



2016-2020 Governing Vision Document

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Party, the political party that is dedicated to the people is proud to share our vision, values and priorities for the 2016-2020 governing period. As the most experienced party on Sint Maarten we strive to present a realistic plan of action.

We the Members of the Democratic Party are dedicated to:

- changing the political landscape
- ridding it of corruption
- presenting real solutions to the problems that have been plaguing the people of Sint Maarten

This plan of action depicts our vision for the future of Sint Maarten, our dreams for the people regarding education, the environment, health care, labor, housing, our infrastructure, family & community values, financial sustainability, tax reform, nation building and much more. The country needs trustworthy leadership, leadership you can depend on. Under the leadership of **Sarah Wescot-Williams, DP is that Party.**

You are invited to give your suggestions on all issues mentioned in this document. Suggestions can be shared with candidates of the political party, members of the political party or sent via email todemocraticpatysxm@live.com

2 Our Dream for Government

We believe in creating values in government, based on transparency, sustainability and collaboration. The people must know what Government is doing at all times. This is only done through being transparent and open. Projects must always be foremost with the people in mind.

WE ARE DEDICATED

1. **Increasing transparency and accountability through communication and open government principles**
 - maintaining regular press briefings
 - ensuring inter-ministerial collaboration, tripartite processes, and consultations with key stakeholders and the public
 - open recruitment for positions
 - open bidding processes
 - integrity in Parliament
 - participation in the Open Government Partnership and becoming a member
 - using technology to provide better and faster services
 - giving English the status of First Official Language and develop a plan to make this a reality
2. **Creating a flexible work environment based on performance management**
 - offer more flexible working times for civil servants such as time-off to parents for children's educational projects, reading in schools etc.
3. **Strengthening strategic planning and the development of monitoring & evaluation frameworks to influence national policies through evidence-based research and accurate data**
 - implement standardized year plans for each Ministry and Parliament
 - ensure each Ministry has a research agenda and monitoring & evaluation framework attached
4. **Establishing stronger financial discipline and management**
5. **Auditing, reviewing and reforming policies and legislation where necessary, based on an action plan of priority areas.**

3 Our Dream for Education

The Democratic Party's vision for education is built on the belief that the development of our human resources is vital to the social and economic development of our island. The focus of the Democratic Party is to create through education, a national environment that promotes life-long learning. It is the Party's belief that all of our citizens should have the opportunity to continually learn, both for professional development as well as personal enrichment and increased earnings.

WE ARE DEDICATED

1. **Creating an education system that prepare students to benefit from all opportunities available on the island for entrepreneurship as well as employment**
 - Early stimulation curriculum (0-4 years)
 - Job creation/youth employment - matching education with labor demands
 - ICT in education within all public school and providing funding possibilities to subsidized schools
 - Develop Higher Standards for Vocational Education (VSBO/SBO)
2. **Stimulating life-long learning**
3. **Establish tertiary education as a vital pillar to Sint Maarten's economy**
 - USM recognition as a national institution and its accreditation.
 - Strengthening the NIPA program of training for quality work.
 - working together with medical schools established on St. Maarten
4. **Strengthen relations with students abroad**
 - Contact programs
 - Education and Employment (internships).
5. **Ensure a safe and positive learning environment for all students**
 - Anti-bullying programs
6. **Improve the QUALITY and ACCESS of education so that all citizens are able to acquire key competencies needed to become active citizens in society**
 - Special needs students

4 Our Dream for Environment

Not only are we dedicated to the people, but also dedicated to the preservation of our environment. We are proud supporters of public and private efforts towards safeguarding our natural heritage. We believe in promoting an environment where our people learn to live in harmony with nature, which will limit disturbance of the ecological balance.

