



St Kitts and Nevis Customs and Excise Department

“To Protect and Collect”

PRESS RELEASE

CUSTOMS HOSTS FRUITFUL DIALOGUE WITH FARMERS AND FISHERS

BASSETERRE, ST. KITTS, JANUARY 24, 2017 (Customs PRO) – The Comptroller of Customs, Mr. Georid Belle and the management of the St. Kitts and Nevis Customs and Excise Department today met key stakeholders of the agriculture sector for a session of meaningful dialogue as a part of Customs Week 2017.

Comptroller Belle was joined by Mr. Kennedy De Silva, Deputy Comptroller of Customs; Mr. Cornell Kelly, Deputy Comptroller of Customs; Miss Launlia Archibald, Senior Assistant Comptroller of Customs; Mr. Reginald Walters, Senior Assistant Comptroller of Customs; and Mr. Marvin Duporte, Senior Assistant Comptroller of Customs. The Customs management team met with the farmers, fishers and agro-processors of the federation to discuss with them the ways in which Customs has been mandated by law to facilitate their import of farming supplies and other materials and their exports to regional and other foreign markets.

The gathering opened with prayer by a veteran farmer, Pastor Solomon Morton of Cayon and welcome remarks were delivered by Mr. Cornell Kelly, Deputy Comptroller of Customs. In his remarks, Deputy Comptroller Kelly advised that the stakeholders that the invitation to the stakeholders is based on the Customs department’s creed to facilitate legitimate trade in all sectors the economy.

Mr. Alistair Edwards, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, addressed the gathering and thanked the Customs and Excise Department for embracing the interests of the agricultural sector stakeholders. Mr. Edwards in his remarks encouraged the department, in its quest to achieve more effective border management, to be vigilant and not to bend to external pressures. These, he said, would lend consistency and reliability to the service that Customs Officers provide the nation.

The agriculture stakeholders raised a number of concerns in areas such as upgrades in the list of concessional goods in both the farming and fishing subsectors, the instances when the Customs Service Charge payable by farmers is doubled, the types of preferential treatments our goods attract in other markets, the need for quotas on the importation of specific competing goods and the concern of foreign market access for local produce when there is a glut on the local market.

Deputy Comptroller De Silva and Comptroller Belle ably addressed these and other concerns with insights in to the laws of the federation and the policies of the federal government, as well as provisions of the international agreements of which the nation is a party. The stakeholders were encouraged to request more information and technical assistance from the Customs Department to assist them in the processes of accessing duty relief and other concessions.

The Customs department has also pledged to assist the Marine Resource Department in its public information exercise to advise the nation on the need for sanitary certificates for the export of fish and other marine catch, even in the bags of individual travelers.

The stakeholders in their post meeting testimonials applauded the Customs Department for what was in their consideration a session of important dialogue. Many found the information imparted by the department to be fruitful and timely as they wished the department much success in its week of activities.

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