



## CATHERINE FLON *Symposium*

Cultivating Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Women Economic Empowerment

MAY 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2016  
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NY

# POST SYMPOSIUM REPORT

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Catherine Flon is regarded as one of the symbols of the Haitian Revolution and independence.  
She sewed the first Haitian flag on May 18, 1803



## BACKGROUND

One of Haiti's main challenges since the magnitude 7.0 earthquake in January 12, 2010, has been to refocus efforts from emergency planning to long term, sustainable economic development. The World Bank has noted that more vibrant private economic activities will be critical to create greater opportunities to escape poverty; therefore, for Haiti to improve its economy, it must increase trade. The lack of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Haiti – what is commonly referred to as 'the missing middle' – is a significant obstacle to private sector development and economic growth.

According to the United Nations, women are vital to improving Haiti's economy. Since economic growth worldwide is driven by the development of SMEs, The Danielle Saint-Lot Haiti Women's Foundation (DSLH) seeks to bridge the gap to fill the 'missing middle' and grow the creative economy by empowering Haitian women through the promotion of social entrepreneurship, leadership, social skills and professional development.

Both in Haiti and its Diaspora business environment, female entrepreneurs face a lot more obstacles and constraints than their male counterparts. The New York State Assembly, under the leadership of Haitian descent Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte, has passed several pieces of legislations to promote minority and women-owned businesses, as well as other small businesses, and assist these businesses to grow and thrive.

Capitalizing on successful efforts in Haiti and efficient legislations in New-York in favor of women entrepreneurship enhancement, the Danielle Saint-Lôt Haiti Women's Foundation (DSLH) and the National Alliance for the Advancement of Haitian Professionals (NAAHP) convened the Catherine Flon Symposium at the United Nations headquarters in New-York on May 18th, 2016 in celebration of Haiti Flag Day and the creativity of Haitian women entrepreneurs.





## SYMPOSIUM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Symposium main goal was to increase global awareness on the key role of women entrepreneurs in the rebuilding of Haiti and promote investment in female owned enterprises in Haiti and its Diaspora as a greater priority for inclusive growth in Haiti.

Its objectives were:

- To create a forum to explore inclusive solutions that create opportunities, innovations, and strategic partnerships for female entrepreneurship enhancement in Haiti and the Diaspora.
- To engage in a conversation that discusses the various challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Haiti and the Diaspora and opportunities for them to succeed in the global market.



“I warmly applaud the Danielle St-Lot Haiti Women’s Foundation for putting together the Catherine Flon Symposium at the United Nations’ Headquarters. By showcasing some of the country’s most inspiring and promising female leaders entrepreneurs, this event is a seminal contribution to women’s empowerment and a testament to the transformative ability of one of Haiti’s most untapped forces.”

**Ambassador Maryse Pénette Kedar,**

former Secretary of State for Tourism, President of PRODEV

## PARTICIPATION

The Catherine Flon Symposium was held at the Trusteeship Chamber Council of the United Nations from 10 a.m – 1:00 pm. The event gathered over 400 delegates, speakers, and partners from the tri-state area, Washington DC, Boston, Atlanta, Florida, other US states, and Haiti. Participants included public and private sector leaders, entrepreneurs, professionals, development practitioners, students and friends of Haiti mainly women.



## PROCEEDINGS

Welcoming remarks were given by Serge Renaud - President of NAAHP, and Danielle Saint-Lot -President of DSLF. **“We at the NAAHP strongly believe that Haitian women entrepreneurs are essential for economic growth in Haiti and we will continue to engage them in development in Haiti.”** said Serge Renaud.



“Women are key to Haiti’s long-term economic recovery. But, we are the “missing middle” in the country’s economic landscape. Too many women entrepreneurs and small business owners in Haiti are not yet prepared for the global marketplace. I see my role as a “Connector” – working to bridge the gap to fill this “missing middle” and grow the creative economy by empowering Haitian women.”

**Ambassador Danielle Saint-Lôt**

An extremely important remark was given by Symposium honorary speaker **Ambassador Denis Régis**, Haiti Permanent Representative to the United Nations, referring to Haitian history and the key role that the Diaspora can play in Haiti’s social and economic development.





