

May 27, 2020

H.E. Minister of Tourism, Public Health and Sport
Mr. Danguillaume Oduber
Bestuurskantoor

His Excellency,

After holding an AHATA Hotel General Manager meeting yesterday, the AHATA Board wishes to outline a few of our association's priority concerns at this crucial moment for Aruba:

Reopening of Border

AHATA is concerned about the need to avoid a second lockdown, because a second lockdown would be much more damaging to our economy than the first lockdown. We agree that the first lockdown was a necessary measure, however wish to emphasize the need to avoid another one when a second wave of cases occurs. This requires that prior to announcing a reopening date there is transparency regarding:

1. The inventory of rooms available on Aruba for isolation and quarantine of visitors, at separate properties from accommodations where healthy visitors are staying. AHATA has assisted with finding a quarantine property and is offering any further assistance needed for isolation properties as well.
2. The capacity of our healthcare system for COVID-19 cases.
3. What exact formula is used by the authorities to determine when a second lockdown would be required.
4. What exact plan is in place to ensure that a second lockdown is not required.

We repeat AHATA's recommendation that Aruba requires visitors to have proof of a negative test prior to boarding their flight to Aruba. This reduces the number of visitors to Aruba, but also reduces the number of possible positive cases on island to burden our healthcare system. If this entry requirement is not viable for our authorities, we do expect clear answers to the above 4 questions prior to any reopening announcement.

Travel Insurance

AHATA agrees with Aruba implementing a requirement for travel insurance for our visitors, which includes the coverage of pandemic costs to a visitor in addition to trip cancellation and medical expenses. As you are aware, AHATA was even assisting with establishing such an insurance program for Aruba. We vehemently disagree, however, with the government's potential plan to introduce an additional room levy for this travel insurance.

A required travel insurance should:

1. Be paid by every single visitor that enters Aruba and not only by hotel guests. There is still a lack of knowledge by the authorities of all alternative accommodation inventory and a lack of complete compliance for the corresponding tourism levies.
2. Be paid prior to travel (embedded into the online ED card) or upon arrival at Aruba airport. The visitor should be required to show proof of insurance to enter the island, just like a visa.

3. Be paid directly to the travel insurance company to the insurance company and not administered via the public sector and a room levy. AHATA is opposed to the possibility that such a room levy would be introduced to cover governmental expenses such as for AZV and/or the hospital.

Marketing Plan

A priority concern for AHATA is whether Aruba has sufficient funds allocated to attract visitors after we reopen, in a highly competitive field and fewer travelers worldwide. The hotel General Managers are very concerned about their lack of information regarding Aruba's specific marketing plan tactics for each market.

AHATA understands that airline information is dynamic, however the partners needs to be aware of the island's marketing plan with most current information possible.

A second concern is the lack of information on the funds available for overseas marketing. Considering the fact that we expect a slow recovery with low occupancies, we are aware that tourism levies will be limited through 2021. It is essential for our economic recovery that we collaborate on seeking funds required for effective marketing.

AHATA has appreciated a productive partnership with the A.T.A. and participation in strategic marketing plans for our island in the past and considers such a collaboration even more essential during this immense crisis. We look forward to understanding of the concerns expressed above and to further communications as well as collaboration on productive solutions for Aruba's tourism recovery.

Kind regards,



Tisa LaSorte
President and CEO

cc: Prime Minister of Aruba, Mrs. Evelyne Wever-Croes
CEO of A.T.A., Mrs. Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes
AHATA Board of Directors