



# Parliament of Sint Maarten

## Staten van Sint Maarten

Parliamentary Year 2024-2025-185

**National Ordinance stipulating the Budget of  
Country Sint Maarten for the service year 2025  
(National Ordinance Budget 2025)**

**Report  
No. 6**

The Parliament, in its meeting of the Central Committee, has exchanged views with the Government on the Draft National Ordinance stipulating the Budget of Country Sint Maarten for the service year 2025.

The Parliament considers the draft to be adequately prepared when the questions below are answered in time for the public meeting so that the draft can be discussed in a Public meeting.

**The Unified Resilient St. Maarten Movement-faction** has taken note of the draft and has the following questions and remarks.

Ministry of Finance

The faction mentions that when colleagues are concluding that the laws were broken, serious allegations have been made, and basically, the MP, at least the faction is reading between the lines, is being silenced about it. The faction states that it is not aware of laws being broken and, therefore, cannot leave it unanswered. The faction would like to receive the ministry's response to the allegations that were brought forward by the National Alliance faction.

The faction commends the Minister on the presentation given and, in particular, the presentation of the budget versus actuals of Q1 from 2025. This gives a better understanding of how realistic the budget is. The faction notes, for instance, that the revenue for permits *vergunningen* has not met expectations. 6,000,000 expected and only 2.9 million generated.

During the handling of the last 2025 budget, the faction asked about the preparation of the financial statements, and in particular, the 2022 and 2023 financial statements. Were these financial statements completed? And if not, when does the Minister anticipate that they will be completed? And when does the Minister expect to complete the 2024 financial statements, which would be due in September?

The faction would like to draw the Minister's attention to page 60 of the budget, with the FTEs and vacancies overview. The *vacatures* and *niet begrote vacatures*, the faction believes that those two columns are switched and asks if the Minister could just give attention to that table on page 60 in the budget.

#### Ministry of General Affairs

The faction mentions GEBE and states that it is a burden on our society. The faction would like to give the Prime Minister the opportunity to enlighten us all in regard to the billing crisis and, what is currently being done and where are we. A lot has been said, and a lot is being said, but the faction thinks that the proper channel is for the Prime Minister to be given the opportunity to provide us, also what has been brought forward here today; will we soon be able to see the light?

The faction continues and mentions sexual harassment cases. The faction would like to know if there is a sexual harassment policy other than the policy that currently is in place in regard to the Civil Servants Code. If not, is the ministry looking into making such a policy specifically in regard to sexual harassment?

The faction mentions that there was a motion passed in January in regard to legislative lawyers. An update was supposed to be given in six months. Seeing that we're approaching the six-month mark, I would like to give the Prime Minister the possibility to update the Members of Parliament as to how we are standing with that motion.

The faction would like to echo sentiments of other colleagues regarding GEBE and what is currently going on. There are a lot of issues with elderly being disconnected. The faction received a distressing phone call again from elderly individuals who were just cut. Seeing the high cost of living, they cannot pay the outstanding, and they cannot even pay enough to get a payment plan. It's a very

difficult situation. Because of the faction members' history with GEBE, the faction tries to mediate and help people when they reach out. But the faction has been noticing recently that even people who are trying to help within GEBE are having difficulty helping now with some of these cases.

The faction recalls a proposal that a member of the faction presented before in another capacity — about adjusting the 8.5% that is built into the fuel clause for net losses. The faction estimates that there is room in that 8.5% that can be significantly reduced in the fuel clause, and we can make a big difference for households.

The faction understands that this has already been asked of GEBE. There is a new management now. The faction encourages government to ask again and see that we go after this 8.5% to see that it can be reduced to a more acceptable amount — so that it can reduce the fuel cost overall.

The faction further draws the Prime Minister's attention to a well-formulated article in the People's Tribune by Mr. Buncamper, where he mentions this same percentage as well. He also mentions some other variables — one of which is the water subsidy, which is now given to the production company.

The faction must note, however, that if we take away that subsidy, we're still going to have to pay for the water — which means the consumer's water rate will go up. So, the faction doesn't believe that that one will have the effect. However, the 8.5% net losses — which are the electricity that leaves the plant — let's say 100 kilowatt leaves the plant — it is estimated here that only 91.5 reaches. And the faction is saying that more than 91.5 reaches the households. So, the net losses are less, and people are paying for that. But we could reduce the bills if we fix that — if GEBE fixes that — in the fuel clause.

The faction would like the Minister to bring that forward to GEBE again. The faction will continue to mention it and continue to ask them to do that because the faction knows that that's something they can do. They just have to have the will.

#### Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication

The faction mentions Soul Beach and that a lot was said and asked. The faction would like to receive clarity on the following. The money that was used,

what was the amount that was used and from which budget was it used? The international artists that came to Sint Maarten, what did they cost? What was the price connected to those artists? In regards to the after-party events that were organized on the French Side, can it be explained why those events were organized on the French Side? Can the ministry provide the full detailed numbers as to what the festival cost in total and what it has gained us?

#### Ministry of Justice

The faction mentions that there was a motion passed in October 2024 in regard to the Crime Fund, where the Minister was urged to comply with the crime prevention funds ordinance and develop a comprehensive crime prevention policy for Sint Maarten. The faction is bringing this forward because it has been very active talking about the crime fund and also wanting to make sure that the crime fund can be used in the proper way through the proper legislation. Seeing that in that motion there were several key pointers mentioned and also the strategic approach to combat the rise in crime and to ensure public safety, and seeing what is currently happening in regards to the crime and continues to happen, also after the round table that we had, the faction believes and would like to know where we currently are with this policy.

The faction continues and also mentions that during the January budget, the current Minister mentioned that the ministry is working hard on the policy and didn't want to submit a policy for submitting sake and that the new policy will be submitted for the budget amendment. The faction would like to know where we are with this policy and if this policy can be submitted shortly. If so, when? Seeing that it is obligated by law.

