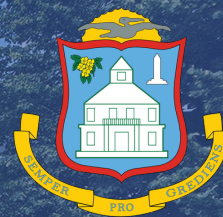


# QUARTERLY



## Cabinet of the Minister Plenipotentiary of Sint Maarten

In this first quarterly edition of 2026, we reflect on a period defined by connection, representation, and practical cooperation in service of Sint Maarten. A key highlight was the visit of Minister Patrice T. Gumbs, Minister of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure. Furthermore, this edition captures Sint Maarten's growing international presence, including Minister Arrindell's participation in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) in New York.

Beyond these milestones, readers will find updates on Kingdom affairs, academic and diplomatic exchanges, climate resilience, social impact partnerships, and the collaborations that continue to strengthen Sint Maarten's position within the Kingdom and internationally.



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## SINT MAARTEN IN FOCUS

### SUPPORTING SINT MAARTEN'S MINISTRIES

The Cabinet's role as a bridge to Sint Maarten's ministries and institutions remained central. During the working visit of Minister Patrice T. Gumbs (VROMI), discussions focused on biodiversity, waste management, and the ongoing challenges related to sargassum (seaweed), all of which are critical to the sustainable development of Sint Maarten.

The discussion also explored how the Cabinet can help connect the Ministry with relevant partners and knowledge institutions in the Netherlands, with the aim of fostering international cooperation and knowledge exchange. In addition, the issue of personnel capacity and processing capabilities was addressed, highlighting the importance of strengthening implementation capacity.



### DIALOGUE FOR LONG-TERM IMPACT

The quarter concluded with a constructive exchange with SER Sint Maarten, where discussions centered on sustainable development priorities, strategic partnerships and the long-term policy impact of advisory work, including healthcare accessibility.

Together, these engagements illustrate how Kingdom cooperation increasingly translates into practical support, stronger institutions and concrete opportunities for the people of Sint Maarten.

### WORKING TOGETHER FOR SINT MAARTEN STUDENTS

In continued efforts to strengthen support for Sint Maarten students, the Minister Plenipotentiary also held a productive online meeting with the Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, Ms. Melissa Gumbs. The meeting focused on several key initiatives, including further development of the diaspora and student database, alongside the rollout of a new engagement campaign designed to improve connectivity with students both locally and abroad.

Additional points of discussion included strengthening student information systems across the Cabinet's social media channels in collaboration with third-party stakeholders, as well as plans for personal outreach visits to cities most frequently chosen by Sint Maarten students for their studies. These visits aim to foster direct engagement, provide support, and maintain closer ties with the student community overseas.

The ministers also discussed preparations for SXM Day 2026, the promotion of third-party scholarship opportunities, and the coordination of an upcoming toy drive initiative.



## MINISTER ARRINDELL BRINGS SINT MAARTEN'S VOICE TO CSW70 IN NEW YORK

In March, Minister Arrindell represented Sint Maarten at the opening and ministerial meetings of the seventieth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) in New York.

This year's priority theme, "Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls," placed renewed focus on inclusive systems that protect rights across every stage of life.

A highlight was Minister Arrindell's participation in the Ministerial Round Table on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all older women. She emphasized that older women remain a vital force within society, resilience and leadership that strengthen families and communities: "Older women represent an extraordinary source of knowledge, resilience and leadership."

Minister Arrindell shared Sint Maarten's continued efforts to support senior citizens through initiatives such as Senior Connect, which helps improve access to information, services and community networks, reinforcing independence and active participation.



## MINISTER ARRINDELL ATTENDS FIRST KINGDOM COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING UNDER NEW DUTCH CABINET



At the first meeting Kingdom Council of Ministers following the swearing-in of the new Dutch cabinet, Minister Plenipotentiary Arrindell was also in attendance.

The meeting marked several notable firsts within the Kingdom. It was the first participation for Mr. Errold Bishop as Deputy Minister Plenipotentiary of Curaçao, as well as for Ms. Mildred Schwengle in her role as the newly appointed Minister Plenipotentiary of Aruba in the Netherlands.

Following the meeting, Minister Arrindell presented Prime Minister Jetten with a publication highlighting the history and heritage of Sint Maarten, reaffirming the importance of keeping the island's story visible within Kingdom-level dialogue and decision-making.

