



For further information, please contact:

Tricia N Henry

Manager - Marketing and Communications

Trinidad & Tobago Chamber of Industry & Commerce

Columbus Circle, Westmoorings

T: 637-6966 x 310 F: 637-7425 M: 740-1376

Email: thentry@chamber.org.tt

www.chamber.org.tt

Tobago Division, 2nd Floor Ansa McAL Building Scarborough Tel/Fax 639-2669

March 21 2014

TO: NEWS EDITORS – For Immediate Release

CHAMBER STATEMENT ON VIRGIN ATLANTIC AIRLINES NO LONGER SERVING AIR ROUTE FROM TOBAGO

The announcement by the Tobago House of Assembly's Tourism Secretary, Tracy Davidson-Celestine, that Virgin Atlantic Airlines will no longer be serving the air route from Tobago, notably not for the first time, is one which greatly concerns the Tobago Division of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

This is a very serious and ominous development for Tobago. While we understand that the THA has signed contracts with both British Airways and Monarch Airlines to provide additional flights to Tobago for the winter season, the fact remains that the ANR International Airport suffers from poor infrastructure and the room stock in Tobago remains woefully inadequate in terms of room count and standard, and with no comprehensive plan for the way forward in both these areas. We question the sustainability of these additional flights, if these issues are not resolved.

With respect to the upgrade of room stock and development of tourism-related businesses, such as restaurants, the Division continues to advocate for the implementation of the Tourism Development Fund, which requires the efforts of the Central Government, THA, the banks and the businesses to ensure its success.

The Chamber's Tobago Division does not believe that adequate attention is being paid by the Government to Tobago's tourism product, which remains the island's economic mainstay. Tourism is already in a fragile state and has been spiraling downward for quite some time. This pull out by Virgin Atlantic airways will result in not only a loss of revenue and jobs, but also a deterioration of Tobago's international image.

We urge the authorities to act with haste on this matter. The Chamber's Tobago Division, as always, stands ready to assist.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS