



Parliament of Sint Maarten

Staten van Sint Maarten

To the Hon. Minister of Public Health, Social Development and Labor
Mr. R. Panneflek
Administration Building
Philipsburg

UV/266/2019-2020

Philipsburg, April 24, 2020

Re: Questions from MP S.L. Duncan regarding poverty line

Hon. Minister Panneflek,

Herewith I submit to you questions posed by Member of Parliament, Ms. S.L. Duncan pursuant to article 62 of the Constitution and article 69 of the Rules of Order of the Parliament of Sint Maarten.

The letter is self-explanatory.

Yours truly,

R. Brison
President of Parliament

Nancy R. Guishard-Joubert

From: Solange L. Duncan
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 8:40 AM
To: Rolando Brison
Cc: Nancy R. Guishard-Joubert
Subject: VSA Inquiry - Poverty Line
Attachments: VSA Request - Poverty Line.pdf
Follow Up Flag: FollowUp
Flag Status: Flagged

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Dear Chairman Brison,

Please find attached a letter to be forwarded to the Minister of VSA in connection with a poverty line study.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

S. Ludmila Duncan
Member of Parliament





SOLANGE LUDMILA DUNCAN
MEMBER OF THE PARLIAMENT OF
SINT MAARTEN

April 22, 2020

Rolando Brison
President of Parliament
Wilhelminastraat #1
Philipsburg, Sint Maarten

RE: Inquiry into the Minister of VSA's plans to conduct a Poverty Line Study

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Parliament received a presentation from the Minister of Finance on Tuesday April 21, 2020 on the St. Maarten Stimulus and Relief Plan (SSRP). Present at the meeting was the Minister of Health, Social Development and Labor (VSA). The presentation provided some insight into the plans of Government to assist some vulnerable groups in our community who have been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it is my belief that there are still a number of questions left unanswered in particular regarding the role of the Ministry of VSA in this Covid-19 fight.

The SSRP provides assistance to persons who are (or risk becoming) unemployed and sole proprietors in the following manner:

- The Unemployment Program will pay ANG. 1,150.00 to qualifying individuals for the months of April, May and June 2020;
- Government is proposing to pay up to ANG. 1,150.00 per month to qualifying individuals for the months of April, May and June 2020.

The figure of ANG. 1,150.00 is below the established minimum wage on St. Maarten and the "borrowed" living wage within the Kingdom which is NAF. 4,000.00 per household of two adults and two children ("Minimumvoorbeeldebegrotingen" Bonaire, Nibud 2014) Furthermore, St. Maarten's basket of goods decree should be updated during this time and supermarket retailers regularly controlled as we see and hear the cries of our people on increasing food costs.

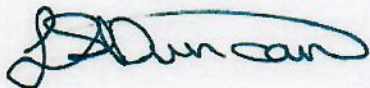
In 2019, The University of St. Martin (USM) indicated, at a Seminar Series co-sponsored by Government and UNESCO, their willingness to jointly conduct a poverty line study on Sint Maarten in collaboration with the Anti-Poverty Platform. They delivered a proposal entitled "Minimum Reference Budgets for Saint Martin: A Research Proposal" in November 2019.

I believe now more than ever that this poverty line study must take place. Understanding poverty levels is important for generating effective policy, targeting development initiatives, and monitoring and evaluating economic progress especially in a post-Covid 19 St. Maarten. It is for this reason that I am posing the following questions to the Minister of VSA:

1. Can the Ministry of VSA accelerate the process to conduct a poverty line study? If yes, what will the approach be and can the Council of Ministers review the proposal made by USM?
2. Does the Ministry of VSA currently have a task force or committee established regarding poverty measurement? If yes, what is the makeup of this taskforce and their objectives? If no, I would like to suggest that a task force consisting of representatives of the Ministries of VSA, TEATT, GA and USM and the Consumers Coalition be established to jointly execute this process.
3. Can a poverty line study be conducted within the next 6 months?

Thank you for your cooperation in forwarding this letter to the Minister of VSA and I look forward to a response at his earliest convenience.

With kind regards,



Solange Ludmila Duncan
Member of Parliament

Cc. Minister of General Affairs
Cc. Minister of Finance
Cc. Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport & Telecommunications