## THE HAGUE AFFAIRS

### ATTENDING WELLENSTEIN LECTURE



Another highlight was the fourth Wellenstein Lecture, organized by the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV) at Pulchri Studio in The Hague.

This year’s lecture, was delivered by renowned foreign affairs commentator and author Sylvie Kauffmann. Her reflections offered a thought-provoking analysis of the evolving relationship between Europe and the United States, set against a backdrop of shifting geopolitical realities and growing global uncertainty.

Minister Arrindell described the lecture as both inspiring and timely, noting that the opportunity to briefly meet Sylvie Kauffmann after the event was a particular highlight: “Bringing together diplomats, policymakers and international affairs experts, the Wellenstein Lecture once again underscored the importance of dialogue, reflection and informed exchange in navigating today’s rapidly changing world.”

### FAREWELL TO MINISTER RIJKAART AND STATE SECRETARY VAN MARUM

Minister Arrindell attended the farewell ceremony for former Dutch Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations Frank Rijkaart and former State Secretary for Digitalization and Kingdom Relations Eddie van Marum.

In recognition of their cooperation and engagement with Sint Maarten, the Minister presented both dignitaries with a copy of the booklet *Salt Reapers: The Story of the Salt Industry on Sint Maarten*.

Minister Arrindell expressed appreciation for the collaboration during their tenure marking the close of a period of Kingdom cooperation.



### COURTESY VISIT SECRETARY - GENERAL ROALD LAPPERRE

Minister Arrindell held a meeting with Mr. Roald Lapperre, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature (LVVN). Mr. Lapperre, who assumed this role on 1 September 2025, previously served as Director-General for Kingdom Relations at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The meeting offered a valuable opportunity to reconnect in his new capacity and to exchange perspectives on areas of shared relevance.

Discussions focused on key themes such as food security, sustainability, and the importance of strengthening resilience within the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. Particular attention was given to the challenges and opportunities facing small island states, including the need for innovative approaches to sustainable agriculture, food supply chains, and environmental management.

The Cabinet looks forward to further engagement with LVVN and its partners, with a shared ambition to translate dialogue into practical cooperation and tangible outcomes for the people of Sint Maarten.

**KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

**FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION TO DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION**

This quarter was marked by various meaningful conversations centered on education, governance, and institutional development. The meetings reflected the Cabinet’s continued commitment to building stronger knowledge networks between Sint Maarten, the Netherlands, and international academic partners.

A notable exchange took place on Monday, 23 February, when the Minister met with Ms. Priscilla de Roo, Teacher of the Year for Special Education in the Netherlands. Building on an earlier introduction during the King’s New Year Reception, the discussion focused on opportunities for practical cooperation in the field of special education. Particular attention was given to autism support, early intervention, and ways to strengthen local expertise on Sint Maarten through knowledge-sharing and collaboration with education professionals.

In a separate digital meeting, the Minister spoke with Dr. Julia Dahlvik, sociologist and researcher at the University of Applied Sciences FH Campus Vienna. Their conversation contributed to an international research project on access to administrative justice and the evolving role of ombuds institutions. Drawing on her own experience as a former Island Council Member, Minister Arrindell reflected on the legislative journey that led to the establishment of the Ombudsman in Sint Maarten and underscored the institution’s continuing value in promoting accountable governance in service of citizens.

The period also included an in-depth exchange with Professor Dr. Wouter Veenendaal, Professor of Kingdom Relations at Leiden University, joined by Legal Advisor Farida Telgt. The discussion explored the functioning of the Kingdom through themes such as democratic representation, autonomy, and the lived realities of cooperation between the four countries. By connecting academic research with policy practice and lived experience, the meeting reinforced the importance of continued dialogue in strengthening mutual understanding and future Kingdom cooperation.



## ACROSS THE KINGDOM

### STRENGTHENING TIES WITHIN THE KINGDOM

A central part this period was the series of introductory and working meetings held in The Hague with counterparts from Aruba and Curaçao.

Minister Arrindell welcomed Drs. Mildred Schwengle, recently sworn in as Aruba’s Minister Plenipotentiary, for a warm exchange on common priorities and the importance of maintaining close coordination between the Cabinets in The Hague.