One of the highlights of the Symposium at its opening was the presentation of the first Catherine Flon Award to the Honorable **Rodneyse Bichotte** for her leadership and commitment to women economic empowerment.



Envisioning the world in 2030 when 90% of jobs will require ICT skills, Anne Falth, Manager of Empower Women shared success stories of UN Women's Empower Women program investing in knowledge and skills through ILearn, a global mobile learning platform for women entrepreneurs.





In first panel, “Bridging the Gap- How to Fill the Missing Middle”, Cleve Mesidor, a former Obama presidential appointee, engaged Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte and Ambassador Danielle Saint-Lot in an interactive conversation about significant challenges faced by women owned small and medium enterprises and the critical role that women entrepreneurs from Haiti and the Diaspora can play when it comes to creating a vibrant middle class in the homeland.

“I think we all agree that Haitian women are phenomenal. What do you think is our secret? As Maya Angelou noted, I think it is the grace of our style. I was proud to engage a dynamic conversation between two phenomenal daughters of Haiti whom like the audience, I admire.”

**Cleve Mesidor**  
former Obama Presidential appointee,  
Global Solutions Consultant, The Raben Group





Second panel, “Innovation, Entrepreneurship and How to Contribute and Help Promote Women’s Economic Empowerment”, moderated by Ambassador Saint-Lot, featured three inspiring female entrepreneurs from the Diaspora creating jobs in Haiti and business opportunities for other women in competitive agribusiness value chains. Leanna Archer, founder and CEO of Leanna’s Essentials a multimillion New York based natural hair products’ company outsourcing oils from Haiti, Yve-Car Momperousse, Founder and CEO of Kreyol Essence producing eco-luxury beauty and personal care products exclusively in Haiti and Gabriele Aurel Vincent who is, through SAPEN S.A., driving a revolution in the poultry industry in Northern Haiti.



“I would like to take this opportunity to thank Danielle Saint-Lot Haiti Women’s Foundation and NAAHP for offering a platform on May 18th at the Catherine Flon Symposium to women entrepreneurs from different backgrounds and industries to make our voices stronger, for this I am grateful. You have given Haitian women opportunities to learn from one another, to share our challenges and successes, to feel like their successes are ours and with your inspiration, vision, guidance and continued support Haitian women will continue to lead every step of the way.”

**Gabrielle Aurel Vincent,**  
co-founder and CEO of SAPEN S.A.



Both Kreyol Essence and SAPEN S.A. success stories have been facilitated by matching grants of the LEAD project funded by USAID and conducted by PADF. Nadia Cherrouk, Director of PADF Haiti proudly presented the project and its success in empowering female entrepreneurs in competitive value chains.



In her inspiring closing remarks Dr. Marjorie Brennan, President of the NAAHP Advisory Board reviewed key themes from the Symposium that stood out for her. She also highlighted the importance of economics for women’s health: *“As a physician in global health, working in Haiti, with all the issues I was seeing there with maternal mortality, I understand that economics is the biggest driver of health in women.”*





## KEY TAKEWAYS

Overall, there was an abundance of sharing, networking and fun at the Catherine Flon Symposium. It was rejuvenating to watch the transformation of the audience from quiet before Symposium commenced, to the bustling excitement that roared through as the attendees, both Haitian and international friends united in celebrating our blue and red Flag.



“I have to congratulate the amazing women of Haiti who together collaborate on a vision for the future. Haiti has been an extraordinary inspiration and a place that I recommend for so many people to go and be as inspired as I have. Seeing the endless possibilities and creativity is truly inspiring. It’s a country that needs your help and support to take it to the next dimension as it’s potential is endless.”

**Donna Karan**

Honorary Ambassador to Haiti and Founder of Urban Zen Foundation

“Catherine Flon is the original Madame CJ Walker. She took something regarded as “women’s affairs” and built an empire around it. Her legacy has empowered me, as a young Haitian American Woman to pursue my passions with the mindset of building financial stability.”

