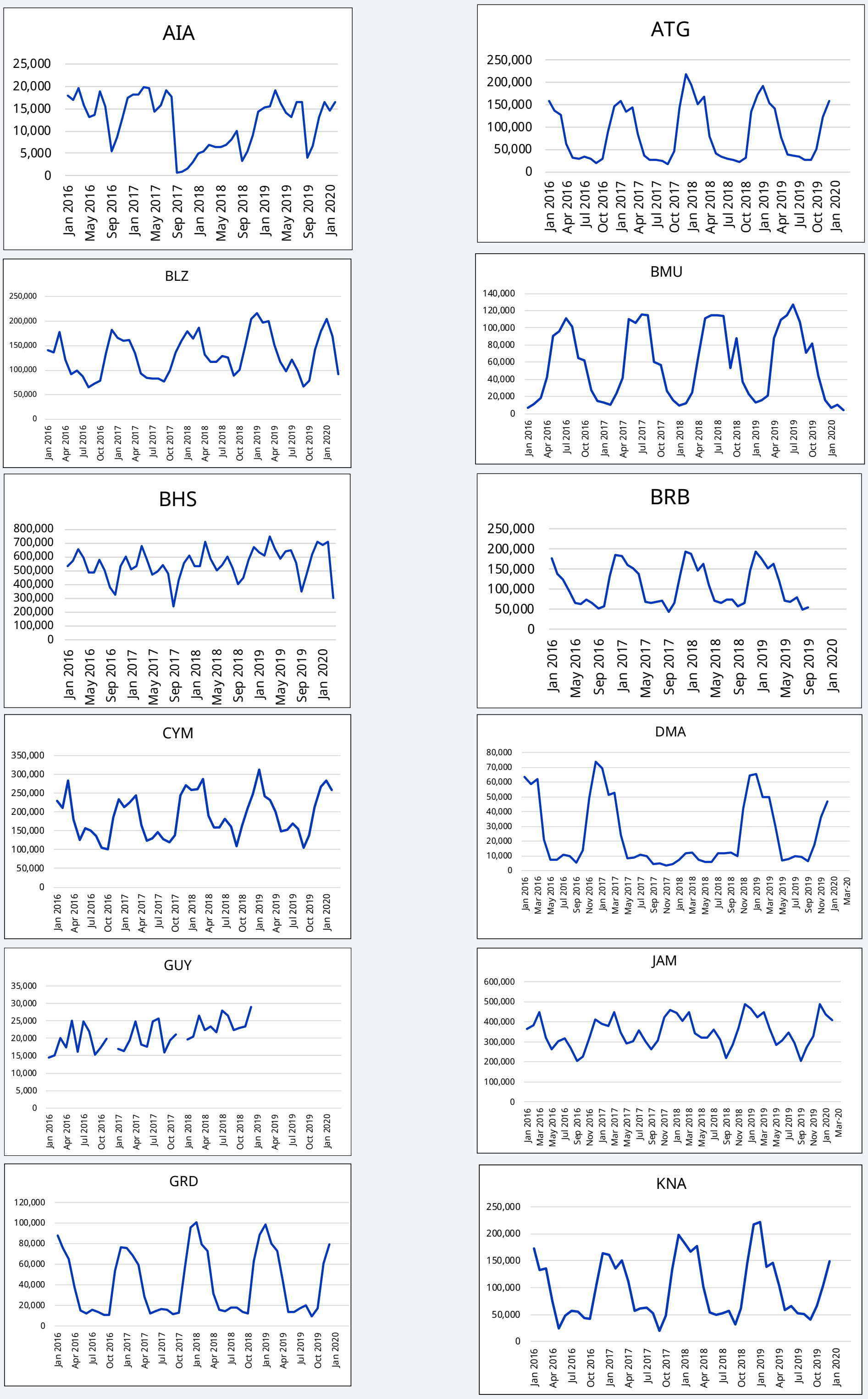
Suriname is the only country with most of its visitors not originating in any of these aforementioned source countries/regions. Instead, most of its visitors come from mainland Europe (the Netherlands in particular), followed by Latin America.

Another relevant aspect is the seasonality of tourism in the region, which peaks between November to April, or the winter months in the northern hemisphere, for most countries examined (see Figures 4a and 4b). Even with this common seasonality, there is variation in the extent to which this is the case with much larger differences (close to 100 per cent difference) between the winter and summer months for the Eastern Caribbean states,[8] versus countries like the Bahamas, Jamaica and the Turks and Caicos Islands, which experience a more stable demand throughout the year (around 50 per cent seasonal reductions). In concrete terms, this means that for the Eastern Caribbean countries - which have missed the end of the 2019-2020 season - the big incognita is the degree of preparation for the 2020-2021 season.

8 Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Monsterrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Figure 4a

Monthly visitor arrivals in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs (2016 to most recent month available)



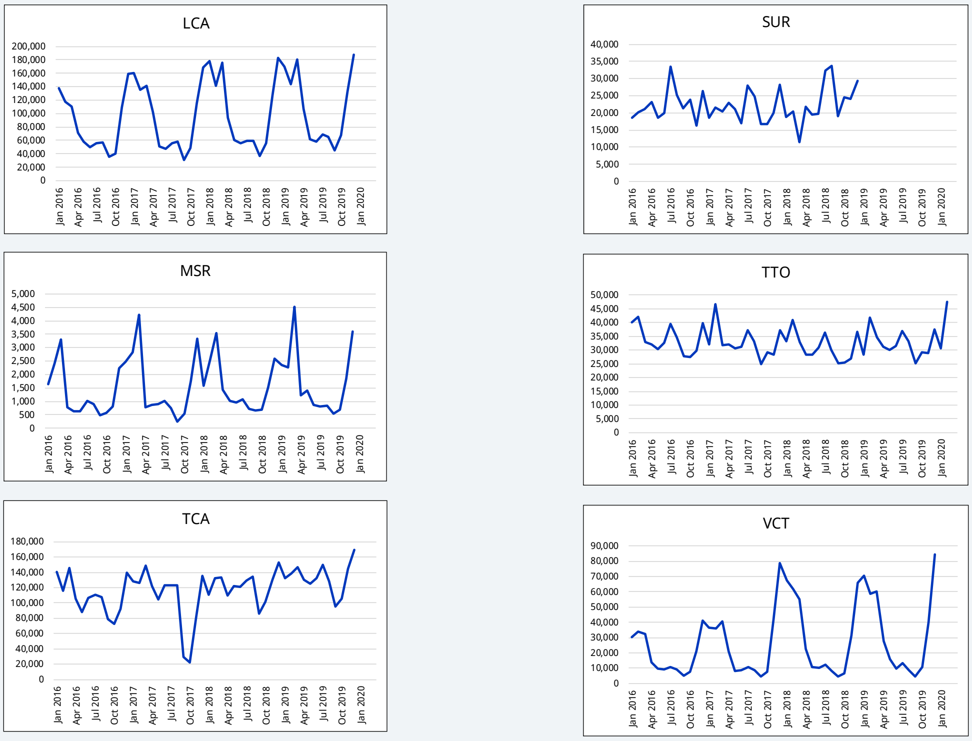
Source: National Statistical Offices, Tourism Authorities, and Central Banks

The main exceptions to this seasonality are, as expected, the commodity-based economies of Suriname, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago with visitor arrivals being generally low and fluctuating within a narrower range throughout the year. There are, of course some consistent spikes as with Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago, however, these still remain on a much smaller scale than in the rest of the region. The other major exception is Bermuda whose seasonality runs counter to all the other countries examined with higher arrivals in the summer months.

The tourism sector in the region is also extremely sensitive and vulnerable to adverse weather conditions, particularly hurricanes that may be accelerating in frequency.[9] The devastating effect of major hurricane events on visitor arrivals is visible in Figure 4a and 4b, for example, in countries like Anguilla, Dominica, the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands in September 2017 with the passage of Hurricane Irma. The unfolding of the 2020 hurricane season is likely to exacerbate challenges to the industry caused by the COVID-19 pandemic if countries' infrastructure is additionally damaged and reconstruction is hindered or slowed down by COVID health concerns.

Figure 4b

Monthly visitor arrivals in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs (2016 to most recent month available)



Source: National Statistical Offices, Tourism Authorities, and Central Banks

*TTO data is for non-resident arrivals

9 For Central America and the Caribbean the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projected "reduction in mean precipitation and increase in extreme precipitation; more extreme precipitation in tropical cyclones making landfall along the eastern and western coasts" see Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2013:105) in "Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Summary for Policymakers, Technical Summary and Frequently Asked Question"

Finally, one noteworthy regional trend over the last two decades has been the shift toward a more sustainable tourism approach. While the traditional sand, sea and sun mass tourism template is still dominant, specialized or special interest areas of tourism now abound, including ecotourism, agro-tourism, heritage and cultural tourism, events and sports tourism, festival tourism and business tourism. Together with partially changed preferences driving market forces and national programmes, international initiatives such as the development of the 2008 Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework and the creation in 2014 of the Sustainable Destination Alliance for the Americas (SDAA) have resulted in and simultaneously contributed to such moves. The region's vulnerability to weather events has also catalysed this shift with Dominica, for example, aiming to become the first "climate-resilient" tourism destination.

Tourist in a taxi - Image courtesy pexel.com

Sector impact of the COVID-19 crisis

As of July 2020, with the first regional case confirmed only in March 2020, the incidence of COVID-19 in the Caribbean has been low, relative to other countries and regions of the world. The Caribbean region saw less than five confirmed cases per 100,000 people in most countries[10] compared to the Americas average of 482 per 100,000 and 741 per 100,000 in countries like the United States.[11] The death rate has been even lower. Therefore, from a health perspective, the region has been largely spared the worst effects of the virus. The tourism sector is thus potentially in a better position to reopen and welcome tourists as a "safer" destination than many other regions.

