

QUARTERLY



Cabinet of the Minister Plenipotentiary of Sint Maarten

INTRODUCTION

During the second quarter, the Cabinet of the Minister Plenipotentiary continued its role as a bridge between Sint Maarten, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the European Union, and the international community. A key priority was investing in the country's future by supporting students and young professionals and strengthening educational partnerships. At the same time, the Cabinet actively positioned Sint Maarten within important international meetings, advocating for greater access to funding opportunities, stronger regional cooperation, and practical solutions for renewable energy and democratic participation.

This edition also highlights the Cabinet's diplomatic engagement and commemorative activities across the Kingdom and beyond. These initiatives reflect one common objective: ensuring that dialogue is translated into tangible outcomes for Sint Maarten and its people. Have a safe and enjoyable summer vacation!

Minister Plenipotentiary Drs. Gracita R Arrindell



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EDUCATION AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

INVESTING IN SINT MAARTEN'S STUDENTS

Supporting the next generation of Sint Maarteners was one of the key priorities set by the Minister Plenipotentiary in this quarter. The Cabinet continued to strengthen its engagement with students, educational institutions, and young professionals in the Netherlands through a series of initiatives focused on education, talent development, leadership, and community building.

A central part of these efforts was the Student Engagement Session held in The Hague. During this session Sint Maarten students shared their experiences, challenges, and aspirations while studying abroad. Discussions highlighted important topics such as housing, financial pressures, academic preparedness, mental wellbeing, and the need for a stronger Sint Maarten student community in the Netherlands. Building on the success of this first session, the Cabinet will expand the initiative to other regions, allowing the Cabinet to engage directly with students where they live and study. The next edition will be held in Eindhoven in September.

These conversations form part of a broader effort to ensure that students feel supported and connected throughout their educational journey. They provide valuable insights that help inform future initiatives aimed at strengthening student support and creating opportunities for networking and collaboration.



EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Cabinet welcomed a delegation from SVOBE, represented by General Director Jacqueline Duggins-Horsford and Education Director Sergio Blomont. Discussions focused on strengthening educational cooperation and creating new opportunities for Sint Maarten students.

Topics included Erasmus+ exchanges, internship opportunities and talent development. Particular attention was given to encouraging students to eventually return to Sint Maarten and contribute their knowledge, skills, and experience to the country's continued development. The Cabinet highlighted the importance of its Diaspora Database as a tool to connect talented Sint Maarteners in the Netherlands with future opportunities back home.



PREPARING FUTURE LEADERS

Beyond supporting students, the Cabinet remained committed to developing future leaders and strengthening understanding of Kingdom governance and international affairs.

Minister Arrindell attended the closing session of the first Postgraduate Kingdom Affairs Program at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. The program brought together participants from across all six islands and the European Netherlands to exchange perspectives on governance, cooperation, and public administration within the Kingdom.

Similarly, Minister Arrindell participated as a speaker at the Atlantic Assembly 2026, organized by Jonge Atlantici. The conference brought together students, young professionals, policymakers, and experts to discuss international security, geopolitics, and emerging global challenges. During a panel discussion on the Caribbean region, Minister Arrindell shared Sint Maarten's perspective on regional stability, international cooperation, and the evolving geopolitical landscape.



BUILDING CONNECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Taken together, these initiatives reflect the commitment to investing in the future of Sint Maarten through education, talent development, and youth engagement. Whether through direct dialogue with students, partnerships with educational institutions, or participation in leadership and governance programmes, the common objective remains the same: empowering young people with the tools, networks, and opportunities needed to contribute to Sint Maarten's future development.



THE NEW EU-OCT FRAMEWORK



STRENGTHENING SINT MAARTEN'S POSITION WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION PARTNERSHIP

During the second quarter, Sint Maarten participated in a series of high-level meetings and conferences in Aruba centered around the 21st European Union-Overseas Countries and Territories (EU-OCT) Forum and the annual Ministerial Conference of the Overseas Countries and Territories Association (OCTA).

Representing Sint Maarten, Minister Arrindell emphasized the importance of ensuring that the growing recognition of the Overseas Countries and Territories as strategic partners of the European Union translates into tangible results for their communities. By engaging early in this forum, Sint Maarten is positioning itself to effectively advocate for continued or increased funding while highlighting its key national priorities.

