

The Prime Minister of Sint Maarten  
Mr. Marcel F.A. Gumbs  
Clem Labega Square  
P.O. BOX 943  
Philipsburg, Sint Maarten

Wednesday June 10, 2015

Re.: "Ready to work for you", Governing program 2014 – 2018

Honorable Prime Minister Gumbs,

By means of this letter the Faction Leaders of the Governing Coalition presents to the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, the Governing program 2014 – 2018, "Ready to work for you" for further execution.

Sincerely,

MP Franklin A. Meyers



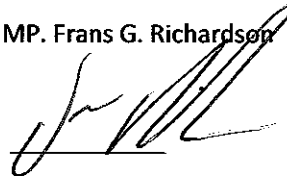
MP. Van High C. de Weever



MP Leona M. Marlin-Romeo



MP. Frans G. Richardson





**READY**  
**TO WORK FOR YOU**

**GOVERNING PROGRAM**

**2014 - 2018**



# INTRODUCTION

## Ready to Work For You

On September 25, 2014, a governing accord was submitted to His Excellency the Governor of St. Maarten His Excellency Eugene Holiday, signed by eight elected Members of Parliament who pledged to work together to keep St. Maarten moving upward in a stable governing coalition. This declaration, backed by a strong mandate from the people, forms the basis for the **READY TO WORK FOR YOU** governing program of 2014 – 2018 which summaries our objectives, goals, priorities, initiatives and plans to build a better and brighter St. Maarten.

This program comes at a defining moment in our nation's history when our democracy, autonomy and identity as a young nation are being tested. Nevertheless, we are confident that our people have the will, capacity and determination to build a strong, unified and healthy self-governing nation that embraces fairness, freedom, respect for the rule of law and equality.

The immediate task facing our new government, therefore, will be to improve the quality of life of the people of St. Maarten, provide good governance through effective representation, greater transparency and improved accountability and establish stronger fiscal discipline and promote sustainable development and economic growth. This coalition commits to exercising adequate control over government's policy and projects, as well as cooperating in the realization of new legislation and amending existing ordinances to the benefit of all citizens.

This will be achieved by a participatory approach to open government, mobilizing and engaging our communities and stakeholders so that everyone can contribute to the development of our people and country. Our development agenda is a people centered one that seeks to bring relief and opportunities to all, particularly, the most vulnerable in our society.

We all love St. Maarten and want the very best for our Country. We are ready to work for you and with you. We encourage you to join with your government and support us in realizing this new vision for a more secure, stable and sustainable future for the people of St. Maarten.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction (Ready to Work for You)</b> .....	2
<b>Vision Statement</b> .....	4
<b>Strategic Objectives</b> .....	5
Quality of Life .....	6
Good Governance/Integrity.....	6
Financial Discipline/Management.....	6
Job Creation & Sustainable Development .....	7
Constitutional Evaluation & Dispute Committee.....	7
Government Owned Companies.....	7
<b>Being Efficient for and Caring About People</b> .....	8
<b>Ministry of General Affairs</b> .....	12
Personnel and Organization.....	12
Facility Management.....	13
Legal Affairs & Legislation.....	13
Central Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten .....	13
Internal & Kingdom Relations.....	13
Bureau Foreign Relations .....	13
Office of Civil Registry .....	14
Department of Communication.....	14
Records & Information Management.....	14
<b>Ministry of Public Health, Social Affairs &amp; Labor</b> .....	15
Public Health .....	15
Social Affairs .....	16
Labor .....	17
<b>Ministry of Justice</b> .....	18
Immigration and Border Control.....	18
Police Force.....	19
Correctional Facilities and Judicial Process.....	19
<b>Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs &amp; Sports</b> .....	21
Education .....	21
Culture .....	23
Youth Affairs .....	23
Sports .....	23
<b>Ministry of Finance</b> .....	25
The Budget .....	25
Tax Assessment and Collection.....	25
Changes to the Tax Structure.....	25
<b>Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transportation &amp; Telecommunication</b> .....	27
Tourism .....	27
Economic Affairs .....	28
Transportation .....	29
Telecommunication.....	29
<b>Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment &amp; Infrastructure</b> .....	30
Public Housing.....	30
Spatial Planning.....	31
The Environment.....	32
Infrastructure .....	34



# VISION STATEMENT

The 2014-2018 governing coalition envisions St. Maarten as a socially and economically sustainable country that embraces freedom and equality, promotes solidarity, and ensures justice and integrity while building a strong, unified, and healthy nation that provides opportunities for all.

The governing coalition hereby presents its vision in this governing program to provide an insight, understanding, and clarity to the population of St. Maarten. This governing program illustrates a clear indication of a strong desire to provide a direction for the country of St. Maarten and to realize positive changes and opportunities for the people of St. Maarten.



# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The vision of this governing coalition will be realized once strategies are developed anchored in key strategic objectives:

- Enhance the quality of life for the people of St. Maarten.
- Ensure the execution of good governance.
- Focus and ensure sustainable growth.
- Financial discipline and management.

The goals per ministry to coincide with these objectives are outlined later in this governing program.

Additionally, the signatories of the governing accord 2014-2018 have agreed to eight additional priority areas for the governing term:

- Arriving at a decision regarding the various reports on the integrity of the public administration and subsequently the execution thereof.
- The establishment of the gaming board.
- Strengthening the “Landsrechercheur”.
- Plan of actions for the tax office.
- Execute financial and operational audit of government owned companies.
- Finalize and implement the changes in the civil code that regulate short term labor contracts.
- To finalize (publicatie) the process with regard to execution of article 10 of the “Uitvoeringsbesluit arbeid vreemdelingen” as approved by the Council of Ministers on August 12, 2014 (the Counter Part policy).