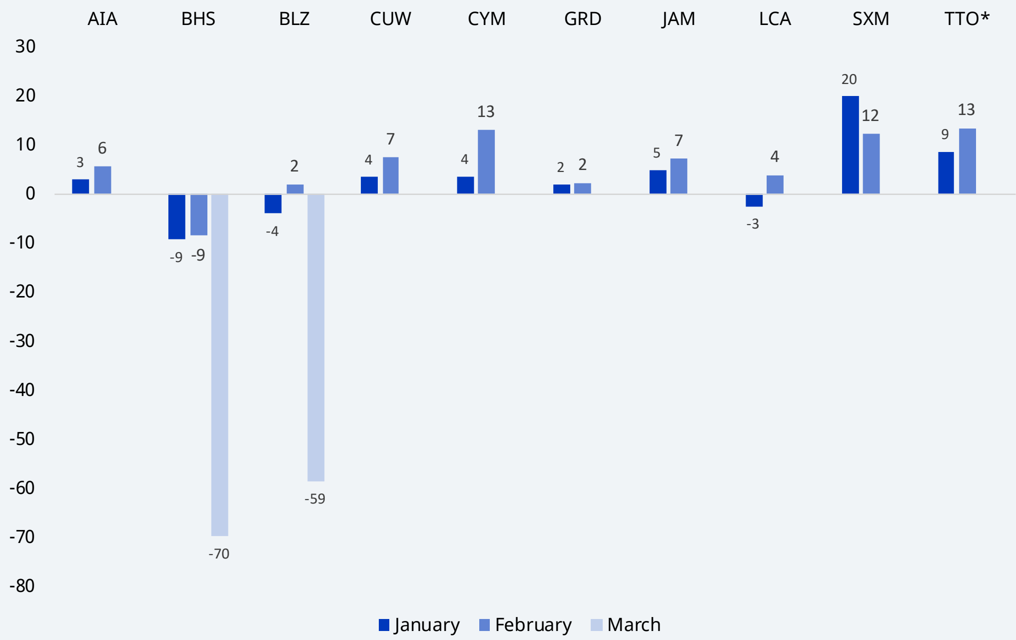
Notwithstanding the above, a deeper analysis shows worrisome trends. Even with no regional cases confirmed prior to March 2020, fears surrounding travel as the virus began to spread may have affected tourism in the region prior to the official regional and international border closures in the same month. As Figure 5 shows, this was generally not the case for stop-over arrivals in January and February 2020 with most countries seeing about the same or even higher volumes of tourists relative to the same months in 2019. The main exception to this trend is the Bahamas, which saw small reductions in tourist arrivals for both months of around 9 per cent. By March 2020, however, as the virus escalated across the world and national lockdowns and border closures began to occur, stop-over arrivals declined dramatically in the two countries for which data is available. Specifically, stop-over arrivals fell by 70 per cent in the Bahamas and almost 60 per cent in Belize. The situation is likely to have been very similar in the rest of the region since most countries depend on the same major source markets of North America, and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom, for tourists (see Figure 5).

10 Caribbean Public Health Agency Situation Reports. https://carpha.org/

11 World Health Organisation. https://covid19.who.int/

▶ Figure 5

Percentage change in stop-over arrivals in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs Q1 2020 vs. Q1 2019 (%)



Source: Author’s calculations based on data from National Tourism Authorities and UNWTO

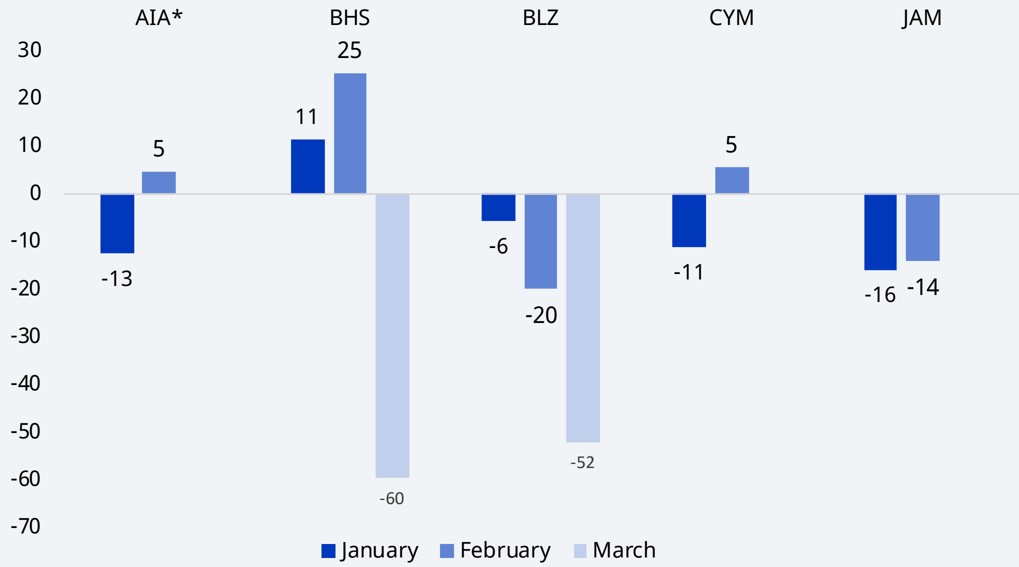
*Data is for non-resident arrivals

The effect of the pandemic was felt much sooner in the cruise tourism sector with sizeable reductions in cruise passenger arrivals in January and February 2020 for three out of the five Caribbean countries for which data is available (see Figure 6). This early onset effect is likely due to the greater fears surrounding cruise travel given the high chance of virus transmission on board a cruise vessel. Indeed, this concern is likely to pose a significant challenge for the recovery of the tourism sector in the region since persistent concerns for the spread of the coronavirus will inhibit the resumption of cruise activities at a similar pace and on a similar scale as is already happening with air travel. Many countries have announced that the opening of borders to cruises and similar vessels will not occur until 2021.[12] While, as mentioned previously, cruise tourism does not generate as much revenue for Caribbean countries as does stay-over tourist arrivals, the scale of cruise passenger arrivals in the region (more than 60 per cent of all visitor arrivals in most Caribbean countries as a proportion of all visitors) implies an impact on revenues.

12 This is also partially due to the Atlantic hurricane season between June and October.

Figure 6

Percentage change in cruise passenger arrivals in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs Q1 2020 vs. Q1 2019 (%)



Source: National Tourism Authorities

*Anguilla does not have receive cruise passengers. Data is for excursionists/one-day visitors. Note that cruise passengers fall under the broader category of excursionists.

With stopover arrivals, by March 2020, more dramatic reductions in cruise passenger arrivals occurred at 60 per cent and 52 per cent for the Bahamas and Belize, respectively. Border closures and internal lockdowns at the end of March meant that tourist arrivals and accompanying revenues were almost zero for the months of April and May, with only very slow changes expected as countries gradually reopen their borders in June and July (see Table 2).

Table 2

Border reopening dates in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs

Country	Border reopening dates - commercial air travel	Notes
AIA	No date announced	N / A
ATG	June 4	US, UK and Caribbean flights recommenced thus far.
ABW	July 1	15 June - borders open between Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao only. 1 July - International borders for Europe, Canada and the Caribbean will reopen for travel with the exception of The Dominican Republic and Haiti. 10 July - borders open to US
BHS	July 1	Flights scheduled from the US and Canada. Repatriation flights - June 10 and 11. June 15-30 - Open to boaters, yachters, and private aviation
BRB	July 12	Air Canada flights from Toronto beginning July 12, British Airways from London on July 18, Jet Blue from New York on July 25, and American Airlines from Miami on August 5.
BLZ	August 15	Note: Land borders to remain closed and cruising not to be restarted yet. Open entry for chartered flights, private aviation and limited re-opening of international leisure travel with approved hotels only. Flights confirmed (as at July 8) for resumption are all from the US.
BMU	July 1	Flights from US -July 6, Canada - July 7 and UK July 17.
BVI	No date announced	Limited reopening of borders for nationals, permanent residents, work permit holders and naturalised citizens as of June 2.
CYM	No date announced	Closed at least until August 31.
CUW	July 1	Maximum of 10,000 passengers will be welcomed to the island so that there will be minimal pressure on the local health system. Visitors only from Belgium, Canada, China, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain allowed entry in the first phase of reopening.
DMA	July 15	Borders and airports will open for nationals and residents on 15 July, and for non nationals on 7 August
GRD	July 1	N / A
GUY	August 1	Limited repatriation flights allowed before Aug 1.
JAM	June 15	Open to all international travellers. Flights from the UK and Canada recommencing in July.
MSR	No date announced	N / A
KNA	No date announced	N / A
LCA	June 4	Chartered flights only in the first instance including repatriation of nationals. Commercial air travel recommenced in July. Flights from the US only until August 1.
VCT	July 1	Open to all international travellers. Flights from the US, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados resuming in July.
SXM	June 15	Borders opened to select Caribbean islands in June. Open to Europe and Canada from July 1. US travellers to be allowed entry from July 15 (subject to change).
SUR	No date announced	N / A
TTO	No date announced	N / A
TCA	July 22	Flights to resume from the US, Canada, and Europe. Cruise center to remain closed until August 31, subject to guidance from health authorities.

*As at July 8, 2020.

