

Barbados Port Inc. welcomes Le Soléal for inaugural call

THE Barbados Port Inc. (BPI) yesterday welcomed French cruise ship Le Soléal to the Bridgetown Port for the first time at an official inaugural ceremony. The seven-deck ship, renowned for its expedition-style cruises, arrived in Barbados from Venezuela and has now set sail for Martinique; its last stop on its 17-day cruise.

The inaugural plaque was presented to Le Soléal Captain Debien Mickael by BPI Divisional Manager, Corporate Development and Strategy, Captain Karl Branch to ceremoniously greet the ship and its crew. “The Barbados Port Inc. officially welcomes Le Soléal to Barbados. Please accept this plaque in the spirit of friendship and we sincerely hope your inaugural call to our shores is the first of many more to come,” said Branch.

Captain Mickael, a cruise captain for seven years, returned these sentiments. He, too, presented a gift of appreciation to the BPI on behalf of Le Soléal – a book of the cruise ship’s most visited destinations. “It is a pleasure to be here in Barbados, it is a beautiful call. I hope my passengers enjoy Barbados’ culture and history, and that we will have many

more calls here in the future,” he said.

On board, Le Soléal’s 216 passengers have access to restaurants serving French and international cuisine, a theatre for informative lectures, fitness centre, day spa, hairdressers, swimming

pool, kids club, as well as cocktail and pool deck bars. There is also a variety of live entertainment to enjoy such as a pianist, singers, dancers and cultural shows.

Le Soléal cruise ship is owned and

operated by French cruise ship operator Compagnie du Ponant. Some of Ponant’s most exciting destinations include navigating through the Arctic Ocean and North Pole, as part of its unique adventure-based cruises.



Le Soléal Captain Debien Mickael (left) with the Barbados inaugural ceremonial plaque and BPI Divisional Manager, Corporate Development and Strategy, Captain Karl Branch with the Compagnie du Ponant ‘Points North’ destination book.

Elegant Hotels Group enters agreement to acquire Treasure Beach

ELEGANT Hotels Group plc has announced that it has entered into a conditional agreement to acquire Treasure Beach Limited, which owns the 4-star, 35-room Treasure Beach Hotel in Paynes Bay, St. James.

CEO of Elegant, Sunil Chatrani, said that the agreement was signed last Friday and is expected to be finalised in May. “Elegant Hotels went public in May 2015 and presently operates six upscale properties – The House, Colony Club, Tamarind, Turtle Beach, Crystal Cove and Waves Hotel & Spa; as well as the beachfront Daphne’s Restaurant, all in Barbados.

“Following our successful launch of Waves last August, and on the heels of our recent management agreement with Hodges Bay Resort & Spa in Antigua, set to open in October 2017, as well as a sales and marketing agreement with The Landings Resort & Spa in St. Lucia, this newest agreement shows that Elegant Hotels is more committed than ever to executing its long-term expansion strategy,” he noted.

Chatrani added that Elegant was looking forward to integrating Treasure Beach into its portfolio. “When completed, this sale will see us heavily investing in renovations at Treasure Beach similar to what we did at Waves, to bring the resort up to the Elegant standard. We see enormous potential for this property and are excited at the prospect of creating a resort that will complement our existing portfolio and meet the exacting standards that our guests have come to expect from Elegant Hotels.”

NGOs learn more about opportunities afforded by NGO-specific legislation at national consultation

NON-GOVERNMENTAL organisations in Barbados have learnt more about the opportunities and benefits provided by NGO-specific legislation during a national consultation workshop held recently.

The consultation was held under the auspices of the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) and the Pinelands Creative Workshop (PCW) and funded by the European Commission. It forms part of a wider regional initiative to improve the legislative environment for NGOs in the Caribbean.

In explaining the rationale for the consultation, CPDC Executive Director, Gordon Bispham noted that the legislative framework for the operation of the NGO sector in the Caribbean was “fragmented and sparse”.

He added: “NGO Sector organisations are plagued by a compelling need to gain legal recognition and establish themselves within a support network that enables them to develop and undertake the services they are designed to deliver. The consultation is held to address this need and improve the legislative environment for NGOs in CARIFORUM and is being replicated throughout the region.

“Ultimately, meaningful civil society engagement and participation in governance is critical for achieving sustainable development in the region. NGO legislation will help to achieve this,” Mr. Bispham concluded.

At the consultation, the findings of a review and analysis of a report on NGO Legislation in St. Kitts and Nevis, Belize, Kenya and Uganda were presented by

Attorney-At-Law Ondene Kirton. She noted that the existing legal framework for NGOs in Barbados was found under discrete sections of the Companies Act and the Charities Act. She added, however, that there was a need for NGO-specific legislation for NGOs to gain full legal recognition, fulfill their mandate, as well as monitor performance and achieve transparency and accountability.

Ms. Kirton encouraged workshop attendees to look critically at existing NGO-specific legislation in the region and determine those elements suited for Barbados. She noted that several conditions were needed including a clear understanding and agreement on the term “NGO”, a comprehensive and in-depth draft NGO policy achieved through consultations with NGOs across the region, and NGOs demonstration of self-sufficiency through the generation of revenue or social entrepreneurship.

Chief Executive Officer of Pinelands Creative Workshop, Rodney Grant said that the workshop went well. “We were able to achieve our objective of sensitising participants to the importance of NGO Legislation especially regarding legitimacy of the sector as a formal part of governance.”

Broad discussion required
Going forward, Mr. Grant indicated that a broader discussion would be required. “We recognise we have to broaden the discussion and have dialogue with a wider section of the society. It is important to get the legislation right the first time, to make sure it’s all inclusive. We can only achieve this with wide participation

and consultation,” he explained.

NGOs including the Barbados Council for the Disabled, Barbados Association of Non-Governmental Organisations, the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados, and the Caribbean Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Livelihoods (CoESL) participated in the consultation.

Dr. Marcia Brandon, Managing Director of CoESL described the workshop as very useful. “It informed me about the variations among the legislations which exist in different countries. The facilitators very clearly broke down the legislation and guided the participants to the pros and cons, and the gaps.”

Dr. Brandon noted that if NGO legislation was implemented in Barbados, CoESL as well as other charities and NGOs would benefit. “We would, by right, be able to receive financial and other support from Government regularly and consistently. CoESL and other NGOs would also be registered under one heading and be able to do social business with the benefits of a non-profit. CoESL would definitely benefit from having an independent body set up specifically to lobby, appeal on behalf of, and facilitate NGOs.”

The next national consultation will be held this month in Dominica.

The NGO Legislation initiative falls under a 1 785 000 euro joint three-year grant partnership which the CPDC is undertaking with the European Commission to strengthen the capacity, confidence and effectiveness of Caribbean NGOs.