The people of St. Maarten are particularly concerned about the high cost of living and have identified energy cost as the most significant factor contributing to high cost of living along with high food prices. In the short to medium term the governing coalition will seek to:

- Implement projects that reduce energy costs through Waste to Energy Technology.
- Further Introduction of renewable energy technologies on St. Marten through the energy policy.
- Provide incentives for identified target groups to facilitate the transition to an energy efficient society.

## **Quality Of Life**

Improving the quality of life is of paramount importance during this upcoming governing term, focusing primarily on the following areas of concentration: St. Maarten Medical Center, SZV, Mental Health Foundation, Security, Social Services, Sports, Culture, Housing, reduction of Energy Costs, Environment, Sustainable development, Transportation, and Telecommunication. The implementation and execution of various polices over this governing term will improve the well-being of our citizens. All citizens would benefit from a new medical facility with adequate equipment, Housing possibilities for families and single-parents, and of the upgrading of our telecommunication. The further promotion and investment in our largest cultural festivity as well as cultural activities throughout the calendar year will serve as testimony to the commitment to protecting St. Maarten's cultural heritage including the protection of monuments.

## **Good Governance/Integrity**

It will be one of the priorities of Government to ensure the needs of the masses are constantly met with the utmost of honesty and fairness. Carrying out the integrity program and the majority of the recommendations of all three integrity reports, the PwC report, the report that the Wit-Samson Committee drafted in July this year and the integrity report of St. Maarten's General Audit Chamber, will serve as testimony to how highly regarded "good governance" and integrity will prevail during this governing term.

Part of good governance is the synchronization of government services to facilitate more efficiently and cost-effective operations. Synchronization solutions should create proven flexible, secure and scalable IT architecture that supports robust information/data flow and exchange within or across government companies and departments.

## **Financial Discipline/Management**

The overall objective of fiscal policy is to create as high a level of social protection and assistance for those who need it most. The Government is therefore giving priority to measures that contribute to Sustainable economic growth and high employment level, welfare for all, community improvement and stable economic development. The Government will use the budget to lay down the direction of economic policy and for the further growth of our country. The completion of a balanced budget for 2015 and beyond is another priority against of the backdrop of good governance.

The coalition will strive to integrate the Tax Inspectorate and Receivers Office through information technology. The centralizing the administration of persons and businesses through a national ID and the automating the process of procuring permits and licenses for all ministries will also be a priority.

## **Job Creation & Sustainable Development**

The experience and changes over the last few years confirms the need of more and better jobs. It is necessary to implement deliberate and integrated policies like the counterpart policy, employability through training and skill building for youth and adults, strengthening workplace compliance and formalization of the informal economy that compliment economic growth and reduce unemployment in order to create sustainable development. The focus will also be on stimulating careers.

A booming tourism product through the marketing of our destination and further job creation will be an area of focus during this governing term. The improvement in the quality of education through a practical and policy approach will further equip our students for the job market. The counterpart policy will be a cornerstone in the further development and nurturing of our young professionals.

## **Constitutional Evaluation & Dispute Committee**

In cooperation with Kingdom partners, assist in establishing a work group to outline how it envision the establishment and functioning of an independent Kingdom dispute committee/ institution to which the countries in the kingdom can seek advice on kingdom laws or instructions they perceive as an infringement on their autonomy. The independent body will be focused on the issues between countries, especially those involving the kingdom government and from which all decisions should be clear and concise.

Furthermore, an action plan must be agreed upon for the 2015 general evaluation of the constitutional relations between the four countries of the Dutch Kingdom, including the three islands of the Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba). Government will also seek to work closely with the United Nations and other international bodies.

## **Government Owned Companies**

The council of Ministers shall be responsible for all matters related to decision making of appointments, representation and functionaries of all government owned companies, foundations and government entities.

For the execution of any decision of the Council of Ministers for the approval of the budget and financials of all government owned companies, foundations and entities, the Council of Ministers shall appoint the Minister of Finance.





# BEING EFFICIENT FOR AND CARING ABOUT PEOPLE

The objectives of the coalition’s political programs are to strategically address some of the main issues that are affecting the communities, to bridge the gap between the government and the people of St. Maarten, to give back to the community in order to increase the confidence of the people, to build strategic alliances with community councils so that they may serve as filters to assist the government in taking care of specific needs of the people of St. Maarten. Some of these key programs include but are not limited to:

## Healthy Homes Projects

**Objectives:** To rebuild homes in needy communities and create a humane, safe, secure place of living for those that have been severely impacted by natural disasters and to be executed by The St. Maarten Housing Development Foundation.

This initiative has never been done before and it gives back to the community/families showing that the government cares. The people affected no longer have to wait because there is a program in place, once qualified to assist them in feeling humane again and living in a secured home. This initiative will have an indisputable positive impact on the community. This includes developing housing for uniformed services.

**Strengthening Community Councils**

**Objectives:** To allow the community councils to be able to function in an efficient, structured manner that will benefit the community. It allows the community councils to make a greater impact and have a more structured and meaningful role in the community. It alleviates the need for individuals to seek handouts during specific periods and have them turn to the community councils for assistance.

**Summer School Program**

**Objectives:** To allow students the opportunity to move to the next level by offering an intensive summer school program based on the failing subjects. Students will be tested at the end of the program with a standardized/centralized test which will determine whether they will be promoted or not. Students are given the opportunity to be promoted hence directly implementing a no child left behind initiative. Students will no longer have to repeat a year based on failing 1-2 subjects.

**E-Governance**

**Objectives:** To provide the Ministries with the necessary tools that will enable them to function in an efficient manner through the usage of technology, data synchronization and the implementation of unique identification number. This initiative reduces the redundancy and bureaucracy of Government which centralizes the administration of the government. This also ensures that accurate and reliable information is being distributed to all stakeholders and reduces the risks of identity fraud. Information will be readily available on a read-only access basis, allowing Ministries to offer better services to the citizens of St. Maarten. Information from citizens would only have to be given once, therefore reducing the need to produce documents and identification numbers to multiple ministries. In order to implement the aforementioned specific laws and regulations would have to be amended and administrations established.

