



News Update

# Park Hyatt developer commends PM Harris, Minister Grant for roles in facilitating job creation for hundreds

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## NEWSPAPER COVERS



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By Valencia Grant, press secretary to the prime minister of St. Kitts and Nevis

**Basseterre, St. Kitts** – Park Hyatt St. Kitts Christophe Harbour – the first Park Hyatt hotel in the Caribbean – hosted a press conference Friday to mark its opening earlier this month. The five-star luxury beach resort opened Nov. 4.

“Ladies and gentlemen, it’s happened,” Mohammed Asaria, vice chairman of Range Developments, the developer of the project, said during his introduction, referring to the opening of the hotel. “Guests have been coming in since then and we have very strong bookings over the festive period. I will assure you this now, the benefits of this hotel are already being felt throughout the whole economy of St. Kitts and Nevis. That’s just not on the 20 acres or the southeast peninsula; that benefit is being felt from Charlestown to Basseterre, from Newcastle to St. Peter’s.”

The vice chairman of Range Developments also said that the 134 rooms and suites in the hotel directly employ 320 workers, as well as “somewhere between 75 to 90 percent more indirectly.”

Asaria characterized the employment of hundreds of locals as a product of community outreach that has been taking place every weekend, enabling people to interview in their communities for available positions.

“We haven’t made it difficult by saying ‘please come down to the southeast peninsula, spend the money, have the interview.’ We’ve been going out to the various constituencies, working with the relevant ministers [of government],” he said. “Prime minister, Minister [Grant], thank you for your support in helping us with these initiatives, and the product of that is seen today,” the vice chairman of Range Developments added, further noting that, “Out of the 320 permanent employees, 94 percent are from the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis.” That’s about 300 people.

Prime Minister the Honourable Dr. Timothy Harris and Minister of Tourism the Hon. Lindsay Grant joined executives of Range Developments at the head table for the auspicious occasion. The new general manager of Park Hyatt St. Kitts, Flor van der Vaart, and other Park Hyatt executives were also in attendance at today’s press conference, as well as United States Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Linda Tagliatela.

“From employing more than 800 Kittitian staff in the opening phases to working with local purveyors for restaurant ingredients, Park Hyatt St. Kitts Christophe Harbour brings forward the island’s warm hospitality throughout guests’ entire experience,” van de Vaart said earlier this month.

For instance, Park Hyatt St. Kitts Christophe Harbour offers a series of “journeys” to promote its guests’ immersion into the culture of St. Kitts and Nevis. The well-trained staff of the luxury beach resort will introduce their guests to the history and people of the federation through enriching activities such as walks with an island historian, rainforest excursions, and visits to local sites including the world-famous UNESCO Brimstone Hill Fortress.

At today’s press conference, Prime Minister Harris commended “the business genius” of Range Developments’ vice chairman and also praised Kamal Shehada, Range Developments’ development director, for his “enduring interest in people development” and “wanting to take the citizens and residents of St. Kitts and Nevis to a higher plane.”

Harris said the employment of hundreds of Kittitians and Nevisians “is a clear indication of the deserving confidence that has been placed in the ability of our people to excel and to reach their God-given potential.”