The faction indicates that recently, the ministry was in Parliament and that in that meeting, the ministry made it clear that there is a policy plan being developed in regard to the ankle bracelet. The faction mentioned during that meeting to sit with specialists, such as Attorney Peppy Sulvaran for example, in regards to this policy, seeing that this policy is active in Curacao since 2015. The faction would like to know what the update is on this policy. The faction thinks that this is the only option available, but stands to be corrected, to tackle the current human rights violations that are currently taking place.

The faction mentions the recent report that was brought out by the Law Enforcement Council dated June 6th, 2025. The faction would like to know if the ministry will take the advice of the Council and invoke article 32 of the Kingdom Act of the Enforcement Council.

The faction mentions the question regarding the price per inmate per day. Did the faction understand correctly that it is in the operational cost? The faction would like to ask if it can be researched a little bit more. The faction would like to know if it has been looked into how much it will cost to monitor inmates with ankle bracelets.

The faction can remember that it was mentioned in the past that there were about 25 ankle bracelets. Is that still the case? Are there more? How much of those ankle bracelets are currently in effect?

In regards to the amount of years versus the amount of persons, the faction would like to know based on the amount of persons what the oldest verdict is.

In regards to the policy that is being referred to that the inmates association lawyer provided and also attorney Sulvaran provided a plan, the faction would like to know what the reason is that that plan cannot be used. The faction understood that it was mentioned that there are two different law books being used. Can this be clarified? According to the faction, there is no difference in the laws, but the faction stands to be corrected. The faction would like to know what the difference is and, if there is a difference, why it cannot be tweaked to the legislation of Sint Maarten if it is mentioned in the law.

The faction continues and indicates that according to the faction, it's also based on an MB and can be decided on by a Minister. The factions also know that in the past, it was decided on by previous ministers to have, in the sake of capacity, because let's be real about it, the capacity issue is not an issue of now, and in the past, there were policies made to temporarily lift the capacity issue. The faction would like it to be clear what the reason is that, currently, that cannot be used or not be developed. Or if it can be developed, seeing the urgency, why can't the current policy that has been submitted by Mr. Sulvaran be tweaked to Sint Maarten if it's being said that the legislation is different?

The faction continues and indicates that it was mentioned in regard to the crime fund policy plan, completed in 2025. Is there a date for that? It's quite broad. Having those policy plans in place, projects can then be implemented, and the current the current crime rise will then be tackled through those plans. The faction believes that if you don't have a plan, it can be used for all kinds of things. The faction believes that we would like to avoid that.

The faction is also happy to hear that based on the report of the *Raad voor Rechtshandhaving*, the ministry, together with Kingdom Partners, is looking into making sure that that is being handled on a Kingdom level.

The faction continues and mentions payments to justice workers. According to what the faction understood that there were payments to the justice workers. Can the Minister clarify this?

The faction mentions that the policy plans and previous plans are available through the Minister. Were these reviewed? The faction would like to know what the conclusion has been in regard to that.

In regards to the several visits that were restricted. The faction would like to know if that has been fixed. Are the inmates currently getting visits and telephone calls with their family members? Is that also properly arranged with the ones in Bonaire?

It was mentioned in regards to the payments and that no payments would be able to be made. The faction would like it to be clarified what the status is of that. What kind of consequences can that have for the people of Sint Maarten?

Seeing that rehabilitation and resocialization is a must; the faction would like to know if the education programs have started as well. Also, the work, as the law gives inmates the opportunity to work, has that started? If not, is there any clarity on when that will start?

The faction mentions ASYCUDA. The faction knows that it has been put as one of the amendments to the budget. How is the preparation coming along? Because we are already in June. And so, when the budget is approved — are we ready to go with ASYCUDA? Or are we going to say that it has to be postponed? It is very important to know if it could start this year, as projected and as budgeted.

#### Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport

The faction indicates that it was recently once again contacted by several parents of students in regards to being discriminated because of their hair. It was very troubling to hear that that's still happening. The faction is aware that this has the ministry's attention.

The faction continues and mentions that there was a motion passed in January, and the faction would like to know if the ministry can provide Parliament with an update as to how the ministry is going to tackle this matter in regards to hair discrimination within the schools.

The faction refers to the answer to the question of the 4-year-old and allowing them to go to school and how that would apply for the coming school year, and questions if the same approach can be taken for hair discrimination. Seeing that we are getting it in Q3, can we already let the schools know that this is coming to ensure that for the coming school year, the schools do not discriminate against the students based on their hair?

#### Ministry of Public Health, Social Development, and Labor

The faction indicates that it finds it nice to see that there's a mental health campaign going on. It's good to ask the question "If you're good" because often we forget to ask each other that question.

The faction is also happy to see that the Help Desk is still operational, and the faction cannot wait to see when the next lectures take place that can benefit the community of Sint Maarten.

The faction continues and mentions that there was a motion passed in January in regards to the mental health policy and would like to know, seeing that also there was a 6th-month mark on that, how we are standing. Is the policy already in effect? The last time when the Minister was here, it was mentioned that it was almost finalized. The faction would like to know where we are standing.

The faction is happy to hear about the legislation that is currently being pushed and currently pending at the SER. In light of the ministry's co-legislative role in guiding and pushing the legislation forward, the faction would like to know what concrete measures are being taken to ensure that entities such as the

SER issue their advice within the six-week term and if the ministry is monitoring these timelines, and how are delays being addressed to avoid legislative bottlenecks.

