

Country Package

1. Is there intent to change the way subsidies are granted to foundations and other groups? Will the subsidy ordinance as is still apply or is there intent to change this? If yes, how? Please explain the intended change.
2. What policy plans if any have been drawn up for the execution of the reforms in the country packages?
3. What is this so called "robust tax system" that the Dutch keep saying will be implemented on SXM? What are the details of this tax system?
4. More specifically, is there an intention to impose a VAT tax on St. Maarten as well as property/land tax?
5. Are you of the same opinion as the Dutch that the corporate governance at the government owned companies is not adequate? If yes, explain why you would think this. If not, why is this used as a motivation for control over our companies?
6. Are you of the opinion that the government owned companies do not produce reliable income and expenditures estimates as suggested by the Dutch?
7. Will Ministers still have the freedom of signing for expenditures under Naf 50k? If not why not?
8. Who manages and supervises the crime fund at present? and what type of independent organization will be setup as mentioned in the country package?
9. It is stated that the countries are working towards a harmonized level of protection of personal data within the Kingdom via a Kingdom Act. What can be envisioned by a Kingdom Act for the protection of personal data and why is it necessary in this form? Exactly what personal information is being referred to? Where and who will be managing this data and who will oversee those who are managing it? What happens if where this data is stored, is somehow compromised?
10. There is mention of proposals for care and a review of the medical insurance package with introduction of personal payments. So now we want to introduce personal payments to put an added burden on the working class? After already taking a cut in their benefits? What will happen to the seniors?
11. What benefit is increasing the pension age to 67 for the working class? How does the lifespan of persons on the island factor into this?
12. What is specifically meant with "reducing the cost of doing business" in the context of entrepreneurship and the investment climate?

13. There is a strong focus being placed on foreign labor in relation to promoting reconstruction. Why is this the case?
14. What benefit is there to the local labor force and the country if it is made easier to recruit foreign workers?
15. How does this tie in with the fact that in 2017 St. Maarten had to give up border control to the Netherlands, under the guise of preventing an influx of foreign labor, so that the local population could benefit from the re-construction jobs?
16. How is local labor being protected and guaranteed for projects of the NRPB and considering the motion passed in Parliament on local companies getting work.
17. Part of the analysis of the labor market policy includes a "reduction of working hours" and "relaxation of the dismissal law". What is understood by reduction of labor hours? How will this benefit the labor force and the country?
18. How will the dismissal law be relaxed?
19. What benefit is it to employees and the country if the dismissal law is relaxed?
20. What has been spent from the trust fund on the social security system and what is the status? What kind of delay can be expected if any?
21. The country package mentions a review of the supervision on the financial markets will be carried out by an independent body. Does this mean a review of the Central Bank? And what will the role of the Central Bank be?
22. The intention is also to study dollarization. Was a study on this not already executed? How will this study be utilized?
23. A Deposit Guarantee Scheme will be introduced. Please explain what this is.
24. There is also mention of strengthening the governance of the Central Bank of SXM and CUR. How? And how does this tie in with the recent agreement of the Central Bank and the Netherlands to work together? Please be specific.
25. What is the exact role of the Customs Department in relation to tax collection? As it is mentioned that Customs and Tax department administration will be optimized and modernized. Also, optimized and modernized how? Will this include hiring additional personnel?
26. What is minimum Base Erosion and Profit Shifting?
27. What is the "corporate governance protocol 2020?"

28. Who are the parties involved in the Corporate Governance task Force?
29. Are they appointed for a specific amount of time? Who do they report to?
30. What will happen to the Corporate Governance Council?
31. What would be the impact of a 12.5% VAT/BTW tax? Especially considering the cut in the salary packages based on the 2nd tranche.
32. A VAT tax is a tax on consumption. Which means that poorer households pay the most. Most of the tax dollars that are generated by a VAT come from those who can least afford to pay them. Why would you saddle your people with this tax? When the cost of living is already so high.
33. A VAT is also usually added to other taxes. SO we have a 5% TOT and now want to add a 12.5% VAT? Why would government agree to this in a country package knowing that costs would be passed on to the consumer?
34. When a VAT is added, it changes the retail price point of every item and service that is offered. The VAT would need to be calculated for every step of the process that it takes to create a product or offer a service. Then these added costs would be put into the final product price, which causes the consumer to pay for all of the added taxes.
35. Is government aware of the administrative burden to businesses a VAT would have? Thereby making TAX collecting probably even more difficult?
36. Will there be tax exemptions for this VAT?
37. What happened to the Naf. 12.3 mil contract the former Minister of Finance Perry Geerlings awarded to Bearing Point for the ICT services and software of the Tax Department in 2019?
38. What is exactly being proposed where it pertains to "tax holidays" in the country package as it pertains to limiting administrative interference?
39. What is the reason for providing the tax and customs administration with information from the banking sector? What information exactly will be provided? Will this require new legislation? How will this affect the confidential and personal relationship between a bank and its client?
40. What does reviewing the HR function entail? (B-8 in the country package)
41. A lot is said about strategic personnel policies and a performance management system. Performance management was implemented in 2008 by Government. What is wrong with the current system?

