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## North American Investors Tout Positive Experiences At Invest Caribbean Now Forum

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**NEWS SPONSORED BY:** St. Kitts Bottling Company Ltd. ( Tel: 869-465-2580 / 869-662-3632 )

**CaribPR Wire, NEW YORK, NY, June 7th, 2012:** North American investors, Jonathan Blue and Jay Yeo, are touting their positive investment experiences, in the Caribbean region.

At the Invest Caribbean Now forum on June 6th in New York City, both institutional investors shared their experiences with over 150 delegates including over a dozen Caribbean ministers of government.

Blue, chair of Blue Equity LLC, spoke of his multi-million dollar investments in Jamaica and expressed extreme satisfaction with the country and its business environment.

He referenced seamless transitions among three governments since Blue Equity has invested in Jamaica.

"Blue Equity is continuing to evaluate opportunities in the Caribbean and is committed to inspire other investment firms to follow their lead," Blue said.

Jay Yeo, President of the Canadian-based Solamon Energy, spoke of his firm's work in the Caribbean and said governments should be focusing on renewables, especially solar, to solve its high energy cost.

"Capital intensive renewable energy is an important vehicle to increase the inflow of capital into the Caribbean and achieve economic growth," said Yeo, adding that jobs could be increased 11 times more than in companies where energy comes from coal or natural gas.

Chairman of the Caribbean Tourism Organization and Minister of Tourism of St. Kitts/Nevis, Ricky Skerritt, opened the panel and said the Caribbean may not be a fully fledged BRIC group yet, but the message from Invest Caribbean Now is, that it's on its way.

Jean Arnell, vice president of the French Saint Martin Chamber of Commerce, told the audience that the Caribbean island is open for business and over the next five years is looking to create a "Free Zone" of office and warehouse, an island wide broadband open access network and expand its road, water and sewage networks and the Grand Case Airport for regional traffic.

St. Martin was represented by a delegation of five including President of the Collectivity, Alain Richardson. In addition, there were several ministers of tourism present including Chief Minister Government of Anguilla, Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Investment, Commerce & Tourism, Hubert Hughes; and the Premier of the British Virgin Islands, Dr. Daniel Orlando Smith.

Lisa Lake, Chief Development Director, Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship - Caribbean, who wrapped up the panel, insisted that the ultimate goal of the center was to help young entrepreneurs grow and create employment for others.

One of the world's most renowned and successful entrepreneurs, Sir Richard Branson, was this year's inaugural Leadership Award recipient. Branson, in his acceptance remarks, said he is now directing a lot of his interest and his funds in entrepreneurial enterprises in the

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Caribbean through his Branson Center of Entrepreneurship - Caribbean and reiterated his commitment to young entrepreneurs and the region.

"The Caribbean may still be best known for its sun and its beaches, but we are proving that there is so much more to this region," said Felicia Persaud, CEO of Hard Beat Communications and convener of Invest Caribbean Now, in summing up the conclusion of the June 6th sold out power forum, held in collaboration with the Caribbean Tourism Organization, as part of Caribbean Week in New York. "What has to happen now is for government ministers to take their jobs of doing business with the private sector seriously."

The forum was moderated by W. Dave Dowrich, V Vice President of Risk and Capital Markets in the Financial Institutions Group at Goldman Sachs, who observed that "too long the Caribbean has been simply known as a playground and great for partying but when it comes to the serious business of investment - not so much so."

"We hope to begin through this forum to change that image somewhat - yes the Caribbean is great to vacation, but it's also a hot emerging market that should not be ignored and should be considered for some of your wallet share," said Dowrich.

Other private sector delegates included CEO of Spackman Capital, Martin Mohabeer; Lugano Group's Harold Doley, III, Dean Chang of CIBC Markets; Laura Perez of Merrill Lynch; Kathleen Mulhern of the Coleman Alliance and Brian Lilly, founder of One Caribbean Television.

See Branson's full acceptance speech at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VjaVFuVT94> and our video news report from One Caribbean Television.

The presentations from the four speakers are at <http://investcaribbean.wordpress.com/2012-speakers/> and a list of attendees can be found at <http://investcaribbean.wordpress.com/who-should-attend/>.

Fans can also bid on two auction items - a trip for two to Jamaica or Grenada - online at <http://www.32auctions.com/organizations/3984/auctions/4426>

The Invest Caribbean Now 2012 forum was funded in part by The French Saint Martin Chamber of Commerce, (CCISM), One Caribbean Television and Teamsters Local 237, a union of 24,000 New York City employees who work in government agencies and several municipalities on Long Island, while supporting sponsors include the PR Newswire, CaribPR Wire, News Americas Now, the Museum of American Finance, ALTA and Damoola Inc.



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