WE ARE DEDICATED

1. **The protection and preservation of natural heritage**
 - regulating proper control of our bodies of water to avoid further pollution
 - monitoring and protecting the Simpsonbay Lagoon, the Salt Pond and other inland waters to ensure that these bodies of water are healthy and continue to fulfill their role as an important part of our ecology
 - seek funding and expertise to conduct massive cleanups of the Simpsonbay Lagoon and the Great Salt Pond.
 - ensure that all investments must be weighed against their environmental impact and infrastructural implications
 - regulating environmental penalties
 - creating island-wide zoning
 - implementing an environmental curricula
 - developing green areas (parks etc.)
 - conduct a study to identify ways to reduce the negative effects the invasive monkeys and iguanas are having on humans, other animals and vegetation.
2. **Promoting alternative energy**
 - short term: 35% renewable by 2020
 - long term: 80% renewable by 2028 and 100% HF oil free by 2030
 - ensuring alternative energy options along with creating tax incentives to promote alternative energy usage, reducing fossil fuel dependency and introduction of electric vehicles in addition to grid level storage of solar and wind energy
 - promoting electric vehicles with the intention to replace government vehicles by 2022 with electric vehicles
 - installing solar powered street lighting to reduce the energy consumed with 50%
 - execute plan for the National Energy policy
 - Develop global and regional partnerships made possible by the Paris COP 21 Agreement to make this transition economically realistic
3. **Facilitating proper waste management**
 - building a solid waste management facility and plan including recycling
 - creating an island wide sewage systems
 - develop and implement educational and information programs
 - implementing recycling program for Government and public schools

5 Our Dream for our Youth, Families & Community Development

The Democratic Party believes that our communities and families are the cornerstones; here the leaders of tomorrow are molded and therefore these should be supported and valued as an essential aspect to the development of Sint Maarten. Our Party believes that parents must take up their parental responsibility, but that as a society we should give support when and where needed.

Efforts geared towards our youth must be combined and synchronized, so that no one falls through the cracks. DP will continue to put the necessary policies and services in place to ensure that laws in the area of care, education, participation, protection and rehabilitation for the youth are fully developed for the wellbeing of our citizens.

WE ARE DEDICATED

1. To protect and promote the rights of the child
 - establish a central reporting center for Child abuse as well as reporting codes and investigation approaches for cases of child abuse
 - strengthen the youth rehabilitation facility.
2. Strengthening youth development
 - utilize insights and tools from OECS YES Program
 - amend Integrated Youth Framework to strengthen coordination among government stakeholders.
 - establishing a comprehensive training and employment support strategy which assists young women and men in obtaining and retaining employment as well as starting and managing their own enterprises
3. Strengthening community development and family values
 - continue with the implementation of an integrated neighborhood development policy, initiated by the DP
 - provide support to community councils
 - partners with NGO's and corporate St. Maarten to facilitate programs for our youth, family activities and parenting
 - The Community Help Desk program will expand
 - Implementation of the victim support unit
 - continue efforts towards district improvements including cleanliness of the districts, proper infrastructure, drainage, and sewerage.
 - encourage small business development in the districts
4. Ensuring accurate collection, compilation and dissemination of research and data on youth and children's lives to contribute to the development of more responsive policies

6 Our Dream for Housing

The Housing Vision 2012- 2020 outlines our housing needs and the potential for increasing the amount of available (social) housing. High on the list for the Democratic Party is working together with the St. Maarten Housing Foundation to increase different categories of homes for particularly first time homeowners, young adults, social housing, housing for the elderly, and accommodations for guided living for the disabled.

Acquisition of land is a must for further expansion of the housing supply. That, along with public private partnerships to upgrade existing land lease projects, will enable us to begin alleviating the housing needs across St. Maarten.

WE ARE DEDICATED

1. **Facilitating affordable housing**
 - further collaboration with the St. Maarten Housing Foundation to expand our housing supply with a special emphasis on first time homeowners, young adults, social housing, housing for the elderly, and accommodations for guided living for the disabled
 - work together with public private partnerships to upgrade existing land lease projects
 - stimulate entry level pricing schemes for affordable homes and condominium ownership to attract first time home-buyers

7 Our Dream for Infrastructure

When it comes to the infrastructure of Sint Maarten, there is a lot that needs to be done such as better planning in synch with the zoning plans which are being developed.

WE ARE DEDICATED

1. **Improving infrastructure**
 - Supporting the development of links 3, 4 and 6, Union Road
 - Construct side-walks in the districts, lanes for biking, jogging & walking, and clear paths for hiking through our hills
 - updating the Road Network Plan
 - allocating the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) to further district improvements and upgrades.
 - engage citizens meaningfully in discussions about future plans for the zoning of the island
 - maintain infrastructure of roads through regular upkeep and road repairs
 - developing parks

8 Our Dream for Financial Sustainability and Taxes

We believe that simplification of our tax system is very urgently needed. A simpler, more harmonious tax system supported by an improved tax organization can, in the vision of the party, improve compliance and yield more income for government, thus eliminating the annual search for new and untested taxes and fees. The party prefers a system of indirect taxation. We believe it is important to develop a more effective and fair tax structure that will strengthen this country's financial position for the long term.

