

Virgin Atlantic celebrates the Season

CUSTOMERS visiting Virgin Atlantic Airways' Hastings office were met with kites everywhere.

The airline recently celebrated the Easter season by decorating their office with kites of all sizes in the company's corporate colours. Beverley Layne, Brand Engagement Executive – Caribbean, Virgin Atlantic Airways Ltd explained "We wanted to embrace and

celebrate this unique Caribbean tradition and our customers truly enjoyed this creative representation."

In addition to office decor the Virgin Atlantic team encouraged their younger customers to create their own designs by distributing crayons and kite drawings. Mrs Layne said, "I think it's safe to say this Easter custom is in good hands."



A smiling Nyomi Edwards trying her hand at creating her own kite design with Virgin Atlantic.

BHTA extends condolences to the family of Pat Nehaul

ON BEHALF of the Board of Directors and members of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA), I wish to express our sincere condolences to the family and friends of tourism pioneer Pat Nehaul, who passed away last week.

A former director of the Barbados Tourist Board, Nehaul started her career in the sector in the 1950s and served in many areas including accounts, marketing and public relations over the years.

"The BHTA is truly saddened by the

passing of Mrs. Nehaul who was a great supporter of our Association, always ensuring our members were included in any major Tourist Board projects. Her valuable contribution to the tourism industry is greatly appreciated and will

not be forgotten."

"Our thoughts are with her family and friends. May she rest in peace."

**Stephen Austin,
Chairman of the BHTA**



ECLAC Caribbean's Deputy Director Dr Dillon Alleyne and Economic Affairs Officer Michael Hendrickson.

New opportunities for Caribbean tourism industry discussed at ECLAC meeting

CARIBBEAN countries have taken important steps toward upgrading and diversifying their tourism sector. Efforts have also focused on diversification, with the development of new product niches in areas such as eco and nature tourism, health, sports and culinary tourism, while new opportunities have been sought by penetrating markets in Latin America and even China.

These are some of the main findings that emerged during an expert group meeting organized and hosted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean.

Held at ECLAC Caribbean headquarters in Port of Spain on 3 May 2019, the meeting brought together key

experts from the Ministries of Tourism, Tourism Boards, Chambers of Industry and Commerce, as well as hoteliers. Discussions during the meeting centred on the findings of an upcoming study by ECLAC Caribbean. Entitled "Industrial Upgrading and diversification to address the competitiveness challenges in the Caribbean: the case of tourism", the study analysed upgrading and diversification of tourism products and services in The Bahamas, Belize and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

The three countries were chosen because they span the profile of the industry in the region; The Bahamas being a well-established mature destination. Belize, a relatively new destination, boasts a wider product mix, including eco-tourism and nature

tourism alongside sun, sea and sand, while Saint Kitts and Nevis is a small twin-island destination that recently won the World Trade Organization's prize as the world's best destination for sustainable tourism.

The experts recognized efforts at upgrading undertaken by these countries, including investment in better-quality rooms at hotels and a wider array of amenities such as spa and wellness treatments. Nevertheless, it was argued that the countries still have a long way to go in optimizing the use of disruptive technologies such as Big data and Artificial Intelligence, which are proving transformative in this sector.

In a similar vein, product diversification will require better

research on what product bundles are best suited for each country to invest in and what would be required to deliver a high-quality experience in these areas. It was also suggested that market diversification will require targeted investments in language training, facilitating airlift and establishing business to business contacts with leading marketing firms in prospective new destinations.

The experts concluded that the tourism landscape in the Caribbean is one of both opportunity and challenge, and with carefully crafted strategy and targeted actions, these countries could significantly enhance their tourism product, bringing increased economic benefit and improved living conditions for their people.