



Parliament of Sint Maarten

Staten van Sint Maarten

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**National Ordinance stipulating the Budget of
Country Sint Maarten for the year 2020 (National
Ordinance Budget 2020)**

**Report
No. 5**

The Parliament in its meeting of the Central Committee had an exchange of views with the Government on the Draft National Ordinance stipulating the Budget of Country Sint Maarten for the year 2020.

The Parliament considers the draft to be sufficiently prepared if the questions asked below are answered in time for the public meeting so that the draft can be discussed in a public meeting.

The National Alliance faction has the following questions and remarks.

The faction has taken note of the draft and mentions that Sint Maarten like the rest of the world is fighting a war against an invisible enemy. An enemy that looks like a science fiction movie. The death toll in Sint Maarten is alarming and is rising. Government and people together need to fight this war on several fronts. Government first of all needs to keep people healthy and alive while we await a vaccine that will be developed by the bigger countries in the world. In the meantime Sint Maarten has to adhere to the guidelines given by Government and to stay home as much as possible. On the other hand Government also needs to ensure that the economy stays alive to overcome this battle against this unknown and unseen enemy.

Now more than ever Sint Maarten is dependent on outside help not only to fuel our economy but also to keep our people healthy and alive. We really need all hands on deck. We all have concerns and questions to ask. But now more than ever it is important to get the budget moving as quickly as possible. It would mean that the faction is lending its support to this budget in the first place to make sure that our people who are waiting on help, that the help can start trickling down. Several thousands of people who are waiting on a food box from

Government, less than half have received it. Some people will be on the backend of receiving their food box.

This pandemic has also created opportunities. Some people in the telecom industry are even working overtime. They can even work better now because there is no traffic. But a lot of people have lost income (casino workers, taxi drivers, businesses on Front Street etc.).

The faction further states that the Stimulus plan is only for three months. After that the Government needs to assess the need on a going forward basis. One of the other problems we face: the budget is always a projection. The real challenge is always ensuring that money is there. Generating money is going to be very difficult. We will have to depend heavily on the Netherlands. We will come across as beggars in our own Kingdom. A loan will keep you forever dependent. There is a lesson to be learned from this experience we are going through.

The faction points that we are in a hurricane zone. According to the predictions and models, we have an active season ahead. 5 to 6 hurricanes are expected to make landfall between the Caribbean area and the US mainland. We pray to God that we are not affected but it is our reality that we have to face and plan for.

Furthermore, the faction would like clarity to be provided on whether we will be receiving a loan or grant and what kind. The decision will be made by the Dutch Government. We have to deal with not only with the first 3 months but also the recovery phase. This will depend on cruise ships coming back and planes full of visitors coming to Sint Maarten.

Government needs to continue to govern regardless to the circumstances we are faced with. There is a daunting task for the Ministry of Education to meet the needs of the school boards, students and teachers. Besides the COVID-19 war, there are still people stuck all over the world because they left to seek medical care. Law enforcement needs to continue doing its job. Yes it will be on under challenging circumstances. We need improvement at the prison and in law enforcement. All these improvements call for investment in human capital, investment in physical infrastructure in investment in material. We can't make investments while we are fighting this invisible war. The challenges before COVID-19 will only increase.

A serious focus needs to be placed as well on the demands within Government. We see growths that were projected for additional personnel. Government realizes too that if there is no money certain things can't be done. We need to realize that we are all in this together and hence all have to tighten our belts.

The United Peoples Party faction has the following questions and observations.

The faction with interest has taken note of the draft national ordinance and mentions that we are in an extraordinary time. But the faction must point out that this budget is admittedly one that is not reflective of the current realities. The faction, however, recognizes and understands the legal need for passing this budget to ensure that the urgently needed relief can be given to our people.

Despite that reality, the faction must receive some commitments from the Government. When will a more realistic budget be presented to Parliament?

The faction wants to make it very clear that the United People's Party's support of this emergency measure is contingent on the Government delivering a realistic budget that takes into account the economic needs of the people and businesses still suffering post-Irma.

The faction requests that the budget must take into account the still urgent need for housing after Hurricane Irma so that those without proper homes can finally have a home.

The faction emphasizes the need to improve our Health System to deal with these challenges as experts predict there will likely be a resurgence of COVID-19 in the future.

