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Cuba Tourism: Growing and There's No Turning Back;

By Arturo Garcia Rosa, President & Founder of SAHIC Latin America Conferences

Cuba is experiencing tremendous projections for growth in hotel development, real estate, and tourism as we lead into 2017.

Tourism continues to grow in Cuba and will continue to grow at surprising levels. Since December of 2014, the country's tourist arrival rate rose 7%, a notable percentage for a two-year period of growth. As of December 30, 2016, Cuba reached four million tourist arrivals, an increase of 13% as compared to 2015. And so tourism has become the second largest generator of income in the country, behind that of professional services, reaching \$2.8 billion in 2016.

Looking at the projections for hotel development, 108,000 new rooms will be added by 2030, with an average of 8,000 rooms added per year over the next fourteen years. Key hotel groups supplying this growth are Grupo Gaviota, Gran Caribe, Cubanacan and Isla Azul groups. Additionally, the Cuba Golf group, will add hotels, real estate, golf courses and various other amenities. And prior to its acquisition by Marriott, Starwood had agreed to operate the Four Points Miramar of the Gaviota group, which opened last June.

Various airline operators are increasing flight routes to Cuba - American, JetBlue, and Delta. Newcomers include Austrian Airlines, Pegas, Virgin Atlantic, Itaca, Turkish and Eurowings which plan to establish flight routes this year.

There are enormous and a variety of opportunities for investors, banks, investment funds, developers, architects, designers, construction companies, logistics companies, and machinery and equipment firms.

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Arturo Garcia Rosa is the President & Founder of SAHIC South America and SAHIC Cuba. The inaugural SAHIC Cuba will be held in Havana May 15-16, 2017 at the Melia Cohiba Hotel in the Veradero neighborhood. Since 2010, Garcia Rosa has traveled to Cuba, nearly on a monthly basis, to work exclusively with Cuban hotel companies to grasp an understanding of the infrastructure, policies and processes for tourism and hotel development in the Caribbean island nation.

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