

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Kitts and Nevis to join global Plastic Free July campaign



The St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network (SKSTMN) and the Sustainable Destination Council (SDC) are coordinating efforts for a Plastic Free July campaign in St. Kitts and Nevis. The Federation will join over 130 other countries in this international effort to refuse single-use plastic during the month of July. By the year 2050, 99% of all seabird species are predicted to have plastic in their stomachs and the amount of plastic in the ocean will outweigh the amount of fish unless we change our ways. Sea turtles near SKN shores who eat jellyfish may mistake plastic bags in the water for food and choke. A 22 year-long study in the Caribbean Sea found tiny bits of plastic in 60% of their water samples. These plastic bits are eaten by fish and, in turn, eaten by us. The Plastic Free July campaign will help prevent further plastics from entering our environment.

Residents and visitors are encouraged to forego plastic straws in their drinks and bring their own reusable bags when grocery shopping or ordering take out to help create a #PlasticFreeSKB. "Plastic Free July is an opportunity for citizens of St. Kitts and Nevis to develop plastic-free habits that will benefit ourselves, our community, and our country" says Project Coordinator Sara Ramirez.

The following seven businesses have pledged to supply patrons with plastic straws or bags ONLY upon request and encourage the use of reusable bags during the month of July: IGA Valumart, Ram's, Inon's, Mr. X's Shiggidy Shack, No Limit Beach Chair and Umbrella Rental, Shawarma King, and Vibes Beach Bar.

Persons interested in participating in Plastic Free July can do so by refusing plastic straws and/or plastic bags at restaurants and stores, patronizing participating businesses, post and share on social media using the hashtags #PlasticFreeSKB and #plasticfreejuly, and attending Plastic Free July events. Plastic Free July will begin on July 1st with a reusable bag sale at Ram's Bird Rock and end with a public sea turtle release the morning of July 29th at White House Bay. The general public is urged to wear purple on Plastic Free Friday, July 21st, and share pictures on the SDC Facebook page. Throughout the month, the youth of SKN will also partake in Plastic Free July activities at various summer camps. Stay tuned to the SKN Plastic Free July Facebook event page for further information and follow #PlasticFreeSKB posts on social media.

For more information on the St. Kitts Plastic Free July campaign visit www.facebook.com/SDC, www.facebook.com/SKSTMN, and www.facebook.com/Heart of St. Kitts. For further questions, interview requests, or promotional opportunities contact Sara Ramirez at 661-6462 or certifiedturtleapproved@gmail.com.

About the St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network:

The St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network (SKSTMN) is a registered Non- Governmental Organization (NGO) in St. Kitts and a qualifying Public Charity under the United States Internal Revenue Code Sections 501(c)(3) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi). The SKSTMN was founded in January 2003 with the mission to: implement a long-standing sea turtle conservation management program under the direction of the St. Kitts Department of Marine Resources; promote community awareness of the plight of sea turtles; and provide non-consumable sources of income to communities as an alternative

to the sea turtle harvest in an effort to decrease pressure on St. Kitts turtle populations. For more information on the SKSTMN visit www.stkittsturtles.org.

To report any sea turtle activity, please call the **St. Kitts Sea Turtle Hotline (869) 764-6664**

About the St. Kitts Sustainable Destination Council:

The Sustainable Destination Council (SDC) is an advisory body made up of public and private representatives with interest in sustainable tourism development in St. Kitts. The SDC facilitates partnerships and functional relationships among public and private sectors and all people in St. Kitts, to ensure that development in our destination preserves and benefits our environment, culture, heritage and community livelihoods. The SDC implements awareness campaigns, development projects and policy advocacy around destination action priorities. The SDC supports various initiatives including the Heart of St. Kitts Foundation and Sustainability Charter.

St. Kitts Sustainable Destination Council: **Good for Us, Better for All**

For more information about the SDC, please call (869) 467-1390 or email iasdmc.sk@gmail.com