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**THE NEW PUERTO RICO CONVENTION CENTER HOST TO
MAJOR CARIBBEAN TOURISM MARKETING AND SALES EVENT**

-- Caribbean Marketplace 2006 to Welcome 1,500 International Delegates --

SAN JUAN, January 5, 2006 – The new Puerto Rico Convention Center will be the site of Caribbean Marketplace 2006 taking place from January 15 – 17, 2006. Hosted by the Caribbean Hotel Association, this is the first international meeting to be held at the Center and is expected to draw 1,500 delegates to the new state-of-the-art facility which opened November 17, 2005.

Caribbean Marketplace (formerly CHA Marketplace) is recognized as the most important tourism marketing event of the year for the Caribbean region. Held every January, the two-day event brings together tourism suppliers from 36 Caribbean destinations to meet with wholesalers, incentive buyers, meeting planners, group buyers and dive shop owners from the US, Canada, Caribbean, Latin America, Asia/Pacific, Africa and Europe.

“We are honored that the first group of international delegates to the Puerto Rico Convention Center showcases the Caribbean region as a premier meetings and leisure destination,” stated Ana Maria Viscasillas, president & CEO, Puerto Rico Convention Bureau, the official marketing and sales agent for the Puerto Rico Convention Center. “Puerto Rico is the hub of the Caribbean and hosting Caribbean Marketplace represents just one of the types of groups that we are interested in attracting to the new Center, as this much needed facility will catapult the Caribbean in the meetings arena.”

Caribbean Marketplace represents 2,596 room night bookings for San Juan area hotels, including the Condado Plaza Hotel & Casino, the headquarter hotel for the event. In addition, Caribbean Marketplace is anticipated to infuse \$973,500 into Puerto Rico’s local economy.

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New PRCC Host to CHA's Caribbean Marketplace 2006.../2

“Hosting this year’s Caribbean Marketplace in San Juan makes perfect sense as San Juan is centrally-located with excellent airlift for our buyers and sellers,” stated Berthia Parle, MBE, President of the Caribbean Hotel Association. “In addition, being the first international event to take place at the new Puerto Rico Convention Center adds a special, exciting feature to the entire event.”

The new 580,000 square foot (53,882 meters) Puerto Rico Convention Center is a \$415 million facility located in San Juan. The largest facility of its kind in the Caribbean, the Puerto Rico Convention Center is able to host up to 10,000 delegates, representing a new era in the Island’s tourism history with an ability to host groups never before able to consider the destination due to lack of facilities.

The new Puerto Rico Convention Center features a 152,700 sq. ft. (14,186 sq. m.) exhibition hall dividable into three individual exposition spaces, as well as a 39,500 sq. ft (3,670 sq. m.) Grand Ballroom, the largest in the Caribbean. The Center also offers 36,400 sq. ft. (3,363 sq. m.) of meeting space, including 15 separate meeting rooms on two levels, which can be divided into 28 breakout rooms.

As the most technologically-advanced facility of its kind in the Caribbean and Latin America, the new Puerto Rico Convention Center features full fiber optic broadband and wireless Internet access, video-conferencing, satellite up-link and down-link capabilities and more. The Center also includes design elements which highlight the welcoming natural elements of the Caribbean. With a 13-story glass wall, the Center features unobstructed ocean and harbor views, is flooded with ample natural light throughout the Center’s public spaces and is topped off by the Center’s distinctive wave-like rooftop.

“It’s very fitting that one of our first groups at the new Puerto Rico Convention Center is CHA’s Caribbean Marketplace,” continued Viscasillas. “The Center provides us with an opportunity to celebrate the beaches, climate and brilliant sunshine of the Caribbean with our regional partners and those who sell travel to the Caribbean to visitors from around the world.”

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Currently the new Puerto Rico Convention Center has more than 70 events scheduled through 2008. It is anticipated that the Center will generate over \$300 million annually for Puerto Rico's local economy.

For more information about CHA's Caribbean Marketplace, visit www.caribbeanhotels.org. For further information about the Puerto Rico Convention Center or for details on upcoming events at the facility, visit www.prconvention.com.

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Editor's Note:

The Puerto Rico Convention Bureau is the official marketing and sales agent for the Puerto Rico Convention Center at the Puerto Rico Convention Center District. The non-profit organization is responsible for promoting and developing group and convention business to Puerto Rico through an integrated marketing strategy for more than 40 years. Based in San Juan, with offices in Chicago, Miami, New York, and Washington D.C., the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau provides sales consultation services to meeting planners in the corporate, incentive and association markets. The Bureau contributes approximately \$92 million annually to the Island's economy. For more information, visit the Bureau's Internet page at www.meetpuertorico.com or send a message at info@prcb.org. The Puerto Rico Convention Bureau, representing the capital city of San Juan, is a member of BestCities, a global alliance of Bureaus that represent the highest standards of service in the meetings and convention industry. For more information, visit www.bestcities.net.

High resolution images of the Puerto Rico Convention Center construction and architectural renderings are available upon request.