## Adopt a School Program

**Objectives:** To reallocate responsibility to the business community by allowing them to contribute back to the community in a productive, structured, visible manner. Businesses will ensure that the public schools firstly and other schools are maintained and sustained throughout the year. The government of St. Maarten will no longer have to concern themselves with the extra cost of maintaining the public schools of St. Maarten. This is a win-win investment.

## Electoral Reform

**Objectives:** There are multiple objectives to having an electoral reform. The main objectives however are to assess the current electoral laws, to analyze the errors made in the last election based lack of clarity in the law as it was not written in chronological order. The analysis should also include the following implementing electronic voting as written in the law.

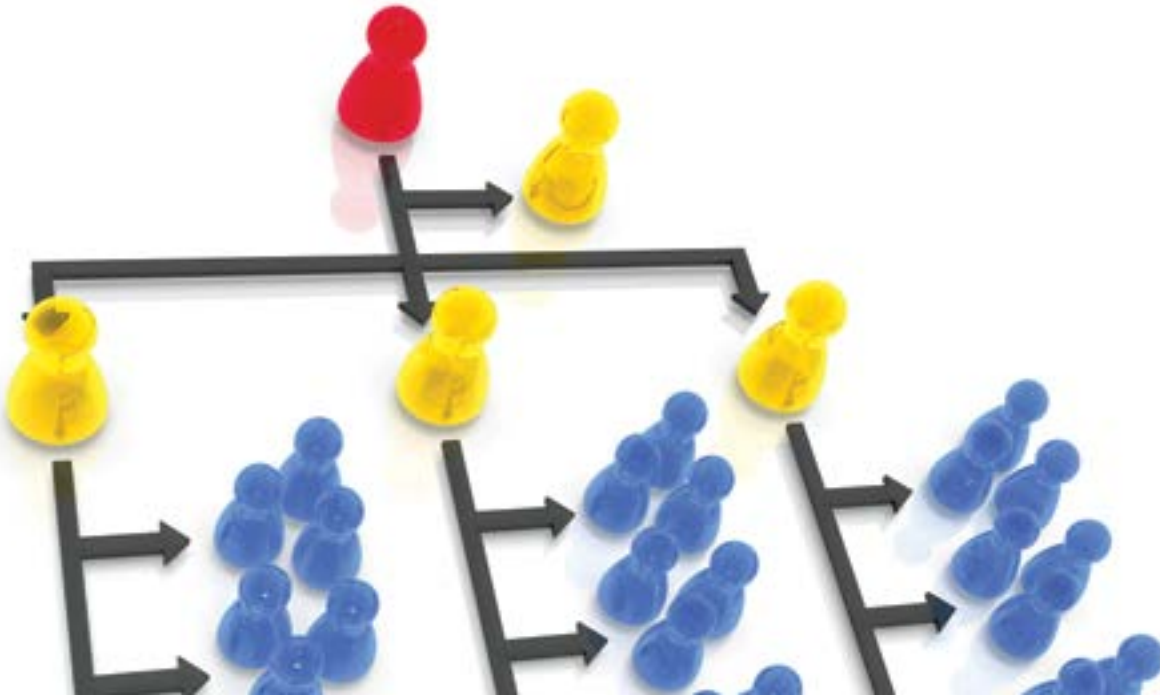
## Enhancement of Care for the Aging Population

**Objectives:** The aging population is consistently increasing and this also includes the age group of 60+. It is imperative for the Government to take immediate holistic measures to maintain and sustain the aging population. To be more specific the following measures are recommended in structuring the present situation:

- A monitoring agent with a skilled individual in the field of aging to ensure the entities presently providing 'care' have a standard by which they must abide.
- Monitoring the efficiency of Transportation Services. Currently there are no norms regulating what is to be expected in rendering transportation service to the seniors. Benchmarks must be established as guidelines to force individuals into realizing service is first and foremost the business they're in, revenue generating second. Without properly educating individuals within transportation services of their obligations, things can go astray.
- **Maintain and expand existing community help desks.**
- **Congregate Dining.** Congregate dining facilities are created to foster social interaction, and to provide a nutritious meal for seniors, reclusive persons and handicapped people who may not have relatives to cook for them on a daily basis. This must be paired with transportation services and adult centers to ensure efficiency across the board.
- **Financial Planning Services and Financial Obligations of Employers.** Of most importance is planning for retirement. Older persons receive pension on the island, however,

many do not receive more than NAf. 400.00, while some receive absolutely nothing and become a burden to government's coffers.

Companies shall be held accountable for questionable practices lead to having retired workers without any source of income at the age of 60 and beyond. The Labour and Inspectorate of Taxes must do their part in cracking down on businesses that deduct premiums from their employees pay cheques, however they have not registered the workers, are not paying anything in taxes to government on behalf of the workers, nor does the employee know of it.



# MINISTRY OF GENERAL AFFAIRS

*St. Maarten must now fully assume the responsibilities of a national government which requires an effective and efficient civil service. The public administrative structure should not be cumbersome and inefficient. Government must function in a professional and streamlined manner.*

## PERSONNEL AND ORGANIZATION

- Facilitate employment for returning graduates and create incentives to attract students.
- Review of organizational structure.
- Introduce safeguarding measures and controls against graft and corruption within the civil service thereby ensuring fair and unbiased treatment for the public.
- Improve government productivity by establishing standards and deadlines by which services to citizens must be met, including accountability and productivity systems to evaluate the performance of civil servants.
- Institute and promote innovation within government
- Evaluate and execute the Performance Management system
- Implement an integrated strategy for the Ministries
- Provide training for government staff
- Strengthen cooperation between the Council of Ministers and Parliament
- Review and enforce policy on government owned and operated vehicles
- Improve the efficiency of the Public Service Center
- Maintain and improve government's communication towards the public

- Establish a citizen's complaint procedure regarding government services
- Mandate that every civil servant wears a visible identification tag
- Encourage the public to seek information regarding their rights, privileges and relevant laws

### **FACILITY MANAGEMENT**

- Finalize the move to the new administration building.
- Prepare a long range plan for future office needs of the Government.

