



Invest Caribbean Now 2015

Remarks by Felicia J. Persaud

Thank you very much Kara for that kind introduction .. Bonjour
Good Morning every one.

Protocol already established, please permit me to recognize a few other key individuals in the room this morning who have been integral this year to making this event happen.

First off, let me add my welcome to the Beijing delegation to ICN 2015 this year. We are truly making history in the north east Caribbean with this 40 member delegation all the way from China. Thank you so much for making this trip.

And I have none other but Li Li and Peter Zhang of the Sino American Friendship Association of New York and the Chinese American Business Council of New York.

Secondly, let me thank publicly the President of the Office of Tourisme of Saint Martin Hon . Jeanne (Jan) Rogers-Vanterpool and her staff – what an amazing woman and team!

Thank you too to the Port of Saint Martin and the Saint Martin Chamber of Commerce.

This ladies and gentlemen is how we Invest Caribbean Now – through strong public private sector partnerships that crosses borders.



And speaking of partnerships – allow me just a few more moments to recognize a few other key individuals who have made this year’s event possible.

To my friends at One Caribbean Television who have been our partners from Day 1 and who continue to be our biggest cheer leaders and to our emcee, Ms. Kara Coleman, the most beautiful anchor on Caribbean television, who is now with us for a third year in a row. Thank you Kara.

Hopefully Madame Vanterpool can help me make her an honorary citizen of St. Martin.

And to each and everyone of you for being here with us this year many of you have travelled from around the world and the region so thank you so very much....

Partnerships, linkages, collaborations – these are the key for upward mobility and continuous growth.

There is no way any one of us - whether in government or private sector - are smart enough to do it alone – but through collective respectful efforts and partnerships we can move our nations, our economies, our businesses and our people to higher heights globally.

It is this lesson I hope to leave with you this morning. To ensure that each of you this morning, especially local delegates, understand that creative private - public sector partnerships are the key to improving our nations, our region, our lives and the lives of the people in this Caribbean region.

We must move beyond petty politics and arrogant perceived power and understand that our growth as an island – and as a region – is tied to



relationship building globally – whether in the Caribbean Diaspora, the US, China, Europe, Africa or other areas around the world.

We as a people in this region must become more creative and work smarter by moving outside our proverbial box – whether geographic, socio-economic or political – and we must push forward - smarter to ensure we reach our full potentials, match global standards expected of us and create a legacy that our children and future generations in this region can be proud of and build upon.

Ladies and gentlemen, The Competitive nature of the global market place demands such action and we cannot be left behind in 2015. We must think global and act global!

As a dear colleague of mine insists - Even though we live in an environment where our economic fortunes are tied to the support of lounging around, we as leaders in St. Martin and the Caribbean cannot ourselves be caught lounging around as well.

We simply cannot be doing what the tourists are doing but ensure we are thinking and acting globally and ready to compete for our global wallet share as my Goldman Sachs colleague would say.

The Convergence of emerging markets globally demands it and we must meet these demands if we are to succeed and do business in the global market place – as a country and as a region.

Let us ensure we don't just use this conference again to have a grand talk shop but let us show case the economic opportunities here on this island which the hon. Minister will soon lay out and collaborate on outside the box ideas that can foster growth and create economic empowerment for all.



Ladies and Gentlemen, last year we launched an exploratory committee to pursue the start of the first Invest Caribbean Now micro fund for the region. Too many small businesses and entrepreneurs are starved for funding to launch and grow in our region and too many governments are ignoring the fact that their futures are not tied to multilateral debt institutions, foreign direct aid and foreign direct investments, but to growing their own local small businesses to become huge enterprises that can create jobs and boost development in their communities and nations.

We hope St. Martin and its government will see the wisdom of a micro fund for their small businesses and entrepreneurs and join us in this effort.... *As we continue to Invest Caribbean Now...*

We too must boost our strength as the world's #1 emerging region so we can finally take our place at the table with China, India, Brazil and others.

With Cuba emerging as well finally, it is time the Caribbean and fabulous Caribbean people achieve the greatness we are capable and we can do that in partnership with our friends... It begins right now right here TODAY at this conference if we ALL do our part. Not just today but tomorrow and into 2020 and beyond

Thank you very much everyone for being here... we have a great rest of the morning lined up for you and please enjoy the hospitality of Saint Martin and let's do business in this French Caribbean Isle.