Existing projections of the impact of the crisis by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) for the Bahamas, Barbados and Jamaica, suggest that reductions in GDP, due to tourism losses, could range from 1.7 to 3.5 percentage points in the case of a rapid recovery of the tourism sector; and 5.3 and 10.5 percentage points in the case of a delayed recovery that cuts into the region's high tourism season.[13] Projections of GDP growth for Barbados, the British Virgin Islands and Anguilla by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are more severe - between -12 and -16 per cent, -11 and -13 per cent, and -20 and -25 per cent, respectively in the most likely scenarios.[14] Meanwhile, the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has produced a preliminary projection of a 50 per cent reduction in tourist arrivals for 2020 which could "take the Caribbean back to 1995/1996 levels, a reversal of 25 years of growth"[15]. Hoteliers in the region, surveyed by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association in April 2020, indicated that they do not anticipate the sector's recovery prior to Q1 of 2021.[16] One of the most visible casualties of the crisis has been the liquidation of the regional air carrier, LIAT, whose collapse, though not caused by the crisis, was certainly catalysed by it.

Ultimately, the total impact of the crisis on the tourism sector depends not just on the supply side factors of the reopening of regional borders and the ability of the industry to guarantee visitor health and safety, but also on the demand for tourism from the region's source markets. With the pandemic causing economic hardship across North America and Europe, demand is likely to be at least dampened for some time. The additional factor of a second wave of infections as borders open introduces further uncertainty to projections of the total impact.

13 This range of projections is for the tourism-based economies of the Bahamas, Barbados and Jamaica. Inter-American Development Bank (2020). "Caribbean Economies in the Time of Coronavirus", Caribbean Quarterly Bulletin, 2020:1, pp. 1-17.

14 The figures quoted are projections of GDP loss for the scenarios of an 8-week lockdown with tourism restarting in August or November 2020.
UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women Eastern Caribbean (2020). Anguilla: COVID-19 Macroeconomic and Human Impact Assessment Data. COVID 19 Policy Document Series.
UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women Eastern Caribbean (2020). Barbados: COVID-19 Macroeconomic and Human Impact Assessment Data. COVID 19 Policy Document Series.
UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women Eastern Caribbean (2020). British Virgin Islands: COVID-19 Macroeconomic and Human Impact Assessment Data. COVID 19 Policy Document Series.

15 Caribbean Tourism Organization. The Future of Caribbean Tourism – Key Considerations for the COVID-19 Recovery. Webinar Presentation. April 30, 2020.

16 Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (2020). COVID-19 Caribbean Tourism Impact and Outlook Survey.

Workers in the hospitality sector. Photo compliments rawpixel.com free photos

Impact on employment in tourism industries

How many jobs are at risk?

In 2019, some 413,000[17] persons were directly employed in the tourism sector in the Caribbean. Such figures cover subindustries such as accommodation for visitors, food and beverage serving activities, different types of passenger transport, transport equipment rental, travel agencies and other reservation services activities, as well as cultural activities, and sports and recreational activities.[18]

The effective two-month closure and only gradual reopening of the tourism industry with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has put these jobs and livelihoods at risk. Tourism workers in the region, like elsewhere in the world, are currently facing unemployment and underemployment, and consequent loss of incomes. They also face the added challenge of having limited alternative employment options given the lack of diversification in most Caribbean economies.[19]

To have a more complete picture of the actual size of tourism employment, Figure 7 and Table 3 present data on the percentage of workers employed in the tourism industry as percentage of total employment in the countries of the region, with an average of 18 per cent being directly employed, and an additional

17 Author's calculation based on World Travel and Tourism Council figures for individual countries summing to 413,251 persons in 2019. Countries included in this figure: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago. National data on tourism employment is limited in the region.

18 Such coverage does not fully reflect the ILO's definition for tourism which is used synonymously with the Hotels, Catering and Tourism (HCT) sector comprising: accommodation (hotels, boarding houses, motels, tourist camps, holiday centres); food and entertainment (restaurants, bars, cafeterias, snack bars, pubs, nightclubs and other similar establishments; institutions that provide meals and refreshments within hospitals, factory and office canteens, schools, aircraft and ships); travel management and activities (travel agencies and tourist guides, tourism information offices and conference and exhibition centres); tourist attractions (national parks, museums and their facilities). The sector includes the services provided to travellers as well as those provided to residents. Source: International Labour Organization (2017). ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism. Geneva: ILO. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates for the sector covers jobs within tourism and travel, which is defined as "relating to the activity of travellers on trips outside their usual environment with a duration of less than one year". Industries included are those which deal directly with tourists, including hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transport services, as well as the activities of restaurant and leisure industries that deal directly with tourists. There may be some discrepancy between the two definitions, however, it is not possible to obtain a precise definition from the latter to be able to determine this discrepancy. For countries for which national data is available, WTTC estimates generally match national figures on direct tourism employment.

19 The dependence of the regional economies on tourism was laid out in an earlier section.

25 per cent being indirectly employed.[20] Indeed, figure show that slightly more than 30 per cent of all workers depend on the tourism sector for employment, whether directly or indirectly, in 14 out of the 18 countries covered. Countries like Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, and Saint Lucia, in particular, are among the most dependent, with tourism directly and indirectly accounting for 91 per cent, 84 per cent, and 78 per cent of all employment, respectively. Saint Lucia also has the highest share of workers directly employed in tourism at 48 per cent. These proportions confirm that large shares of several countries' employed workforce stand to be severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

As with tourism's contribution to GDP, the commodity-based economies of Suriname, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago have the lowest shares of workers employed in the sector.

▶ Figure 7

Direct and indirect employment in the tourism industries in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs 2019 (%)

Source: World Travel and Tourism Council estimates for the Travel and Tourism Industry

20 The WTTC defines "the direct contribution of tourism to employment" as the number of direct jobs in travel and tourism i.e. those industries that deal directly with tourists as detailed in footnote no. 17. The "indirect contribution of tourism to employment" comprises both the indirect and induced contributions of tourism to employment looking at the impact of three factors on jobs, namely, capital investments in travel and tourism industries, government spending in support of tourism activities, and supply chain effects.

Table 3

Direct and indirect employment in the tourism industries in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs 2019 (%)

Country	Direct employment (%)	Indirect employment (%)	Total employment (%)
SUR	1.1	1.7	2.8
GUY	1.4	3.3	4.7
TTO	3.8	6.1	9.9
BMU	10.0	13.0	23.0
JAM	11.4	21.4	32.8
CYM	13.7	19.5	33.2
BRB	13.4	19.9	33.4
DMA	13.8	24.8	38.7
BLZ	13.1	26.2	39.3
GRD	17.1	25.8	42.9
VCT	15.5	29.7	45.2
AIA	22.0	29.2	51.3
BHS	32.0	20.2	52.2
VGB	17.2	36.4	53.6
KNA	22.7	36.4	59.1
LCA	47.8	30.3	78.1
ABW	36.4	47.9	84.3
ATG	32.7	58.0	90.7
Average	18.1	25.0	43.1

Source: World Travel and Tourism Council estimates for the Travel and Tourism Industry

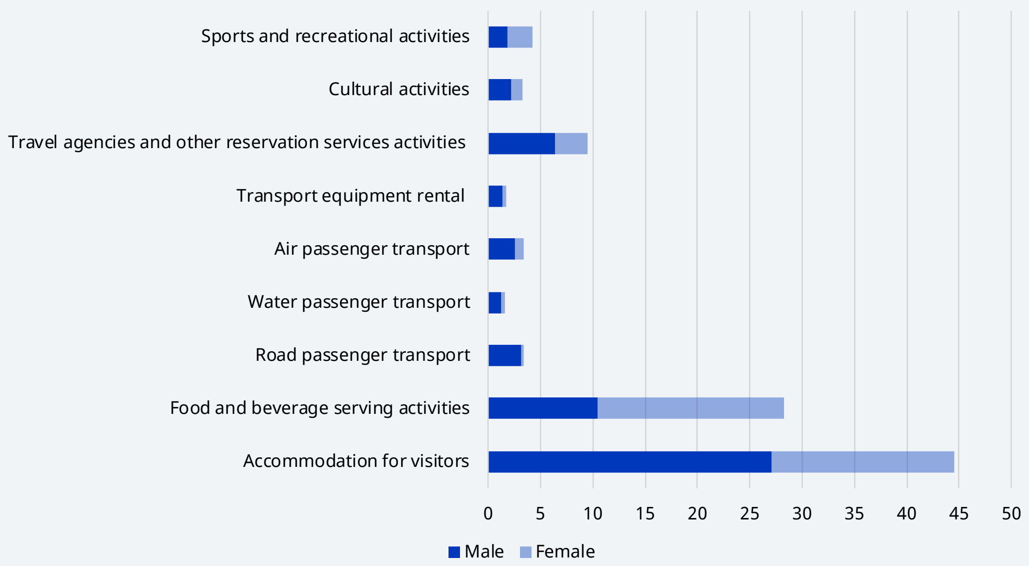
Breakdown of tourism employment

Traditionally, a labour-intensive industry with a higher than average multiplier effect on employment in other sectors (e.g. agriculture, food processing, construction, transport, as reflected by indirect employment figures), the industry tends to benefit categories of workers experiencing disadvantage in the labour market such as youth, women and migrants and, more generally, is capable of absorbing workers with limited skill levels. On the other hand, generally speaking, gaps in working conditions are non-negligible. These include systematic long working hours, low wages, low union density, limited training provision and exposure to vulnerability due to systematic use of fixed-term or seasonal contracts in the absence of alternatives.

Zeroing in on subsectors of employment, Belize is the only country in the region with data for all tourism subindustries and, even then, this data only applies to socially insured workers.[21] As Figure 8 illustrates, the majority of socially insured Belizean tourism workers are found in the "accommodation for visitors" and "food and beverage serving activities" subindustries at 45 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively.