### **LEGAL AFFAIRS & LEGISLATION**

- Establish an internal committee for the continuous review of existing legislation in order to update legislation where needed.
- Review the Electoral law and policies
- Review all organic laws
- Review the Kingdom Laws
- Establish a partnership with the Legislative Academy in the Netherlands (Wetgevings Academie)
- Recruit and hire additional legal expertise
- Strengthening the legislative capacity within Parliament
- Facilitate training for incoming Parliamentarians

### **CENTRAL BANK OF CURAÇAO AND SINT MAARTEN**

- Improve the functioning of the bank
- Ensure the improvement of the physical structure of the building
- Transform the local office into a full-fledged branch in accordance with the Slotverklaring
- Pursue the construction of a new building

### **INTERNAL & KINGDOM RELATIONS**

- Prepare for the 2015 negotiations within the Kingdom.
- Completion of the National Development Plan.

### **BUREAU FOREIGN RELATIONS**

- Utilize Kingdom embassies to promote business relationships.
- Develop a system of regional representation to benefit from relationships within the Caribbean and for the broadening and creation of treaties for greater economic and political cooperation among Caribbean islands and regional partners such as the United States and Latin America.
- Enhance the cooperation with regards to European Funding.
- Review the treaties, laws, and policies for aviation and maritime affairs and establish aviation and marine directorates for this purpose.

- Develop a comprehensive and synchronized program with St. Martin.

#### **OFFICE OF CIVIL REGISTRY**

- Continue the upgrading and modernizing of the services offered by the Office of Civil Registry.
- Expand the Office of Civil Registry to better accommodate the public.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION**

- Prepare a strong Vision Statement to provide direction and focus for the people of Sint Maarten.
- Disseminate a steady flow of information to the public on our constitution and how it affects the general public.
- Eliminate the complaint from the public that they are not heard in Government by implementing a system where written complaints can be submitted on all areas of Government.
- Provide valuable service to business and to the community in an efficient and effective manner.
- Implement a media code.

#### **RECORDS & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

- Upgrade the information management process to ensure that all documentation is synchronized, thereby guaranteeing a smooth flow of information.
- Integrate information systems to provide better service to business and the community.
- Further development of e-government.
- Improve the public administration system by simplifying and streamlining the bureaucratic processes, making them more user-friendly and easier for the average person to understand.
- Improve Government productivity by establishing standards and deadlines by which services and information provided to citizens must be met.





# MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH, SOCIAL AFFAIRS & LABOR

*Affordable healthcare services, safe communities and employment opportunities are some of the basic rights every citizen of Sint Maarten is entitled to.*

## **PUBLIC HEALTH**

- Establish a health care research and development council
- Automate and upgrade the collection of healthcare data
- Support existing rehabilitation efforts for hard drugs and alcohol
- Build a mental health facility
- Elderly care:
  - Gather and maintain a database on the elderly on Sint Maarten
  - Provide additional insurance coverage to seniors that include incentives and discounts
  - Promote private/public partnerships designed to offer caretaker services for the elderly
  - Introduce pensioners discount cards



- Build a modern medical facility that will establish Sint Maarten as a regional healthcare center
- Support and promote medical tourism in conjunction with the new Sint Maarten Medical Center (SMMC), thereby providing a broad range of specialist and emergency care that would normally not be possible in Sint Maarten and, for the greater part, eliminating the need for patients to travel off island for medical treatment
- Mediate between on-island medical schools and the University of St. Martin to provide pre-med and other basic preparatory training possibilities on Sint Maarten
- Finalise tariff structure between the SZV and the SMMC to develop and improve healthcare services to the residents of Sint Maarten
- Recruiting medical and allied health specialists from neighboring islands that meet medical standards
- Attracting and retaining local nurses and doctors with tax incentives
- Tightening collections on insurance and patients to safeguard the hospital income and budget
- Exploring additional resources through health, NGO and visitor philanthropy

**SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

- Create development programs where no community is forgotten by placing greater emphasis on community planning to create a greater sense of community spirit and a positive healthy outlook.
- Community volunteer and outreach programs:
  - Create volunteer programs where civil servants can allocate one day a month to their community, thereby encouraging residents of those communities to also play a role in their communities
  - Create incentives to promote community volunteering and national service
  - Encourage community action through recognition and awards, such as a “Community Volunteer Award”
  - Appoint District Inspectors chosen from respected community leaders and charged with overseeing each district’s general health needs.
  - Funding for the training of community councils which play a major role in improving their communities
- Assist young people to develop skills and make a difference in their communities, through a program designed for 16-20-year-olds that encourages personal and social development
- Along with the Ministry of Justice, review the Court of Guardianship’s function and propose stricter enforcement and harsher sentences for dead-beat fathers
- Provide support services aimed at helping single parents, in particular young, single mothers who are economically vulnerable
- Expand and upgrade the services for children with special needs, both physically and mentally
- Work on government policies to provide better support to NGOs
- Combat all forms of discrimination and educate the people on detecting the signs of discrimination

