



THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION OF
THE CARIBBEAN HOTEL ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GRENADA'S HOTEL AND TOURISM SECTOR BRACES FOR UPCOMING
HURRICANE SEASON**
*Preparedness and Response Hurricane Simulation Exercise will Prepare Industry
Personnel at Two Weeks from Start of Season*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (May 17, 2005) – The noted Atlantic-basin hurricane forecaster, Dr. William Gray, has revised upward his forecasts for the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season, announcing 13 named storms with 7 named hurricanes and 3 major hurricanes. This is not necessarily good news for Caribbean and U.S. territories that are affected by hurricanes originating in the Atlantic each year, and especially for Grenada, which was so heavily affected by Hurricane Ivan last September and is still recovering. In light of this upcoming above-average hurricane season, starting in just two weeks, the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), in coordination with the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association (GHTA), will offer a Hurricane Preparedness and Response Workshop to hotel and tourism industry workers on Wednesday, May 18, 2005. "Disaster preparedness is everybody's business and it makes eminent good sense to reduce or eliminate, wherever possible, the potentially devastating effects of any natural disaster—particularly hurricanes," says Deirdre Shurland, CAST director. The workshop will be held at the Greenery of the Bananas Restaurant in True Blue, and is expected to bring together some thirty participants from hotels, restaurants, tour companies and other service businesses.

"Preparedness for any disaster, and specifically, preparedness for Hurricanes, will contribute to the success and continued growth of the local tourism industry," says Alice Thomas-Roberts, Executive Director of the GHTA. "For years, we considered that Grenada was located just south of the Hurricane belt; now with the changes in the weather pattern, we have noticed that hurricanes are starting closer to the equator. Hurricane Ivan served as a wake up call for every sector of Grenada to become disaster ready," Thomas-Roberts added. Hurricane Ivan struck the island of Grenada on September 7, 2005, and destroyed or damaged 95% of the island's buildings and 14,000 homes; left 80% of the island without power; and 80% of the



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national nutmeg crop destroyed, all of which triggered myriad indirect effects, such as extensive looting and civil chaos.

The one-day workshop provides information about hurricanes, their form and structure, and covers areas including structural needs, insurance issues, the safety of guests, visitors, and the general public, as well as staffing issues. It trains, with the help of guidelines, on how to prepare for and respond to a hurricane emergency, through a highly-participative planning simulation exercise.

Ian Da Breo, President of GHTA, and Sylvan Mc Intyre, Head of the National Disaster Management Authority, will deliver welcome remarks at the opening of the training. Representatives from the National Commercial Bank, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Grenada Board of Tourism, will also be present.

For more information, please contact Alice Thomas Roberts at (473) 444-1353, amtr@ghta.org.

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About the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) – www.cha-cast.com

CAST, the environmental subsidiary of the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), was chartered in 1997 to undertake collaborative environmental efforts within the hotel industry, enhance the practices of the region's hotel and tourism operators by providing high quality education and training related to sustainable tourism; promote the industry's efforts and successes to the traveling public and other stakeholders; and serve as a vital link to all stakeholders with sustainable tourism interests in the Caribbean region. CAST has consolidated its strategic focus within the following four program areas: sustainable tourism certification and standards development, development of environmental management tools, advocacy and fundraising.

About the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) – www.caribbeanhotels.org

The Caribbean Hotel Association is dedicated to excellence in hospitality, leadership in marketing, and sustainable growth in tourism, to the benefit of its membership and that of the wider Caribbean community. It aims to be a regional forum that will advance the Caribbean hotel and tourism industry. The members of CHA represent the entire spectrum of hospitality industry's private sector, from 835 member hotels representing some 127,000 hotel rooms in 36 national hotel associations to allied members – airlines, tour operators, travel agents, trade and consumer press, hotel and restaurant suppliers, among many others – which account for 520 members. CHA is headquartered in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and maintains a promotion and marketing office in Miami, Florida.

