

## WHAT THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY MEANS TO STAKEHOLDERS

**Basseterre, St. Kitts, June 02, 2017 (SKNIS):** The Ministry of Culture in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held a National Cultural Policy Finalization and Strategy Workshop from June 01-02, 2017. Presentative from the Government ministries and stakeholders from the community were invited to take part in the discussions.

Dr. Keith Nurse, workshop facilitator and UNESCO Internal Cultural Policy Expert and Consultant facilitated explained that the workshop was designed to revise the existing cultural bill that was developed in 2010 and implement actionable steps to fulfil the policy.

“One of the challenges of the existing policy document is that it has a long list of recommendations,” said Dr. Nurse as he conveyed that this workshop’s main mission is to take the recommendations and “identify specific areas for action, not only by the government but by all key stakeholders.”

He highlighted that the focus will be on five key areas which are important for the success of the policy. These areas are intellectual property capture, accessing markets, funding and finance, knowledge and training and clusters and incubators.

Stakeholders in attendance gave their views on the how beneficial they found the workshop and on the key areas covered in the discussions.

Hqusac Huggins, Business Analyst in the Ministry of Finance stressed his concern about the lack of awareness of resources available to individuals in the cultural sector. “Those who have a vested interest in the cultural sector should be educated on allowances, concessions and financing that are available to them. This will help them to successfully run their businesses which in turn will prove fruitful to the economy in the long run,” said Mr. Huggins. Other stakeholders shared their sentiments on this point and expressed that the public is unaware of programs such as the National Entrepreneurial Development Division (NEDD) and others that provide financial as well as technical assistance to local business owners.

“Mr. Raphael “Phonse” Rodney voiced that the workshop is very important as it re-introduces a policy that was created some years ago. He also state that a central distribution center or mechanism is needed to act as a market place for local vendors to promote and sell their goods. He recommended that the local stakeholders partner with the Ministry of Tourism to create or utilize the existing tourism website as this virtual market place.

“I think it is a good idea that the policy is being discussed now because there is a need for an additional income source in the economy and the utilization of the St. Kitts Tourism website and brand would allow the local business owners to get exposure to the regional and international

market. I believe that the website should display our culture (entertainment, arts, culinary etc) and local business owners, showing what the country has to offer,” said Mr. Rodney.

“Social media and online exposure is necessary and essential in this day and age for business promotion and marketing. It is also important to foster collaboration with government entities such as Tourism which can lead to the development of a profitable industry in St. Kitts and Nevis,” said Mr. Rodney as he expressed that entertainment and arts are a part of the country’s tourism product and should be promoted as such.

The Stakeholders who attended the workshop agree that the Implementation of a solid Cultural Policy could give way to the development of the federation’s national culture as well as generate income for local entrepreneurs and the economy.