



Sociaal Economische Raad
Social Economic Council

SER Sint Maarten visits SER Curacao & SER Aruba.

REPORT

The Chairwoman, Oldine Bryson-Pantophlet and Secretary-General, Gerard Richardson of the Social Economic Council (SER) Sint Maarten attended the board meeting of SER Curacao in Willemstad on July 10th and SER Aruba, in Oranjestad on July 14th, 2015. The meeting dates were selected by the SER Curacao and SER Aruba.



SER Sint Maarten delegation consisted of:

- Oldine Bryson-Pantophlet, Chairwoman,
- Gerard Richardson, Secretary-general,

SER Curacao board:

- John Jacobs, acting chairman, employer representative, Curacao Chamber of Commerce,
- H. Mogen, employees representative, Central General di Trahadonan di Corsow (CGTC)
- J. (Pablo) Zimmerman, substitute employees representative, Asosiashon yuda bo man (AYBM)
- R. Maduro, independent expert
- J. Lieuw, substitute employer representative
- P. Cova, employees representative
- R. Illario, employees representative
- Josephine Provence, Secretary-General
- J. Dictus, Policy worker Secretariat Curacao (not in picture)



Sociaal Economische Raad
Social Economic Council

The agenda of the visit:

Friday, July 10th 2015, Willemstad Curacao 11 am – 13.00 pm.

1. Opening and welcome.
2. Update SER Curacao and SER Sint Maarten.
3. Preparation AICESIS, General Assembly meeting in Russia, Moscow September 17th-18th
4. AICESIS-SER Sint Maarten regional conference 2016.
5. CESALC
6. Proposal SER Curacao, SER Sint Maarten, SER Aruba bi-annual meet.
7. Closing

Written account of the board meeting

Agenda point 1.

The board meeting was hosted by SER Curacao. The acting chairman of SER Curacao, Mr. J. Jacobs welcomed the delegation of SER Sint Maarten and gave everyone present the opportunity to introduce themselves. The meeting between SER Curacao and SER Sint Maarten is the first official meeting between the chairpersons, since the establishment of SER Sint Maarten in October 2010.

In 2011 SER Curacao submitted a proposal to their government with the request to amend several important articles in their National ordinance (Landsverordening Sociaal Economische Raad). The articles are related to: the composition of the board, the publication of advice and solicited advice to parliament.

The acting chairman further explained that, at the moment SER Curacao does not have a chairperson. Former chairman Stanley Betrian left the SER in 2012, to become the Prime-minister of Curacao. New elections are schedule to be held in the near future, where after a new chair and vice chairperson will be elected.

The SER is currently housed with the GOA (Georganiseerd Overleg in Ambtenarenzaken) and ROA (Raad onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt); together the three institutions have a joint secretariat, with one Secretary-General who oversees the day to day management. At present the staff assigned to the SER, consist of five persons.



Sociaal Economische Raad
Social Economic Council

Agenda point 2.

SER Curacao explained that they are currently in dialogue with their government concerning the amount of advice request they receive. The advice requests from government were mainly focused on Social premiums, national health insurance and minimum wage. Secretary-General Provence explained that statistics remains a challenge for SER Curacao. The lack of adequate data complicates the work of the staff as they are not able to properly substantiate their findings.

Chairwoman Oldine Bryson-Pantophlet gives a summary of the work SER Sint Maarten has carried out in the first half of 2015. The Chairwoman explained that thus far SER Sint Maarten has completed 1 solicited advice regarding the price indexation National Ordinance Accident Insurance ("*Ongevallen verzekering*" [OV]) and National Health Insurance Ordinance ("*Ziekteverzekering*" [ZV]) 2015 and submitted 2 unsolicited advice; Poverty and Turn over Tax (TOT). Secretary-General Richardson elaborated on the other unsolicited advices that are currently in the works.

The Chairwoman went into details with regard to the multi-year plan 2014-2017, explaining some of the plans SER Sint Maarten has in the coming years. The introduction of the working committee, the proposed regional conference 2016 (see agenda point 4) and the presentations to parliament and government of Sint Maarten were all discussed. SER Curacao was impressed with the working committees and commended the Chairwoman for her approach.

Agenda point 3.

Secretary-General Provence, stated that Curacao will be stepping down from the AICESIS board at the end of the term, which will conclude in September 2015. Sint Maarten, Curacao and Brazil presently represent the Caribbean and Latin America region on the AICESIS board 2013 - 2015.

Curacao would like to focus more on the region and enhance its relationships with the Social Economic Councils and similar institutions in the Caribbean and Latin America. Secretary-General Provence further explained that there needs to be better cooperation between SER's in this region. Chairwoman Bryson-Pantophlet agrees and stated that this is the reason why SER Sint Maarten is reaching out to its sister organizations within the Dutch Caribbean. The Chairwoman states that SER's Curacao, Aruba and Sint Maarten should work more closely together and be less dependent on the larger institutions such as the AICESIS. Curacao has indicated that they will travel to Russia, Moscow for the General Assembly and board meeting to be held from September 17th – 18th. It is SER Sint Maarten intention to travel to Russia to seek support for its regional conference scheduled for 2016. The Chairwoman further states that she discussed SER Sint Maarten participation as a board member in the AICESIS with Secretary-General Richardson, and will make a final decision within the coming weeks.



Sociaal Economische Raad
Social Economic Council

Agenda point 4.

Chairwoman Bryson-Pantophlet explains that, SER Sint Maarten would like to organize a regional conference in 2016 in collaboration with SER Curacao and SER Aruba. Secretary-General Provence, states that SER Sint Maarten should await the working theme 2015-2017 of the new president of ACESIS, before choosing a topic. SER Curacao will support SER Sint Maarten in this endeavor. In addition SER Curacao will approach the Dutch representative of the Netherlands on Curacao to extend an invitation to the Chairwoman of SER Netherlands, Mariette Hamer.

