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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BAJAN PILOTS CAPTAIN COPA INAUGURAL FLIGHTS

What began as a celebration of the inaugural Copa Airlines service to Barbados from Panama turned into a homecoming affair as Barbadian pilot Marc Holford landed the first CM0260 flight at the Grantley Adams International Airport (GAIA) on Tuesday, July 17.

Holford, who was accompanied by his mother, Marva Holford, was all smiles when he arrived home along with the Barbadian-Panamanian delegation, led by the Hon. Kerrie Symmonds, Minister of Tourism and International Transport. Also adding to the excitement was the pronouncement that another Barbadian pilot, Chetwyn Clarke, would captain the return flight from GAIA to Tocumen International Airport in Panama City, Panama.

From 2:00 p.m., the Crop Over atmosphere reached the GAIA tarmac as arriving passengers on the inaugural flight disembarked to much fanfare. They were pleasantly surprised as they were met with a warm Bajan welcome featuring a water cannon salute, folk characters, sweet treats and music.

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Symmonds thanked Holford and Clarke for being a part of the inaugural celebrations during a brief ceremony held following the flight in the Grace Adams Suite of the GAIA. He described it as “a testament to the deep bonds between Barbadians and Panamanians” that Copa Airlines, Panama’s flagship carrier, has two Barbadian captains on the roster.

The new Minister went on to share his enthusiasm about “the possibilities for further integration and growth between Barbados and Panama, and the rest of Latin America, with the introduction of the new twice-weekly service.”

Copa Airlines representatives Bernardo Ordaz and Camille Hackett, Regional Sales Manager and Commercial Manager respectively, were on hand to receive the official inaugural plaque welcoming the new airline to Barbados.

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About Barbados

The island of Barbados offers the most authentic Caribbean experience with its exceptionally rich culture and history rooted in remarkable landscapes. Rated as one of the world's sexiest beaches in 2008 by Concierge.com; Barbados' Crane Beach in St. Philip stands as a premier destination for travellers. Barbados is also the first Zagat-rated Caribbean island and is known as the culinary capital of the Caribbean. Barbados has hosted several world class events including: The annual Barbados Food & Rum Festival; the 2006 PGA World Golf Championships-Barbados World Cup, the ICC Cricket World Cup Finals in 2007, the Sentebale Charity Polo match with Prince Harry of Wales in 2010, and the ICC Twenty20 Cricket Finals for 2010, and the Rihanna LOUD concert in 2011. Accommodations range from picturesque plantation houses and villas, to quaint bed and breakfasts and award-winning, five-star resorts. Grantley Adams International Airport offers even more non-stop and direct service from a growing number of U.S. cities, making Barbados the true gateway to the Eastern Caribbean. Barbados was voted eighth in the World by Trip Advisor's "2008 Traveler's Choice Destination Awards" in its Top 100 Destinations category. For more information on travel to Barbados, visit www.visitbarbados.org, follow on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/VisitBarbados>, via Twitter @Barbados.