The Government must also consider the loss of business and, by extension, jobs. Hence, the Government must invest more in Destination Marketing and investor scouting to improve our economic situation. And, it must have the necessary ingredients to foster improvements in Social Development and improve our Education System, from Day Care to Tertiary Education.

But this present budget must also not be taken lightly.

The faction would like the Government to:

1. Identify a timeline for when the Ministry of Finance will return with a more realistic "COVID-19" budget;
2. Provide a timeframe for when a mid to long-term economic development plan can be presented to Parliament as a prerequisite for future budget approval;
3. Provide a List of both private and public constructions projects identified by Government, and how Government will facilitate such projects being fast-tracked with an emphasis on jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities for locals;
4. Get a commitment from the NRPB and Steering Committee to fast track the projects under them that do not fall under the auspices of the national budget, but indirectly have budgetary implications (more plans could mean, more economic activity and thus more income for the Government);
5. Make a clear commitment that this budget will be able to fulfill the need for the first phase of the SSRP;
6. Give clarity on what will and what will not be used as capital expenditures, or whether to expect those capital expenditures to be all canceled;
7. Give assurance to Parliament that passing this budget can provide much needed funds to purchase and conduct mass testing in Sint Maarten for COVID-19;
8. Request that the Minister of Finance hold the Central Bank accountable for their lack of action in supporting Sint Maarten in its urgent time of need.

The faction mentions that at the start of this journey, after another election in the country's short history, no one anticipated that Sint Maarten, and the entire world, would be going through such a crisis that has taken so many lives and crippled the economy globally.

The faction emphasized that the endorsement of this budget is based on the need for an emergency solution to the growing needs of the citizens of our Country.

The faction informs that this is the time for us to act boldly and take charge of our recovery from COVID-19. Decisive decisions will have to lead to measurable results and improve our decision taking. It should be based on documented results such as testing, and contact tracing to ensure that we are controlling the spread of the virus.

The faction wants the Government to be clear regarding these issues that are important to the people of Sint Maarten:

- They want to go back to work;
- They want to be sure of where their daily bread will come from;
- They want to be able to pay their rent without having to give excuses to the landlord;
- They want to be able to feed their children;
- Students want to go back to school;
- Businesses want the visitors to return to our island.

However, none of this can happen if the Government and each Ministry does not carry its weight.

The faction believes that in times like these, we must recognize that we need businesses to be honorable and reasonable. The Government must understand the struggle and sacrifice of these businesses. They invested in the recovery post-Irma, only to be faced with the loss of business caused by COVID-19. The faction reminds and cautions the Government about the upcoming Hurricane Season.

The faction requests assurances not only for the citizens, but also for the business community. They too must be supported as we are all in this together. We cannot just depend on the business community to reopen when a calamity strikes, so our economy can rebound and not help the businesses in times of their needs.

The faction is aware that some ministries have already sought the support of seasoned professionals. Their expertise will be critical in the recovery effort for our country.

Because of this, the faction has full confidence in the essential steps that must and will be taken to safeguard our citizens' health and the future of our economy.

Evidence has shown that the most vulnerable in this crisis are our senior citizens. Hence the attention of the Minister of Finance and the rest of the Executive, especially the Minister of VSA is being asked to pay special attention to this matter. The Minister and Government must ensure that all efforts are made, and no expense is spared to protect the senior citizens from further harm.

The people of this country are suffering enough and should not have to go through the loss of their loved ones if it can be avoided. The needs and challenges are known; hence these should be met. The people should not have to ask Government for help.

In supporting this budget the faction requests the Government to give some assurances.

The faction wants the Government to assure the people of Sint Maarten that help is on the way. Businesses that need help, whether large or small, must get the help they need as long as it goes towards keeping our citizens employed:

- The Government must do everything to prevent mass unemployment;
- The Government must help the people of Sint Maarten;
- The Government must ensure that the front-line workers have the tools they need to protect themselves and the rest of our citizens and win the fight against this pandemic.

The Government is encouraged to consider a more holistic approach to addressing the challenges that we are facing. No man is an island and we must understand that we cannot solve these problems alone.

The citizens of Sint Maarten are commended for being disciplined and understanding. They should continue practicing social distancing to stop the spread and reduce the number of cases of coronavirus on the island. The faction wants to encourage the citizens to protect themselves and their families.

