The Virgin Islands Consortium

Rotary President-Elect Kai Nielsen Visits UN Center In New York

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Kai Nielsen (far right), Rotary Club of St. Croix President-Elect, stands beside Nicola Watkinson, Austrade Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner for North America, at the United Nations Church Center in New York, N.Y.

Watkinson was the guest speaker during an International Breakfast Meeting hosted by the Rotary Club of New York on Wednesday. She spoke on Australia’s approach to trade amidst protectionist policies that restrict international trade and the rise of China. Nielsen believes that representation of the Virgin Islands at the breakfast and networking with people like Watkinson are important steps towards the development of the territory.

Over the past two decades, Australia has boasted one of the longest stretches of economic expansion in history. The country is also internationally competitive in the areas of services, technologies, and high-value-added manufactured goods.

According to Nielsen, Australia is a model country for the Virgin Islands as the territory seeks to recover from the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and as it seeks to develop in general. The 29-year-old, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of VI Collaborative Solutions LLC., said he's using both his international and local networking experience to craft an emergency management team of the best minds in the areas of emergency planning, highway administration, and solid and hazardous waste. This team, Nielsen said, will be willing to aid the government in rebuilding the Virgin Islands post-Maria and post-Irma.

The significance of the dialogue at forums similar to the Breakfast Meeting at the UN Center in New York, he believes, is to prepare the members of his team to be the best civil servants.

"We're getting into these conversations so that when we get to the table, we are then better suited to serve the people of the Virgin Islands…[and] to make sure funds are allocated correctly," he said.