## LABOR

- Further develop and strengthen the counterpart concept
- Develop a comprehensive labor policy incorporating the needs of the island's economy, taking into account existing labor, as well as graduating students entering the labor force
- Ensure that the information flow to Government pertaining to the labor market is up to date and accurate, providing the base for proper planning
- Prioritize ongoing training and development to increase worker productivity and performance through:
  - Incentives to employers for employee development
  - Promotion of the introduction of flexible working practices to increase industry responsiveness
  - Ensuring that service level in the labor industry is of high standards
- Ensure, through ongoing training, that the service level in the hospitality area is given top priority
- Implement the law for flexible labor (6 month contract issue) to improve the economic position and therefore spending power of employees and to improve the productivity for employers
- Research the solution for the gap between the education (supply) and labor market (demand) and the possibilities for job creation for the returning young professionals of St. Maarten
- Provide training programs in areas of employment requiring specific training and skills, such as IT development (host services), telecommunications, civil aviation (air traffic controllers and pilots) and shipping and maritime inspectors.
- Ensure employment for returning graduates:
  - Promote counter-partnerships
  - Create a database linked to student registry



# MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

*Every citizen is entitled to live in a safe and secure environment functioning within an efficient and effective judicial process.*

## **IMMIGRATION AND BORDER CONTROL**

- Implement an extensive and in depth review of the immigration function based on a continuous review of the need for non-locally available labor
- Ensure that the immigration policy accommodates the employment of qualified locals first, while providing foreign labor where not locally available
- Investigate the possibility of offering a temporary, short-term work and residence permit system
- Establish clear, unbiased immigration policies for permits, renewals, and amendments
- Improve the time factor on procedures for application review and response by simplifying and reducing the level and detail of the bureaucratic process involved in the granting of work and residence permits
- Implement the use of advanced technological systems for smoother running's of the immigration, visa and border control procedures
- Implement an effective data processing system at points of entry in order to achieve proper immigration controls by keeping in depth details on stated place of residence on Sint Maarten
- Develop fair, regular and consistent immigration controls to be executed in a humane manner while protecting the rights of those being controlled

- Improve coordination with Saint Martin authorities to combat cross-border crime (falls under the Governor)
- Identify these instances and, until this matter can be rectified legally, work and residence permits should be issued
- Work with Kingdom authorities in reviewing the Dutch language requirement for naturalization
- Strengthening the Customs department with, among other things, training and increase of manpower.
- Ensure that high risk flights are always checked for the control of illicit goods
- Strengthen cooperation between Customs and immigration & Border Control
- Together with PJIA better facilitate and improve the facilities for passengers with challenges in immigration (holding area)
- Reinstating the Simpson Bay Facilities as a holding center for undocumented individuals
- Combat human trafficking
- Implement joint border control at PJIA/ the Franco Dutch treaty
- Introduce Police Cooperation Treaty
- Finalize demarcation of Sea borders
- Improve the immigration information system to create facts for policy decisions
- Higher police visibility in various districts. More police vehicles.

**POLICE FORCE**

- Formalize the Justice Academy
- Support the recruitment efforts of the police force
- Recruitment of (auxiliary) police officers
- Focus on youngsters not in school between the ages of 17 - 19 as being primary recruits for the police force
- Establish salaries and benefits (i.e. health and physical programs) to build a strong police force
- Train and upgrade the police force for the improvement of the force
- Provide debriefing services for police force such as counseling to alleviate the stress levels in the workplace
- Implement a program where Government can make police available for hire to businesses thereby providing better protection for the business and the public while earning additional revenue for Government which will allow for the employment of additional members to the police force

**CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AND JUDICIAL PROCESS**

- Gather data on juvenile delinquency and school drop outs to assist the appropriate ministries in dealing with juvenile delinquency
- Advocate increased sentences for spousal and domestic abuse, along with greater support for victims and the institutions that offer assistance, such as championing the causes of organizations such as Safe Haven
- Create re-integration programs for the youth after serving time or out of school

- READY TO WORK FOR YOU
- Finalize the expansion and renovation of the Pointe Blanche Prison
  - The privatizing of the prison must be studied. The coalition will establish a review committee consisting of Government representatives, business, the church and the prison to study this option
  - Support and expand the existing rehabilitation and probation department by utilizing psychological analysis, discipline, and close coordination with the prison on prisoner behavior, training etc.
  - Motivate the judicial process to:
    - Foster a get tough on crime attitude

### **YOUTH DELINQUENCY**

- Finalize the (Miss Lalie) Youth Detention and Rehabilitation Facility for youth offenders
- Establish Youth Community Service policy for first offenders/ Expand possibilities for alternative punishments
- Prevent crime amongst youth through crime prevention programs
- Provide for rehabilitation programs and guidance for (youth) offenders

### **HOUSE OF DETENTION**

- Research possibility of prisoners contributing to their incarceration costs
- Finalize the upgrade and expansion of Point Blanche prison to meet international standards'
- Continue improvement of the House of Detention. Complete all phases



# MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS & SPORTS

*The future of Sint Maarten depends on the success of our educational system, the provisions we make for our youth, the development, recognition and ownership of our culture and the development and professionalization of sports.*

## EDUCATION

- Implement education reform necessary for the future development of Sint Maarten by maximizing the potential of our students. No student, teacher, or school should be left behind.
- Because Dutch is a very important language, the coalition will put in place a strong Dutch-as-a-foreign language curriculum in all schools to allow students to master Dutch by the end of secondary education.
- Further expand the scope and content of the current education system by developing effective policies on:
  - Elementary Education—the foundation to a good education—should nurture young learners to develop high self-esteem and critical and creative learning skills.
  - Secondary Education—one of the vital links in the “chain” of goals and objectives of education—will be geared toward assisting students in becoming independent and responsible adult citizens.