**Maité Saint-Surin,**

New York based freelance brand Consultant







The Symposium did succeed in being a true experience and best practices exchange as well as a catalyst for follow-up activities including recruiting new members for NAAHP, engaging volunteers to support DSLF efforts, seeking sustainability for initiatives to promote Diaspora investments in Haiti and partnerships with Haitian women entrepreneurs and creating a permanent annual Symposium in celebration of the Haitian Flag and Haitian female entrepreneurs success stories. As we look forward to next year's Symposium, we took stock of the big themes emerging from this year's keynotes, panels, and debates. Some of the key takeaways include:

- Investment in women owned SMEs to build the “missing middle” and contribute to inclusive growth
- Public private partnerships are key to build an infrastructure that fosters women business development
- Innovation in business models linking entrepreneurs from Haiti and the Diaspora to catalyze a rippling effect on those living in poverty in Haiti
- Investment in knowledge and skills through digital learning, experience sharing, matchmaking and networking platform for women entrepreneurs from Haiti and the Diaspora
- Engagement of the Haitian Diaspora to increase the development impact of their investments
- Millennial Haitian American women are becoming a force to be reckoned with





## LOOKING FORWARD

Over the next years, the NAAHP and DSLF reinforcing their partnership will continue to instigate important conversations and provide the fertile ground needed for Haitian professionals and entrepreneurs from Haiti and the Diaspora to share innovative ideas and examples of how they can concretely impact Haiti social and economic landscape through women entrepreneurship.

“It was great to see so many young leaders in the U.S and other countries geared up and ready to learn more about the challenges that faces Haiti and how they plan to be a part of the solution finding. Everyone left the event eager to create change including myself and colleagues.”

**EJ Dupervil**, Principal Consultant at Off The Ground Solutions



We look forward to next year's Symposium, where we will further examine and debate how we can better capitalize on the Haiti Diaspora as investors, consumers and business advisors for women entrepreneurship enhancement in Haiti. In the meantime, we will be gathering insights and research to strengthen knowledge about the Diaspora investing and buying power in order to develop a thought-provoking agenda for 2017.



“The collective power and enthusiasm of the women who attended the Catherine Flon Symposium was palpable. As someone who has been visiting Haiti since the 2010 earthquake, I left the day encouraged by the incredible strides female entrepreneurs are making in the country, and energized by all the incredible work still to come. I look forward to next year's event!”

**Suzanne Lerner**, President of Michael Stars



# OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR INSPIRING SPEAKERS



**His Excellency Denis Régis**  
Permanent Mission of the  
Republic of Haiti to the  
United Nations



**Ambassador  
Danielle Saint-Lot**  
Founder,  
Danielle Saint-Lôt Haiti  
Women's Foundation  
Former Minister of  
Commerce, Industry and  
Tourism of Haiti



**Honorable Rodneyse  
Bichotte**  
Assembly Member and  
State Committee Woman/  
District Leader for  
New York State's 42nd  
Assembly District



**Serge Renaud, MBA, MSA**  
President of the  
National Alliance for the  
Advancement of Haitian  
Professionals (NAAHP)



**Marie Gabrielle Aurel**  
Co-founder - Société  
Agricole de Production et  
d'Élevage du Nord,  
(SAPEN, SA)



**Leanna Archer**  
Founder & CEO of  
Leanna's Essentials



**Anna Falth**  
Manager of  
EmpowerWomen,  
UN Women Economic  
Empowerment Section



**Dr. Marjorie Pierre  
Brennan, MD**  
NAAHP Advisory Board  
Chair and Co-Chair of the  
Scholarship  
Committee



**Yve-Car Momperousse**  
CEO and Co-Founder of  
Kreyol Essence (KE)



**Cleve Mesidor**  
Global Solutions  
Consultant, RABEN  
GROUP



**Nadia Cherrouk**  
Country Director,  
Pan American  
Development Foundations  
(PADF)



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P.O. Box 5096, Hillside, NJ 07205



Danielle Saint Lôt  
Haiti Women's Foundation

haitiwomensfoundation.org  
daniellesaintlot@gmail.com | 509.3730.0117  
7, impasse Fleury, Musseau, Petion-Ville, Haiti

An abundance of gratitude to our partners for their generous contribution to the success of the Catherine Flon Symposium



*The Coca-Cola Company*



*Michael Stars*



*Nouvelliste*



challenges



Wednesday May 18, 2016  
United Nations Headquarters, New-York City

Theme:  
Catherine Flon<sup>1</sup> Symposium:  
Cultivating Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Women Economic Empowerment

