

PNP big on health tourism

FROM THE MANIFESTOS:

THE Opposition People's National Party (PNP) has said that Jamaica is uniquely poised to take advantage of the health tourism market given its international communication system, airports, seaports, climate and unique hospitality industry. As such, the PNP said that a Government formed by that party will encourage and facilitate private sector investment in this area that has the potential of realising significant economic returns and becoming a major job provider.

The areas to encourage, the PNP said, will be spas and wellness centres, ecotourism centres, medical health tourism, convalescent and retirement centres as well as incorporating facilities into existing hotels.

A PNP government, the party said, will continue to explore national and international options for development of spas, particularly in the case of Milk River and Bath Mineral spas.

The party said that it will also ensure that there is planned integrated infrastructural development of resort areas. Consensus, it said, will be sought on a plan that outlines development along the north and south coasts which will include all elements such as housing, water supply, sewerage, transportation and environment protection measures.

It is also proposing to ensure better and more inclusive participatory governance of the tourism sector by restoring restructured resort boards as a tool for consultation and management of the development of the resort areas.

The PNP said that it will also continue the development of the cruise ship sector and pursue the development of Harmony Cove.

It also proposes to upgrade, beautify and enhance resort areas using the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) following pre-approved plans designed by resort architects.

It will also continue to diversify overseas markets by focusing more on the potential of the European, UK and Canadian markets as well as explore market activities in the emerging markets, particularly Latin America and Asia.

The PNP said that it will continue to expand airlift into Jamaica, as well as focus on increasing the revenue earned from the sector.

It is also promising to ensure that pension schemes and planned housing benefits are put in place for workers in the hotel industry.

Additionally, the party hopes to deepen and widen tourism linkages with other sectors of the economy and ensure that more tourism dollars stay in Jamaica.

The TEF, it said, will be restored to its original mandate of being a transformational source of funding for the industry.

The PNP is also promising to enhance the visitor experience by developing, expanding and diversifying the number of available attractions which showcase heritage and culture as well as promote communitybased tourism through the creation of a Heritage/Culture Development Unit at the Tourism Product Development Company.

The PNP said that it will develop the craft sector using TEF resources to upgrade the physical infrastructure of craft markets, expand and diversify the product offerings, as well as assist with

training in new methodologies, technologies and marketing.

It is also proposing to provide support for the small and medium hotel sector by funding special dedicated marketing programmes targeting clusters as well as pursue the development of specific market segments of tourism for which Jamaica is ideally suited.

The PNP said that it will also expand tourism awareness campaigns in communities and schools.



Tourists soaking up sunshine near one of the island's beaches.

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