The faction would like to know when General Health Insurance will be instituted. SZV is waiting on it. Cft mentioned it. And as long as we do not have GHI, we continue to run liabilities. That is the faction's opinion. The faction understood that we were scheduled to start GHI on January 1st, 2026, but in a recent meeting in Parliament, the faction took note that this would not be the start date anymore. The faction would like to know when is the new start date. How did that extension come about? Did the SG of VSA advise the Minister to start in January 2026 or 2027? When? And did the department head advise the Minister? Or is this postponement based on the Minister's own assessment or that of the Minister's cabinet?

The faction just has a clarification—not even on a question that the faction asked, but on another question from one of the faction's colleagues. The Minister answered about his cost-saving measures. He mentioned that he saved 100,000 on travel by not attending the ILO conference. So, it's not clear—the faction is not certain what the Minister meant, and that's why the faction is asking for clarification.

This 100,000—is it that the Ministers before him used 100,000 more? Or is it that he was going to use 100,000? The faction would like for the Minister to clarify and let us know—in 2023 and 2024, when it was not an option to not go to ILO because Sint Maarten was called before the tribunal, we had to go. In 2023, how much was the cost? How big was the delegation? And how many days did the delegation stay? And also in 2024: How much was the cost? How many people? And how many days? The faction is just trying to see what the 100,000 that was saved. The faction notes that it champions saving money and efficiency in government all the time. The faction congratulates the Minister on that—but would like the Minister to give these numbers so that we can understand better.

The faction just wants to clarify that the Minister will bring back the numbers requested. The faction knows the Minister said he would come back later and is hoping that “later” means when he brings the rest of the answers, he will also bring back the answers to the questions regarding the cost of travel—how many people and how many days.



The faction does not want the public perception to be that former Ministers—although it was mandatory that they traveled—elaborately for 100,000. The faction is quite certain that the cost for the former Minister to travel did not cost 100,000, especially considering that travel was done in economy class to Geneva.

The faction mentions the groundbreaking for the MHF and believes that that is a good sign, seeing that it is moving forward with the design. The faction does have a fundamental issue when reading the article. The faction knows that agreements were made beforehand with the NRPB and the World Bank. But are we really telling our local people that we don't have a local architect who could have qualified to design this building? The faction is seeing a pattern here happening too often, which is concerning. It is like we are only good to be a subcontractor to these major projects. The faction is happy to hear that the Minister went to NRPB, put his foot down, and made certain moves and discussions to get things done. But let us be clear as to how we want to set the direction because we cannot, as a government, allow NRPB or the World Bank to determine certain things as well. Because when we have discussions with NRPB, you hear it's not NRPB. It's the government. The faction believes that we should take control of that narrative as well.

#### Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure

The faction wants to congratulate the Minister of VROMI for the work that has been done on the roads. Everyone in Sint Maarten can see our roads — we drive on our roads — and we can see the difference. The faction believes that the road paint wasn't successful everywhere — we need to work on that. The faction is hoping that we can also get garbage under control.

The faction would like to know when will the current garbage contracts come to an end. Does the Minister intend to do the new tender in-house, or will the Minister hire a firm to do the tender? The faction finds it very important for the cleanliness of Sint Maarten overall.

The faction inquires about the Housing Foundation and affordable homes. In the past, a former Minister had a meeting with the Housing Foundation to see how certain land could be transferred to persons. The faction believes that it is important to have ownership in this country. Some of the areas discussed were

the FOGA estate and the South Reward area, where the Housing Foundation has these homes in place. The Foundation had agreed that they would be willing to turn over the homes to those persons already living in them for a symbolic fee. Hence, the faction would like to suggest that the Minister contact the Housing Foundation to see if that's still feasible, and that way, we can create immediate home ownership for those persons living in those areas.

**The Democratic Party-faction** has taken note of the draft and has the following questions and observations with regards to the draft national ordinance.

The faction would like the government to provide an update to the answers given to the faction in the answers of the Central Committee to the first budget 2025. Several of those answers referred to things being updated and reports being expected. The faction would like to know where we stand right now with those issues.

The faction would like to get an update or answers to where matters stand with the motions as approved during the handling of the budget in first instance. A report or an update that was promised regarding tax reform and tax reform issues. The faction would like an actual update on the whole tax reform initiatives of the government as outlined in the answers given in January.

The faction would like to come to the draft budget in front of us and would like to congratulate the Minister and the ministry with the presentation of why we're here today and what this budget contains. The faction took note of the fact that this budget is being proposed to go into effect as per the approval and ratification of such and not requiring the six-week wait for the Ombudsman. This budget is being treated as an urgent matter to be passed, which the faction agrees it is.

#### Ministry of Finance

The Minister of Finance mentioned issues such as the increase in the vacation allowance and the indexation. The faction would like to know if, depending on where we are, civil servants can expect their increased vacation

allowance and indexation as per the planning based on the law vacation allowance and indexation that we approved.

Notwithstanding this budget, the faction hopes we can get this budget out of the way as soon as possible, but the faction wants to make sure what the government's thinking is in the handling of this budget for those items there.

In that context, the faction would also like to know where we stand with the capital projects as approved in the budget. Which ones are ready to go with the approval of the capital budget?

Can the government give a ballpark figure of the fixed liabilities, *de verplichtingen*, in the budget? Differently, than some expect, there is very little room for expanded expenditures if we continue to follow the budget as it is and do not start to focus on other streams of revenue for matters such as mitigating the effects of climate change and the like. Can the government provide a rough overview of that?

The faction would also like to know the status of the tourist tax proposal.

The faction mentions that at this stage, draft law proposals are being developed, reviewed, assessed, and finalized. Once the necessary data and financial analysis are completed, the Minister stated that she will make decisions on the specific direction to take, and the legislative process will be initiated. Can the Minister Provide Tax reform updates and an update with respect to the Management of the Tax inspectorate, as well as efforts to promote the LB as *eindheffing*.