Figure 8

Socially insured tourism workers in Belize by subindustry and sex (2018) (%)



Source: Belize Tourism Board Statistical Digest 2018

Overall, there are more men in the Belize tourism industry relative to women, accounting for 56 per cent of all tourism workers and closely mirroring the pattern among all employed workers.[22] This applies to all tourism subindustries with the exception of food and beverage serving activities where women comprise 63 per cent of all workers, and sports and recreational activities where women account for 56 per cent. Ultimately, however, these figures may be influenced by women having a higher propensity to be informally employed resulting in them not showing up in these numbers.

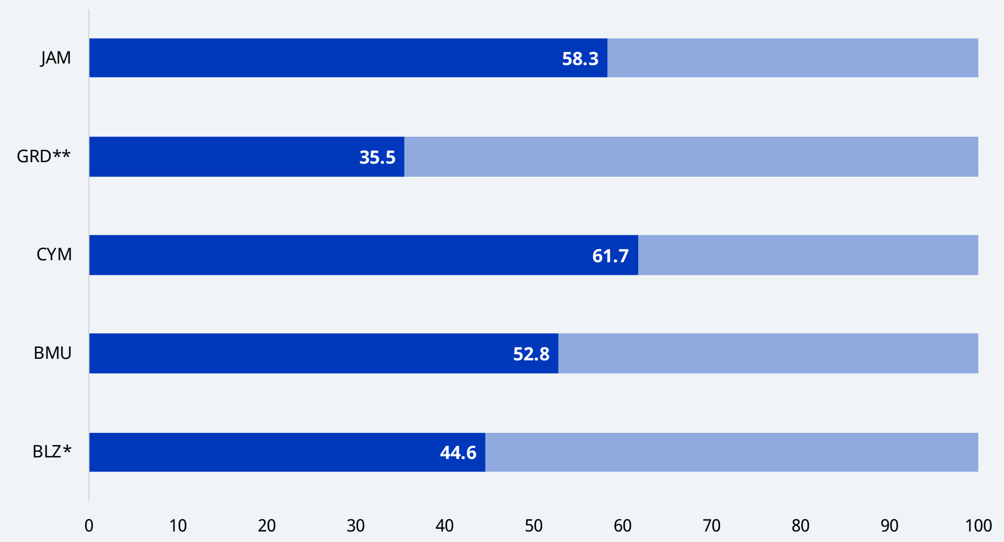
21 That is, informally employed workers are not included in these figures.

22 In 2019, 60 per cent of employed workers in Belize were male. Source: Labour Force Survey 2019. Statistical Institute of Belize.

Data for the accommodation subsector alone, though still limited, is available for a few more Caribbean countries. Figure 9 shows that this subsector tends to be the largest of all tourism subindustries with as much as 62 per cent of all tourism workers in accommodation in the Cayman Islands.

Figure 9

Employed workers in the accommodation subsector as % of all tourism workers (Most recent year available) in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs



Source: Author's calculations based on data from Jamaica Labour Force Survey (average of 2014 and 2016 for workers with main job in the accommodation subsector); UNWTO data for Grenada (2017); Belize Tourism Board (2018); Cayman Islands Labour Force Survey Report (Fall 2019); and Bermuda Department of Statistics Tourism Satellite Account Report 2018. Note that calculations of percentages were done for Grenada, Cayman Islands and Jamaica using WTTC estimates of the total number of tourism workers in the respective years.

*Data for Belize is only for insured workers i.e. Excludes informally employed tourism workers.

**Data for Grenada applies only to employees i.e. Not the self-employed

Given the high proportion of visitor arrivals accounted for by cruise passengers, we additionally examined the proportion of employment directly accounted for by the cruise tourism sector. Generally, in the countries for which we have data, we find this figure to be very low, ranging from 2.2 per cent in Grenada to around 11 per cent in Belize. The two exceptions are in Saint Kitts and Nevis (18 per cent) and the Cayman Islands (57 per cent, perhaps led by the relatively small size of the labour force). In these two countries in particular, and to a lesser extent in Belize, the slow recovery anticipated for the cruise sector is likely to have more severe consequences for employment.[23]

23 Estimates of share of cruise tourism in direct employment in tourism (%): Grenada - 2.2; Saint Lucia - 3.6; Dominica - 3.8; Jamaica - 4.1; Aruba - 6.7; Antigua and Barbuda - 6.8; Barbados - 7.0; Bahamas - 9.2; Belize - 10.7; Saint Kitts and Nevis - 18.4; and Cayman Islands - 56.6. Figures for the number of workers directly employed in the cruise tourism sector were obtained from the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (2015) as stated in Association of Caribbean States (2016). Cruise Tourism in the Greater Caribbean Region. Figures for total direct employment in tourism is obtained from the WTTC. Shares of cruise tourism in total direct employment in tourism are calculated based on these two sets of figures.

In order to identify who exactly is likely to be most impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, we examined the labour force survey microdata for Jamaica for 2014 and 2016 as it relates to those whose main job is in the accommodation subsector (a subset of the whole tourism industry).[24] Although not representative of the entire industry nor of the entire region, the fact that accommodation is the largest subindustry, as just demonstrated, and Jamaica a major tourism economy, provides a preliminary perspective of tourism employment dynamics in the region and will be discussed in this context.

As illustrated in Figure 10, accommodation workers are more likely to be female (60 per cent), hence, women are more likely to be faced with the unemployment and underemployment resulting from the current crisis.[25] They are also overwhelmingly in the occupation category of service and sales workers (59 per cent)[26] and medium skill occupation categories[27] (75 per cent), more broadly speaking. This may mean that accommodation workers are able to move into other sectors more easily given their higher level of skills, however, such mobility will ultimately depend on the degree of specificity in their skills versus the skills required in available jobs in other industries, as well as the structure of the given economy. Additionally, 16.5 per cent of female accommodation workers are in managerial positions compared to just nine per cent of all employed female workers.[28] In terms of youth, Figure 10 also illustrates that there are slightly more youth in the accommodation subsector than in the total labour force in Jamaica.

Given the nature of the accommodation subindustry with large hotels, they are additionally more likely than other employed persons to work in establishments with 50 or more workers (29 per cent versus 17 per cent) and to be employees (76 per cent) as opposed to self-employed workers.[29] To the extent that larger firms are more able to withstand economic crises, accommodation workers may be better off than others in terms of having a job to return to once the sector recovers. On the flipside, this may be a source of vulnerability if it reflects employment in large foreign-owned hotels which can easily close and leave the country as compared to smaller locally-owned establishments. Large hotels are less likely to be a feature of the tourism sector in smaller tourism economies such as those of the Eastern Caribbean where reliance on micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the accommodation subsector is expected to be higher. Workers are therefore more vulnerable in such countries if smaller establishments are found to be less resilient in the crisis.

24 The Jamaica Labour Force Survey only captures this tourism subindustry. Available labour force survey microdata for other Caribbean countries do not contain a sufficiently disaggregated ‘industry’ variable to be able to classify tourism workers and their subindustries.

25 This imbalance toward women is corroborated by data for the accommodation subsector in the Cayman Islands (2019) – 60 per cent female, and Grenada (2017) – 61 per cent female (this figure is for employees only). It is also corroborated by labour force survey data for the broader “accommodation and food service” industry for Saint Lucia (2019) – 56 per cent female, Aruba (2019) – 61 per cent female, and the Bahamas (2017) – 57 per cent female. This industry is often referred to as the hospitality industry and is taken as an imperfect proxy for the tourism industry.

26 This finding was partially corroborated by the analysis of labour force survey microdata for Saint Lucia (2019) using the accommodation and food service sectors as a proxy for the accommodation subindustry of the tourism sector. Specifically, 40 per cent of accommodation and food service workers were found to be in the occupation category of service and sales relative to 28 per cent among all employed workers.

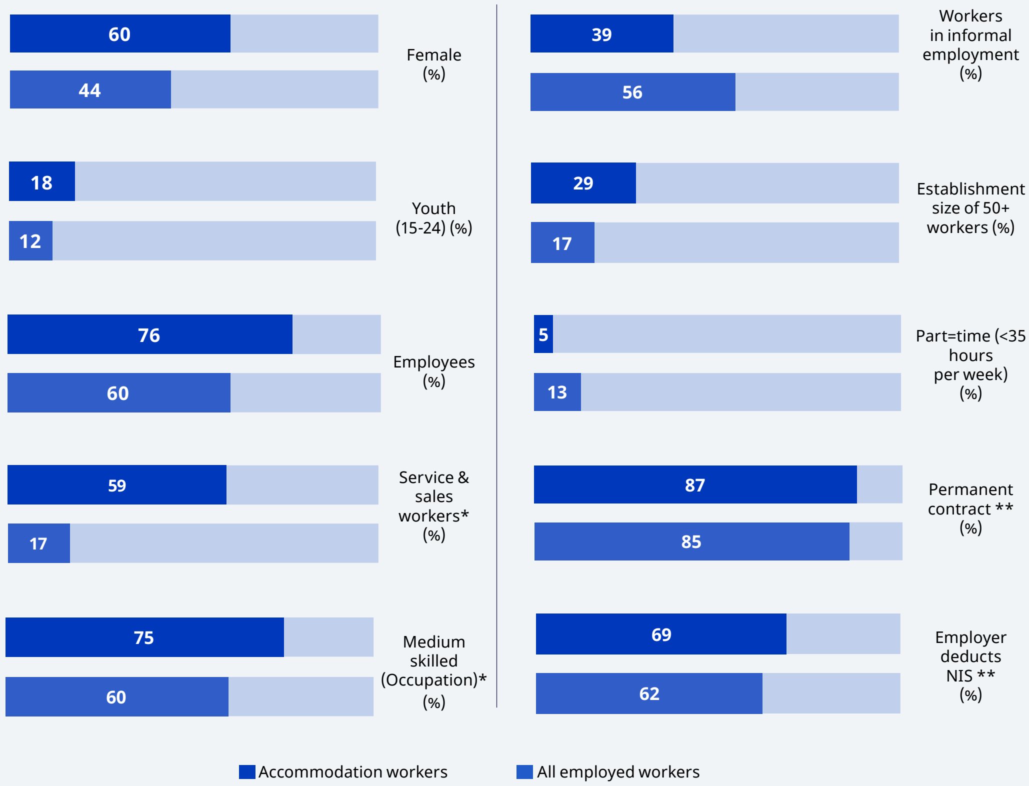
27 This includes clerical support workers, service and sales workers (largest constituent of this group in the case of tourism workers), skilled agricultural and fishery workers, craft and related trades workers, and plant and machine operators and assemblers.