This cannot be accomplished overnight and we therefore believe that the organizational issues of the tax inspectorate should be urgently addressed and the number of persons and companies not paying a fair share must be tackled. A decision must be taken on the main points of the new tax system and the introduction should be done in phases.

It is also important that the areas where taxes can act as a deterrent (sin taxes) and in other areas as a stimulator (e-zones, energy, employment etc.), these changes be made now.

WE ARE DEDICATED

1. Simplifying tax system

- abolish the TOT and impose a type of VAT (value added tax) excluding certain products and services from tax altogether while still ensuring that low-income earners, who do not pay wage tax, do not end up subjected to a higher cost of living due to the tax on food and other consumer goods
- eliminate the profit tax and lower the wage tax
- create a stronger tax infrastructure, one that is more equitably spreads the burden, fairly assesses the taxpayers, and eliminates the need for aggressive collection methods
- implement a sin tax on tobacco and alcohol
- explore the possibility of implementing a sin tax on certain sugar products

2. Strengthening compliance

- increase access to information on persons' obligations.

9 Our Dream for Health & Pension

Sickness insurance and old age pension are managed by the Social & Health Insurance (SZV). While this agency has come a long way and is still developing, we must now direct our focus to cost effectiveness, prevention programs and health education.

Pension reform, while never a quick fix, is definitely a topic for further study. We have begun with pension system studies in order to determine the feasibility of providing affordable pensions in the future. While the basic old age pension has been indexed annually, as part of the tax reform, we believe that an alignment with the pension amount should be pursued.

The large number of uninsured persons is a concern. A National Health Insurance was seen as the solution to this phenomenon. Much work has been done to develop a National Health Insurance (NHI). A transition of this magnitude however, cannot be taken lightly. The DP therefore prefers an introduction of the NHI in phases, along with private insurer partnerships, making it a much more manageable process.

We have taken the on-off plans for the St. Maarten Medical Center and given this project a real push forward through a transparent process to commission a turn-key project. We will see this through.

The state of the mental health of our population needs our urgent attention. The Mental Health Foundation provides the first assistance to mental health patients. However, we no longer can treat mental health in an uncoordinated manner. A Mental Health Policy Plan for St. Maarten is a must. In this area too, education and sensitization are factors that must be part of any policy.

WE ARE DEDICATED

- **granting pensioners a "tax-free" pension.**
- **an introduction of the NHI in phases, along with private insurer partnerships, making it a much more manageable process.**
- **ensuring the new hospital process is open and transparent from the beginning to the end of its development**
- **making St. Maarten Medical Center (SMMC) the St. Maarten General Hospital.**
- **ensuring that by 2019, most services for which residents must now travel abroad will be available on the island**
- **Cooperation between the health care institutions on the Dutch and French side**

- Affordable healthy eating will be encouraged by price controlled healthy foods.
- curbing unhealthy behavior by instituting taxes on tobacco, sugary drinks and foods
- focusing on childhood nutrition and exercise, wellness and prevention
- increased penalties for transshipment and importation of drugs
- regulating the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes
- strengthen and expand mental health services and facilities

10 Our Dream for Economic Development

Given the unemployment figures, especially amongst the youth, the DP believes that job creation should be the number 1 objective. In doing so, we oblige ourselves to not only look at our traditional economy (tourism), but maybe even more so at additional economic drivers. Gainful and sustainable employment in itself is an economic driver as workers are the ultimate consumers.

However, the government does not have the financial resources or the authority to engage in stimulative spending. So, how does the government promote job creation without going into deficit spending? Two areas to achieve this: Job creation will come about as a result of the growth of SME's (Small and Medium Enterprises). and new Foreign Direct Investment.

WE ARE DEDICATED

1. **Stimulate economic development and job creation**
 - Create an enabling and supportive regulatory and tax environment.
 - Actively identify and recruit Foreign Direct Investment (“FDI”).
 - Establish a SME financial and technical support program.
 - Implement the Economic Free Zone.
 - Promote Public Private Partnerships.
 - Enable microfinance projects.
 - Sponsor work-study programs for students at both the secondary and university level tied into entrepreneurship.
 - Support an Aviation Academy
 - establishing a Job Creation Bureau within the Ministry of Economic Affairs

11 Our Dream for Labor & Human Resources

The DP will continue its approach of social dialogue on matters related to labor, allowing workers and employers to contribute to the process. There is a general consensus on more flexibility in the labor market, the need for adaptation of the dismissal law, effective control on compliance, and better unemployment benefits.

