

**REPORT of the Minister of Justice. C. De Weever work visit to the Dominican Republic
March 12th - 16th, 2018.**

The Minister of Justice and acting Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunications hereafter (TEATT), Hon. C. De Weever, and his delegation attended various meetings in the cities of Santo Domingo and Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic. In Santo Domingo, the Minister and his delegation met with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and various representatives of the harbor, Free zone Las America, the Cyberpark, Prison Najayo and the Regional Penitentiary Academy.

In Puntacana, the delegation visited the airport (Custom and Border Protection/Pre clearance), a tourist resort and the harbor. In addition meetings were held with the airport, cruise harbor authorities and other representatives from the tourism sector.

The Sint Maarten delegation consisted of:

- Cornelius de Weever, Minister of Justice. Act Minister of TEATT
- Miguel de Weever, Secretary-General of the Ministry of TEATT
- Regina Labega, Chef de cabinet of the Ministry of TEATT
- Michael Hyman, Chief operations officer of PJIA
- Gerard Richardson, Secretary-General of the SER
- Yohishi Romney, Policy worker International relations of the Ministry of Justice
- Julie Edwards, Consultant PJIA

The agenda of the work visit:

Monday, March 12th 2018, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

1. Welcome at Airport Las Americas by Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Rob de Leeuw and Reiner Davina, Commercial attaché.
2. Dinner at restaurant Pate Palo and tour of Plaza Espana, Zona Colonial
3. Check in hotel.

Written account of the Monday, March 12th

The Minister and his delegation were welcomed at the Ambassador lounge of the airport by Mr. Rob de Leeuw, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Ambassador expressed his appreciation of the Minister's willingness to travel and meet with various representatives of the Dominican Republic. The program was presented and discussed with the Minister and his delegation. The Minister and his delegation had dinner at Pate Palo in the Colonial Zone of Santo Domingo. The delegation also received a tour of Zona Colonial. The Minister on behalf of his delegation, thanked the Ambassador for his hospitality. At the end of the evening the Minister and his delegation were dropped off at their hotel.

Tuesday, March 13th 2018, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

1. Visit to the harbor of Santo Domingo.
2. Tour of boatyard.

Written account of the Tuesday, March 13th

The Minister and the SG's of TEATT and SER received a tour of the harbor of Santo Domingo. Mr. Jose Acero Sr, runs the day to day operations at the harbor. The Minister and the SG's were given a tour of the facility and met with various representatives. In addition discussion were held with various authorities concerning the possibility of a salvage barge from the Dominican Republic servicing Sint Maarten to salvage the sunken vessels in the Simpson Bay Lagoon. The cabinet of the Ministry of TEATT and Justice will collaborate and follow up on this matter. Points of consideration are (labor) cost, immigration and labor permits. In closing its important that the work is carried out in compliance with the law.

Wednesday, March 14th 2018, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

1. Tour of Modelo de Gestión Penitenciaria.
2. Meeting at Regional Penitentiary Academy.
3. Meeting and visit at Dutch Embassy.

Written account of the Wednesday, March 14th

On Wednesday the delegation paid a visit to the prison Najayo in the District nacional of Santo Domingo. The purpose of the visit was for the Minister to receive a better understanding of the various prison system (old and new) in the Dominican Republic. Mr. Ysmael Guerra, prison coordinator and Ms. Yeny Hernandez Rosario, directress led the delegation on the tour. First the delegation received a tour of the (old) prison system. In this system the prisoners have rules but much is permitted by the prison guards. The housing facility of the prisoners is below UN standard. The prisoners were given an opportunity to speak with the minister, and they explained how they are currently experiencing life in jail. The delegation also met two prisoners who carry the Dutch nationality one from the Netherlands and the other from Aruba. The cost to house one prisoner is more or less \$ 12 per day. The overall prison population is 3000 inmates.

In the new prison system, the prisoners have better living quarters and also have the opportunity to further their education. Most prisoners in the new system are better prepared for their reintegration into society. A majority of the prisoners in the new system have jobs and some are in the work release program. The prison cells in the new system are clean and well kept. Overall hygiene (prison cells, bathroom and tv room) is much better compared to the old system. The delegation was also given a tour of the women's facility. The women's facility seem more organized compared to men's. The woman prisoners have jobs and follow courses to improve their education. The recidivism percentage under the woman's prisoners is between 1% - 3%.

