

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SKNCIC Quarterly Luncheon Highlights Homeporting as a Strategic Opportunity for Private Sector Growth

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts, July 2026 - The St. Kitts-Nevis Chamber of Industry and Commerce (SKNCIC) hosted its Quarterly Luncheon on July 8, 2026, under the theme "Positioning St. Kitts and Nevis as a Homeporting Hub: Opportunities, Partnerships and Growth." The event brought together government representatives, members of the business community, statutory bodies, partners, sponsors, and invited guests for a focused discussion on the Federation's transition toward turnaround and future homeporting operations.



In his welcome remarks, SKNCIC President Mr. Nick Menon underscored that homeporting should be viewed as more than a tourism initiative. He noted its wider relevance to transportation, logistics, hospitality, retail, trade, infrastructure, entrepreneurship, and private sector competitiveness, while encouraging meaningful dialogue on the readiness, partnerships, and investment required to realize the opportunity.

The luncheon featured remarks and discussion led by the Honourable Marsha Henderson, Minister of Tourism, and a panel discussion with her team Mr. Calvin Duggins, Chief Operations Officer of the St. Christopher Air and Sea Ports Authority (SCASPA) and Permanent Secretary Tivanna Wharton. The session was hosted and moderated by Mr. Val Henry, who guided the exchange between panelists and attendees.

Minister Henderson outlined the Government's strategic direction to position St. Kitts and Nevis as a stronger regional cruise and maritime hub. She highlighted the role of the new cruise terminal, the importance of supporting infrastructure and regulatory systems, and the significant economic opportunities that could arise in areas such as transportation, port services, shore excursions, retail, hospitality, provisioning, bunkering, facility maintenance, and other support services.



L-R: Val Henry, Host; PS Tivanna Wharton, Hon. Marsha Henderson, COO Mr. Calvin Duggins

A central message of the luncheon was that the success of the homeporting initiative will depend on early and active private sector involvement. Members were encouraged to begin assessing how their businesses can respond to emerging demand, including through improved standards, service consistency, supply chain coordination, and strategic investment.

Chamber members and invited guests also had the opportunity to share questions, suggestions, and concerns directly with the presenters. Key points raised included the need for clear and timely information for businesses, better coordination between public and private stakeholders, clarity on the investment required to participate, and practical planning to prevent wastage, overproduction, or missed opportunities. Members further emphasized the importance of aligning projected cruise line demand with realistic local production capacity and business readiness.

The discussion reinforced the need for continued collaboration among the Ministry of Tourism, SCASPA, the St. Kitts Tourism Authority, SKNCIC, and the wider private sector as preparations advance for expected turnaround operations in November 2027.

The luncheon also included a presentation by Ms. Sharalee Benjamin on the upcoming SKNCIC Business Excellence Awards Ceremony scheduled for October, which will recognise excellence, resilience, innovation, and contribution across the Chamber's membership and the wider business community. SKNCIC will

reintroduce the topic of Homeporting at a Fireside Chat later this year where members can more intimately share their perspectives on this initiative.

SKNCIC extends sincere appreciation to its featured speakers, moderator, members, partners, sponsors, and guests for contributing to a timely and constructive discussion. The Chamber also acknowledges Delisle Walwyn & Co. Ltd., Partner Sponsor, and S. L. Horsford & Co. Ltd., Silver Sponsor, for their support of the Quarterly Luncheon.

As the voice of the private sector, SKNCIC remains committed to ensuring that businesses are informed, engaged, and included in the planning and partnerships needed to convert national development opportunities into sustainable economic growth.

- **End of Press Release** -