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**BAHAMIAN ENTREPRENEURS AND LEADERS HOSTED BY ROYAL CARIBBEAN,
BAHAMAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND EMPLOYERS' CONFEDERATION**

The Small Business Development Centre, Tourism Development Corporation and the vacation brand discuss progress on small business development programs and Royal Beach Club Paradise Island in Annual Power Brunch

MIAMI, Sept. 13, 2024 – This week, **more than 250 of The Bahamas' top business and civic leaders** turned out for the annual Bahamas Chamber of Commerce and Employers' Confederation (BCCEC) Power Brunch **hosted by Royal Caribbean International on the new [Utopia of the Seas](#)** in Nassau, The Bahamas.

This marks the third consecutive year BCCEC and Royal Caribbean join forces to welcome influential entrepreneurs and community leaders for a panel discussion with stakeholders from The Small Business Development Centre (SBDC), the Tourism Development Corporation (TDC) and the vacation brand. The attendees and panelists discussed the various business development programs available and the progress on Royal Caribbean's highly anticipated [Royal Beach Club Paradise Island](#) coming to Nassau in **late 2025**.

Among the guests in attendance were British High Commissioner to The Bahamas Tom Hartley, International Telecommunications Union Ambassador His Excellency Leon R. Williams, Deputy Director General of Tourism, Investments and Aviation R. Kenneth Romer; President of Royal Caribbean International Bahamas and Royal Beach Club Paradise Island Philip Simon Jr.; and Vice President of Government Affairs, Americas at Royal Caribbean Group Russell Benford, alongside Executive Director of The Bahamas' Small Business Development Centre Samantha Rolle, Chairman of the Tourism Development Corporation of The Bahamas Rafique Symonette, Executive Director and CEO of the Tourism Development Corporation Ian R. Ferguson, Vice Chairman of BCCEC Don Williams; and Chief Executive Officer of BCCEC Dr. Leo V. Rolle.

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Samantha Rolle shared an update on the overall impact of the **SBDC Access Accelerator’s Royal Caribbean Kickstarter Programme**, established in 2022 to provide tourism-related startups with vital assistance such as business training and funding opportunities. To date, the program has supported more than **100 small businesses** with **entrepreneurial training** and **more than \$350,000 in approved funding**.

Philip Simon Jr. dove into the status of the beach club experience coming to Paradise Island, offering insights on the measures taken to **invest in local talent and partner with local businesses**, as well as updates on the progress of demolition and construction.

“Once again, Royal Caribbean International is proud to host the annual Power Brunch with the voice of business in The Bahamas, the Bahamas Chamber of Commerce and Employers’ Confederation,” said Simon. “I know firsthand the important role that it plays in the stability and growth of the Bahamian economy, and the partnerships with the Small Business Development Centre and Tourism Development Corporation only help to strengthen the many benefits for members.”

Ian Ferguson also presented testimonials from winners of TDC’s 50×50 and Venture Pitch Competition. He noted the power of partnerships and offered sincere gratitude to Royal Caribbean for its continuous support of their endeavors. The competition seeks to motivate and empower both existing and aspiring entrepreneurs by providing entrepreneurial training and funding opportunities to those in tourism and hospitality.

“I am elated for another opportunity to partner with Royal Caribbean and thank them for their unwavering commitment to the business community, nationwide,” said Dr. Leo V. Rolle. “As a member-based nonprofit, the Chamber of Commerce relies on the generosity of companies like Royal Caribbean to help us execute our mission, shape fiscal policies and create economic impact that fosters growth and prosperity. Our mantra at the BCCEC centers around creating pathways that lessen the burdensome cost and unease of doing business, which would not be possible without the strong support of organizations like Royal Caribbean, the Small Business Development Centre and the Tourism Development Corporation. I am pleased that, collectively, our commitment to corporate social responsibility transcends our corporate walls into the communities we serve.”

Royal Caribbean’s **SEA the Future** vision drives its commitment to **energize communities and support economic vibrancy**, like the BCCEC’s annual Power Brunch. The cruise line also supports community-based organizations in The Bahamas, such as the Agricultural Development Organization, The Bahamas Feeding Network and entrepreneurial training groups like the SBDC and its Royal Caribbean Kickstarter Programme and TDC’s 50×50 and Venture Pitch Competition.

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About Royal Caribbean International

[Royal Caribbean International](#), part of Royal Caribbean Group (NYSE: RCL), has delivered memorable vacations for more than 50 years. The cruise line's game-changing ships and private destinations revolutionize vacations with innovations and an all-encompassing combination of experiences, from thrills to dining and entertainment, for every type of family and vacationer. Voted "Best Cruise Line Overall" for 21 consecutive years in the Travel Weekly Readers Choice Awards, Royal Caribbean makes memories with adventurers across more than 300 destinations in 80 countries on all seven continents, including the line's top-rated private destination, [Perfect Day at CocoCay](#) in The Bahamas.

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