POSITIONING SINT MAARTEN FOR FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

A key focus of the meetings was the future European Union budget cycle and the upcoming 2028-2034 Decision on Overseas Association including Greenland (DOAG). During a trilateral meeting with representatives of the Netherlands and the European Commission, discussions focused on ongoing EU-funded programs, future investment priorities, and opportunities to strengthen cooperation.

Minister Arrindell stressed that small island territories such as Sint Maarten face unique capacity and resource constraints, making simplified access to European funding instruments essential. Sint Maarten advocated for practical and accessible funding mechanisms that allow smaller administrations to participate more effectively in European programs.

The discussions also highlighted Sint Maarten's strategic role as a regional logistical hub and underscored the importance of investments in maritime connectivity, renewable energy, digital transformation, and food security. These priorities were consistently reflected throughout the various meetings and consultations held during the Forum.



THE NEW EU-OCT FRAMEWORK

BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH REGIONAL COOPERATION

One of the most significant outcomes of the Forum was the signing of the StormWatch Initiative on Disaster Risk Management. Minister Arrindell signed the agreement on behalf of the Caribbean OCTs as Sint Maarten is currently the Regional Authorizing Officer of the RESEMBID Program.

The €3 million regional initiative aims to strengthen disaster preparedness, like hurricanes, improve early warning systems, and enhance coordination among Caribbean OCTs. Given the increasing frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters throughout the region, the initiative represents an important investment in resilience and sustainable development.



STRENGTHENING THE VOICE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF OCTA

During the OCTA Ministerial Conference, Minister Arrindell emphasized the importance of a more proactive, visible, and results-oriented organization. In the discussions surrounding the future EU-OCT partnership framework, Sint Maarten further advocated for sustained political dialogue with the European Union, fostering accessibility of funding opportunities, and a stronger focus on implementation that delivers tangible benefits for OCT communities.

LOOKING AHEAD

The engagements in Aruba reaffirmed the importance of strong partnerships between Sint Maarten, the European Union, and fellow Overseas Countries and Territories. They also demonstrated Sint Maarten's continued commitment to ensuring that regional cooperation delivers practical outcomes for its people.

The Cabinet remains committed to supporting government in translating these opportunities into tangible results that contribute to resilience, economic development, and a sustainable future for Sint Maarten.



KINGDOM LEVEL CONSULTATIONS

Throughout the second quarter of 2026, the Cabinet remained actively engaged in a range of Kingdom-level discussions and consultations.

As the political and administrative landscape of the Kingdom continues to evolve, maintaining strong relationships with partners across all four countries remains essential. During the quarter, Minister Arrindell participated in a number of meetings and consultations focused on issues of direct importance to Sint Maarten, including governance, democratic representation, economic development, and intergovernmental cooperation.



STANDING COMMITTEE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

On 28 May, Minister Arrindell attended the public debate of the Standing Committee for Kingdom Relations in the Dutch House of Representatives. Discussions covered a range of topics relevant to Sint Maarten, Aruba, and Curaçao, including the progress of the Country Packages (Landspakketten), the 2025 Semi-Annual Report of the Sint Maarten Reconstruction Trust Fund, food security initiatives through the Carifood Fund, and the refinancing framework relating to Sint Maarten.

PREPARATORY MEETING KINGDOM COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (RMR)

Cooperation between the countries of the Kingdom remained an important priority during the last quarter. Ahead of the Kingdom Council of Ministers (RMR), the Cabinet hosted a preparatory meeting with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK), as well as colleagues from the Cabinets of Aruba and Curaçao.

The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange perspectives, discuss shared priorities, and strengthen cooperation ahead of formal Kingdom Council meeting. As a tangible outcome of these discussions, participants agreed to continue organizing quarterly preparatory meetings, rotating among the respective Cabinets to further strengthen coordination and collaboration.



IPKO

Minister Arrindell attended the opening of the Interparliamentary Kingdom Consultation (IPKO) in The Hague, where parliamentary delegations from Sint Maarten, Aruba, Curaçao, and the Netherlands came together to discuss issues of shared importance across the Kingdom. Topics included climate change, democratic participation, ageing populations, and innovative approaches to citizen engagement and public policy.

ADVANCING DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

On 9 June, Minister Arrindell participated in an interview with the Expert Group on the Democratic Deficit within the Kingdom. Established by IPKO, the Expert Group has been tasked with examining existing challenges related to democratic representation and identifying opportunities to strengthen participation, accountability, and cooperation throughout the Kingdom.