The faction has concluded, in looking at the budget before us, that the government is moving from a management "*beheer*" budget to a more policy "*beleid*" type budgeting process. That is why now we have for all of the paragraphs in all of the ministries a synopsis of the cost, personnel on one hand and material cost on the other hand. However, while the faction applauds this procedure, the faction thinks it is going a little too slow for where we are, and hence the faction's request to the government and TWO to please pay attention to what the government considers priorities in this regard, notwithstanding the finalization of TWO in 2027. The process and the budget right of Parliament are crucial to the faction.

Since we have started to move to a more summarized budget, which for the oversight is a good thing; however, that would mean that the elucidation for Parliament needs to connect to the budget. While the faction would not advocate to go and change this budget to reflect that connection with the amended budget that is going to be presented. The faction requests that the budget amendment have a better alignment with the elucidation. So when Parliament sees under a post, like it is in several ministries and departments, subsidies with a total amount, we should be able in the elucidation to that department to find the matching sum of subsidies and which subsidies they are.

The faction notes that what will have to change is the way that government's budget is elucidated. It is going to have to be better aligned.

In that same context, moving to a policy budget, the faction would recommend that the list of subsidies, as provided as an annex to the budget, be reviewed and updated. We can no longer have that a particular subsidy, in the subsidy list of the budget, refers to a decision of the Executive Council. That is not an updated list of subsidies. Please take this along in dealing with the proposed budget guidelines and regulations.

The faction notes that the same goes for the matter of SLA's "*dienstverleningsovereenkomsten*". The faction indicates that if you check that list, you will see that everything under the sun, for example, be it for insurance, be it for ads, is under SLA. The faction is of the opinion that those are wrong classifications of expenditures.

The faction would like the government and the ministry of Finance to review, to present along with the next budget, hopefully, the listing of SLAs and the subsidy list.

#### Ministry of General Affairs

What is the government contemplating to do with respect to electoral reform for which an amount is budgeted for the committee electoral reform in the budget? The faction hopes that it is actually in the budget and not only under the subsidy list.

This subsidy chapter is something that needs to be dealt with by the government. We have a subsidy ordinance, but regularly next to the

*“compatabiliteit”* ordinance there are guidelines to be applied for subsidies and the faction believes that those are lacking.

The faction would like to thank the Prime Minister for publicizing the fact that a report has been had from the Bureau of Telecommunication with respect to relief to be offered in connection with electricity and maybe even water. The faction would like to know, in presenting this report to the GEBE Supervisory Board, what has government stated. What has government recommended to the board in order to effectuate relief?

#### Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication

The faction mentions that the Minister made mention of the Soul Beach situation and that she found that it was sufficiently marketed. The faction knows that it was only about 5 or 6 months that we actually had to market the event on such a grand scale. Given the opportunity to have a full year, how does the Minister see those projections if we had a full year without disturbance to market an event like that? What does the Minister see that event coming up to?

The faction would also like to see the plans for the Clem Labega Square.

The faction would like to know if there is any update to be given on the issue of signage on the island. Who is responsible, or who gives the permit when it comes to the area outside of the airport fence? Is that the airport’s responsibility to decide which and how signage can go up there, or is it something of the general ministry of TEATT?

The faction mentions several questions regarding matters that were asked in January for the first budget and asked the different ministries to review those questions and provide a further update where relevant.

Was the gambling legislation finalized? Had the business case for the Gambling authority started, and by whom?

Has there been any progress with the announced Agreement with SCDF going forward?

The faction would like the Minister to provide updates on the initiatives, such as the establishment of the St. Maarten Tourism Authority and the development of a Tourism Master Plan and Carrying Capacity Studies.

### Ministry of Justice

The faction mentions the answer regarding the amount of 300 years to be served. The faction would like to know how many persons that equates to and specifically between the ages of 18 to 25. How many persons are awaiting placement in prison and between the ages of 18 and 25? The faction believes that this is very important because when we're talking about rehabilitation programs to come, this is a very important age group. We need to understand that if there is a significant amount of 18/19/20 years, we need to tailor our rehabilitation programs to them to provide them with the best possible second chance available.

The faction would like some further clarification and update on the crime fund.

Taken from December 2024 answers:

"The Ministry acknowledges the concerns raised by foster and prospective foster parents regarding the insufficiency of the current stipend in adequately covering the costs of caring for children in foster care. In response to these challenges, legislation is currently being drafted to increase the monthly stipend for foster parents. " Where is this at?

"While illegal migration is a concern, overpopulation as a direct result of these flows has not been conclusively determined. The ministry has not observed a significant number of residency applications from individuals unable to demonstrate legal arrival on the island. To fully understand the impact of migration on Sint Maarten's population density and resources, a thorough, data-driven study would be required." Is this being done or initiated?

Regarding the Proposal for the Prison Rehabilitation Training Program 2024. Has this been accepted to be executed?

### Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport

The faction mentions that the Minister made mention of being able to travel more and going to different schools to create different MOUs. The faction mentions that COVID showed us that you don't necessarily have to meet in person to create these relationships. You could do these things online via webinars, which are also more efficient and cost-saving. The Minister mentioned

that more trade schools need to be looked into having MOUs. Having things that are going to add value to the future of education. The faction read something a couple of days ago saying that 60% of college graduates don't get jobs in their fields, which we already know. So, definitely learning a skill – coding – all kinds of things other than business management. There's nothing wrong with that.

The faction indicates that it was mentioned that school fights are down, which is a great thing. Hence, the faction wants to know if anything was done structurally and if any changes were made. If so, kudos and the faction would like the Minister to keep that up.

The faction would like **to know if any further attention is** being given to the issue of the tertiary education dilemma. The dilemma being of the United States decisions regarding international students which include our own. Not only to keep the people of Sint Maarten informed as to some of these decisions by the United States government, but also continue diligently to seek alternatives to be able to propose these to students, current and upcoming.