On the same day, the Cabinet also received Mr. Errold Bishop, Deputy Minister Plenipotentiary of Curaçao, together with Secretary-General Mr. Djurick Comenentia. These conversations underscored a shared ambition to deepen practical cooperation, exchange best practices, and reinforce alignment on Kingdom matters in the years ahead.



### CONNECTING KINGDOM PRIORITIES WITH EUROPE

The Kingdom perspective was further broadened through an exchange with Dr. Eduard Braam, Special Envoy to the European Union for Curaçao, whose work focuses on strengthening engagement with EU institutions and identifying strategic funding opportunities.

The discussion highlighted how closer collaboration on climate resilience, sustainability and development challenges can create wider benefits for the Caribbean countries of the Kingdom, particularly as European partnerships and funding streams become increasingly relevant to island development.

### NEW YEAR'S RECEPTION AT THE ROYAL PALACE

On Monday, January 12, Minister Plenipotentiary Arrindell had the honor of attending the traditional New Year’s reception hosted by His Majesty King Willem-Alexander and Her Majesty Queen Máxima at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam.

"I look back on a warm gathering where connection and dialogue were at the heart of the evening, values that remain essential for Sint Maarten and the Kingdom, especially at the start of a new year."



## EXPLORING MEASURABLE SOCIAL IMPACT PARTNERSHIPS

Minister Plenipotentiary Drs. Gracita R. Arrindell, together with Consular Affairs Officer Vereska Illidge, welcomed Raël Martis Ozuna and Michael Defares of Stichting Buro Help to the Cabinet for a constructive exchange on strengthening social impact through collaboration and measurable outcomes.

During the meeting, Buro Help introduced its innovative platform, which helps non-profit organizations translate their work into clear, data-driven impact. This not only strengthens accountability and visibility but also supports organizations in attracting funding and building sustainable partnerships.

Particular interest was expressed in the potential involvement of Sint Maarten based non-profits and corporate partners, creating new opportunities to connect community initiatives, businesses, and measurable social value.



## CARIBBEAN PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Minister Plenipotentiary Drs. Gracita R. Arrindell was pleased to attend the WRR Hollands Spoor session on climate adaptation in the Caribbean islands, held on 31 March 2026 in The Hague.

The gathering brought together senior civil servants, administrators, academics, and private-sector representatives to reflect on the urgent realities of climate change facing the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom. Central to the discussion was the importance of social infrastructure, the places and networks where communities meet, organize, and support one another, as a key element in building climate resilience.

With the Caribbean islands on the front line of climate change, the exchange offered an important platform to connect research, governance, and lived experience. By bringing Caribbean voices and perspectives into the conversation, the session reinforced the value of shared insights and collaboration in strengthening long-term resilience across the Kingdom.



## DIPLOMATIC DIARY

Some meetings, moments & milestones from the past quarter

### 28 January | Courtesy visit - Republic of Kosovo

The quarter opened with a meaningful courtesy visit from H.E. Dr. Dren Doli, Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo, at the Cabinet in The Hague.

The exchange focused on Kosovo's internationally active sectors, including agribusiness, ICT, digital industries, and the creative sector. The conversation naturally evolved into future opportunities for collaboration with Sint Maarten, particularly in the areas of youth exchange, entrepreneurship, cultural diplomacy, and educational cooperation.

This first meeting laid the foundation for one of the quarter's most tangible diplomatic outcomes: a scholarship for a student from Sint Maarten to attend a summer school at the University of Pristina.



### 17 February | Celebrating Kosovo's 18th Independence Anniversary

Minister Arrindell joined the diplomatic community at the Nieuwe Kerk in The Hague to mark the 18th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Kosovo. The evening combined diplomacy with culture through a concert and reception attended by international guests and senior officials.

A highlight of the evening was Minister Arrindell's introduction to Kosovo's newly elected Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Glauk Konjufca, creating an important moment for international exchange.



### 25 February | Celebrating Independence Day Dominican Republic

The diplomatic quarter also included Minister Arrindell's attendance at the reception hosted by the Embassy of the Dominican Republic to commemorate nearly 182 years of sovereignty.