During the consultation, Minister Arrindell shared perspectives on Kingdom governance, the position of the Caribbean countries within the Kingdom structure, and the importance of ensuring that all countries have meaningful opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes that affect their citizens.

The discussion forms part of a broader dialogue taking place across the Kingdom aimed at strengthening democratic legitimacy and ensuring that cooperation between the four countries continues to evolve in a manner that is inclusive, effective, and future-oriented.



FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION

The engagements of the past quarter reaffirmed the importance of active participation, dialogue, and cooperation within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Through continued intergovernmental consultations, and conversations on democratic representation, the Cabinet remains committed to ensuring that Sint Maarten's interests, perspectives, and priorities continue to be effectively represented.



DIPLOMATIC DIARY

Meetings, Moments & Milestones from the past quarter

Throughout the past quarter, Minister Arrindell participated in a number of diplomatic and cultural engagements in The Hague. These occasions provided valuable opportunities to strengthen international relationships, promote intercultural dialogue, and exchange perspectives with members of the diplomatic corps, international organizations, and cultural institutions.



Human tribe totem unveiled at the ICC

Minister Arrindell attended the unveiling of Human Tribe Totem, a sculpture by Uruguayan artist Roberto Vivo, at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Donated by Uruguay, the artwork symbolizes humanity, unity, and shared responsibility, values that closely reflect The Hague's role as the international city of peace and justice.

Culture as a bridge for dialogue

At the invitation of H.E. Dr. Dren Doli, Ambassador of Kosovo, and the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), Minister Arrindell attended a special screening of the award-winning film *Hive*. The event highlighted the power of culture and storytelling in fostering dialogue, reconciliation, and international understanding.



International day for dialogue among civilizations

Minister Arrindell attended the commemoration of the International Day for Dialogue Among Civilizations at the Peace Palace, hosted by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China and Diplomat Magazine. Bringing together ambassadors, academics, members of the judiciary, and international organizations, the event emphasized the importance of intercultural dialogue and peaceful cooperation in today's interconnected world. As a multicultural country, Sint Maarten continues to value opportunities that strengthen mutual understanding, respect, and international partnership.

COMMUNITY & KINGDOM CEREMONIES

Alongside its policy, diplomatic, and Kingdom engagements, the Cabinet continued to participate in different commemorative and ceremonial events that reflect the shared history, values, and partnerships within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

HONORING FREEDOM AND REMEMBRANCE

During National Remembrance Day on 4 May and Liberation Day on 5 May, Minister Arrindell joined commemorations in Amsterdam and Wageningen, honoring civilians and members of the armed forces who lost their lives during the Second World War, subsequent conflicts, and peacekeeping missions. These national moments of remembrance reaffirm the shared history of the countries of the Kingdom and the continued importance of freedom, democracy, peace, and international cooperation.



CELEBRATING ARUBA'S MILESTONES

Minister Arrindell attended a reception hosted by the Cabinet of Aruba to welcome H.E. Mildred G.M. Schwengle as Aruba's newly appointed Minister Plenipotentiary. The occasion also celebrated two important milestones in Aruba's history: 40 years of Status Aparte and the 50th anniversary of the Aruban flag and anthem.

IN OUR NEXT EDITION...

Get ready for another inspiring edition featuring stories and opportunities from our Diaspora Database and student communities. We will continue highlighting student and young professional engagement, including the next Student Engagement Session in Eindhoven, the welcome reception for students from Sint Maarten on 3 August, and the experiences of Sint Maarten student Roberto Patrick, who participated in a summer course in Kosovo.

Preparations are already underway for this year's Sint Martin Day celebrations in the Netherlands. The next edition will feature updates on the annual community gathering, opportunities for local entrepreneurs and cultural organizations to participate. Stay tuned for these exciting features and much more in our upcoming quarterly in October.

We encourage students and young professionals to stay connected by registering, via our socials, in the Cabinet's database, allowing us to share educational opportunities, internships, scholarships, events and other initiatives relevant to the Sint Maarten community.

The Cabinet once again invite the Sint Maarten community to participate in its Toy Drive. The initiative reflects the Cabinet's commitment to giving back to the community by collecting toys and gifts for children in Sint Maarten. More information about the Toy Drive can be found on our social media channels.



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