28 Calculations based on Jamaica Labour Force Survey 2014 only. Occupation variable for 2016 contained a large portion of unclassified observations.

29 Similar findings were found upon analyzing labour force survey microdata for Saint Lucia (2019) using the accommodation and food service sectors as a proxy for the accommodation subindustry of the tourism sector – 87 per cent of accommodation and food service workers were employees compared to 70 per cent of all employed workers.

▶ Figure 10

Accommodation workers and all employed workers in Jamaica (Average 2014 and 2016) by selected demographics and employment characteristics



Source: Author's calculations - average of figures from Jamaica Labour Force Survey 2014 and 2016 for workers whose main job is in the accommodation subsector.

*2014 data only.

**Employees only i.e. No self-employed / employers

Here, it should be noted that the nature of the crisis means that hotels which are less densely laid out, for example, with isolated cabins and villas, are likely to reopen sooner and attract visitors at a higher rate relative to denser establishments. Workers in such accommodation are thus likely to regain their jobs quicker. Of course, the data does not allow for identifying the fraction of accommodation workers to which this applies.

Broadly speaking, accommodation workers are less likely to be in informal employment[30] relative to all employed workers; 39 per cent versus 56 per cent, respectively (Figure 10). This follows from the nature of the subsector as accommodation tends to be more regulated and has less self-employed workers.

30 The calculation follows ILO (2018) "Women and men in the informal economy: a statistical picture (third edition)" / International Labour Office – Geneva: ILO, 2018. In line with the existing International Standard: (i) in the case of own-account workers and employers, the informal employment status of the job is determined by the informal sector nature of the enterprise (registered or not); (ii) all contributing family workers are classified as having informal employment; and (iii) in the case of employees, informal employment is defined in terms of the employment relationship. Specifically, to be considered informal, the employment relationship should not be, in law or in practice, subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits.

However, it is unlikely to be the case for other tourism subindustries such as the food service, as well as those with high ratios of self-employed workers. Indeed, globally, the tourism sector is recognized as having high degrees of informal employment.[31] With regard to social security contributions, although relative to all employed workers, accommodation workers are more likely (7 percentage points) to have national insurance contributions deducted, in absolute terms, it remains that around 30 per cent are likely to fall outside the pre-existing social safety net. To the extent that this figure is representative of other Caribbean countries, it is particularly a concern where pre-existing social insurance measures are being relied upon to aid affected workers without new measures to catch those excluded. Furthermore, in some countries, new COVID-specific benefits are only accessible by those (pre) registered with national insurance bodies.

Contrary to expectations arising from the seasonality of tourism in the region, at least in Jamaica, temporary and part-time employment are not significant features of the accommodation subsector.[32] This augurs well for workers during the crisis since permanent employees tend to have greater entitlements, for example, with regard to being laid off, and greater negotiating power related to union membership, where applicable.[33]

Another dimension of employment that is relevant in the crisis context is the status of migrant workers in tourism versus residents or nationals. While perhaps not applicable in Jamaica, this is a major concern in countries such as the Cayman Islands and British Virgin Islands where migrants comprise 57.6 per cent[34] and 68 per cent[35] of the total workforce, respectively.[36] Looking at the Cayman Islands specifically, Figure 11 shows that the accommodation subsector is disproportionately comprised of Non-Caymanian workers compared to all employed workers in the country; 63 per cent versus 48 per cent. Since 62 per cent of all Cayman Islands tourism workers are estimated to be in this subsector and given the high proportion of migrant workers in the country generally, we can infer that migrant workers will be the most affected by the crisis in the tourism industry. The fact that most of these workers are also women (61 per cent of the accommodation subsector)[37] means that female migrant workers will be doubly disadvantaged. The migration status is particularly relevant if one considers the fact that work permit holders are often ineligible for almost all benefits and social assistance measures introduced by the Government to provide relief during the crisis. This is the case for the Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos and most other Caribbean countries.[38]

31 ILO (2020). ILO Sectoral Brief: Impact of COVID-19 on the Tourism Sector.

32 Note that these figures may be a result of Government's action in 2019 to end temporary contract employment for tourism, and particularly hotel workers, and thus are unlikely to be the same for the entire region.

33 As discussed earlier, tourism worker unions are scarce in the region and in the world generally, however, this statement is still relevant for membership in general unions with both tourism and non-tourism workers.

34 This figure is for permanent residents with rights to work (9.9 per cent) plus Non-Caymanian workers i.e. Those on work permits (47.7 per cent) as a percentage of all employed workers. Source: Cayman Islands Government, The Cayman Islands Labour Force Survey Report: Fall 2019.

35 This figure is for 2014 as quoted in UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women Eastern Caribbean (2020). British Virgin Islands: COVID-19 Macroeconomic and Human Impact Assessment Data. COVID 19 Policy Document Series.

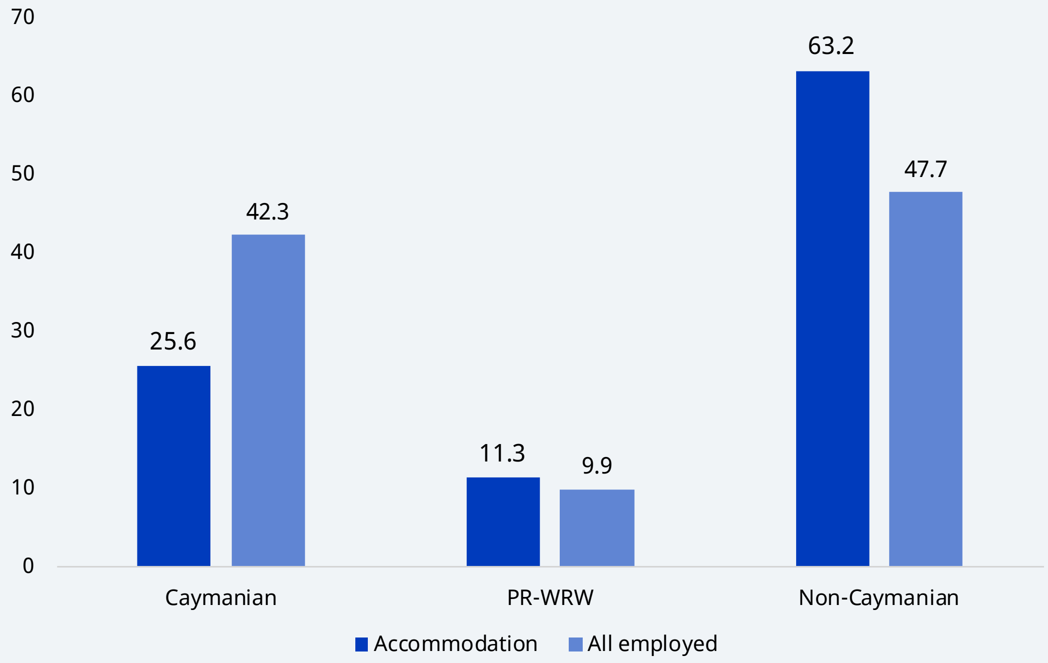
36 Figures are likely to be similar for the Turks and Caicos Islands.

37 Source: Cayman Islands Government, The Cayman Islands Labour Force Survey Report: Fall 2019.

38 Bermuda is the only country in the region identified as explicitly extending COVID-19 benefits to non-national workers.

▶ Figure 11

Accommodation workers and all employed workers in the Cayman Islands (Fall 2019) by migration status (%)



Source: Cayman Islands Government, The Cayman Islands Labour Force Survey Report: Fall 2019.

*PR-WRW = Permanent resident with rights to work

Generally, tourism workers in the Caribbean are not exclusively represented by any workers' associations. However, there are three good examples of workers' representation. The first one is the Bahamas Hotel, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (BHCAWU). Although representing non-tourism workers as well, it is the only Union identified in the region as being largely focused on this sector. The second is in Barbados, the Barbados Workers' Union (BWU), which has members and plays an active role in advocating for workers' interests. The third is in Antigua and Barbuda where almost all workers are directly or indirectly employed by the tourism sector, it is the Antigua and Barbuda Workers' Union (ABWU). Even without a dedicated union, the interests of tourism workers are represented by other unions (where existing).

▶ What is the effect of the crisis on employment?

Labour force data is not yet available to determine exactly how tourism workers have been affected by the crisis thus far. Studies conducted by regional organizations and preliminary national administrative data, however, have begun to paint a picture of what is happening.

In terms of overall job loss, an IADB COVID-19 Impact Survey in the Latin America and the Caribbean region[39] found that 45 per cent of respondents reported that a household member had lost a job during the pandemic, while 57 per cent reported business closures among respondents of households that operate small businesses.

39 Inter-American Development Bank. "Coronavirus Survey Results Show Big Impacts, Linkages between Labor Markets and Inequality".

