

# *Panama and the Netherlands to Develop South Caribbean Tourism Route*

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Panama City, September 26 (Xinhua-RHC) -- Panama and the Netherlands have agreed to jointly develop the South Caribbean tourism route, the Panamanian presidential press office announced Thursday.

The route links the city of Colon, located at the northern entrance to the Panama Canal, with Colombia's northern beach resort of Cartagena and the Caribbean islands of Aruba and Curacao, which are parts of the island chain, the Dutch Antilles, the office said in a statement.

The agreement was confirmed during a meeting Wednesday between Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte.

"The leaders agreed the destinations had the natural connectivity needed to form a successful tourism route that could benefit both nations' tourism sectors," the statement said.

The two leaders also expressed their interest in developing a hub in Panama for distribution of fuel, which would serve increased maritime traffic once the Panama Canal's expansion work is completed, the

statement added.

Colon lies on the Caribbean side of the Panama Canal, and is home to the world's second-largest duty-free zone.

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