The faction emphasized that they will not stop until every man, woman, and child can walk freely on the streets of Sint Maarten once more. The day will soon come when we are moving about freely without fear of illness. Our people must have full assurance that they will get proper medical and financial help in times of need.

The United St. Maarten Party faction has the following questions.

The faction has taken note of the draft and mentions that the budget as it stands today is in serious trouble and with the serious loss of income projected presently at NAFL. 108 million, an increase of expenses of some NAFL. 124 million

and an existing deficit of some NAFI. 31 million prior to COVID19, we have some problems. That's a fact. The questions of the faction are based on what the faction considers in these trying times to be important, needed cost cutting, legally based and lastly fair to all concerned.

The faction is going to ask critical questions so we don't lose a day for answering seeing the deadline of May 1st, 2020. We are on TEAM Sint Maarten and we will be on board to get this country back on track.

Ministry of General Affairs

In regards to cost cutting in the past when it was operational, civil servants would pay a percentage of the medical cost that they made which would be subtracted from their salaries. Is it true that these costs have not been withheld from the salaries of the civil servants? If so, will this be corrected?

What is the plan to completely incorporate a paperless Government and enhance the efficiency of the processes?

What's the status of the purchasing of the vehicles for the Government through the World Bank program as it's a mayor bottleneck for the efficient functioning of the VROMI Ministry and others?

The project of the sanitary landfill aka The Dump was the greatest monster in this country back in especially 2018. A Canadian company offered the Government an offer to handle the landfill at zero cost to Government and zero risk, which was approved in December 2017 by the then Council of Ministers. Today that offer still stands but for whatever reason millions of dollars are being wasted out of the Trust Fund to tell us we must recycle and do waste to energy with a private investor. Is Government going to take the offer given to them and approved by the Council of Ministers back in December 2017 (same Government now again) or are we going just continue wasting Trust Fund monies? By the way the offer still stands from the company.

When will all the construction projects start as related to the Trust fund with regards to schools, shelters, roof repairs as these will seriously boost our economy with a great injection of monies?

How can we get assurance from the Government that the Trust Fund money will in fact be invested in our economy at this time at a higher pace than

it has been spent or invested thus far? Irma passed in September 3 years ago and we didn't spend a decent 20 million out of the 550 million yet.

Will a full personnel stop be made now for 2020 or are we still hiring critical vacancies or will we promote from internally?

Ministry of Finance

In the policy document there are 4 main areas of priority; financial management improvement, tax compliance, income generating and cost reduction measures and disaster management. This is an ideal time for us to invest in tax reform, in automation and reorganization and efficiency of the Government. What is the Government planning to do in these areas this year yet?

How is the stimulus plan supporting our budget 2020 and are the Dutch in agreement that its used as budgetary support?

How long can Government continue without any financial support be it from the Dutch aid/grant/loan, foreign money or local money?

Does Government realistically expect to receive concession funds this year from the Government owned companies and if yes how much?

Will any Government subsidies regarding salaries be adjusted downwards seeing the financial deficit the budget has and if so what are the projections? The faction asks such so if it happens the subsidized entities can at least prepare for such.

Government has an outstanding to SZV for the OZR Fund. The OZR, does the Government intend to deal with this post and when will the Government start or restart charging civil servants the relevant percentage that they are to pay based on their medical expenses?

Will a tax incentive program be considered for manufacturing companies that would want to come to the island to set up shop? It's a new stream of income and a source of new jobs.

Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure

The faction points to several mentioned items such as sustainable development in the budget for the ministry, the rebounding strength of the country, the quality of life to name a few which all will need some serious capital financing to execute. How does Government see that happening this year?

If we are not to truly follow the policies and tasks laid out in the ministry due to funding, is it now not an ideal time for us to at least do some lagging infrastructure repairs like fixing the potholes, resurfacing where needs resurfacing, fixing traffic sign boards, fixing guard railings etc. using our own people who are on payroll anyway?

At present there's some US\$ 15 million dollars projected to clean up the landfill. Why aren't you making use of locals in collaboration with the Canadian company who offered to clean up the dump free of charge to Government to ensure that the Trust Fund and budgetary money stays in the country?

