

The Hague, June 2, 2023.

Dear Chairman and members of the Committee on Kingdom Relations of the TK and EK,

With some surprise and also some indignation I took note of the message on dossierkoninkrijksrelaties.nl¹ that *suddenly* haste is being made to tackle the cliff on St. Eustatius. After all, it was already widely known (even at the time of Government Commissioner Van Rij). Alarming reports have been systematically concealed and fortunately there is the judge who calls this disgraceful display to order. And yes, then it is no longer possible to wait for the 'Voorjaarsnota' and things must be settled quickly. It characterizes the way *colonial* rule pushes its way through without orderly consultation or democratic decision-making. Now that the judge has spoken once and twice (and a third time) there is apparently no "goat's path" left for this government and things must be docked. Then there is now the shadowy building permit game surrounding the just-built Golden Rock Resort on St. Eustatius, where an illegal path to the ocean dozens of meters below has been dug and really right on the edge of the cliff a nine-meter-deep swimming pool has been dug (in the very unstable soil: volcanic material). It is waiting for accidents....

When will work be done normally on St. Eustatius? More than once I have already made the point that for some Dutch people other laws apparently apply, however uncool that may be. The thought of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* comes to mind: "*All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others*". This well-known book dates back to 1945, but almost eighty years later, we in the country of the Netherlands appear to have learned very little from it. This government is characterized by wisdoms such as '*unknown makes unloved*' and '*it should not cost too much money*'.

And then Minister Schouten goes to Bonaire to make appointments there: apparently any protest there just brings in five tons. Why is Bonaire not seen as "just" one of the three islands that make up the Dutch Caribbean? Why is the Caribbean Netherlands seen as a 'less' part of the indivisible 'country' of the Netherlands (subject to constitutionally arguable exceptions)?

It seems as if the members of Parliament who until now had paid little attention to poverty in the Caribbean Netherlands have also woken up; the oh-so-simple question is now suddenly being asked: *how many people per island are actually living below the poverty line and what does it cost to alleviate poverty quickly?* I hope this will not be a reason to set up another committee to investigate this: CBS has already neatly listed it for you in its first study (dd. November 29, 2022) *brede welvaart Caribisch Nederland*².

¹ <https://dossierkoninkrijksrelaties.nl/2023/05/31/opeens-heeft-den-haag-wel-haast-met-aanpak-klif-statia-kamers-gepasseerd/>

² <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2022/48/eerste-onderzoek-brede-welvaart-caribisch-nederland-toont-wisselend-beeld>

And if the social domain is going to be shaken up anyway: take care of unemployment benefits right away. Should it come to the point that the oil terminal on St. Eustatius closes, then at least that is also taken care of.

Is also the result of the political intervention in 2018 and the report on this by the General Court of Auditors an item on your agenda? The verdict "worrisome" may give cause for that.

Yours sincerely,

J.H.T. (Jan) Meijer MSc MBA,
Cornelis Houtmanstraat 9-b,
2593 RD The Hague.

T +31 6 31 79 58 57 (for SMS and WhatsApp)

E jhtm.nl@gmail.com

W <http://statia.nu> of <http://statia.nu/nl>

cc: *National Ombudsman*