The faction states that we need to look closer at the fact that we and our students are European Union citizens and what that could mean, not only for us because we have such a passport, but our students as well in the different European countries who make up the European Union.

Taken from December 2024 answers:

“These funds are available to dance institutions on a request basis; however, the budget has been reduced from ANG 200,000.00 to ANG 100,000.00 due to budget cuts.” How are these requests being assessed?

“The Department of Culture was instrumental in establishing the organizing and execution of the National Cultural Parade and has supported the S’Maatn National Cultural Parade Foundation annually since its inception. “

How much assistance is anticipated for 2025? What about the cataloging of our national symbols as a sequence to “national symbols of St. Maarten”?

"The Minister would like to expand the list of schools in the US that we have MOUs with and try to explore other states outside of Florida because even that is something to think about when exploring these agreements. That is

something the Minister will work on in 2025 and hope to come back to Parliament with an update.”

With the changed policies in the USA, what are any other approaches and avenues worth exploring, such as other European institutions, USM, and affiliated schools?

The faction would like to commend the Minister for staying on top of the issue of our students, especially because of and in connection with the policy changes that continue to come from the United States with respect to international students, amongst which we all have taken note of the information evening, and the faction would really encourage the ministry officials to think outside of the box in terms of coming up with possibilities in this digital age.

The possibilities for our students are greater than when the law was drafted and based on the connection “*de aansluiting*” with our educational system.

The faction would like to react to the government's actions in connection with the vaping issue that we have in Sint Maarten and throughout the world. The faction has taken note of the comment that the report is ready and that now the ministerial committee will meet. Is there any type of a budget mentioned, and if it is ahead of the discussions yet to take place, could a ballpark figure be given? What will it cost for us to start or even attempt to address the matter of vaping? Could that ballpark figure be provided?

The faction mentions the matter of the scholarship and the scholarship list. The faction hears and appreciates the move and opening even further of the possibility for areas under the Orange Economy to fall under talent scholarships.

The faction would like the Minister to confirm whether on the latest regular scholarship listing, matters like theater, visual, creative, and festival arts specialists, which were on the regular scholarship list that is still the case in the most recent regular scholarship list. And if they are, is it the government's intention to take that portion from the regular scholarship list and expand the talent scholarship list?

Can the Minister give her views on those specific areas and as mentioned, these were on the regular scholarship list.



Ministry of Public Health, Social Development, and Labor

The faction mentions the matter of the reparation law SZV in order to offer medical coverage to sole proprietors, taxi drivers, bus drivers, and the like. Where do we stand with that?

Back in January, Parliament was promised that the results of the STEPS survey would be available in February and analyzed. Is it now something that can be shared?

The faction requested of the Minister data with respect to our labor market. Employment, unemployment, requests for work permits, etc., etc.

STEPS and the results. The faction would like to commend the organization and recommend the conference on Women's Health that is upcoming next week.

Taken from December 2024 answers:

"While resources and capacity challenges within VSA have temporarily slowed progress on this initiative, the attention on the matter is appreciated. The ministry will reconnect with ECYS and Justice to identify ways to move this important initiative forward. "

Have you been able to move forward on the scourge of vaping amongst youngsters?

"The recommendations received on the HAP allude to the fact that a HAP is needed. A plan on the proper implementation of such a service is expected to be received within the first quarter of 2025."Have you received this?

The STEPS survey was finalized in October 2024. The data is currently being cleaned and prepared for processing. In total, 2014 valid interviews were completed, and 775 blood tests were carried out. The initial results from the preliminary data analysis will likely be completed in late January-early February 2025. A preliminary report may be drafted in late February or early March 2025. The final report should be completed by April 2025. Was it completed, and can it be shared with Parliament?

The updates to Book 7 Title 10 of the Civil Code that governs labor agreements was last updated in 2022. A monitoring period is necessary to

properly evaluate its effects. During this monitoring period, the ministry will increase awareness & controls, which will also ensure that workers' & employers' rights and responsibilities are guaranteed. Has this happened? How?

"Can the Minister confirm that this has been done and that there are no such cases to be amended because of the minimum wage increase? Thank you for allowing the ministry the opportunity to remind the applicant that they can reapply. " Has this been done? Have applications been received, and have adjustments been made?

"As soon as the information of the STEPS survey is cleaned up and can be shared with Parliament, can that be done, please? Yes, this will be shared with Parliament once the process is completed. "Please share.

"The faction would like some further explanation as to the issue and the concern regarding the cannabis legislation. Due to an ongoing legal issue, the ministry is currently unable to provide transparency regarding the matter in question. " What legal issue and where does this stand presently?

"Can Parliament receive some labor stats in terms of unemployment as well as whether there have been any queries and complaints from employees regarding their rights? The ministry is currently compiling all relevant documents. Once received, The Ministry will review what can and cannot be shared in order to comply with your request. " Where do we stand with providing this information?

The faction would like to know the intention behind the white paper on the approach to cannabis legislation.

Regarding the coverage for sole proprietors, taxi and bus drivers, vendors, etc. The more the SAAHA is being pushed forward, the more urgent it becomes to deal with this matter. The faction was taken aback to hear that it has not even been drafted, when according to the faction and the information provided over the course of time, it was drafted and is at the Council of Advice. The faction is talking about the reparation to SZV legislation. What is the issue now? Can the Minister please explain this? The faction has submitted in writing to the ministry ways that the matter can be dealt with in the meantime.

It was disappointing to hear where we stand with the results of the STEPS survey. The faction is assuming that the steps survey is an international

instrument, definitely regional as far as PAHO is concerned, but even the WHO. It's a recognized instrument, and reports coming from that are standard reports with clear outcomes. Alcohol use, tobacco use, and the outcomes based on the survey. To hear that what has been collected with the assistance of the survey by PAHO, that that now needs to be translated into more layman's terms, then the faction would like to understand what is meant by that.