- Technical and Vocational Education will be broad-based at the secondary and tertiary levels so as to provide specialist skills to enhance individual earning capacity, thereby further stimulating personal and economic growth.
- Higher Education: the University of St. Martin should be supported in order to provide Sint Maarten with competent men and women trained in business, government, the arts, science and technology, and other professions that will contribute to the growth of the economy.
- Adult and Continuing Education will be promoted to enable adult learners to acquire basic skills needed to be more productive members of the society.
- Special Needs Education will provide students with strategies and techniques to cope with disability throughout their education and the tools needed to become well-adjusted, independent persons in the community.
- Implement reform to facilitate and accommodate:
  - » e-learning
  - » home-schooling
  - » schooling for the gifted and talented
  - » HIV/AIDS education, sex education, community service, tourism education, and environmental education
  - » a greater emphasis on culture and heritage education, from elementary to higher education and throughout adult education
  - » a greater emphasis on science and technology and the performing arts
- Review Government's role in the support and development of the University of St. Martin by making the university a priority in Government's educational plans for Sint Maarten:
  - Officially recognize the University of St. Martin
  - Support the accreditation of the University of St. Martin.
  - Support the efforts of the University of St. Martin in improving university affiliation and alliances which will allow for the transfer to accredited institutions
  - Become a partner in the marketing strategy for expansion and growth of USM in attracting students from the region
- Establishing benchmarks for teachers
- Providing professional development opportunities
- Working towards the presence of Assistant teachers
- Review the existing scholarship policy to ensure that it fully caters to the needs and requirements of Sint Maarten and grant scholarships based on needs of the island
- Foster increased awareness and recognition of the national symbols and national pride, primarily through education
- Include Culture and local heritage in all curricula
- Support after-school and afternoon programs for those students needing extra help
- Reduce the bureaucracy in the assessment and hiring of teachers



- Urge local financing institutions to assist in creating incentives for teachers and all civil servants, such as favorable loan and mortgage rates
- Order an inventory of the needs of the schools in Sint Maarten and request bids from companies to carry out the required repairs and improvements and to convert all schools to solar power
- Offer incentives to companies to adopt a school
- Study the feasibility of a Summer School program for students who have been held back due to not obtaining the necessary scores in one or two subjects. In a possible 6-week program students can be tested at the conclusion to determine if they are at the level to be promoted.

## **CULTURE**

- Create the mechanism to disseminate the message that an awareness of culture enables and develops a healthy spirit of nationalism
- Undertake cultural awareness campaigns teaching citizens about the culture of Sint Maarten
- Government will continue to encourage and support existing cultural efforts by local cultural organizations
- Build a Center for Performing Arts to be used as a venue for the performance and development of arts and music
- Develop a state-of-the art National Library, National Art Gallery, and National Museum to record, protect, and preserve Sint Maarten’s cultural heritage
- Support the Sint Maarten Carnival development foundation in their efforts to ensure growth of the festival on an annual basis.
- Preserve and support Sint Maarten’s monuments through dedicated effort
- Establish an Archaeological Center to serve Sint Maarten and the immediate region

## **YOUTH AFFAIRS**

- Establish firmly as Government’s position that the youth is the future and the most valuable resource of Sint Maarten
- Put in place programs and collaborate with relevant youth organizations to address specific youth issues

## **SPORTS**

- Develop a comprehensive sports policy with the emphasis on access for all, focusing on making it possible for all citizens, regardless of their physical ability, financial status, or age to participate in sports activities, whether recreational or competitive
- Establish firmly as Government’s position that sports development is essential as sports play an important role in the nation-building process by enriching lives and by further fostering civic pride and community identity
- Promote sports scholarships for talented students who might not otherwise qualify for



academic scholarships

- Continuation of the National Sports Institute to:
  - Develop sports tourism
  - Re-instill confidence in Sint Maarten's sports and restore the island's pride in the high level of sports talent in the community
  - Function as the sole directorate for sports in charge of all matters pertaining to sports
  - Function as the centralized sports authority entrusted with formulating a comprehensive sports policy
  - Encourage talented athletes and others to become trainers and coaches
  - Coordinate national sports days
  - Stimulate sports achievements on all levels by organizing yearly sports awards presentations bolstering national pride and stimulating young athletes to excel and showing appreciation for coaches, trainers, and support staff
  - Develop neighborhood and school competitions
  - Assist, support, and supervise the building of national teams
  - Establish and coordinate sports seasons to maximise community involvement
  - Encourage cooperation between the public and private sectors by offering tax breaks for corporate sponsorships and support of school sports programs and national teams
- Maintain all sports facilities
- Create movement programs for the elderly, the mentally and physically challenged.



- make this available in the English language to the public in general
- Adapt the current tax system until a thorough study and review and a proper plan, clearly defining the pros and cons of the changes, is drawn up
- Collect reliable information and other data to feed an economic model that will as accurately as possible calculate the consequences of changes in tax laws, tax rates, and the shifting of taxes
- Establish a council comprised of tax and finance experts capable of making decisions on the proposed package of changes and the consequences to the changes, who will:
  - Prepare an explanatory document on tax simplification, its aspects, and general identification of possibilities set within the framework of financial, social and economic policies
  - Assist Government in reviewing the tax structure with the purpose of simplification, rationalization, and upgrading
- Upgrade the departments involved in the levying and collection of taxes to better handle the demands of the existing tax structure as well as prepare them for the demands of the restructured tax structure
- Uncover loopholes created by the dual nationality of the island and propose legislation to deal with this issue in a fair manner
- Offer information sessions, on a regular basis, on tax compliance and tax filing, thereby changing the culture of fear of taxation and offering more people an opportunity to register as first time tax payers while giving them the information they need to ensure that they know their rights and obligations as far as taxes is concerned
- Maintain assurances and guarantees to ensure ongoing social security obligations
- Implement a study of Government owned corporations to determine the level of efficiency under which they operate and to determine to what extent the profits of these corporations could be utilized within the adjusted tax structure
- Implement small business tax-breaks for small business in sectors of the economy, designated by Government, for orderly growth in sectors that are lagging within the island
- Ensure that the full impact of dollarization and its ramifications are understood and made known to the public in general
- Start to dismantle the Monetary Union with Curacao (CBCM)



# MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, TRANSPORTATION & TELECOMMUNICATION

*A strong economy is the base for all other factors within any country and it should be managed properly for the benefit of all.*