In the Caribbean, it was also found that the incidence of job loss was higher among poorer households[40] while data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) suggests that 9.9 per cent of working hours in the Caribbean are expected to be lost during the second quarter of 2020. This is equivalent to a loss of 1.5 million full-time jobs.[41]

In the tourism sector specifically, an impact survey conducted by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association[42] in April 2020 among a random sample of its hotel members revealed that 71 per cent of hotels had laid off staff as a means of addressing the revenue shortfall caused by the crisis. Some 66 per cent had also reduced the workweek or hours worked, while 53 per cent had cut salaries. The ILO approach[43] establishing a classification of employment according to five categories of risk - high, medium-high, medium-low, low-medium and low - based on a number of parameters, including the possibility for telework. Worldwide demand and real-time economic and financial data collected during q1 and q2 2020 include the "Accommodation and food service activities" industry amongst the high-risk ones and "Transport and Storage" amongst the medium-high ones.

This pattern is consistent with figures announced by Jamaica's Minister of Tourism indicating that 75 per cent of the country's tourism workers had been laid off due to the crisis with the remaining 25 per cent working for only two or three days a week at a reduced rate of compensation.[44][45] In many countries, workers were asked to take vacation leave or unpaid leave, as a pre-measure before initiating layoffs.[46] Paid leave during the crisis, however, is not a common practice in the region.

Administrative data from Belize's COVID-19 Unemployment Relief Programme[47] is also telling of the situation in the tourism industry with almost 30 per cent of approved applicants coming from tourism (see Figure 12). This group included tour guides, wait staff, kitchen staff, those in guest/customer services, housekeeping, and maintenance and upkeep. Assuming that the approval system was rigorous enough to verify that applicants were truly unemployed, we can use this figure to obtain a lower bound on the scale of unemployment in Belize's tourism sector resulting from the crisis. Comparing the 13,150 approved applicants to the 22,058 workers employed in the sector, as stated previously, we find that 60 per cent of tourism workers are estimated to have become unemployed as a result of the crisis.[48][49]

40 Inter-American Development Bank, "COVID-19, the Caribbean Crisis".

41 International Labour Organization, "ILO: COVID-19 eliminates the equivalent of 1.5 million jobs in the Caribbean".

42 Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (2020). COVID-19 Caribbean Tourism Impact and Outlook Survey.

43 See ILO (2020) "COVID-19 and the world of work. Fourth edition".

44 Government of Jamaica. https://jis.gov.jm/

45 Workers have been asked to take pay cuts in Barbados ranging from 10 to 15 per cent, and in some cases as high as 50 per cent. These numbers, however, apply to all workers and not just those in tourism. https://gisbarbados.gov.bb/blog/nis-receives-36482-unemployment-claims/.

46 This is not specific to tourism workers.

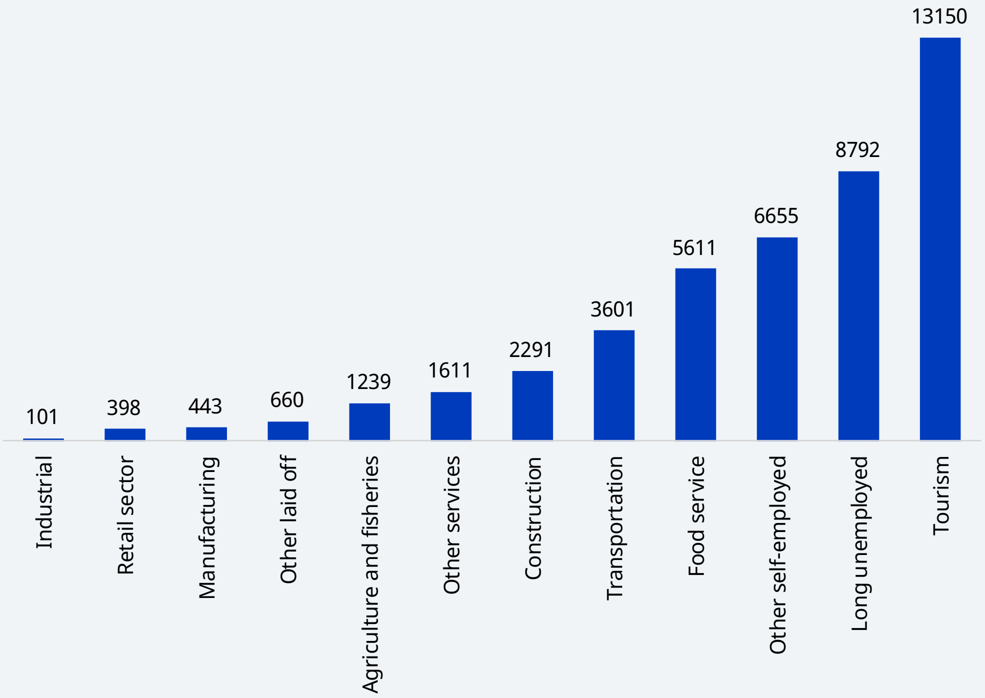
47 Government of Belize Press Office. "Summary Report of Unemployment Relief Program". Note that this programme is mainly targeting tourism workers but is not exclusive to them.

48 This figure is only an estimate since more unemployed are likely to be included among (i) the 34,400 relief applications which were not approved; and (ii) those who did not apply at all. Additionally, figures for the total number of workers in the tourism industry do not include the informally employed.

49 In Barbados, 36,482 unemployment benefit claims were made as at 15 May, 2020, relative to a total workforce of around 140,000 (roughly 26 per cent). This figure applies to all workers and not just those in tourism. https://gisbarbados.gov.bb/blog/nis-receives-36482-unemployment-claims/

Figure 12

Approved applicants for the COVID-19 unemployment Relief Program in Belize by industry (June 2020)



Source: Author's calculations based on Government of Belize data.

Projections have also been made for total unemployment and employment (or underemployment) in the tourism sector, specifically. Studies commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Eastern Caribbean suggest that total unemployment in 2020 could reach between 27 per cent and 34 per cent in Anguilla, 12 per cent and 17 per cent in the British Virgin Islands, and 17 per cent and 21 per cent in Barbados, in the scenarios of tourism restarting between August and November, 2020.[50] Tourism job losses are projected to be in the range of five to eight per cent for all three countries.

In terms of income losses, projections have also been made that in 2020, tourism workers are likely to lose between 34 per cent and 56 per cent of incomes in Anguilla, 37 per cent and 60 per cent in the British Virgin Islands, and 13 per cent and 32 per cent in Barbados.[51] As expected, these numbers are far greater than the losses anticipated for workers in other sectors.[52]

A rise in informal employment, which may entail exclusion from work-related social protection measures, is also a concern since informality tends to increase during economic crises.

50 UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women Eastern Caribbean (2020). Anguilla: COVID-19 Macroeconomic and Human Impact Assessment Data. COVID 19 Policy Document Series. UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women Eastern Caribbean (2020). Barbados: COVID-19 Macroeconomic and Human Impact Assessment Data. COVID 19 Policy Document Series.

51 Ibid. Figures quoted are for the most likely scenarios of tourism restarting between August and November 2020.

52 Op cit. See further details of expected income losses for tourism workers relative to other workers in the three UNDP Assessment Reports cited.

Estimating the Impact of arrivals on employment in the tourism industries

Using visitor arrival and employment data for the past 20 years (2000-2019) for 18 Caribbean countries, we also attempt to project the impact of the crisis on tourism employment. Using a log specification to estimate the average elasticity of employment in the tourism industries to tourism arrivals, we found that depending on the chosen identification strategy, a 50 per cent reduction in visitor arrivals anticipated by the Caribbean Tourism Organization for 2020 is likely to be matched by a total annual reduction in direct tourism employment ranging from 7.9 to 29.8 per cent.[53]

Table 4

Predicted change in employment in the tourism industries with reduction in visitor arrivals to the Caribbean using different regression specifications

Regression specification	Estimated elasticity	Δ in Tourism employment with 10% reduction in visitor arrivals	Δ in Tourism employment with 50% reduction in visitor arrivals	Number of observations
Pooled OLS regression with country and year dummies (18 countries, 2000-2019)	0.12	-1.25%	-7.9%	319
Fixed effects regression with year dummies (18 countries, 2000-2019)	0.12	-1.25%	-7.9%	319
Pooled OLS regression with country and year dummies for visitor arrivals in the 60th percentile or higher (9 countries, 2000-2019)	0.51	-5.23%	-29.78%	128
Pooled OLS regression with country and year dummies for visitor arrivals in the 75th percentile or higher (7 countries, 2000-2019)	0.31	-3.21%	-19.33%	80

Source: Author's calculations using direct employment in the tourism industries data from the World Travel and Tourism Council and visitor arrival data from National Statistical Offices, Tourism Authorities, Central Banks and the UNWTO.

53 Note that this prediction does not take into account general equilibrium effects as tourism workers move into other sectors where employment may be available.

Government responses[54]

Governments in the region responded swiftly to the crisis, with many announcing stimulus and relief packages at the end of March into early April 2020. In several countries, these measures have been financed by borrowing from the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Rapid Finance Programme (RFP) and other international financial institutions (IFIs), borrowing from local financial institutions, and in some cases, by the issue of government bonds.

Monetary policy has also generally followed the tenor of fiscal policy to be more accommodative in countries where such policy is internally determined[55], or regionally determined, for example, in the case of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States.

With regard to the tourism sector, specifically, several countries have introduced measures directly targeting workers, both employees and the self-employed, and businesses in the industry affected by the crisis, alongside more general measures for the wider population. Tourism workers and firms also stand to benefit from this latter group of policies. Table 5 maps the measures taken by governments in the region which target individuals, both employees and the self-employed, and households, while Table 6 takes stock of those taken to support businesses during the crisis. In both cases, those specifically targeting the tourism sector are highlighted. It should be noted that this mapping covers only those measures taken directly in response to the COVID-19 crisis and not those pre-existing, unless an additional injection was specifically made to deal with the current situation.[56]

54 Measures discussed in this report were mapped by the author and the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean in a separate exercise based on official government online sources not detailed or cited again in this report. The full country policy briefs can be accessed here: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm.

