



13th INSME Annual Meeting

“Improving Productivity in SMEs and Their Role in Global Value Chains”

From the 15th to the 17th of May 2017
Puerto Vallarta - State of Jalisco, Mexico

Ms. Lejia Melanie Gideon

General Manager, Enterprise & Innovation Division

BELTRAIDE

Belize

Ms. Gideon obtained her first degree, B.A. in International Relations with a concentration in Development, and a Minor in Public Administration, at the Florida International University in Miami, Florida; and subsequently obtained her MSc. degree in International Development, Trade, and Industrial Development with a focus in Enterprise Development in Small States from the Institute of Development and Public Management at the University of Manchester, Manchester, England.

Ms. Gideon has served in various capacities at BELTRAIDE since 2003, including Director of Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Development, Director of Business Facilitation, Director of Administration and Projects, Deputy Executive Director, and now General Manager of Enterprise & Innovation / Investment Development.

Ms. Gideon leads the Investment Development Team at BELTRAIDE under her GM of Investment Development portfolio, earning Belize fourth place in ECLAC's FDI Inflows in 2014. Currently, Ms. Gideon works at actively targeting investors from around the world to come invest in Belize, as well as to facilitate local investors to enlarge their investment footprint at home. Importantly also, she works closely with the Ministry of Trade, Investment, and Commerce in develop “ease of doing business” policies and regulations, ensuring a continuous improvement in the overall business climate for Belize.

Ms. Gideon has, also, been keenly involved in leading the effort to developing the country's first series of enterprise development policies and strategies, first the National MSME Development Policy in 2012, then the National Entrepreneurship Strategy in 2015, and finally the National Export Strategy in 2017.

During her various capacities over the years, Ms. Gideon is most proud of her work in leading the team that effectively first established the Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Development Unit at BELTRAIDE in 2007; and again in 2012 with the successful redesigned and implementation SBDCBelize Unit, now considered a regional best-practice in the English

Caribbean; as well as SBDCBelize's sister unit, EXPORTBelize in 2014. Ms. Gideon is not stopping there, for she is also spare heading the partnership with the largest university in Belize, to establish the country's first series of business incubators in the country's largest urban area and commercial hub – Belize City.

She is pleased to note that Belize now ranks second in the Americas for Entrepreneurship, according to the Global Entrepreneurships Monitor (GEM), due to all the partnerships and initiatives BELTRAIDE has been able to secure, nationally, regionally, and internationally. Ms. Gideon continues to work extensively with MSMEs, entrepreneurs, and innovators in strengthening and developing their competitiveness for them to flourish in the ever-evolving business environment.