



in new gaming facilities operating in line with the standards required and expected by the major United States and world casino operators and gaming equipment suppliers. The expansion of legal, well-regulated gaming on the Caribbean islands will bring with it expanded economic development, increased employment opportunities for the island populations, and increased revenues for government functions, all of which are of critical importance to the Caribbean nations. A precursor to such a cooperative Caribbean regulatory association may well be establishing an annual regional conference supported by a number of Caribbean nations focusing on Caribbean gaming and regulatory issues that encourages an open dialogue between Caribbean gaming regulators and Caribbean gaming operators and gaming equipment suppliers.

IMGL Past President Robert Stocker echoed Chairwoman Golden's call for regional cooperation during the "Changes in Offshore Gaming Regimes" panel at the IMGL conference, noting that the Caribbean countries permitting gaming operations need to get their houses in good order in anticipation of the eventual opening of Cuba to the United States general tourist trade. Stocker noted that it is only a matter of time before Cuba and the Cayman Islands, as well as the Atlantic island of Bermuda (which is in the preliminary stages of establishing casinos on the island), open their doors to casinos. These are other tourist-oriented jurisdictions seeking to lure tourist dollars to their islands. While in some cases such gaming expansion will in all likelihood be many years away from reality, the sooner the Caribbean islands that currently allow gaming get themselves into solid regulatory status in compliance with United States and international regulatory trends, the greater the likelihood of their being able to withstand increased competition from the opening of legal gaming in other competing tourist destinations.