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CARIBBEAN TOURISM MEETING WITH UK STAKEHOLDERS SEEKS UNITY IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (March 12, 2007) – The Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), its environmental subsidiary, the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), along with the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), will be hosting a meeting in London on March 13th, to discuss recent developments in UK government policy affecting the travel industry, aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change. Representatives from tour operators, airlines, travel associations, and government will meet to discuss areas such as taxation and maintaining competitiveness in the face of these measures.

Climate change is being discussed internationally in the context of environmental security. In Europe, taxes were doubled in February for all air travel out of the UK and large hotels have been brought by the European Commission into the carbon emissions system. "This is not an issue that we can choose to ignore," said CHA President Peter Odle. "Our response will have an impact on competitiveness, consumer perception, and the economy of our Caribbean tourism industry."

Various stakeholders will be tabling their stance on the issue of climate change as it relates to their sector. Scheduled to make presentations are Dimitri Zenghelis, Senior Economist, HM Treasury, on the position of the British Government; Andy Cooper, Director General, Federation of Tour Operators (FTO), on the position of the travel industry in the UK; and Deirdre Shurland, Director of CAST, on the joint CHA/CTO position of the Caribbean tourism industry.

The meeting, organized by The Caribbean Council, is scheduled to culminate with an open discussion on how to leverage the wider sustainable tourism benefits from climate change. It is expected that the meeting will set the stage for developing a joint approach between the industry in the region and the UK.

The meeting will be co-chaired by Senator the Honourable Allen Chastanet, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation for St Lucia and Chairman of CTO, and Peter Odle, President of CHA.

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