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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tourism Minister urges tourism sector workers to get vaccinated

KINGSTOWN, ST.VINCENT: Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Sustainable Development and Culture, Hon. Carlos James, is appealing to stakeholders within the tourism sector to join the current COVID-19 vaccination drive. The tourism Minister was among hundreds of Vincentians who turned up at health centres across the country this week to receive their first dose of the Oxford AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine.

Minister James, who received his vaccine on Monday March 8, 2021 at the Chateaubelair Health Centre, made the call for stakeholders within the tourism sector to play an even greater role in the fight against the novel coronavirus by giving greater consideration to vaccination.

According to the Minister James, “while we remain focused on the containment of the spread of the COVID-19 virus, it is imperative that a wider cross section of the population becomes vaccinated to enable us to return to some level of normalcy”.

The tourism Minister noted that the tourism sector has been severely impacted by the global health pandemic and that the successful implementation of the vaccination programme will facilitate the gradual ease of current restrictions, particularly for service providers, such as taxi and bar operators, hoteliers and restaurateurs within the sector.

Minister James cautioned that the global tourism sector simply cannot continue to sustain the economic haemorrhage that it is experiencing, noting that some airline and cruise operators will likely implement new measures to kick-start travel-tourism.

“It is highly likely that the industry stakeholders, such as airline and cruise operators will implement what is being termed as a ‘vaccine passport’, which means that some operators would not allow persons to travel without proof of vaccination. Employees within the industry, including seafarers, should stay ahead of any possible changes likely to be implemented to accommodate a safe resumption of travel-tourism,” Minister James said.

The Minister noted that we all have a part to play in providing a safe environment, which can be achieved by adhering to the necessary health protocols and ultimately being vaccinated.

So far, over 5,000 Vincentians have received the COVID-19 vaccine with another 30,000 doses to be administered nationally.

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