55 Countries like Bermuda and the British Virgin Islands use the US dollar and therefore cannot set monetary policy.

56 Measures exclusively targeting other sectors such as agriculture and construction, have also not been mapped here. It is not anticipated that this mapping will be exhaustive but rather should provide a good overview of the actions governments have taken in the region.

Table 5

Mapping of COVID-19 relief measures taken by governments in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs to support employees, self-employed workers, and households

Country	Tax relief (waiver or deferral of payments)	Waiver or Deferral of other fees and penalties, and loan payments	Direct Cash Transfers	Food Assistance	Utility Assistance	Skills Training	Pension Withdrawals/ Holidays	Home Refurbishment/ Home ownership loans
AIA	x	x	x	x	x			
ATG	x	x	x	x	x	o		
ABW	x		x	x	x			
BHS		x	x o	x	x			
BRB	x	x	x o	x	x	o		x
BLZ		x	x o	x	x			
BMU		x	x		x		x	
BVI		x	x	x	x			
CYM			o	x	x		x	
CUW			x					
DMA	x	x	x	x				
GRD	x		x o	x	x			
GUY	x	x		x	x			
JAM	x	x	x		x	o		
MSR	x	x	x	x	x			
KNA	x	x	x	x	x			
LCA	x	x	x o	x	x	x		
VCT	x o	x	x o	x	x			
SXM	x		x	x	x			
SUR			x	x				x
TTO	x	x	x	x	x			
TCA		x	o	x	x			

X – measure targeting general population   O – measure specifically targeting the tourism sector

Source: Author’s mapping based on official government sources.

Table 6

Mapping of COVID-19 relief measures taken by governments in selected Caribbean countries and NMTs to support businesses

Country	Grants or loans, loan guarantees	Salary subsidies	Utility assistance	Tax relief (credits, waivers or deferrals)	Waiver /deferral of other fees and penalties, loan moratoria	Waiver / defferal of social securit contributions	Business coaching or technical assistance	Employment retention conditionalities
AIA	x			x	x	x		
ATG	x			x	x			
ABW	x	x		x o		o		x
BHS	x			x	x			x
BRB	x o					x		x
BLZ	x	x				x	ox	
BMU	x			x	x	x		
BVI	x o		x					
CYM	x o			o	x	x	x	
CUW	x o	x						x
DMA	x			x	x o			x
GRD	x o	o		x	x			
GUY				x	x			
JAM	x o			x	x o		x	x o
MSR	x o	x o		x	x			
KNA	x		x	x	x			x
LCA	o			x	x o			x
VCT	x		o		x o			
SXM	x	x	x	x				x
SUR	x o			x	x			
TTO	x o			x	x			
TCA	x		x	x o	x o			

X – measure targeting general population O – measure specifically targeting the tourism sector

Source: Author's mapping based on official government sources.

At the individual level, the most common types of relief implemented by governments are direct cash transfers available in some form in 20 countries in the region, food assistance ranging from supermarket vouchers to duty concessions on food items, and utility assistance in the form of payment deferrals and amnesties. The latter two types of relief are both available in 18 out of 21 countries and tend to be more accessible across the board with little to no eligibility requirements. For example, price freezes and duty / VAT concessions on food items are non-discriminatory. This means that, at the very least, affected tourism workers are likely to have access to some form of food and utility assistance.[57]

With regard to measures directly targeting tourism workers, these are similarly most commonly found in the form of direct transfers, being implemented in eight out of the 21 countries studied. These range from blanket benefits available to all tourism workers affected by the crisis as is the case in the Cayman Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to those targeted at specific subindustries and occupations such as beach vendors in Barbados, to those targeted at self-employed tourism workers. Transfers to this latter group have been implemented in Saint Lucia, the Bahamas, and Grenada.

Where transfers are exclusive to self-employed tourism workers or sole proprietors in the industry such as tour guides, and taxi / bus operators, they serve the important function of ensuring that self-employed tourism workers, who are less likely to meet criteria of registration and contributions for regular unemployment benefits, are adequately covered. This type of measure, therefore, may represent a prudent way to assist tourism workers in countries where social assistance is conditional on social insurance or tax office registration. This is the case, for example, in Aruba and Dominica.

As discussed in an earlier section, another challenge arises in the case of migrant tourism workers being ineligible for both general and tourism-targeted relief efforts in countries like the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands where they constitute a substantial share of the workforce in the sector.[58] In the Cayman Islands, for example, non-Caymanians are only eligible for a one-time food voucher. In terms of immigration rules, however, there have been some accommodations made given the crisis. Again, in the Cayman Islands, for example, there is an extended period for applications for work permit renewals to be made with work allowed to continue in the interim, as long as there is work available. By contrast, in the case of workers not being able to work while "sheltering in place" or due to layoffs, employers are required to make travel arrangements for such persons to leave the islands.[59] The future of the tourism industry may therefore be jeopardized if such workers are forced to leave the respective host countries due to temporary loss of incomes and employment.

Another observation is that in no country are measures targeted directly at female or young tourism workers – the ones most likely to suffer from job losses and income reduction given the high incidence of employment in the tourism industry and, in the case of youth, the high vulnerability to business cycle fluctuations.[60] However, it is also true that both categories benefit from general social assistance support measures targeting the whole population.[61]

Furthermore, it is worth noting that few countries have pursued the path of upskilling or retraining as a means to assist tourism workers affected by the crisis. The main exceptions are in Jamaica and Barbados with online training in a wide range of areas being offered to tourism workers in the former, and the development of training programmes for formal and informal tourism workers included under the mandate of the tourism recovery task force in the latter. Retraining is also available in Saint Lucia, however, this is not exclusive to tourism workers and applies only to tertiary-educated unemployed

57 Even in the Cayman Islands where Government measures are almost all exclusive to Caymanians, there is still a one-time food voucher available to non-Caymanian workers.

58 The exception to this trend is Bermuda where both national and guest workers are eligible for COVID relief assistance.

59 More information available directly from the Government of the Cayman Islands. https://www.exploregov.ky/faqs/covid-19-worc#wp-amendment.

60 See for instance Dietrich, H., Möller, J. (2016) Youth unemployment in Europe – business cycle and institutional effects. Int Econ Econ Policy 13, 5–25

61 See https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm for a full overview.

workers interested in university-level courses. Upskilling and retraining, therefore, remains an avenue to be explored by many countries moving forward.

Businesses in the Caribbean, as the engines of the economy, stand to benefit from a host of relief measures implemented by governments. These range from the most common mechanism of soft loans and grants identified in all but two countries, to some form of tax relief and waivers / deferrals of other business fees, loan payments, and penalties present in 16 and 15 countries, respectively.

With regard to measures targeting the tourism sector directly, a comparison of Table 5 and 6 reveals that governments in the region favour the channelling of resources to tourism-related businesses and employers as a means to boosting and supporting the sector. Specifically, tourism-targeted business relief measures are found in 15 out of 21 countries, versus in just eight for measures at the individual level. This may be partially due to the lower administrative complexity involved in targeting businesses and employers and the greater likelihood of tourism employment being sustainable if the growth and survival of such establishments are ensured.

As with businesses in general, tourism businesses in the region receive direct support most commonly by means of loans and grants. These include refurbishment loans and grants as in the case of Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago, one-off grants like in Monsterrat, and more unique measures such as the Hotel and Quarantine Grant Stimulus in the British Virgin Islands which seeks to boost hotels by contracting them as quarantine facilities prior to the full resumption of the tourism industry.

Notably, many of these relief measures, including loans and grants just discussed, are accompanied by employment retention conditionalities in several countries. The actual percentage of workers to be retained, however, varies from country to country, ranging from 50 to 100 per cent. Such conditionalities are specific to tourism workers only in the case of the Business Employee Support and Transfer of Cash (BEST Cash) programme in Jamaica.

Stimulus measures are generally not tied to efforts to make tourism in the region "greener" or more sustainable, whether by conditionalities or by favouring efficiency gains or more eco-friendly businesses. The one exception identified is the Barbados Tourism Facility which offers loans to the tourism sector. Funds provided are expected to support links with local agriculture, and use of renewable energy, in addition to job retention and upskilling of local staff. Beyond the tourism sector, it should be noted that there are some stimulus mechanisms in the region which seek to promote sustainability. These include, for example, the construction of climate-resilient homes in Dominica, and support for local food production in several more countries such as Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Montserrat, and the British Virgin Islands.

In some instances, as with individually targeted measures, business support efforts risk exclusion where stringent criteria of registration for social insurance, tax compliance and business licenses are in effect. This is the case in countries like Dominica, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. While hotels and other accommodation businesses may be more likely to meet these requirements, small businesses, such as tour companies, may not. Coverage of the informal sector is therefore problematic.

Also, similar to upskilling and training at the individual level is the limited extent to which business coaching and training have been pursued as a means to coping with the crisis, not just in the tourism sector, but across the board. Even in Belize where such coaching targets the tourism industry directly, the scope is fairly limited as it is in the format of ad-hoc webinars for tourism stakeholders hosted by the Belize Tourism Board. Countries may therefore wish to consider the usefulness of such mechanisms as they chart the recovery of tourism.

Examining both individual and business targeted measures combined, it appears that generally, Caribbean governments have taken a multipronged approach to countering the effects of the crisis by pursuing channels at both levels.