The DP advocates upward mobility for our own people in the labor force. This mobility can be enhanced through training and re-training programs, which is most effectively done in cooperation with employers. A versatile and easily adaptable workforce will be the result. Availability of skilled labor is one part of the criteria investors use to judge the attractiveness of investing in a particular country or region. It also reduces the need for importation of expatriate labor.

WE ARE DEDICATED

- 1. Facilitating more flexibility in the labor market**
 - adapt the dismissal law
 - championing a change from the “cessantia” system to a more modern system of unemployment insurance and pension benefits.
 - ensure effective control on compliance
 - improve unemployment benefits
 - make the work permit procedures more transparent and efficient
 - establish an Economic Citizenship program (investor’s permit)
- 2. Stimulating the local labor market**
 - make hiring of foreign workers less attractive than hiring locals
 - promote upward mobility for our own people in the labor force
 - establishing training and re-training programs in cooperation with employers
- 3. Developing reliable labor statistics to produce evidence-based policies**
- 4. Creating opportunities for human resource development**
 - “Bringing the ILO Home” - Instead of sending a few people annually to the ILO conference in Geneva, bring ILO experts to St. Maarten to train more of our people in modern labor relations
 - empower our labor unions to be effective partners to employers
 - ensure continuing education for our Civil Service

12 Our Dream for Safety & Security

For every resident and visitor to St. Maarten, a feeling of security and safety is vital. In fact, it is critical to our very economic survivability. The issue of safety and security remains a concern for the DP and we are committed to improving the internal security of the nation. We believe the critical difference in fighting crime is one of manpower.

WE ARE DEDICATED

1. **Developing programs and support systems to stop the cycle of crime before it starts**
 - support Neighborhood (Watch) programs
 - create youth friendly spaces/facilities where young people can meet and participate in a range of youth development programs and activities, e.g. cultural, recreational, sporting, educational, technological, social, entrepreneurial, religious, health related/prevention activities, etc.
 - Support for foster care facilities
 - establish a youth correctional facility (Social formation and booth camp style)
 - OECS' Yes Program for youth
 - regulate alternative punishment for light crimes
 - work towards reducing imprisonment- using the Netherlands as a study example, rather than attempting to re-invent the justice system

13 Our Dream for Sports & Culture

It is the conviction of the Democratic Party that Sports and Culture should feature prominently as we pursue national development. Whereas the Department of Sports is charged with the policy and planning aspects with regard to sports development, the National Sport Institute has been established to execute planned projects and sport programs. Culture represents our identity as a people and represents the foundation upon which the D.P. will build our St. Maarten Nation. It is primarily our youth that has placed the focus on our cultural heritage, through their exposure to different and unique forms of art. This is a development that must be

encouraged and stimulated. The (re)vitalization of our culture has also been visible in other areas, such as the literary arts, dance, theatre.

WE ARE DEDICATED

- 1. Strengthening awareness of and pride in being a St. Martinier through:**
 - promotion of programs designed to develop youth in leadership roles in order to enable them to actively participate in dialogue with government, and promote efforts to strengthen their sense of pride in and responsibility for their community.
 - the monitoring of St Maarten's art, material culture, archival, and natural history collections to ensure they are properly managed
 - Monument preservation:
 - a. finalize the cultural track
 - b. strengthen the role of the Monument Council
- 2. Support (subsidized) organizations financially in developing state of the arts facilities**
 - Build a modern Performing Arts and Convention Center
 - Upgrading and completion of the John Larmonie Center
 - National Museum & Art Gallery
- 3. Promote and support of the development of performance, visual, literary, and creative arts, from recreational to competitive on St. Maarten using the schools, community centers and NGO's in the districts as spring-boards.**
- 4. Increase access for all citizens to participate in sports activities, whether recreational or competitive through:**
 - the development of and support for programs for the elderly, the physically challenged, and the underprivileged youth
 - developing sports and recreation activities for children, men and women in general and in particular national interscholastic sports competitions.
- 5. Utilize sports and recreation as a fundamental part of the nation-building process by enriching lives and by further fostering civic pride and creating sustainable and healthy communities though:**
 - the development and implementation of a sports curriculum
 - recognition of sports heroes
 - strengthening of National Teams
 - developing sports and recreation activities for children, men and women in general and in particular national interscholastic sports competitions,
- 6. A massive upgrading program for our sports facilities, such as the Raoul Illidge Sport Complex, the upgrading of the Little League Ball Park and the L.B. Scott Sports Auditorium.**