Did we not receive the outcome for alcohol use? Is that clothed in some scientific term? What is the understanding that the information collected from households are suddenly now a scientific type of analysis?

The faction notes that there is a NCD policy, that the recommendations in that policy were put off in order to await the STEPS results. Does that information need to be dissected? The faction does not understand why the information that the STEPS survey is supposed to provide, why now that after a delay in having the survey done, now we are hearing that information is to be dissected.

Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure

The faction would like to know if any type of approach can be developed, also for public information, regarding how the government and the VROMI ministry is going to deal with the many building permit requests that are in at government. Can the ministry put this clearly in an outline?

Taken from December 2024 answers:

"While this was deemed urgent by the ministry as the road deteriorated in the last month, Well Road will be tackled with a permanent solution, not being part of the current resurfacing or hard surfacing project." Is the permanent solution underway?

"This is one of the reasons the Minister has been critical of the hard-surfacing project and has been closely monitoring its progress. Over the next few days, the Minister will review the current state of the project and announce a way forward in 2025." Has this been decided on, and what is the plan?

"Design and engineering plans for upgrading the Orange Grove Road, including the implementation of drainage leading to the Lagoon, were finalized a few years ago. While funding challenges have delayed the implementation, these

well-prepared plans are ready to move forward as soon as resources become available. How realistic is it to expect this from the 2025 Capex?

"This initiative was led by the Ministry of TEATT. VROMI gave feedback to the policy, however, the exact status can be requested from the ministry of TEATT." Do we now have an updated beach policy?

"The Mullet Bay area, including the Mullet Bay Pond, is included in this plan. There are important prerequisites for establishing and implementing such a zoning plan, which the ministry is currently addressing. While capacity—both human and financial—remains a key factor in the success of this project, the Minister has publicly announced intentions to advance this initiative, particularly in support of MP York's motion. It is the Minister's intention to share the aforementioned map in the meeting that will follow up on the subject of coastline zoning and protection." What is the status of the Mullet Bay Area and the Green Zone plan?

"A public tender was issued for this project, with scope solely for Philipsburg. In a general sense, VROMI is responsible for the purchase of bins. To make distribution fair, haulers are supplied with bins, and they, in turn, make these available to residents. Although this is an existing procedure, it is the intention to bring about changes to this to ensure proper logging of locations of bins take place." Any progress with this matter?

The faction would like to thank the Minister for following up on the question about VROMI ministry making use of the offered cooperation from the MER, *de milieu effecten rapportage*, is falling under the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment. The Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment, established by law, is a not-for-profit independent knowledge institute in the field of environmental and social impacts. This knowledge is used to advise and support Dutch and foreign governments in integrating environmental, social, and climate considerations in decision-making. This is done with integrity and in an authoritative and transparent manner. The vision is that the NCEA ensures that governmental authorities have access to the knowledge of environmental, social, and climate issues they need when making decisions. As a result, governmental decisions are of better quality, better substantiated, and more widely supported. In this way, the NCEA contributes to the quality of the living environment and to sustainable development in the Netherlands and abroad.

The faction has also indicated that Ms. Simone Philipe, who was here in March and is a member of the Dutch Association for the United Nations, hence her reaching out in connection with her offer to Sint Maarten to cooperate with the government, and the VROMI ministry in particular, in assisting in the manner that they can, which was highlighted from their website.

In addition, the Parliament of Sint Maarten, represented by several Members during our last visit to Panama to Parlatino, the Parliament of Sint Maarten is a signatory to an alliance created by the Parlatino for climate justice and a just transition. The faction continues and states that it is the intention, based on that alliance paper, to ask via the committee of VROMI to have Ms. Philipe, even if it's via Zoom, present what this particular Dutch institution can do in assisting Sint Maarten.

The faction would like to encourage the Minister to take up that connection because of the issue of capacity that we keep hearing and the complexity of some of these matters that the ministry is facing. Fact is, when we see an institution like this because of scale of the Netherlands, they can have a concentration of expertise in the many different areas.

Do we have expertise? Yes, we do, but it is so thinly spread that we can't have the kind of concentration that you would need to put on a very complex matter. Thus, decision-making is stalled and delayed because of the process if you want to give it a good review.

In respect to the VNGI, the faction would like the Minister to clarify the following.

Several months ago, an official of VNGI mentioned that their agreement with the government of Sint Maarten is coming to an end, and it did not seem as if it would be extended. The same kind of assistance at no more than a subscription fee is also available for our different ministries, including the ministry of VROMI. Is it the intention to extend that formal agreement with the VNGI, and if not, is it an issue of money for the subscription to be a part of, or is it something else? The faction would like to be informed of that.

The Cft in its advice on the 4<sup>th</sup> *uitvoeringsrapportage* has indicated that Sint Maarten is not moving fast enough on using the Capex budget. When the faction hears some of the projects that seem to be ready to go, road projects and the like, the faction would like to know if it would not be necessary to reschedule and reprioritize capital projects based on those that can move one time, even

though they would have been at a lower priority when the Capex budget was made.

**The Party for Progress-faction** has taken note of the draft with interest and has the following questions and remarks.

Ministry of Finance

The faction indicates that when reviewing the amounts of *kapitaaldienst uitgaven*, it is very easy to look at the specification that is done on page 40 and compare it to a detailed listing that comes up from page 45. Between page 40 and page 43 we have a *kapitaal dienst* overview between 2023, 2024, 2025 and then the differences between the last years. When we are looking at that amount, we can trace it to the additional information that they have, which is a *toelichting op de kapitaaldienst*, which is available on pages 44-45. The faction indicates that everything matches except for the ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport. The total on page 41 is 12,848,186, and the total amount on page 45 is 7,568,186.