The evening offered an opportunity to honor the rich history and vibrant culture of the Dominican Republic, while engaging with members of the diplomatic corps in The Hague.

Special recognition is extended to H.E. Ambassador Carlos de la Mota Jiménez, whose presence underscored the importance of continued diplomatic engagement.



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Following an introductory meeting at the Cabinet on Friday, January 23, with Drs. Arthur Philip Lieuwen, President & Chairman of the Board of the America Europe Friendship Association, Minister Plenipotentiary Arrindell was invited to attend a distinguished symposium on peace and security hosted by the Municipality of Eijsden-Margraten on February 27.

Held in the council chamber of the town hall in Margraten, the lecture brought together leading voices from diplomacy, academia, crisis management, and international security to reflect on the shared responsibility of safeguarding peace in a rapidly changing world. Among the keynote speakers was General Guglielmo Luigi Miglietta Gerhartz, Commander of NATO Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum, who spoke about NATO's role in today's global climate and the responsibility of every citizen in contributing to peace and resilience.

The symposium carried particular symbolic weight in Eijsden-Margraten, recognized as the first liberated municipality in the Netherlands, where remembrance and civic responsibility remain deeply connected. The reflections shared during the event strongly resonated with the Cabinet's broader commitment to dialogue, cooperation, and international partnership.

A special milestone arising from this growing relationship was the Minister's invitation to serve as an Ambassador for the America Europe Friendship Association. This recognition marks an important step in further strengthening transatlantic dialogue, friendship, and shared efforts in the areas of peace, democracy, and mutual understanding.

The Cabinet looks forward to continued collaboration with the Association and its partners in promoting meaningful exchanges that contribute to peace, security, and international solidarity.



## ATTENDING DIES NATALIS UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

Minister Arrindell was honored to attend the 390th Dies Natalis of Utrecht University, where Linda Nooitmeer received a honorary doctorate in recognition of her exceptional societal contributions and her efforts to keep the legacy of slavery firmly on the social and political agenda.

This year's theme, "Maak Kennis. Maak Verschil.", beautifully underscored the connection between academic reflection and meaningful societal change. The Cabinet values being present at moments where education, history, and social responsibility come together.



## HONORING THE LEGACY OF HAMILTON “HAMMY” RICHARDSON

On January 16, Minister Arrindell represented the people and Government of Sint Maarten at the homecoming service of Sint Maarten-born baseball icon Hamilton L. Richardson.

A pioneering figure in baseball, Richardson played a transformative role and helped elevate the Netherlands National Team, paving the way for generations of Caribbean athletes in Dutch sports.

His remarkable contributions to sport and society remain woven into the legacy of both Sint Maarten and the Netherlands.



## MINISTER ARRINDELL VOTES IN DUTCH MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS



During the municipal elections in the Netherlands, Arrindell cast her vote on March 18, underlining the enduring importance of democratic participation. Reflecting on the moment, the Minister highlighted the historical significance of voting rights and the responsibility that comes with civic engagement.

“Remembering the persistence, courage and resistance it took to secure our right to vote gives the act of casting a vote even greater meaning,” she stated.

## IN OUR NEXT EDITION...

In the next edition, we will reflect on the Carrièrebeurs, where opportunities to connect with students and young professionals take center stage. In addition, attention will be given to a Toy Drive initiative, from the Cabinet, which brings together the Sint Maarten community and diaspora in a collective effort to support children and participating households.

Readers can also look forward for more information on Cabinet after 5, a initiative aimed at fostering dialogue, storytelling, and stronger connections within the Sint Maarten diaspora.

Finally, we will provide a closer look at Sint Maarten’s participation in the EU-OCT Forum in Aruba, where key discussions focused on strengthening cooperation with the European Union, advancing strategic priorities, and ensuring tangible impact for the people of Sint Maarten .

**TOY DRIVE Initiative**

The Cabinet warmly invites the community and Sint Maarten diaspora in the Netherlands to take part in support of vulnerable children and families on Sint Maarten.

**FINAL DROP-OFF DATE**  
30 JUNE

**COLLECTION HOURS**  
10:00 - 15:00  
MONDAY TO FRIDAY

**PRINSESSEGRACHT 7**  
2514 AN DEN HAAG

**MORE INFORMATION?**

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