It should be noted that this discussion excludes infrastructure projects and other capital investments undertaken by governments in response to the crisis. In some cases, these have been specifically targeted at the tourism industry, for example, in Suriname, renovation of tourism sites is envisaged as a means to boosting the sector post-crisis. Even where such projects are not directly targeted at the tourism sector, as in the case of construction projects in Dominica and Barbados, for example, it can be argued that in many countries such projects serve and benefit the tourism industry anyway.

Tripartite responses to the crisis have been somewhat limited in the region with most initiatives being undertaken exclusively by governments or in conjunction with employers' associations, particularly national hotel and tourism associations. The main exceptions have occurred in Barbados, and Antigua and Barbuda. In the former, social partnership is an established feature of governance with government, employers', and workers' organizations meeting monthly to discuss issues of national importance. Consequently, almost all stimulus and relief measures, including those targeting the tourism sector, taken in Barbados have proceeded with the approval arising out of tripartite consultation.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the Antigua and Barbuda Hotel and Tourism Association (ABHTA) and the Antigua and Barbuda Workers' Union (ABWU) cooperated in the distribution of food packages to affected hotel workers, while those workers who had previously contributed to the ABHTA/ABWU Thrift Fund had access to relief payments. Both organizations were joined by the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority to host a workshop to address the new health and safety guidelines and operation protocols within the hospitality industry.

In the Bahamas, the Bahamas Hotel, Catering, and Allied Workers Union (BHCAWU) has taken initiatives on a more independent basis, providing food vouchers to affected workers and pursuing dialogue with employers.

The only other area in which tripartism has been a significant feature is in the composition of national recovery committees. Economic recovery task forces in countries like Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, and Jamaica, and an oversight committee for a stimulus fund in Suriname, have included members of government, employers' and workers' organizations. Of course, these committees are not particular to the tourism industry.

In terms of occupational health and safety for workers, almost all governments have developed industry-specific protocols for the resumption of activities, including for the tourism sector. In many cases, these have been developed through consultation with relevant tourism stakeholders, often including training for workers to ensure compliance. Most countries have also introduced business and establishment health and safety certification such as the Aruba Health and Happiness Code, the Clean and Pristine Certification in the Bahamas, Safe Business Certification in Barbados, and the COVID-19 Resilient Certificate in Jamaica. Though intended to attract and reassure tourists and the public patronising different establishments, these certifications serve the dual purpose of protecting workers by ensuring that health and safety codes in the context of the current pandemic are upheld. For example, in Aruba, businesses are not allowed to operate without being certified.

Closely linked to health and safety are the unique mechanisms being used as the tourism industry reopens. For example, in Antigua and Barbuda, villas and hotels physically structured to be more conducive to social distancing have reopened earlier than more densely packed establishments. Furthermore, across the region, in countries such as Bermuda, the Bahamas, and again, Antigua and Barbuda, yacht tourism has also resumed at a quicker pace given the ease of isolation in this mode with Bermuda, in particular, seeking to boost superyacht tourism as a means to accelerating the sector's recovery. Finally, Curacao has taken the approach of limiting the maximum number of visitors allowed at a time to ten thousand passengers so as not to risk overburdening the local health care system.

The way forward

The dire and substantial consequences of the COVID crisis on the tourism sector in the Caribbean call for a structured response that shall include:

- A recovery based on a human-centered approach ensuring - to the maximum extent possible - income support and job recovery. In line with the general recommendations included in the ILO's "Policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis"[62]. Such approach should consist of a suitable portfolio of policy measures aimed at:

    - Stimulating - to the degree that movement restrictions allow - present or future demand for services and goods in the tourism sector and in the value chains directly dependent upon it, which were affected by the absence of an exit market. Direct support to businesses and workers along the lines followed in the first months of the pandemic is part of the solution and shall be complemented by measures aimed at stimulating demand, possibly starting with a national one given travel restrictions. Under the current circumstances, intra-Caribbean tourism, deferred purchase of tourism services and goods, and in general, targeted subsidies to stimulate the demand, may be considered.

    - Providing a fiscally sustainable support to tourism enterprises, distinguishing between the needs of micro, small, medium and big ones, their different cash flow constraints, and the capacity to reopen after short or long break, should be paramount. Where possible, such support should be shaped to ensure preserving the jobs and salaries in line with the fundamental principles entrenched in the ILO Termination of Employment Convention, 1982 (C158), and ILO Termination of Employment Recommendation, 1982 (R166). If restructuring and layoffs is unavoidable, social dialogue, educated and transparent decision-making about dismissals, and assistance to workers post dismissals (e.g. job search, retraining etc.), shall be considered.[63] In addition, it remains vital to provide an alternative social protection support for both salaried and self-employed workers who lost their income-generating sources. Guiding principles should be those ingrained in the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) and Employment Promotion and Promotion Against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168). To the benefit of the whole sector, in order to support reopening and longer-term strategies, the creation of a regional public good shaped as a dissemination tool can be considered. This tool should aim at sharing real-time information on borders, available means of transport, travel restrictions, public health measures (physical distancing or wearing of facemasks), and more generally, situation of the tourism services.[64]

    - Once the reopening kicks in, a phased in approach is recommended to ensure occupational health and safety for workers[65] and protection of customers' health while warranting continuity of production process for the employer. Such approach shall incorporate an establishment-base risk assessment and contingency plans.[66] It should also be an opportunity to ensure that more general principles expressed in the ILO Working Conditions (Hotels and Restaurants) Convention, 1991 (No. 172), and the Working Conditions (Hotels and Restaurants) Recommendation, 1991 (No. 179), and to the ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism are fully adopted. Measures

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62 See https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_745337.pdf

63 See ILO (2020) "Restructuring for recovery and resilience in response to the COVID-19 crisis" for further guidance

64 See as an example https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1045

65 Recalling that in line with the scope of the Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964 (No.121), workers who are infected by COVID-19 as a result of their work should be entitled to healthcare and, to the extent that they are incapacitated for work, to cash benefits or compensation including paid sick leave or sickness benefits as long as they are incapacitated to work.

66 See ILO (2020) "Prevention and control checklist for accommodation and food services for a safe return to work in the context of COVID-19", forthcoming.

including the adaptation of working arrangements (telework, flextime and, in some cases, reduction of working hours[67]), provision of support for workers who have to look after his / her family member who have fallen ill with COVID-19, which could take a form of family care leave,[68] and expanding access to paid sick leave,[69] may be considered and (without being detrimental to other sectors) tailored to the needs of tourism. To be considered, however, is that recovery may be hindered, stopped or even reversed depending on the evolution of the pandemic and on the measures to contrast it. The sector as a whole will need to remain vigilant and flexible.

  - Ensuring facilitating conditions for industry specific social dialogue mechanisms as a tool to develop creative and sustainable solutions. This should include strengthening the capacity and resilience of sectoral employers' and workers' organizations, the capacity of governments to constructively attend and contribute to the dialogue mechanism.

- Consideration of the current crisis as an opportunity to facilitate productivity enhancement[70] combined with a just transition to sustainable tourism, creation of decent green jobs and, more generally, give tourism the primary role to lead green / blue economic transitions in each country in line with SDG 14, Target 14.7, which calls for an increase of "economic benefits to Small Island Developing States [..] from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism". Current and future COVID-related enterprise or job oriented support measure could be designed to:

  - Develop enabling conditions for an overall better business environment [71] – which could include more and better digitization of regulatory and administrative arrangements, fast-tracking approval process, and facilitate paperless transactions for micro and small businesses in tourism.
  - Facilitate transition to sustainable tourism and ecofriendly technologies with tax incentives or consumption support, and also direct support to strengthen local agro value chains to supply in quality and quantity to the tourism sector.
  - Reduce costs via energy efficiency, recycling, consuming local agro and food and construction products.
  - Ensure protecting natural ecosystems as hotspots for tourism (and thus for the recovery) as an immediate objective.

- Take full advantage of the measures aimed at stimulating the current recovery to ensure the response to the current crisis ingrains mechanisms to prepare workers and employers to confront climate change effects and the consequence of extreme weather events within their operations. These can include - but not limited to - insurance for businesses and workers (unemployment benefits), incentives to diversification and development of new business models, including but not limited to, more efficient management of companies or (further) exploration of alternative tourism niches (e.g. eco, high end, health based).

67 The Reduction of Hours of Work Recommendation, 1962 (No. 116) indicates that the competent authority or body in each country should determine the circumstances and limits in which exceptions to the normal hours of work may be permitted in case of force majeure.

68 The Workers with Family Responsibilities Recommendation, 1981 (No. 165) recommends care leave in the case of illness of another member of the worker's immediate family who needs that worker's care or support.

69 See the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) and the Medical Care and Sickness Benefits Convention, 1969 (No. 130).

70 A recent research found that small business in particular tend to adopt a reactive approach to the devastation caused by hurricane and wait for the restart of the economy to proceed with 'business as usual'. Mutatis mutandis, such finding may apply to the present circumstances and calls for a change in the approach. See Rojer G and Hu-A-Ng Y. (2020) "Opportunities in times of tempest: business recovery post hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean. The case of Sint Maarten". ILO Caribbean draft for research.

71 See recent EESE and Post COVID-19 Rapid Response Policy Brief.

- Considering the negative impact of labour market detachment on the future labour market performance, the principles included in ILO C158 and R166 (aiming at reducing termination of employment) and in ILO C168 (calling for assistance to reintegrate dismissed workers into the labour market via employment promotion measures, employment placement and related services and vocational training and guidance) should be given the utmost consideration. The path already pursued by few countries in the region of upskilling or retraining as a means to assist tourism workers affected by the crisis is to be encouraged. Ceteris paribus, benefits in terms of increased labour productivity within the tourism sector and / or smoothened replacement to other sectors will ensue.

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