The faction would like to understand the following. In this *kapitaaldienst*, the first section and then the *toelichting*, what can we expect in the future for any changes in this amount. The faction would like to understand how to move through the document right now and then going forward.

Can the ministry explain the difference between page 42 where the overall difference on the entire table of the *kapitaal dienst* is 61,725,230. The difference is when one goes to the *toelichting* page, showing a difference of 58,710,622. So here it is the difference of 58 million on page 45 versus the difference of 61.8 million on page 43. Are these differences supposed to match?

There is another specification, another breakdown, of personnel expenses. When reviewing this breakdown of salaries per ministry, they do refer to the number of staff. The faction would like to know, when looking at the breakdown on pages 51 to 60, if it should be able to be traced back to the *gewone dienst uitgaven* at the beginning of the budget, which is pages 1 through 39. This question is applicable to every ministry.

The faction indicates that it didn't understand the explanation given on the difference noted for ECYS. The Minister mentioned something about being budget-neutral, but the faction would like a more detailed explanation.

The faction would like clarity and questions if it should stop looking at the original budget from January as our starting point, but this document that we received on May 23rd and start from there entirely.

The faction indicates that when we come to the *kapitaal dienst* on page 41 in the amount of 12,848,186, and then when the faction tries to trace it to the amount on page 45 of 7,568,186, the faction would like to know if that is correct or not.

The faction would like to make sure, going forward, that the specifications that we have that were being questioned do not really match.

#### Ministry of General Affairs

The faction continues and mentions the rental properties and *overheidsgebouwen*. In the original version of the 2025 budget, the faction noticed that the Sint Maarten Tourism Bureau was missing from the list of all the rental properties. This was corrected in the version that we got of the budget, which is referred to as IS/666. In that version, the faction remembers that the Sint Maarten Tourism office address was corrected to 28 Front St., and a different amount was indeed listed there. However, now, when we go back to this new version of the budget, it may have been overlooked, so now the old address is back in.

The faction mentions that the list of rental properties is still incorrect for the tourist office on Front Street and the econ office space across Fairway Market in Point Blanche. The landlord is wrong. There is supposed to be use of a building TEATT across Fairway Market. There is supposed to be use of a building on Front Street, which is the Sint Maarten Tourism Bureau. There is also, in the same ministry, the use of BTP building. Because the BTP, the faction believes it is owned by Government, the faction doesn't expect to see it in the list.

The faction would like to make sure that when the correction is being done again that just the address is not simply changed. The faction would like them to actually separate who is still in the building across Fairway Market and

who is in the building in Front St. Sint Maarten Bureau. And then, of course, we just mentally make a note that there's also part of TEATT departments also in the BTP building.

Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport

Ministry of Public Health, Social Development, and Labor

Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure

**The Soualiga Action Movement-faction** has taken note of the draft and has the following questions.

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of General Affairs

Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication

What did the Soul Beach organizers pay to the government of Aruba while they were hosting the event there? And for how long did the Soul Beach festival take place in Aruba—how many years were they on the beautiful island of Aruba, and how much did they pay?

Ministry of Justice

The faction recalls back in 2016 or 2014—somewhere in that range—there was a proposal made by the then Minister of Justice. The faction believes it was between 2010 and 2014. It was a good proposal, where if someone was undocumented - the whole breakdown had come to Parliament, including how much it would save the government - and their time would be shorter than that



of a citizen from Sint Maarten, they would be automatically deported back to their country.

The proposal was accepted by Parliament, but if memory serves correctly, one of the mechanisms in the system—namely the Constitutional Court—ruled that it was unconstitutional because it is a form of discrimination. If two people commit the same crime, why is one getting less?

The Members of Parliament agreed with the proposal from the Minister of Justice, but constitutionally, it was not allowed. The faction believes that that plan was scrapped. The faction requests confirmation on the exact timeline and whether this was indeed the case.

The faction would like to know how many prisoners were sent to Bonaire.

Additionally, the faction would like to know if the prison in Bonaire meets human rights standards. There have been a lot of talks in Sint Maarten in regard to human rights violations in our prison —both the police holding cells and the prison at Point Blanche. That's one of the reasons why there's a plan to have the prison redone.

Can the Minister confirm if the prison in Bonaire is up to par and is meeting the human rights standards? The faction does not want the impression to be given that prisoners are sent to a substandard prison in Bonaire. The faction believes that that is something that needs to be clarified. Whether it is the general ward where they hold the criminals or the psych ward, the faction would like to know if that facility is up to human rights standards.

The faction would like to know how long the inmates are designated to remain in Bonaire. According to the information the faction received, the reason the Minister moved from the government administration building to At Illidge Road was because of the mold in her office.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport

Ministry of Public Health, Social Development, and Labor

Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure

**The National Alliance-faction** has taken note of the draft with interest and has the following questions and remarks as it pertains to this national ordinance.

Ministry of Finance

The faction mentions fees from, for example, the casino and lotteries, etc. They do not fall under the Minister's purview, but the overview of outstanding fees does pass the Minister's desk. The faction would like to know what the current status is as it pertains to outstanding casino and lottery fees and, adjacent to that as well what is outstanding based on taxes from hotels and grocery stores.

What is the outstanding number as it pertains to *erfpacht*? Also, in the Minister's presentation where *vergunningen* and fees were shown, the faction would like to know under which category does *erfpacht* fall. Does it fall under *vergunningen*, or does it fall under fees?

The faction mentions that a couple of months ago, the Minister made reference that she found research had to be done into the reason why Soul Beach left Aruba. The faction would like to know what is the status of that research and what are the findings of that research.

