



Ministerial Statement
Bermuda Hotel Development and Investment Summit
by
The Hon. Shawn G. Crockwell, JP, MP
Minister of Tourism Development & Transport
5th July 2013

Mr. Speaker,

I rise to report on the Bermuda Hotel Development and Investment Summit held at the Fairmont Southampton Princess hotel on June 24.

The Summit was the vision of the Chairman of the Tourism Board, the Hon. Mr. David Dodwell. It was organized and paid for by the Tourism Board and attended by members of the Government Economic Development Committee. Mr. Dodwell led the Summit and his team staged an extremely productive and enlightening event.

The Government Economic Development Committee representatives included the Chairman the Honourable Premier Mr. Craig Cannonier, The Minister of Finance Mr. Bob Richards, the Minister of Home Affairs Mr. Michael Fahy, the Minister of Economic Development Mr. Grant Gibbons, the Minister of Public Works Mr. Trevor Moniz and Director of Tourism Mr. Billy Griffith.

Mr. Speaker,

For personal reasons, I was unable to attend the summit but I have been fully briefed. I have read the entire transcript of what took place and from what I have absorbed the event was an unparalleled success. I would like to personally thank and congratulate the Tourism Board Chairman for a job well done.

Mr. Speaker,

In the interests of full disclosure, the Bermuda Government covered expenses including airfare, accommodation and island transportation. The Premier also hosted a dinner for participants at Camden on the evening of June 23rd. The estimated cost is approximately \$90,000.

All participants are incredibly busy in their respective fields and gave their time freely - there were no fees or payments involved. To my knowledge this is the first time that a Government has invited people of this caliber to share their thoughts and ideas on the future of a tourism industry and how to attract much needed investment in hotels and infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker,

Summit participants included:

1. **Colin Brathwaite:** Associate Director - Hospitality and Real Estate: First Caribbean International Bank
2. **Jim Burba:** President: Burba Hotel Network
3. **Pierre Charalambides:** Dolphin Capital Partners, Founder
4. **Richard Davis:** Shareholder, Greenberg and Traurig, LLP
5. **Timothy Dick:** MAI, CRE Three Wall Capital, LLC

6. **David Larone:** Director, PKF Hospitality and Tourism Business Advisors
7. **Alan Litwack:** SVP, Strategic Development - Business Development WVO
8. **Mike Magrans:** Transaction Advisory Services, Transaction Real Estate, Ernst and Young, LLP.
9. **Rob MacLellan:** Managing Director, MacLellan & Associates
10. **John McCarthy:** CEO, Leisure Partners
11. **Ted Middleton:** Senior Vice President, Development: Hilton Worldwide
12. **Mark Purcell:** VP, Managed Development, Starwood Hotels and Resorts
13. **Ron Sutherland:** President, Hemisphere Group
14. **Michele Wimpling:** VP Real Estate and Development, Fairmont Raffles Hotel International

The attendees represented a first class group of people involved in the following segments of the hotel industry - banking, real estate, investors and developers, legal, well known hotel brands and consultants.

Mr. Speaker,

Let me also offer my thanks to professional facilitator Mr. Bill Quain – a recognized expert in the hospitality field. The Premier and Ministers stayed from beginning to end and were engaged and enthusiastic.

Indeed the Premier said it was one of the most valuable and informative days he has had in Government and gained tremendous insight into the needs of the hotel industry. Clearly we had the right people from Government and the industry in the room. They were very engaged in the process and there was much discussion and consensus reached on how to move forward. This was very much an interactive

summit - it started with questions which led the dialogue with all participants taking an active role.

Mr. Speaker,

Some of the questions, issues, and observations raised by participants included:

The need for a red carpet approach, including faster processes involving regulation, and the creation of a one stop shop for hotel development.

There was recognition by all that tourism is the lifeblood of the island and should have an overriding attention. All agreed we need a master plan for hotel development.

Importantly, it is critical to improve the financial performance of existing hotels. If they are not successful why would other investors come here?

There was recognition of the need for financial incentives and guarantees for hospitality development. There was also the need for further investigation of mixed use hotel development involving residential aspects.

One of the most important factors was the need to modernize the current labour practices.

The need for a more relevant and aggressive sales and marketing campaign was highlighted.

Mr. Speaker,

Many of these points have been discussed by the Tourism Board, staff in the Bermuda Department of Tourism as well as in Cabinet but it was certainly a welcome validation to hear from the experts from other jurisdictions that this is the direction we must take to not only revitalize, but reinvent our tourism product.

The facilitators are producing a report that will go to the Economic Development Committee for review and to help guide our policy in this regard going forward.

Mr. Speaker,

The Summit was extremely productive for all attendees and the overriding message was that we must modernize and be innovative if we wish to compete with other jurisdictions in new developments going forward.

The attendees were incredibly impressed and optimistic about Bermuda including our processes, cleanliness, infrastructure and other factors. They saw no reason why we should not be at the forefront of tourism development if appropriate changes are made.

Mr. Speaker,

I will share a few quotes from attendees:

The President of an international hospitality real estate advisory company said: “It was a thorough pleasure being with you these past few days. I am 100% certain the “white paper” summary of yesterday’s highly focused summit will prove to be a valuable navigation chart for Bermuda's tourism renewal.”

The Co-Chair of a global legal hospitality group said: “I thought the conference went very well. As a post script I gathered some views from a few of the regular people on the island involved in the tourism industry and they were remarkably well informed ... and without prompting echoed many of the conclusions we reached at the conference.”

Mr. Speaker,

This Government is committed to growing our economy and providing jobs. This summit was an important step in attracting foreign hotel investment and new development to the island so we can achieve both of these goals. We said we were going to do this in our Throne Speech and it is a promise kept.

I look forward to returning to this honourable chamber in the near future to report on progress as we begin a new era for one of the most important pillars of our economy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.