

## The road to recovery

Recession-hit Caribbean tourism destinations are still struggling to overturn what have over the past several months been declining prospects.

But the signs are better globally, and the region expects that to filter down to its own industries sooner rather than later.

At the height of the recession destinations including the Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda and St Lucia found themselves sending home hundreds of hotel employees in a bid to keep afloat in what threatened to turn into really desperate times.

And while the worst could be over, things haven't exactly turned rosy yet in these islands in the sun intent on attracting tourists from North America, Europe and elsewhere.

The region can take heart from United Nations World Tourism Organisation data that shows some moderation in declining international arrivals by air for the first half of this year.

Coupled with that, the head of the world's second largest cruise company, Royal Caribbean, has suggested that the cruise tourism sector is stabilising.

Tourism leaders from 142 countries met this week in a World Tourism Organisation forum in Kazakhstan to endorse a roadmap for recovery in a bid to boost global travel.

The organisation said international arrivals declined by four per cent in July this year, a relative improvement when compared to decreases of 10% in May and seven per cent in June.