Time	Event	Room
8:30 am	Registration Check-In Begins	
9:30 am - 9:50 am	Speakers/Panelists Gathering	
10:00 am - 10:10am	<p><b>Haiti National Anthem</b>  <b>Barbara Guillaume, artist and women rights activist:</b>  <b>Welcoming Remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serge Renaud, President of the National Alliance for the Advancement of Haitian Professionals (NAAHP)</li> <li>• Ambassador Danielle Saint-Lot, President of Danielle Saint-Lot Haiti Women's Foundation (DSLH)</li> </ul>	Trusteeship Council Chamber
10:10 am - 10:30 am	<p><b>Opening Statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• His Excellency Ambassador Denis Régis, Haiti Permanent Representative to the United Nations</li> <li>• Special "1st Catherine Flon Award"</li> </ul> <p><b>One Woman - Nou Tout Se Fanm: A song for UN Women</b>            Barbara Guillaume</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Anna Falth, Manager of EmpowerWomen, UN Women Economic Empowerment Section</li> </ul>	Trusteeship Council Chamber
10:30 am - 11:30 am	<p><b>Bridging the Gap- How to Fill the Missing Middle</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambassador Danielle Saint-Lôt</li> <li>• Honorable Rodneyse Bichotte, New York State Assemblymember, Chair of the Subcommittee on the Oversight of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator</b>            Cleve Mésidor, Global Solutions Consultant, The Raben Group</p>	Trusteeship Council Chamber
11:30 am - 11:40 am	<b>Break</b>	
11:40 am - 12:40 pm	<p><b>Innovation, Entrepreneurship and How to Contribute and Help Promote Women's Economic Empowerment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leanna Archer, Founder &amp; CEO of Leanna's Essentials</li> <li>• Yve-Car Momperousse, Co- Founder &amp; CEO Kreyol Essence</li> <li>• Gabrielle Vincent, Co-Founder &amp; CEO Société Agricole et de Production et d'Élevage du Nord S.A. (SAPEN S.A.)</li> </ul>	Trusteeship Council Chamber
12:045pm - 1:00 pm	<p><b>Nap Vanse!</b>            Barbara Guillaume</p> <p><b>Women Entrepreneurs LEADing the Way - Inclusive Economic Growth in Haiti and the Diaspora</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nadia Cherrouk, Country Director PADF Haiti and Chief of Party of Leveraging Effective Application of Direct Investments (LEAD) program funded by USAID</li> </ul> <p><b>Live Streamed Statement</b>            The Honorable Marie Denise Claude, Haiti Minister of Women Affairs</p> <p><b>Closing Remark</b>            Dr. Marjorie Pierre Brennan, MD: NAAHP Advisory Board Chair and Co-Chair of the Scholarship Committee</p>	Trusteeship Council Chamber

<sup>1</sup> Catherine Flon is regarded as one of the symbols of the Haitian Revolution and independence. She sewed the first Haitian flag on May 18, 1803.



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The **Danielle Saint-Lot Haiti Women's Foundation**, a U.S. based non-profit, advances programs to empower Haitian women through the promotion of social entrepreneurship, leadership skills, and professional development. The foundation's activities include trainings, forums, networking, coaching, and mentoring. Among the topics explored are gender equality and conflict resolution to advocate for greater equal social and economic rights for women. The goal is to give women the necessary tools to help them improve the quality of life of their families and communities. The Foundation's initiatives are implemented in Haiti.

For more information visit the foundation's website at [www.haitiwomensfoundation.org/foundation](http://www.haitiwomensfoundation.org/foundation)



Founded in 2011, **the National Alliance for the Advancement of Haitian Professionals (NAAHP)** is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization established by a diverse group of forward-thinking industry experts, youth leaders, faculty, public and nonprofit sector professionals from Haiti and its global diaspora. NAAHP is focused on connecting a global community of peers with career advancement resources, as well as, fostering transformative relationships between NAAHP members and committed stakeholders to rebuild Haiti through philanthropy and social entrepreneurship.