42. What kind of policies is meant by 'strategic personnel policies'? Can the Minister give some examples and indicate what would be different from the existing personnel policies?
43. What does it mean to limit political influence in personnel matters? Ministers are responsible for personnel matters by law.
44. How much has been spent from the trust fund on creating a digital government environment?
45. What is the status of the e-gov project from the trust fund? When did it start and what has been achieved/implemented thus far?
46. How much has been spent from the trust fund for the so called "Quality, effectiveness and implementation power, including the strength of the ministerial staff" as mentioned in the country package and what does it entail?
47. For years it has been stated that ghost civil servants have been addressed. What is the actual status? Can the minister list per ministry the amount of ghost civil servants and what actions have been undertaken to have this addressed?
48. Are there employees who are receiving a salary unjustly? Can the minister list per ministry the amount of employees? And the reason this is the case? Again, this is mentioned in the country package.
49. The section on aviation is very vague. Please explain how the aviation system will be strengthened and the benefits to St. Maarten specifically.
50. Will the strengthening of the aviation system include better prices to travel within the Kingdom, especially to and from the Netherlands for the students?
51. On the issue of having One Disaster Risk Management policy, what has been done via the World Bank in the past 3 years in the area of disaster management? How much money has been allocated via the trust fund to this? How much was paid to the World Bank thus far?
52. Does the government agree with State Secretary Knops that the three laws passed earlier regarding salary and benefit cuts, is a package deal with the country packages and the establishment COHO?
53. Is the government of the same opinion as State Secretary Knops and the President of St. Maarten's Parliament, that before any debate takes place, the country packages and the COHO already has majority support in Parliament so both will be approved by Parliament?

54. During the public meeting for the handling of, amongst others, the law regulating the 12.5% cut in personnel benefits for civil servants, the Prime Minister indicated that the cuts were aimed at the reduction of the costs of personnel. The Prime Minister went on to state that cuts were to generate savings and to be in solidarity with the private sector. Can the Prime Minister confirm if this statement that she made on the floor of parliament was accurate?
55. Did the government stop hiring additional personnel in 2020 to reduce personnel costs?
56. Can the Prime Minister confirm that B5 of the country package is geared towards further reducing the benefits of civil servants?
57. During the public meeting for the handling of the law regulating the 12.5% cut in personnel benefits for civil servants, the Prime Minister stated that she was embarrassed by the salary scales that are in use by the Government and that she had requested this be reviewed by the policy section of the Personnel Department. The Minister went on to draw a link to the country package. Can the minister explain which measure in the country package provides a possibility for the increase in the salary scales in government? As from what I have read, B5 of the country package is actually speaking of further reducing benefits. Can the Minister explain to Parliament and the people of Sint Maarten what is meant by the Dutch word 'versobering' in B5 to be exact?
58. During the public meeting for the handling of the law regulating the 12.5% cut in personnel benefits for civil servants, the Prime Minister stated that if for the execution of the country package Sint Maarten needs 2 or 3 people, Holland is willing to assist in financing the cost or by providing the people themselves. Can the Prime Minister, responsible for personnel affairs as the Minister of General Affairs, explain why it was stated by the Minister of Finance during the Council of Ministers press briefing on February 24th that vacancies have been included in the draft 2021 budget to recruit for persons to amongst other things, execute the country packages?
59. Can the Minister, again as Minister of Personnel Affairs, confirm that the Dutch Government and CFT agree that additional personnel should be hired from the 2021 budget of St. Maarten?
60. The Minister of Finance during mentioned press briefing referred to a letter from the CFT. In the Daily Herald of February 15th reference was made to this letter from the CFT. The article stated the following: According to Gradus, personnel cost accounts for NAf. 179 million of the draft 2021 budget. This represents a 16 per cent increase compared to what was accrued in 2019, and is derived from government seeking to fill some 155 full-time vacancies. "As a result, the savings resulting from pension reform and the 12.5 per cent curtailment of the employment conditions for civil servants are largely unrealized. The CFT advised you, pending the audit that has been agreed to with the Netherlands, to fill the proposed increases by internal shifts," said Gradus. Can the Minister confirm if this is factual information?

61. Can the Minister explain how the Government justifies increasing the pensionable age, freezing the salaries of civil servants and cutting into their benefits, to reduce personnel costs, while at the same time indicating in the draft budget for 2021 that the intention is to hire 155 new employees, which will result in an overall increase of 3.5% in personnel costs compared to 2019?

Hospital Alliance

62. Please explain in detail what is the Dutch Caribbean Hospital Alliance?

63. Please provide a copy of this Alliance document.

64. Who drafted this document?

65. When was it finalized?

66. What input did St. Maarten have specifically in the agreement that governs this Alliance?
Please provide details.

67. How does this alliance benefit St. Maarten specifically?

68. Does this alliance fill any medical voids/services that St. Maarten lacks? Please list them.

69. What are the annual costs involved?

70. How will this alliance ensure the continuity of specialist medical care?

71. How will this alliance increase the quality and availability of medical care?

72. What is meant with "ensuring our cultural values have top priority" in the context of this medical alliance?

73. Please mention some examples of "enhanced collaboration" as outlined in the alliance agreement.