## **TOURISM**

- Emphasize tourism awareness as a part of everyday life stress on the importance of excellent service
- Insist that tourism is placed high on Government's priority list and drive forward policies already under consideration ensuring that the interests of the industry are integrated into broader policy decisions within the economy as a whole
- Create partnership through continuous dialogue with industry partners (direct and indirect) to establish programs aimed at improving service standards
- Encourage investment in our human capital by utilizing the Training and Development Center for Tourism and other Government supported programs through the University of St. Martin
- Review the objectives and purpose of the St. Maarten Tourism Authority and study the

- ▶ possibility of expanding them to broadly represent the primary variables of our economy
- ▶ Protect and keep foremost in everyone’s mind that tourism is everybody’s business by creating tourism awareness programs on television, radio and billboards
- ▶ Achieve a consensus and raise awareness among local tourism providers of the economic benefits of tourism
- ▶ Offer fiscal and other incentives for existing hotel and timeshare properties and other related service providers to improve the quality of product and service, expand promotional coverage and increase operating efficiencies, bringing existing properties in line with internationally accepted standards for the improvement of our tourism product
- ▶ Further develop the tourism pillars such as stay-over passengers, cruise passengers, marine trade, timeshare and condominiums by:
  - Creating programs to convert cruise passengers into stay-over passengers
  - Development of niche and target markets:
    - » Medical Tourism
    - » Sports Tourism
    - » Events Tourism
- ▶ Reduce Seasonality by targeting other markets such as the Latin American and Caribbean markets
- ▶ Give priority to preparing a program of Government incentives, fiscal and otherwise, aimed at attracting brand name and Five Star hotels to Sint Maarten
- ▶ Promote tourism awareness in schools through visits and lectures by key tourism officials
- ▶ Prepare the creation of a hospitality school in SXM to improve the quality of the hospitality sector and expand the possibilities for local students. The kitchen of the hospitality school will also double as a school kitchen to prepare lunches for the schools
- ▶ Prepare the implementation of a U.S. Pre-clearance possibility for SXM.

**ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

- ▶ Ensure sustainable economic growth based on studies, proper planning, and the involvement of the primary partners in the economy and stress on creativity, innovation and job creation
- ▶ Implement studies to attract new business to Sint Maarten
- ▶ Stimulate the off shore industry
- ▶ Synchronize fiscal legislation with the targeted economic activities
- ▶ Institute consumer protection laws to protect the consumer and ensure that the consumer protection laws are implemented, enforced and reviewed in collaboration with the chamber of commerce
- ▶ Establish a Better Business Bureau for the further protection of the consumer
- ▶ Create public and private sector partnerships to maximize the benefits of Government support and to create incentives for private sector initiatives
- ▶ Establish public/private partnerships with other private sector concerns, such as banking, utilities, and light manufacturing where all partners will benefit from the partnership
- ▶ Improve Government’s revenue by supporting Government’s efforts in revising and simplifying the existing tax base
- ▶ Providing support studies for the updating of the GEBE tariff structure where tariffs reflect the present operating efficiencies of GEBE, resulting in the passing on of savings to consumers through lower rates
- ▶ Carry out a review of the function of the Rent Committee
- ▶ Review the products presently covered under price control and propose adjustments



- Support efforts in food production by proposing incentives for utilizing modern growing techniques such as hydroponics and aquaponics
- Establish small business and entrepreneurial programs that will provide the opportunity for participation in the island's economy
- Support entrepreneurship programs through dedicated efforts directed at making available grant and loan funding
- Develop a Social-Economic strategy for St. Maarten to research the current and future labor demand and local supply (education - labor market gap). In particular strategy is necessary for the development of the tourism sector: Research the carrying capacity and possible 6 Month Execution Plan Government St. Maarten 2015.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

- Assist in improving the current infrastructure by gathering and providing data and support
- Assist in prioritizing the funding of major improvements to the island's infrastructure
- Prioritize improvements to air and maritime connections and connectivity to a wide range of markets and ensure that St. Maarten re-obtains its Civil Aviation Category I rating.
- Advocate that user fees, collected directly from tourism, are channeled into the development of the island's infrastructure
- Establish standards for service and training in conjunction with other Government departments
- Implement the policy for free public transportation
- Incorporation of a motor vehicle agency
- Implement the policy for free transportation to increase the services for senior citizens
- Incorporation of a Motor Vehicle Agency: The coalition recognizes the loopholes and financial losses experienced by its Constituent State because it does not have a centralized agency for Motor Vehicle Services. Such an agency is usually a state-level government agency that administers vehicle registration and driver licensing. Similar departments exist in Europe, the United States and Canada.

### **TELECOMMUNICATION**

- Implement quality standards for companies providing communication services on the island
- Study and update, in conjunction with other Government departments, necessary legislation
- Incorporate emerging technologies and communications into Sint Maarten's outlook and strategy towards development.
- Support the tourism function by encouraging promotional distribution through the Internet, e-commerce, and other emergent technologies and utilize monitoring technologies
- Support efforts to train and develop employees for the telecommunication sector
- Work closely with other Government departments in creating a program where all schools are provided with free Internet for education purposes.



# MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HOUSING, SPATIAL PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

*The availability of adequate and affordable housing in a well planned, orderly manner should be a top priority for any Government and a steady flow of new housing sufficient to relieve the most urgent of the island's needs must be assured.*

## **PUBLIC HOUSING**

- Update existing plans for housing needs on the island
- Continue to acquire more land for housing and infrastructure development in various communities.
- Make a sustainable development plan for the Emilio Wilson Estate.
- Make a development plan for the Vorst Estate containing housing and job creation possibilities.
- Plan and execute community gardens and playgrounds in each housing development project
- Create incentives for locally established businesses to invest in housing developments where the benefit to the investors will be:

- A return on their investment that will be higher than bank deposit rates
- Tax and fiscal benefits for the investor
- Other benefits to the investor
- Expand the criteria for the bidding process on public housing projects to include other factors such as employment and the utilization of equipment in the immediate neighborhood and the hiring of young people with challenges
- Segment contracts by size and scope of the job in relation to the size of the contractor bring greater fairness and competitiveness to the bidding process
- Establish private-public programs
- Structure home ownership programs for returning students where special considerations are offered under certain circumstances:
  - Develop a general housing structure operated by Government, but with private funding
  - Smaller, more efficient housing units will be made available for purchase
  - These units will provide a base for our young people to start out in life by owning their own home and having a head start in creating equity for the future.
  - Offer citizens the opportunity for rent-to-own
- Create fiscal arrangements, other than bond issues, that would attract funds from the private sector into the public housing market.
- Healthy Homes Project. The St. Maarten Housing Development Foundation will be engaged to rebuild homes based on the home owners/dwellers needs.