Are any contracts going to be stopped or cut down due to the financial crisis we are facing presently and will in the future?

How will the social housing aspect be dealt with going forward and what is the role for the SMHDF in this matter?

Ministry of Justice

In the policy document there are various aspects that are mentioned like law enforcement, the fight against crime and the prevention of such, detention and the organization. The prison needs to be rebuilt. How much if any will be made available in budget 2020 to ensure we are compliant with human rights laws?

What additional cost will the Government have to make to keep the Dutch police in Sint Maarten until August seeing their term is up in May 2020?

When will the merger of the personnel departments of Justice and that of Government take place to start creating a leaner Government apparatus? What are the anticipated cost savings?

The function books and rectification of the police payments. How will such be realized with the budget issues we have? Seeing the intent of government to apply salary cuts, maybe we can agree not to cut the salaries of

those still owed monies and function adjustments until such is regulated and we do such post haste.

With regards to high impact crimes one such need is the rolling out of the improvement program of the National Detective Agency. With a possible full personnel stop, how will such be realized and if we roll out the program what would be the financial consequences?

Hearing about the undocumented people registered at SZV, is it the intention that the Government will now spend more time on ensuring that the laws of the land are upheld as it pertains to undocumented persons living and working in Sint Maarten? And if so, can the Government please share the plans with Parliament and specify which monies will be dedicated to this particular task and what the role of the border control is in such?

Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports

The faction notes that various policy aspects are anchored in the strategic plan of 2016-2026 and the National Recovery and Resiliency plan. What caught the eye of the faction is the safety and readiness, the curriculum and the afterschool programs and the infrastructure.

What is the status of education and how does Government intend to upgrade it with the serious budget deficit it has, when its priority was also to enhance the quality of education?

A priority is to have proper education facilities and the faction knows that nearly 3 years later not one school has been addressed with the millions of dollars that have been allocated for such. Does Government expect this to happen and will this incorporate IT infrastructure to facilitate online schooling? The needs are clearly visible.

By introducing social distancing and increased sanitary protocols required as a result of the pandemic, what does Government anticipate the additional financial cost will be?

The opportunities for furthering their education on-island at a tertiary level isn't optimal because we don't take care of our University. The faction really hasn't seen much regarding an economic diversification of the university to make it a serious commercial income stream.

The culture on the island is always second place to everything else in the faction's opinion. Until this day we have no monies on the budget nor in the Trust Fund allocated to build a new Cultural center/dance theater. What is the Government's position on such and will the Government be trying to get funds from the Trust Fund to enhance our culture by us building a much needed Center for the Arts? This is an opportune time to rebuild our country starting by its cultural roots.

The youths are every politicians favorite word during elections but are the forgotten ones after the election. The youths are our future but we seem not to understand such as we don't want to understand them very often and we try to change them. In Government's policy the faction sees lots of advancing and promoting of policies and international agreements and understandings. What the faction would like to see is something structural to ensure the many that fail in their educational path can still become someone. The faction is thinking on a sort of militia where they are paid to become a military and learn a trade at NIPA specifically when it comes to the following professions; extra ordinary police, fireman, coast guard or maritime police assistant, carpenters, mechanics, electricians so that when you have a calamity you have capacity to your disposal. Would the Government support this and ask for funding from the Trust Fund and maybe we can build a base for the VKS and have then do the military trainings beside the educational training? The program should be for a period of between 3-5 years per student.

Daycare is becoming more and more expensive. Is there something that the Government can do to make daycare, good quality daycare, affordable and accessible to not only those who can afford it at the moment, but for all who have children and would want their children to have high quality day care services and pre-school education? The faction didn't really see this in the policy elucidation.

Sports in the policy talks about promoting sports tourism. How does Government intend to do such and which facilities are to be earmarked for such?

What are Government's intentions with upgrading sports in the districts and making use of our professionals in the field of the various sports we have?

Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor

We can expect that the Labor office will be burdened with many requests for dismissals and that from that many disputes will arise. Is the Labor office preparing or have they already prepared for dealing with this heavy burden or this extra load of work that is specifically geared towards these issues?

The medical center was to start construction if the faction is not mistaken. Is there now a delay in the commencement of this project and if so for how long is that anticipated?

What's the legal basis for SZV handling the OZR fund?

