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Article 1: Calling All Meeting Planners! Aruba's Gorgeous Beaches, Luxury Resorts, and Tax Incentives Make it an Irresistible Choice.

Aruba is more than just picture perfect beaches, beautiful weather and an oasis of relaxation. It's now one of the best places in the world to hold a business meeting, convention or other corporate function. Why? The U.S. Treasury Department announced that the United States and Aruba signed the Tax Information Exchange Agreement (TIEA) between the two countries. How would this be of interest to event and meeting planners? Because conducting meetings on Aruba will now be exactly like having meetings in the United States, in terms of tax benefits. That's right, U.S. taxpayers can claim tax deductions for all expenses associated with meetings, seminar and conventions held in Aruba. As a result, Aruba now becomes the ninth significant offshore financial center to sign such an agreement with the United States.

So, why did this agreement happen in the first place? Well, besides the economic benefit that Aruba will no doubt enjoy from the increased business, there are a few other good reasons:

- Its an example of goodwill between the U.S. and Aruba
- Helps to ensure that no safe haven exists for funds associated with illicit activities, including terrorism, money laundering and tax evasion.
- Serves as a pledge to maintain the confidence of honest taxpayers, and the fairness of the tax systems in the two countries dealings.

"Aruba is extremely optimistic about the Tax Information Exchange Agreement with the United States and the fact that for tax purposes, having a meeting in Aruba is now just as easy as one in United States," said Minister of Tourism and Transportation Edison Briesen. "We hope that the TIEA and the availability of brand-new tax incentives for the group and meetings/incentives markets will make Aruba even more of a desirable destination."

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO)

So, if you're a meeting planner and you're wanting to plan an upcoming event, how do you go about it? You contact the Caribbean Tourism Organization. Who are they? The CTO is the Caribbean's tourism development agency which has more than 30 governments and many private sector companies as members. When you contact them, they will provide all direction and technical assistance for those who want to plan a meeting in Aruba. In a nutshell, the CTO acts as a liaison between planners and Aruba. They help match up the right resorts, activities for the right group. In addition, they can help with the small details, ie. arranging for the hotel to fly the group's corporate flag on property, or other corporate need.

Why Else Should You Plan Your Next Business Function in Aruba?

- Many great hotels and resorts, offering every amenity needed, including:
 - High Speed Internet Access
 - Professional Event Management Teams
 - 22,000 square foot Convention Center
 - Business Equipment
 - Meeting Equipment
 - AV equipment
 - Decorating
- Renaissance Island, a 40-acre private island for business events
- Hurricane free zone: Aruba lies far enough south and west to be out of the path of big storms.

- Easy customs process: Some say its like they weren't entering a foreign country
- Lots of entertainment, dining and Casino choices
- World class golf at Tierra del Sol: An 18-hole championship course, designed by the world-renowned Robert Trent Jones, Jr
- The North Shore: Check out the interesting and undeveloped moonscape of Aruba's north shore. It's a great place for four-wheel-drive vehicles.
- The famous Natural Bridge: the Caribbean surf has pounded this unique natural wonder through the shoreline to create a vantage point for looking straight down at the waves below.
- Oranjestad for great shopping, including emeralds!
- Incredible Dining! Aruba has a distinct culinary power
- The U.S. dollar is accepted everywhere, and English is spoken universally

The Final Word

If you're a meeting or event planner, Aruba definitely needs to be highly considered. Where else can you enjoy all the diverse experiences of an island paradise and then receive tax benefits as well? If one thing is true, its that Aruba has a dizzying array of things to do: the action is nonstop both day and night.

When is the time to come to Aruba? Anytime! But if you're looking for specifics, the high season is winter, as expected. (mid-December to mid-April) Its probably a good idea to make reservations at least two or three months in advance. After April 15, hotel prices can drop at least 20%.

Come to Aruba! Paradise awaits!