14 **Our Dream for Foreign Affairs**

The Democratic Party attaches great importance to cooperation within the wider Caribbean region. St. Maarten has intensified its engagements in the region by securing membership in the following regional organizations: Caribbean Financial Action Task Force Agency (CFATF), Caribbean Organization Tax Administrators (COTA), Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), Caribbean Telecommunication Union (CTU), Caribbean Association of National Telecommunication Organizations (CANTO), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS). These associations have and will continue to strengthen our relations within the region as well as increase our participation in important issues related to our development. In addition our relationship with the European Union will remain of strategic interest for the Democratic Party.

WE ARE DEDICATED

- 1. Continuing to pursue a focused, effective and results-based foreign policy that is inextricably tied to the development plan of the country**
 - execute the 4 strategic goals that are embedded in our foreign policy
 - support the economic policy of St. Maarten
- 2. Strengthening European Union networking in order to maintain our eligibility for EU funding via a number of programs from the European Development Fund (EDF), which is aimed to support the economic, social and human development of the OCTs, has been a major benefactor in our recent development**
- 3. Strengthening our image within the Dutch Kingdom and beyond.**
 - seek to improve our current political status in the benefit of all the people
- 4. Promoting regional cooperation and building sustainable, mutually beneficial global partnerships as we seek to secure our spot in the new global economy**
 - develop closer ties with Saint-Martin
 - focus our attention in the coming years on the following ten countries: USA, Canada, Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Surinam, Brazil, Cuba and China.
 - build bilateral relations with key countries that will aid in the economic advancement of St. Maarten.

15 Our Dream for Government Companies

Government companies should focus on their core business. More transparency within these companies will be mandated. An economically and socially responsible plan for both long term investments and a sustainable dividend plan must be developed for each public company.

Policy Goals

St. Maarten government companies can become even stronger if they would pool together in several areas, such as: automation, finances, purchases, etc.

For appropriate areas, such as finance, an overarching (holding) company could offer a mutually beneficial relationship between companies and facilitate investments. In addition, corporate social programs by these companies should be coordinated on the basis of the national social priorities.

16 What You Can Do

When you vote for the Democratic Party you must consider yourself a Democrat, and as part of the DP you must ask yourself "What can I do?" to make the above dreams a reality for our beloved Sint Maarten. Below is a list of ideas to encourage you to become an active and proud DP representative.

- Know your government and your rights as a citizen.
- Be informed.
- Participate in the matters that affect us all
- Help a student excel
- Grasp every learning opportunity
- Participate in your child's education
- Support your school's PTA
- Plant a tree

- Grow a kitchen garden
- Be energy conscious. Conserve and use alternatives, solar, led etc.
- Do household sorting and recycling
- Show your pride, respect our culture
- Fly our flag, wear our colors
- Get to know and respect your neighbors
- Foster community togetherness, neighborhood activities, jollification
- Become a volunteer for your community NGO
- Help and encourage the children in your community
- Be the change agent in your district
- Keep your area clean and neat
- Know your rights and obligations
- Pay your taxes
- Seek redress when necessary
- Take responsibility for your own wellbeing
- Engage in healthy living practices; keep your weight in check
- Don't be afraid to try something as a new business if you think you have the knack of it
- Empower yourself through further learning
- Whether in business or labor, get involved in the representative bodies (unions, associations, chambers etc.)
- Help the local police force
- Practice safety precautions
- Form neighborhood groups
- Teach a child a sport
- Be active yourself
- Pursue your talents
- Be an ambassador for St. Maarten wherever you go
- Keep our roads and beaches clean
- Don't litter
- Report illegal activities

For the upcoming 2016 Parliamentary Election, we ask for your support to make the above dreams a reality. Sint Maarten needs people who will be dedicated to building and serving our country. On September 26th, 2016 make the right choice, be informed, and vote for a party that will make a real difference, vote for **the DEMOCRATIC PARTY, THE PARTY THAT IS DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE.**