**Aruba Ports Authority Re-Greens the Earth**

***Mangrove Reforestation Project Implemented Across from Cruise Terminal***

**Oranjestad, April 22, 2013**—Aruba Ports Authority N.V. Director Alfonso Boekhoudt has announced the completion of the site plans conducted by Mangrove.org’s Bob Riley. Mr. Riley conducted an appraisal to develop site plans with specific ecological and enhancement objectives for the reforestation of the Mangrove on the reef across from the Cruise Terminal.

The appraisal analyzed the critical elements in degraded or damaged ecosystems including shoreline dynamics, anthropogenic factors, ecology, hydrology and where necessary, geopolitical influences. As a result of the findings Aruba Ports Authority N.V. will implement the Riley Encased Methodology REM that will transform the ability to mitigate ecological degradation and increase the biodiversity as-well-as resilience of our coastal ecosystem.

The REM method is an innovative planting technique that dramatically increases seedling success. It has radically transformed the ability to mitigate ecological degradation and increase the biodiversity as-well-as resilience of coastal ecosystems. Successful REM project in Belize have resulted in successful efforts which have included organizing Mangroves as feeding and nursery grounds for approximately 74 species of fish and 178 bird species.

Over the years most of the trees on the reef across from the terminal have died leaving only one tree standing. Approximately 200 encasings with red mangrove seedlings (*Rhizophora mangle*), which blooms throughout the year on Aruba, will be planted on the smaller reefs across from our cruise terminals by port employees who volunteered, anticipating the creation of a habitat for many species of amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. The red mangrove is most often found along the water on cays and waterways and is easily identified by the long prop roots that support the plant.

In addition to protecting our environment, this green initiative will go hand-in-hand with the addition of an exposition for our cruise guests to support the Aruba Bird Conservation Foundation  and help educate both visitors and locals, especially children in order to prepare the younger generations to be aware of the environment and to learn how to protect it.

Photographic images of local aviary species, including those of our national bird the Shoco (burrowing owl) will be exhibited in our arrival halls. The port firmly believes that this project will not only create a good first impression of our port facilities but will serve to promote the preservation of local species and the beauty of our flora and fauna in general, giving content to our promotion of Aruba’s culture, history and heritage.

According to Mr. Boekhoudt “We look forward to planting the initial 200 saplings with port workers. To the employees who have volunteered for the APA Mangrove Reforestation Project, our utmost thank you for your effort in wanting to help re-green the earth via this initiative. May it raise awareness on environmental issues and encourage us to do more to protect Mother Nature.”