On the matter of cost savings. The faction understands that there is a project ongoing. Seemingly it's being funded by the World Bank with respect to cost cutting measures as it pertains to pharmaceuticals. At a time that we are living in now, it would seem an urgent matter to deal with, in order to cut costs. What is the status of this project? Are we looking at moving more towards generic drugs? How much would we save if we moved towards using primarily generic drugs?

Will the implementation of the National Health Insurance as projected to start this year be possible yet?

What's the status of amendments for approval to the AOV legislation regarding the age increase and the premium decrease?

This pandemic is and will continue to cause lots of people stress. Are any measures being put in place to handle these costs financially and medically?

Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication

When the faction reviews the policy of the Ministry on sustainable development basically nearly everything is geared towards tourism either by upgrading, working relationships with French Saint Martin, masterplan but no true diversification of the economy. Irma didn't teach us the lesson that COVID-19 is teaching us when it comes to diversification so the faction hopes to see a serious attempt to diversify in fields like IT, Agriculture and fisheries, Medical (new hospital) and even banking.

What is the Government doing about preparing us for the upcoming season, regardless of how big or how small it may be? Has contact been made with FCCA?

Have any steps been taken to start preparing the island in terms of marketing and strategy?

And in addition to tourism, is the Government thinking about new strategies, new income generating measures, new income generating industry? If yes can the Government elucidate a bit not just the type of industries and the type of business from a micro and macroeconomic point of view, but also creating an investment climate that is attractive to investments and would further diversify the economy of Sint Maarten?

Will Government support an agriculture and fisheries farming public private initiative to ensure the country starts producing its own food?

An extremely lucrative industry is medicinal cannabis industry. Aruba who's economy collapsed, is now moving into the business and has made their changes to the laws. What are we waiting on here in Sint Maarten to also start the cannabis industry under the heading of Agriculture and make serious money for this country?

Why has BTP not been depositing any funds in the Government's coffers over the years or is the faction mistaken as it doesn't see it in the budget? Why is NAFI. 8 million budgeted to buy the building which the faction thought BTP basically already owns and is paying a loan for?

Will the gaming board be established once and for all so we can get away of the negative image we constantly receive regarding this industry?

Will the setting up/launching of the consumers association, the competition authority and the agency for business development and investment promotion be a reality this year? These aren't costly endeavors which will take the controlling of many aspects of the economy a long way.

What's the SME development with regards to the diversification of the economy and why yet another study planned?

The Party for Progress faction has the following questions.

The faction has taken note of the draft. The faction indicates that in this instance it just has a few comments about the budget, bearing in mind that it is, in the faction's general opinion, not a true fiscal picture of the Country's finances, considering the economic and fiscal realities that have been and will continue to impact us due to COVID-19.

Ministry of Finance

Could the Minister of Finance share what measures will be undertaken in order to reduce the budget deficit for the coming years, considering the economic projections of COVID-19 and what we are awaiting from the Netherlands in terms of aid?

Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure

The faction notes that the post of Beheersdienst/Overwerk for the Ministry of VROMI implies, as the faction has mentioned in questions sent to the previous Minister of VROMI, a shortage of personnel. Thus, current personnel are paid overtime, which is always more than 100% of their hourly rate. The faction further mentions that VROMI holds two revenue generating departments, Domain Affairs and Permits. The faction would like to know what efforts are being made to fill these open vacancies in the Ministry, particularly in these revenue-generating departments. It may sound counterproductive to talk about increasing personnel costs and decreasing spending in the same breath, but the faction is of the opinion that additional human resources would improve productivity, thereby increasing the revenue-generating potential of the Ministry, which is money that we know we will need.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports

The faction indicates that in our most important ministry, the Ministry of Education, the faction doesn't see any planned investments that we can really detect in the budget and considering the state of the country's finances, it will be difficult to do so. However, the faction has noticed that the office of the Secretary General has a budget post of 5 million guilders set for 2020, which is an increase since 2019, but that there is no real elucidation as to what this budget posting is meant for. So, considering what we have seen with COVID-19 on the technological gaps of several schools, especially the public schools, is it the plan then to improve existing programs within these entities with this post?