Agenda point 5.

Participation in the CESALC (Economic and Social Councils Network for Latin America and the Caribbean) was also discussed. Chairwoman Bryson-Pantophlet stated that the CESALC has good intentions but is still lacking in its overall organization. SER Sint Maarten attended a meeting last year in Argentina and has documentation on the organization. SER Curacao and SER Sint Maarten both agree to continue with CESALC.

Agenda point 6.

SER Curacao foresees no problems collaborating with SER Sint Maarten and SER Aruba. Due to time constraints, SER Curacao request that this agenda point goes over to the next meeting between SER Curacao and SER Sint Maarten.

Agenda point 7.

Acting Chairman J. Jacobs thanks the Sint Maarten delegation for their time and input. The meeting is closed at 1.00 pm

End



Sociaal Economische Raad
Social Economic Council

Tuesday, July 14th 2015, Oranjestad Aruba 09.30 am – 12.00 pm.

The Chairman of SER Aruba, Mr. Rudy Geerman flight from Curacao was delayed; as a result the Vice-chairman Mr. Michel Henriquez chaired the meeting in his place.

SER Sint Maarten delegation consisted of:

- Oldine Bryson-Pantophlet, Chairwoman
- Gerard Richardson, Secretary-General

SER Aruba board:

- Michel Henriquez, Vice-Chairman, employer representative, Aruba Trade and Industry Association (ATIA)
- Felix Bijlhout, Secretary-General



The agenda of the visit:

1. Opening and welcome.
2. Update SER Aruba and SER Sint Maarten.
3. Preparation AICESIS, General Assembly meeting in Russia, Moscow September 17th-18th
4. AICESIS-SER Sint Maarten regional conference 2016.
5. Proposal SER Curacao, SER Sint Maarten, SER Aruba bi-annual meet.
6. Meeting with staff members
7. Closing

Written account of the board meeting



Sociaal Economische Raad
Social Economic Council

Agenda point 1.

The Vice-Chairman of SER Aruba welcomed the delegation from Sint Maarten. He explained that the Chairman of SER Aruba was delayed. Information is exchanged on the composition and functioning of SER Aruba. The Chairwoman of SER Sint Maarten introduces herself followed by the Secretary-General of SER Sint Maarten.

Agenda point 2.

The Secretary-General of SER Aruba explained that due to the ongoing financial situation on the island, SER Aruba was forced to cut its 2015 budget drastically. He pointed out that the situation was unfortunate, as SER Aruba could not attend, the AICESIS regional conference held on Curacao in September 2014. Secretary-General Richardson explained that, on Sint Maarten the SER is faced with the same challenge. Due to budget constraints the secretariat cannot initiate in-depth research, as a result certain advice are lacking the necessary data. Aruba is also confronted with this matter, as government resources are limited.

The Secretary-General of SER Sint Maarten outlines the work SER Sint Maarten has done in the first six months of 2015. He pointed out that in 2015, the SER was invited to parliament for the first time since its inception. In addition the meeting with the Council of Ministers in May was a first for the SER. He explained that for now, SER Sint Maarten received 1 solicited advice request and submitted 2 unsolicited advice to government.

SER Aruba thus far has received 6 solicited advice request from its government. SER Aruba is often called upon by its government, despite the frequency that the institution is called upon to give advice, it has never held a meeting with the government or parliament of Aruba. The Chairwoman of SER Sint Maarten went into details with regard to the multi-year plan 2014-2017, explaining some of the plans SER Sint Maarten has in the coming years.

Agenda point 3.

The Secretary-General of SER Aruba stated that Aruba is also interested in joining the board of the AICESIS. He indicated that SER Aruba needs more exposure and must be willing to take the next step in its development. The Secretary-General of SER Sint Maarten stated that he is willing to assist Aruba in whatever way possible to achieve its goal. The Chairlady, states that its SER Sint Maarten intention to travel to Russia, Moscow in September. The Secretary-General of SER Aruba states that it's important that Aruba is present in Moscow, taking into consideration its ambition to become a board member for 2015-2017 term.



Sociaal Economische Raad
Social Economic Council

Agenda point 4.

Chairwoman Bryson-Pantophlet explains that, SER Sint Maarten would like to organize a regional conference in 2016 in collaboration with SER Curacao and SER Aruba. In addition she states that based on her previous meeting with SER Curacao, SER Sint Maarten was advised to await the theme of the new AICESIS president, before making final decision with regard to the topic of the conference. SER Aruba agrees to support SER Sint Maarten and the regional conference schedule for 2016.

Agenda point 5.

SER Aruba is willing to collaborate with SER Sint Maarten. The Secretary-General of SER Sint Maarten drafted a memo on the future collaboration between the secretariats and will forward the document to his colleague in Aruba. It was further agreed that the cost factor for both institutions needs to be reviewed. Aruba and Sint Maarten should split the cost for the exchange of personnel. These cost are mainly, travel and accommodation.

Agenda point 6.

The Chairwoman and Secretary-General of Sint Maarten were granted some time to speak with the staff of SER Aruba. During the separate conversations with the policy workers, various topics relevant to Sint Maarten/Aruba socio-economic situation were discussed. At the moment SER Aruba has 5 staff members, Secretary-General, Legal advisor, Policy worker 2x and an office manager. The general feeling among the staff is that they are happy with their work and their work environment. SER Aruba is currently in need of an economist and is awaiting the official go ahead from government to hire a new staff member.

Agenda point 7.

Vice-chairman M. Henriquez thanks the Sint Maarten delegation for their time and input. The meeting is closed at 12.00 pm.

END