

United Sense of Urgency

REMARKS AT THE SWEARING IN CEREMONY OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

by

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Governor of Sint Maarten

Harbour View, Sint Maarten
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Prime-Minister, Ministers,

Good Morning,

On January 9, 2020, the people of Sint Maarten went to the polls and elected a new group of parliamentarians. In doing so creating the basis for the formation of a new government.

On January 16, 2020, based on the results of the elections, I named Ms. Silveria Jacobs as *formateur* to form a new government. This following the information received during the consultations and considering the governing accord signed by the NA and UPP representing a majority in Parliament.

The formateur, initiated the screening process for candidates on January 27, 2020, based on the regulations regulating the pre-screening of candidates before nomination. The screening was completed on March 17, 2020. And on March 26 having addressed the outcome of the screening, formateur Jacobs presented me with the candidate-ministers and candidate minister-plenipotentiary supported by a majority in Parliament for appointment and swearing-in.

To all who gave their input to the formation process I hereby, also on behalf of the people of Sint Maarten, express my appreciation. And in particular, I wish to thank Ms. Silveria Jacobs for her work as *formateur*.

Prime Minister, Ministers,

Today, just over 10 weeks, since the January 9, 2020, election a lot has changed. The peoples of the world and of our island are facing an extraordinary global human and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis comes amidst the economic recovery and budgetary challenges we are facing due to the impact from hurricane Irma and amidst the risk of our country being blacklisted by the FATF, to name a few.

This crisis requires a public health and socio-economic policy response that exceeds the available resources of our country. This however does not mean that we cannot and will not build the resilience to overcome this challenge, on the contrary.

The COVID-19 pandemic reminds us again, and now more than ever, that we are interconnected, across continents, across countries, across our Kingdom and across and within our borders. We are reminded that each of us is responsible for the wellbeing of our brother and our neighbor. We are reminded that the people of this island are in this together. And as a people we are called upon to follow regulations and to act socially responsible to protect each other and the most vulnerable among us. We must stand in solidarity with the residents of our island during these trying times. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to express my immense

gratitude to our committed men and women on the front line of this crises and, in particular, to our health care professionals for their devoted service.

Prime Minister, ministers,

You are as such assuming office under extraordinary circumstances. I therefore hereby encourage you to take up your mandate with a united sense of urgency, one anchored on the principles of solidarity, consultation and cooperation with our people, with our health sector, with our businesses and with our partners in the north, in the region and in the Kingdom. This will provide and foster the support necessary to effectively contain the disease, limit its socio-economic consequences and ultimately secure the wellbeing of our people.

Considering the magnitude of the challenges, it is imperative that government continues to work to secure the confidence necessary to raise the required funds to cushion our economy. Essential priorities in this regard are:

1. continued coordinated public health measures to contain the virus;
2. the overdue approval of the penal procedure code to address the risks of a FATF blacklisting;

3. the approval of the 2020 budget as part of government's commitment to sound budgetary and financial management practices; and
4. the role out of a comprehensive socio-economic recovery plan.

And by doing so offer the support our people and businesses need for an effective socio-economic recovery.

Prime Minister, Ministers,

As you assume your mandate to govern our country in these exceptional circumstances, I trust that you, in keeping with your oath, will work in solidarity, consultation and cooperation with our people, with our health sector, with our businesses and with our partners and thus overcome our challenges to safeguard the wellbeing of our people.

In that regard, there rests on you, individually as Ministers, and jointly as Council of Ministers a great responsibility. Your decisions will have lasting influences on the lives of the people of Sint Maarten. Thus, as you deliberate on taking action on the matters before you during your governing period, I wish you wisdom, individually and jointly, in the conduct of your responsibilities as you seek to meet your constitutional responsibility to the people of Sint Maarten.

With that in mind, I hereby congratulate the people of Sint Maarten with the installation of this new government and similarly congratulate each of you, even though I cannot shake your hands, with your appointments as Prime-Minister, Ministers, and Minister Plenipotentiary.

Thank you, God bless you and May God Bless Sint Maarten and protect its coast.