The next meeting of the delegation was with Mr. Roberto Sánchez, coordinator of Academia Regional Penitenciaria (ARP). The Minister thanked Mr. Sánchez for his willingness to meet with the delegation. Mr. Sánchez, gave an explanation of how the prison system works and how his institution facilitates all prisons throughout the Dominican Republic. He also explained that the ARP recently received a grant of € 60.000 from the Dutch embassy to install a video conference system which will allow Dutch prisoners to communicate with their friends and family abroad. Mr. Sánchez explained that all prisoners are screened prior to their conversations and that the authorities listen in on the conversations between prisoners and their family or friends. Sint Maarten can benefit from a similar video conference system which will allow foreign prisoners to communicate with their family and friends.

The final meeting of the day was with Mr. Rob de Leeuw, Dutch ambassador of the Netherlands in the Dominican Republic. The ambassador expressed his appreciation for Sint Maarten and enquired how the recovery/rebuilding phase is coming along in the aftermath of hurricane Irma. He also emphasized for better cooperation between the countries within the Dutch Kingdom. The delegation received a tour of the embassy and met with support staff of the ambassador.

Thursday, March 15th 2018, Santo Domingo – Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

1. Tour of Free Zone Park Las Americas.
2. Visit and tour of Cyberpark.
3. Visit and tour Puntacana Resort & Club
4. Meeting with Puntacana group
5. Visit and tour airport Punta Cana

Written account of the Thursday, March 15th

On Thursday the delegation received a tour of the Free Zone Park from Ms. Jaissa Fernández, Industrial Relations Manager. The mission of the Free Zone is to provide a high standard of infrastructure, services and solutions for tenants in an innovative and cost effective way. Ms. Fernandez explained that the facility has high standards in service, reliability, safety and cost containment in their industry. The park has its own power station and there are scarcely any power outages. The park is self-sustainable.

This is an avenue that Sint Maarten can pursue, main points of concerns are; land space, personnel cost and logistics. A feasibility study can be carried out to investigate if a Free Zone on Sint Maarten is profitable and sustainable.

The second meeting/tour of the day was with Mr. Rafael Vargas, Operation Manager of the Cyberpark. The Cyberpark of Santo Domingo, is the country's premier high technology park. The park consists of three components: the higher education part that is the Technological Institute of Americas (ITLA), the park also houses a manufacturing service for local and international companies and there is a recreational area. The Cyberpark is an enormous and very impressive campus. Prospective students of ITLA must have a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher to be enrolled at the university. The ITLA provides certified training in several areas of technology training. The institute works closely with a number of top universities in the US, which will provide advanced degrees in engineering. The Cyber Park also plans to build more facilities, information technology support and customized technical training. Mr. Vargas is one of the founding members of the Cyberpark and he is willing to share his knowledge and know-how with Sint Maarten. He is fierce proponent of Caribbean unity in all areas.

A Cyberpark is another way to diversify Sint Maarten economy. Main points of concerns are; land space, logistics, promotion and the willingness of politicians.

The next (third) meeting was in Punta Cana. The meeting was with the manager of the Punta Cana Resort & Club. He explained how the resort was founded and how many guest visit on a yearly basis. The resort is privately owned and is operated by the Puntacana group. At the conclusion of the presentation, the delegation received a tour of the premises.

The fourth meeting of the day was with Mr. Frank Rainieri, President and CEO of the PuntaCana group and his associates. Mr. Rainieri explained how the group came into existence. He also elucidated how the city only had a landing strip to shorten the distance between Punta Cana and the capital Santo Domingo. Aeropuerto Punta Cana is operated by Corporación Aeroportuaria del Este, S.A. (CAE) (a private corporate international airport operated by Puntacana Resort & Club).

The fifth meeting focused on the operations of the airport. First Mr. Giovanni Rainieri, Operations Manager of the Punta Cana airport, gave an extensive presentation on the expansion, the Custom and Border Protection (CBP) and air Pre Clearance. Mr. Rainieri was very open and cooperative and took time to answer the delegations questions and concerns. Mr. Rainieri went into detail on how the process was to establish Pre Clearance, the requirements, laws, expectations from the US and possible bottlenecks. In addition the delegation was given an extensive tour of the airport by Mr. Rafael Smith, Landside operations director. Mr. Smith showed the delegation the expansion project, the newly established VIP lounge, baggage area, departure and arrival halls.

Friday, March 16th, 2018 Punta Cana – Santo Domingo.

Return to the capital end of work visit.

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