The faction mentions that this budget, while reflecting some of what the reality is, is not in the faction's opinion, entirely the bigger picture. The faction further mentions that it is and has been on deck with its support throughout this crisis. The Ministers and the ministries have no shortage of work ahead of them in the months to come, which the faction is sure they know. But the faction would like to caution all of the Ministers, to understand that we cannot go back to business as usual. Business as usual has been a large part of the problem. The faction mentions that hurricane Irma exposed the underlying conditions that this country has been plagued with since, daresay, Hurricane Luis in 1995. COVID-19 has exploited those underlying conditions, and this faction urges the Government to take a hard look at what we can do to make sure that these underlying conditions disappear so that they cannot be exploited again. While we look at improving our tourism product and re-opening the airport and the port, or reopening the country to the world, the factions cautions that we do not forget that the only resource that powers this country's economy is the people. The faction finds that whether the people speak English, Dutch, Creole, Spanish, whether they have a Sint Maarten last name or not, we have to come to the realization that if we do not build our people, which we have not been doing, we cannot re-open the airport, or we can do that, build hotels, build condos and it would be for nothing, as long as we do not undertake serious measures to address the social issues that have impacted our communities and that affect our most precious resource. So, any funds, in the faction's opinion, must be diversified and channeled into those efforts.

Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication

The faction mentions that while it understands that we have seen no tourism activity since March and will most likely see extremely low numbers until the United States and Europe fully open up, post-COVID, this does not really account for the decline we have noticed in timeshare tax. The faction indicates that to its understanding, this amount should stay relatively the same; the tax is incorporated in the maintenance fees paid by timeshare owners and this charge is paid in the beginning of the year, whether or not the unit is used. The faction would like the Minister to please explain this conclusion.

The faction looks forward to the Minister of Finance's planned cost-cutting measures, which he announced in the meeting yesterday regarding the stimulus plan. The faction urges the Minister to look at the examples within the

Kingdom, right here in the region. The faction stands ready to make whatever sacrifices are necessary to ease the burden of this crisis on the most vulnerable among us and encourages swift adoption of this attitude across the board, through the Government, through the private sector and beyond.

The United Democrats faction has the following questions.

The faction has taken note of the draft and notes that we are way beyond the constitutional deadlines for the budget, so one could ask, why the rush? Do we not have other more pressing matters to attend to?

However, the faction is aware that the Government is faced with a May 1st deadline in connection with:

1. Establishing what deficit amount is allowed;
2. What is possible liquidity assistance for 2020;
3. And what assistance we can receive from the Netherlands for a COVID-19 relief program (SSRP).

Given these factors, the faction leaders in Parliament have been discussing how best to assist the Government in these endeavors, but at the same time maintaining the budget right of Parliament to grant the Government authorization to manage the affairs of the people. This budget is considered by some to be a formality, however upon perusing the budget, you will see that there are some cardinal issues that in the faction's opinion cannot go unquestioned.

The Government is asking for parliament's authorization to do a couple of things: 1) of course to execute the budget, so money for Government operations, but 2) also to contract loans for capital expenses, other loans etc. So we cannot take it lightly! In addition, Government, upon recommendation of the Council of Advice, has since included, whatever up to now is possible to include, of the effect of the Corona pandemic. So some scrutiny by Parliament is necessary.

The faction would like to receive from all 7 ministries:

1. Their policy priorities. For example for the Ministry of TEATT on page 49, mention is made of gaming control and consumers authority.

2. Their legislative priorities. For example for the Ministry of VROMI on page 53.

Ministry of General Affairs

The faction would like to receive a financial list per item in relation to all SLA's (dienstverleningsovereenkomsten) Government has.

What is the status of the Pension law with regard to the increase in pension age?

Can an update be provided on the Integrity chamber? The annual budget for this institution is approximately NAFL 2 million. However, only in 2021 50% of this budget will be at the expense of Sint Maarten.

Where is the NRBP in all of this? How can Parliament assist Government in speeding up these projects?

Will Sint Maarten receive any COVID- 19 assistance from the European Union as part of the OCTs?

Ministry of Finance

The Council of Advice reported on October 15th on the first version of the budget and upon receipt of this budget, advised the Government to make some link with COVID-19, its impact, etc. Government with this budget now has connected this to COVID-19 stimulus plan.

