



Sociaal Economische Raad
Social Economic Council

SER symposium

Innovate or deteriorate

Corporate Social Responsibility as the Way Forward for Sint Maarten

June 12, 2013

Excerpts from the

Introductory remarks by the honorable Sarah Wescot-Williams

Prime Minister of Sint Maarten



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Prime Minister at Opening of Economic and Social Council SER Opening: “Corporations have indeed the responsibility to contribute to the community in which they find themselves established: the community of St. Maarten”

Calls on Corporate Citizens to Contribute to National Development Plan

From the Cabinet of the Prime Minister- The Prime Minister of St. Maarten the Honorable Sarah Wescot-Williams delivered the introductory remarks at the Social and Economic Council’s Symposium Entitled “Innovate or Deteriorate: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Way Forward for St. Maarten” at the Westin Dawn Beach resort on Wednesday. The main focus of the Prime Minister’s address was the inherent social responsibility of Corporate Citizens on St. Maarten and their contribution in moving the development of St. Maarten forward, particularly with regards to the National Development Plan.

“If we study the numbers of the Chamber of Commerce we have no lack of corporations on the island. There are many, big and small, that are active and not so active in the social arena. And so today, as we look at that responsibility of cooperation on St. Maarten, the question I would like to hear addressed would be the one asking specifically what drives the feeling of social responsibility of cooperation right here on St. Maarten. Corporations have indeed the responsibility to contribute to the community in which they find themselves established: the community of St. Maarten. It is important as we look at that responsibility, of corporate citizens on St. Maarten, that we look at it in the bigger picture of the development of St. Maarten and the contribution of everyone to that development.

“Also with regards to development: I encourage the gathering to create the environment that will ensure that corporate citizens will contribute to the National Development Plan for the Country of St. Maarten, thus incorporating social responsibility to fit into this framework. The Private Sector has a very important role to play in the establishment of the National Development Plan. A plan where no one can be left behind and one in which all have a role to play.



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The Prime Minister also greeted Keynote Speaker Prof. Dr. Ryan Peterson, highlighting the fact that the renowned Academic and UNESCO Research Chair comes from St. Maarten lineage. In a very special way I would like to greet our esteemed guest and Keynote Speaker Dr. Ryan Peterson. If one wonders what our parents and grandparents from St. Maarten did were doing when they moved to the other islands of the Dutch Caribbean, It is my opinion that they were actually preparing to provide those island's with technical assistance using our resources," quipped the PM.

The SER was established in May of 2011 and has as its main goal the advising of government on policies and draft laws in the social and economic field. The Government of St. Maarten requests advice from the SER on matters of a social and economic nature and the SER in turn offers solicited or unsolicited advice to Government on draft laws and policies that fall within its mandate. The Prime Minister initiated the Social Economic Council in May 2011 and conducted the first official meeting of the council at the AC Whaley Legislative Hall that same month.