For more information about NAAHP visit [www.naahpusa.org](http://www.naahpusa.org)



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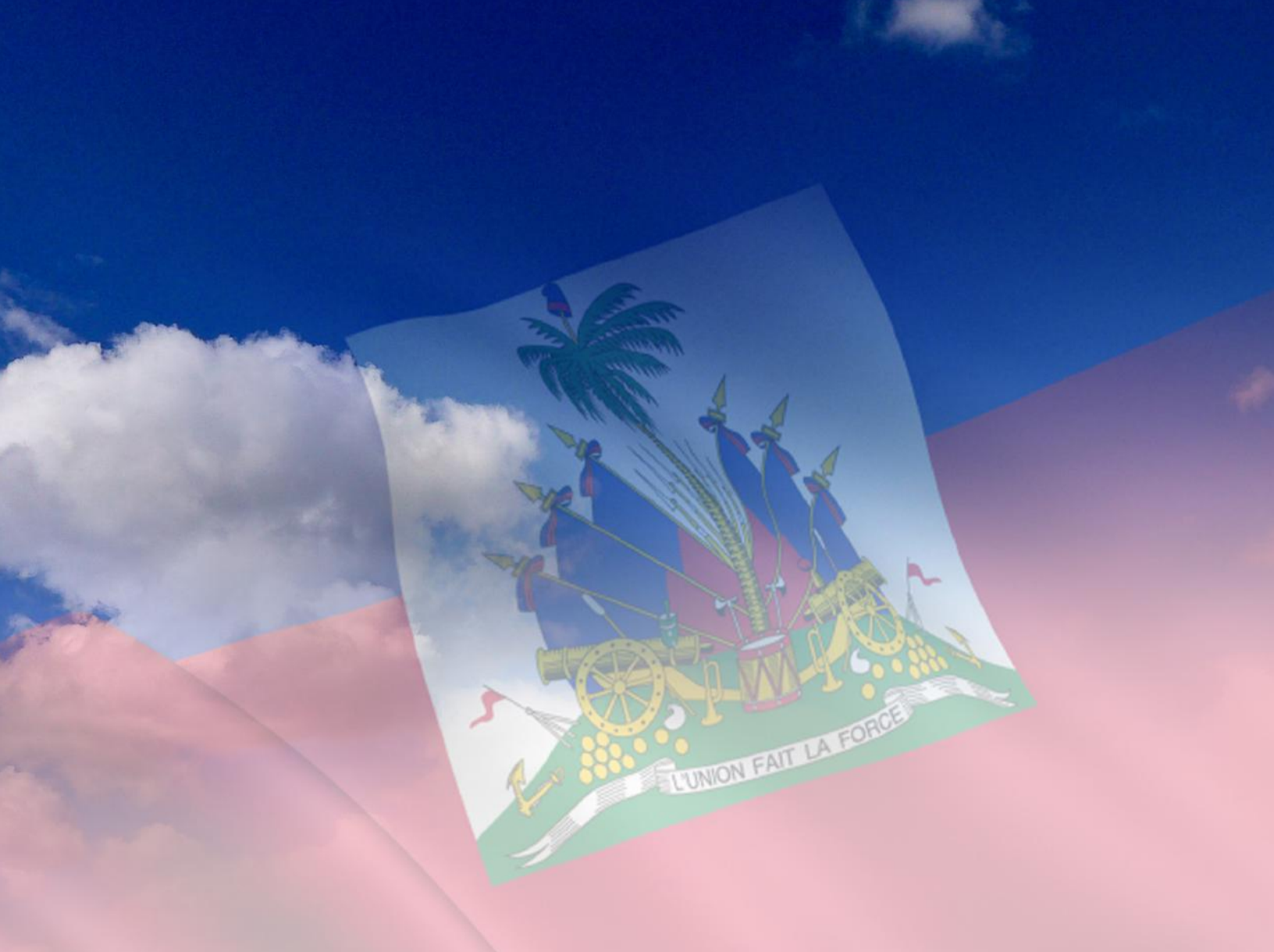
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## Watch #HaitianWomenLead on UN Web TV

<http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/watch/catherine-flon-symposium-cultivating-innovation-entrepreneurship-and-women-economic-empowerment/4910126348001>



## Special Thanks To Our Planning Team:

Ambassador Danielle Saint-Lot  
Serge Renaud  
EJ Dupervil  
Stephanie Senat  
Nadeje Bauzil  
Monalisa Jean  
Wladimir Gilbert  
Samuel Charles



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