

## **PRESS RELEASE**

St. Maarten, 14.06.2016

# **SECA has been formalized. First board meeting takes place onboard Oasis of the Seas**

**June 15, 2016** – Just over a month ago, on Monday afternoon, May 9 at the Cruise Terminal Building, Port St. Maarten, President of the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) Michele Paige, and Cruise Line Executives briefed business officials who were invited by Port St. Maarten under the umbrella of the yet to be established St. Maarten Economic Cruise Association (SECA).

SECA notarial deed was signed on Monday, June 13 at Faride Eloisa Elixie Tjon Civil Law Notary, thereby creating a private sector organization driven by private initiative to move cruise tourism forward and address the challenges being confronted by the destination.

SECA's objectives are to promote, establish, communicate, and influence a clear vision with actions in support of the enhancement of the cruise experience for Sint Maarten.

SECA also recognizes and endorses the St. Maarten Tourism Authority (STA) and is ready to work with this entity once it's fully active.

A board has been appointed for one-year to get the association up and running. The board members are: President Mark Mingo, Treasurer/Vice President Moshe Hakimi, Transportation representative Abdul Meyers, and Retail representative Peter Mirpuri. A fifth member will be appointed at a later stage.

During the meeting held in a conference room onboard of the Oasis of the Seas on Tuesday, discussions focused on the establishment of three work groups; funding; and membership.

One of the work groups identified will focus on association membership and bylaws; the second work group will deal with business intelligence (surveys, data, trends and developments etc.); and the third work group will be focusing on destination experience/marketing-promotion and government relations.

Port St. Maarten Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mark Mingo said that it was very important to have an entity such as SECA that collectively represents the interests of the economy and would work along with Port St. Maarten and other stakeholders in re-inventing cruise St. Maarten, and in addressing the challenges currently being confronted by the country's cruise sector.

"As I have stated in the past, Port St. Maarten cannot do it alone! There are many stakeholders, and everybody has a role to play. We have taken the lead and will continue to do what is necessary. We are now at the cross-roads and we need to deal with the challenges post haste by getting our destination back on track.

"It was Port St. Maarten back in 2014 when we hosted the 21st Annual Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) Conference and Trade Show under the theme, 'Reinventing Cruise St. Maarten,' where we needed to get our act together and address the challenges. The slogan of SECA is 'The Vessel to the Ultimate Sint Maarten Experience,' We are now almost two-years down the coast, and things are different now as we are at a cross-road.

SECA has been an entity that I have been working on for more than two-years, and its formal establishment comes at no better time as the industry faces challenges. We need to work on stabilizing the cruise business as it is an integral part of our economy.

“FCCA President Michele Paige last month said now is the perfect moment to re-invent and fix the challenges and I fully concur with her. The platform for growth is there, but we have to identify the opportunities and invest in them in order to grow once again as St. Maarten remains a fantastic destination as was said by the Cruise Line Executives during last month’s meeting with parliament and with representatives of the business community,” Mingo said on Tuesday.



**PHOTO CUTLINE:** : Members of SECA attending their first official meeting on Tuesday since the signing of the notarial deed.

**For further questions, please contact:** [comments@portofstmaarten.com](mailto:comments@portofstmaarten.com)