## **SPATIAL PLANNING**

- Emphasize the need for spatial planning in Sint Maarten and its beneficial effects for the future
  - Create awareness in the public that, as the demand for housing increases, the size and capacity of Sint Maarten remains the same impacting the size, type and design of public housing
- Create awareness in the public that the availability of land suitable for public housing is scarce and expensive, limiting the availability to locate and purchase suitable areas for public housing
- Establish policies for future public housing that will produce denser urban style development where design will play an important role in creating more livable community oriented living spaces - landowners involvement in development
- Establish a panel consisting of architects, engineers, and designers to create guidelines to direct future public housing projects where creativity will be required to overcome the impact of building in restricted spaces
- Complete zoning plans
- Establish guidelines for making existing communities more welcoming and livable
- Create green spaces wherever possible/urban planning
- Enhance the functioning of the department of Domain Affairs
- Take into consideration the wishes of the communities visited by VROMI in its town hall



meetings and implement suggestions where possible.

- Continue to improve our drainage network

## **THE ENVIRONMENT**

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the emergence of the global environmental agenda where ozone depletion, climate change, de-forestation, and loss of biodiversity have been addressed in a series of summits and conventions. For more than ten years the vicinity of the great salt pond has been plagued by large outbreaks of flying midges (insects), fires at the landfill and the stench from large amounts of dying fish. Eliminating layers of the landfill through the Waste to energy facility will protect the island's Natural and Cultural Heritage. Further research to facilitate the better enforcement of and adherence to existing Environmental policy and regulations is fundamental.

- Establish an environmental committee consisting of Government, business, and environmental groups whose objective will be to ensure that practical and internationally recognized environmental, health, safety and security considerations are given top priority with regard to protecting Sint Maarten
- Initiate the drafting of a Master Plan for sewage management
- Review, finalize and execute the Waste to Energy project
- Organize public awareness program on waste management challenges and the need for sound management
- Gradually introduce garbage sorting at the source in homes and businesses
- Commission a Task Force Climate Change
- Pursue funding for Island wide Biological inventory
- Seek funding for executing the economic valuation studies of areas of Natural and Cultural Heritage
- Finalize Water Authority
- Study the possibility of introducing a "Bottle Bill"/container deposit legislation that makes it mandatory for every aluminum can and plastic drinks bottle to carry a refundable deposit.
- Upgrade governmental efforts, input and awareness on environmental issues and educating the public on reducing waste and on better methods of consumption
- Support a viable recycling program and legislate recycling law
- Establish as a goal of Government that every individual deserves to live in a clean and safe environment.
- Support the worldwide awareness in environmental concerns that highlight the effects of man's impact on the natural world which is becoming more and more apparent
- Balance the needs of economic development while preserving the natural heritage of the island for future generations to enjoy
- Protect Sint Maarten's environment for the people of Sint Maarten while enhancing the

island's tourism product

- Seek funding for executing economic valuation studies of areas of Natural and Cultural Heritage
- Finalize legislation banning the use of plastic shopping bags
- Further sanitize and control the landfill in advance of the waste-to-energy plant
- Expand the public sewage system thereby reducing the impact of sewage contamination
- Connect main sewage lines St. Peters to the sewage treatment plant
- Construct additional sewage treatment facilities and infrastructure to the West of Cole Bay Hill
- Explore alternative, eco-friendly energy options and provide fiscal incentives for alternative energy usage and methods for households and businesses in conjunction with GEBE
- Transform GEBE from energy provider to energy manager through its use of alternative energy such as solar, wind and waste-to-energy conversion
- Explore the establishment of local “green” light cottage industries to provide environmentally friendly products and services
- Introduce strict laws for the protection of marine life encompassing no fishing zones, fishing seasons, and greater regulation on the use of chemical products near the coastline
- Review and update the Marine Park Ordinance as required
- Legislate an adequate enforcement mechanism to enforce environmental laws
- Finalize and implement new VROMI Ordinance
- Implement legislation on banning single use plastic bags
- Introduce a city parking policy/authority
- Enforce environmental legislation to collect fines where applicable
- Facilitate engagement with other programs in the Caribbean towards preservation of our tangible and intangible heritage
- Enforce compliance of the Hindrance ordinance
- Increase enforcement of and adherence to existing policies and ordinances on sewage management
- Establish, expand and support marine protected areas
- Study the possibility of introducing recycling and reuse ordinance
- Draft, implement and enforce a Beach Protection Ordinance
- Draft and implement legislation requiring Social and Environmental Impact Assessments
- Implement strategies to promote the protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage through Tourism
- Review, refine and carry-out the Energy Policy Plan
- Review and where necessary amend the Electricity concessions
- Initiate and aid the building of facilities in support of clean energy production on suitable land
- Support the use of Solar Hot water Heating Systems and Solar Panels for homes, schools, businesses and public entities

- Further investigate the possibilities of the use of Wind Turbine Technology on St. Maarten
- Investigate the possibilities of partnering with neighboring islands where generation and distribution of renewable energy is concerned
- Initiate a study on the Legislation for Energy-buy-back policy