

## **Ponce Mayor Announces the Construction of an Aquarium** <sup>[1]</sup>

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Ponce (EFE) – The mayor of Ponce, Francisco Zayas Seijo, announced today the construction of the first aquarium in Puerto Rico which will cost 10 million dollars. Zayas Seijo informed that the construction of the Oceanographic Center of Ponce, in a tourist complex of La Guancha, will start its construction during the months of June and July. “Among our plans for this year for Ponce we look forward to build the first aquarium in Puerto Rico in the tourist main point of La Guancha, at an approximate cost of 10 million dollars” said Zayas Seijo in a press release. “The Project is now in the design phase, we expect finish it on April and the construction of the structure will start, probably, during the summer this year”, he added. The mayor trusts that, together with the construction of the aquarium, as well as the modern Convention Center and the expansion of the park Julio Enrique Monagas, Ponce will be transformed into the main axis of tourism for the country. According to Zayas Seijo, the construction of the Oceanographic Center in Ponce, now cancels the plans to build a municipal swimming pool in the touristic sector of La Guancha. The mayor informed that the aquarium will have a central structure of two levels with 42 tanks for exhibition and one subterranean floor for the equipment, a filter system and a tank for keeping salt water. It will also have an adjacent structure to showcase dolphins, as well as another structure in the shape of lighthouse that will hold several tanks for circular exhibits, and a glass panoramic elevator. The mayor sustained that the project will be financed by municipal and federal funds, as well as a credit line, if necessary. Zayas Seijo said that various civic and empresarial leaders of the city have demonstrated interest in collaborating with the project; he is therefore considering the formation of a sponsorship, similar to the one that currently manages the Serrallés Castle, with private administration of the installations, rather than municipal. The mayor emphasized that among those interested in participating in the partnership, are Salvador “Chiri” Vasallo, principal executive (CEO) of Vasallo Industries, and the hotel manager Nicolas Albors, proprietary of Hotel Meliá in Ponce

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