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February 13<sup>th</sup> 2020

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Significant Strides in Aviation Sector Contribute to National Economic Diversification Goals**

“The Authority is exploring increasing connectivity within the Caribbean and the Americas and developing an intra Caribbean hub at the Piarco International Airport.” This was the sentiment echoed by General Manager of Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (“the Authority”), Hayden Newton, during a panel discussion held at the 2020 edition of the Routes Americas forum, in Indianapolis. The discussion was led by Felipe Luis de Oliveira, the current executive director and CEO of the Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association (ALTA), and Mr. Newton spoke about the vision for the development of air services to Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr Hayden Newton, who is also a member of the Standing Negotiating Committee on Air Services Agreements, a committee appointed by the Minister of Works and Transport, the Honourable Senator Rohan Sinanan, to oversee bilateral and multilateral air transportation agreements, was part of a team of officials representing Trinidad and Tobago at this year’s Routes forum from February 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> 2020. Other representatives included Mr Emmanuel Baah, Deputy General Manager, Estate Planning and Business Development Ag. and Ms Joanna Fridy, Marketing Manager Ag. of the Authority and Mr. Carlton de Four, Air Transport Coordinator, of Tourism Trinidad Limited (TTL).

Routes Americas is one of the premier networking conferences for the aviation industry that brings together key decision makers of airlines, airports and tourism bodies from all over the world with an interest in developing their route networks within the region. The forum facilitates Air Service Development - the systematic approach by airports and associated stakeholders to increase air lift to a destination via airport and destination marketing.

As the Authority continues to forge ahead with its work of increasing visitor arrivals to this country, talks were held, aimed at attracting new airlines to commence service to our airports and ensuring that existing services are maintained or augmented.

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This Media Release has been issued by Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago  
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Since the event, the Authority has continued discussions with interested companies that have expressed interest in beginning services to Piarco and ANR Robinson International Airports. In collaboration with the major aviation stakeholders, the Authority is confident that these negotiations can be successfully concluded.

Participation in this convention has been the catalyst to bear fruit for the country over the last five (5) years. Discussions that led to positive outcomes with carriers like Jet Blue Airlines, West Jet and Sun Wing Airlines were initiated at Routes Conferences.



(From Left to Right: Luis Felipe de Oliveira, CEO, ALTA, Alvaro Gonzalez, CEO, Bogota El Dorado International Airport, Hayden Newton, General Manager, Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, Rafael Moreira Mello Araujo, Airline Network Planning and Scheduling Executive, GOL Airlines, Werner Geissbuhler, Corporate Finance and Strategy Director, Sky Airline)

This year the Authority had the privilege to be represented by Mr. Newton as one of the esteemed panelists on a panel made up of expert international airport and airline executives, at a session titled, 'How can Latin America and the Caribbean fulfil their promise'. He informed the audience that the Caribbean tourism market is not homogeneous. He stated, "Whereas, the traditional Caribbean market is focused on leisure tourism, the island of Trinidad attracts a large percentage of business passengers. In Trinidad, the business passenger accounts for about 30% of arriving visitors, whereas in the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean, the business traveler on average makes up about 15% of overall visitors".

Mr Newton asserted, "The Authority is exploring increasing connectivity within the Caribbean and the Americas and developing an intra Caribbean hub at the Piarco International Airport. We are

looking at opportunities for growth in South America and developing links into Chile, Argentina, Peru and other Latin American nations. We are also looking at new opportunities in Scandinavia and Europe, which can also open doors to Middle Eastern markets”.

With a current annual passenger movement of about 3.5 million and forecasted increase, the Authority will continue to work with all stakeholders to support national aviation infrastructural development and the development of quality in-transit facilities.

The continuous efforts in air service development will ensure that the aviation, tourism and other downstream industries are poised to contribute more substantially to national economic growth, and play a major part in realising national diversification goals.



General Manager of Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr Hayden Newton and current head of the Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association (ALTA), Luis Felipe de Oliveira meet and greet at the recent Routes Americas Conference in Indianapolis. Luis Felipe de Oliveira has been elected to be the Director General of Airports Council International World.