CFT's advice is included, but regards the first version of the budget. According to the law, Government's reaction to CFT should also be included in the budget presentation. Has Government reacted to CFT's advice of February 5th? Has the CFT received this amended budget? Have they reacted and what is Government's response?

So what do we do as Parliament, given the deadline, Government's request and Parliament's responsibility? This budget, to use a CFT's term is a "base path", something from which you move forward, adjusting as you go. The Council of Advice referred to its "preliminary character".

The faction suggests, taking that into consideration, if approving the budget, to cap and temporize Government's spending. In addition the faction

proposes in the budget mandate from Parliament to make it obligatory for Government to present Parliament with monthly reports, as is done for the CFT and monthly reports on the SSRP. Also, Government has not responded to the Council of Advice's remark concerning "beperken tot hoogst noodzakelijke".

In this draft the faction sees many areas for shifting and reprioritizing, but this will come with budget amendments. That's why, the Government must, also in the words of the Council of Advice, limit its expenses to the most urgent expenditures. And that's why the faction believes a mandatory cap is necessary. Consideration can be given for example an off-the-bat example, the budget for the law course is at NAFI. 800.000; Carnival NAFI. 350.00, which are still in the budget and so there are more.

In the opinion of the faction it does not make sense at this time to prolong the handling of this budget unnecessarily, but there are pivotal points that need to be addressed.

By the way, the SSRP attached to the budget is the April 4th version.

The faction concurs with the Council of Advice and the CFT, that the budget is very poor on elucidation.

How can the 4.1 m "projects and activities" be placed under finance? And the 67.8 million to SZV (page 22)?

What is the status of the Airport insurance money?

What is Government's take on the DPO program and its feasibility?

The instruction that was given to Government in 2015 is hanging out there. But what are the conditions and has Government suggested to amend it? How and where is this now (page 8)?

As it relates to the pool of experts which is divided over the ministries is now reduced with 25% to NAFI. 2.200.000. Is this correct? In 2019 it was NAFI. 3.2 million. How is that deduction 25%?

Can the Government explain the NAFI. 142.1 million increase in the expenditures due to the Stimulus plan to the tune of NAFI. 258 million.

The faction mentions that the letter attached to the budget requests Sint Maarten to pursue the Trust Fund money being put at the Central Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten (CBCS). What is Government's position on this?

The factions points out an alleged letter by an MP that was sent through the offices of the Minister of Finance to the Central Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten (CBCS). The Minister was not in possession of this alleged letter. But what is Government's position on the functioning of the CBCS' management and board, the cooperation with the other shareholder (Curaçao), the current monetary measures by the CBCS and CBCS' attention for Sint Maarten?

Ministry of Justice

Can an explanation be given on the Coast guard plan with an increase of NAFI. 780.000?

In terms of the Politiebijstand, can an explanation be given on the letter from Knops dated April 1 on the borging onderlinge regeling, page 3 toelichting?

How are the calculations going for the police to get their next payout?

The faction refers to "Verhoging sxm aandeel grensbewaking 1.2 m." What is this and what did the Minister of Justice recently sign off to? Can Parliament receive a copy of this agreement?

On one hand the police assistance will stop after the first quarter (page 17), then what did we agree with State secretary Knops to take up in the budget?

Can Government explain the post "Soremar building and the Justice Institute" on (page 37)?

Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports

The faction takes note that the budgets for NIPA and USM have been increased which is a good thing. What are the plans?

Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor

An amount of NAFI. 17.8 million is reserved for the Medical Centre. What is this based on?

The policies of the ministry are based on the UD/SMCP governing program. The faction doesn't think there is nothing wrong with that. Some critical items are included and the faction commends the Government for that. The faction looks forward for Government to get the opportunity to pursue e.g. the Health Information System, continue community strengthening, a national health insurance etc.

Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication

The faction would like to understand the rationale behind the intended purchase of the BTP building and an annual saving of NAFI. 500.000.

The faction suggests a larger budget for the Tourism Recovery COVID-19 at the tune of \$5 million. I suggest a larger budget for this effort.

The faction would also like to see a grouping of tourism stakeholders and Government to come with a solid partnered plan. What is the status of the STA?

This report can be considered the end report.

Adopted at the meeting of the Central Committee of the 25th of April 2020.


The Reporter,

R. Brison