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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IT IS ALMOST TIME TO CONNECT!

Major Tour Operators Converging on the island for annual meetings with tourism partners!

Three weeks away from the May 1 start of the premier business-to-business marketplace, Connect Barbados, with over 100 participants - inclusive of 56 tour operators, have already registered to come and meet with local tourism partners including attraction providers and hoteliers.

Under the theme ‘Breathing Power into Business Connections’, the three-day conference is now in its 14th year. Tour operators have been invited from Barbados’ main source markets – the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Europe and Caribbean and Latin America. Tour operators such as: Air Canada Vacations, Virgin Holidays and Expedia Group, to name a few have already registered to come learn about what is new in Destination Barbados.

Connect Barbados is an annual conference providing opportunities to island operators to sell Barbados’ holiday products to invited tour operators in all of the island’s major source markets.

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The marketplace allows global travel partners to learn about and experience the latest product and service developments on the island, while affording local partners the occasion to thank them for the tremendous contribution they continue to make the success of Barbados' premier economic sector.

BTMI CEO, William 'Billy' Griffith, mentioned, "We are positively anticipating to surpass the 1,200 meeting appointments from Connect 2018 as we once again welcome and share our beautiful product with participating tour operators. Being able to connect our local service providers with the agents who have direct contact with potential visitors to Barbados will be extremely vital to both parties."

This year, as we celebrate the Year of Wellness and Soft Adventure, tour operators will be treated to an outdoor welcome reception as they kick their feet in the sand at the "Feet in the Sand Beach Party, featuring top local entertainment and cuisine, before proceeding to two full days of business-to-business meetings at the Hilton Barbados Resort.

To close out the highly-anticipated conference, a special final evening reception will be held at the prestigious Harrison's Cave and tour operators will get the opportunity to tour the cave first-hand. On the final day, participants will tour the island for a diverse Attractions Day, inspecting places of interest based on their specialities.

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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 & Wine and 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 2012. 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.,

making Barbados the true gateway to the Eastern Caribbean. Barbados was voted eighth in the World by Trip Advisor's "2008 Travelers' 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.