The faction would like to request all advice that were submitted to the Minister by the ministry of Finance as it pertains to Soul Beach. The faction indicates that a similar request was made to the Minister of TEATT and that the request was denied. The faction is hoping that if the Minister has any documentation on the matter from her ministry, that she will lead by example and not follow the trend set by her colleague.

The faction mentions that in the presentation, the Minister showed the multi-year income where the Minister in detail went through the added cost throughout the coming years that the country will undergo, but the faction didn't get the explanation of the added income. Between now and 2028, the faction saw a difference of 50 million guilders. Can the Minister elaborate on that?

Regarding subsidized school teachers, the faction would like to know if the funds were sent to the school boards.

The faction indicates that in the budget, there were explanations based on the capex expenditures for various projects. If, for example, there's a Capex project that's going to be executed this year, 2025, but the completion of the project depends on capex to be requested and received in a subsequent year, if, for any case that capex is not approved and we do not get the capex, what happens to said project? Can the Minister elaborate on that or explain under that circumstance what happens to the project?

Furthermore, in the budget, the faction went through the rental overviews. The faction looked up the amount of rent that is being paid now for the new tourism office and noted that the digital overview has one number and one set of information, and the physical overview has a different rental number and a different owner for the building. This is all from the same budget. The faction would like the Minister to explain why the same budget in the digital form and in the physical form has two different sets of information. Can the Minister explain that?

The faction continues and mentions that the Minister of TEATT and the Minister of VROMI recently had a meeting with the market vendors, where the vendors expressed their need for any type of financial relief. It is said that the Minister of TEATT told them that she had a conversation with the Minister of Finance about the matter. The faction would like to know if it is true that the Minister of TEATT and the Minister of Finance had a discussion on the matter. Is it true that the Minister of Finance said no to any idea of financial relief for the market vendors? Is the Minister of the opinion that the market vendors deserve some type of financial relief, seeing that they were displaced for a year, and that affected their income?

The faction mentions that a letter was sent pertaining to tax holidays. In the last budget debate meeting, the Minister said that last year, one tax holiday was approved, and some were pending. What is the status of those that are pending? What is the timeline for them to be completed? Whether a yes or no and how many tax holidays did the Minister sign off on since the previous budget debate? What are the advice on these?

The faction notes that the Minister alluded to inheritance tax and the abolishment of inheritance tax. When did this process start of the abolishment of

the inheritance tax? When is it slated to be completed? Can the Minister attach the timelines?

Regarding grocery stores and hotels, is it possible for the Minister to extract the data of the outstanding taxes by individuals, excluding businesses? Would that be possible?

The faction mentions the findings of the research on Soul Beach and why it left Aruba. Did the Minister reach out to her colleague Minister in researching this almost million-dollar investment? The faction inquired about all the advice pertaining to Soul Beach that was submitted to the Minister and would like to receive the advice that the Minister received for her share of the investment in Soul Beach. If so, what is the advice, and can it be shared with Parliament either confidentially or not?

The faction would like clarity if the payment for subsidized schools' teachers was in the current budget that is being handled right now. Can the Minister clarify that?

Regarding Capex, if there has been a project approved for Capex expenditure right now on the books, but half or more of that project is slated to be completed with a subsequent Capex investment from a subsequent Capex year. What happens with said project if there is no Capex from the subsequent year to be requested and to be received? What happens with said project, and is it then financially responsible to even start the project knowing you cannot complete it?

The faction would like a clear answer to questions regarding the relief for the market vendors. Did the Minister of Finance have any conversations with the Minister of TEATT pertaining to relief for the market vendors? Did the Minister say no to the Minister of TEATT to the financial relief as it pertains to the market vendors?

The faction notes that the presentation reflected the concerns of the Members of Parliament and that it is appreciated that those concerns were put in the presentation regarding the amendments and Council of Advice.

Continuing with the assignment from Parliament to check to see if the budget was the same or had errors. The faction's view is that there are still errors mentioned. In the *toelichtingboek* on page 7 in the multi-year budget

overview, you see a discrepancy in the calculation for the year 2025. If you look at the revenues, which are listed as *baten*, it is listed at 586 million, and expenditures, the *lasten*, at 577. This is a difference of 9 million, but the table incorrectly states 8 million. So, the *totaal resultaat van de overheid* in the *toelichtingboek* is at 8, but it's supposed to be 9. Can the Minister correct the faction if it is wrong?

The faction continues and mentions that in the table summarizing the revenues in the economic category, there is also an error. If you look at the sum it should be 609 million guilders so,  $485 + 23 + 58 + 43$  which would then bring the *totaal overheid* to 609 but it's listed at 608.

If you look at the next one, 2027, the sum should be 625, which would be the  $499 + 23 + 60 + 40$  but the *totaal overheid* it states it at 624 million. If you look at page 9 in the economic category, where they mention the tax revenues, it mentions *belastingen zonder nieuwe beleid* from the previous year and mentions that the growth is anticipated through the 3% GDP. For 2028, there should be  $481 + 15$ , which is then 496 million, but in the table, it states it incorrectly again at 495 million. These things are off by 1 million guilders, which is not a dollar; it's a million guilders.

The faction continues and looks at page 13. There's also an error by the personnel, *goederen en diensten, afschrijvingen sociale voorzieningen*. There you'll see 611 million Guilders and that should be listed as 612 that would be the  $266 + 155 + 16$  million  $+ 40$  million  $+ 119 + 26$  and then the *totaal overheid* would be 612 and not 611.

If you look at the liquidity *prognose*, the cash flow table is also wrong. The total sum should be 651 million Guilders, but it's listed as 652. If you look at the *eindsaldo liquiditeit* 2025, the closing balance is 23 million but should be 22 million.

On page 20, the BW it should be 551 million, so  $426 + 21 + 58 + 46$ , but the table shows it at 550 million guilders. On page 25, *materieel kosten*, there's a difference between the OB, 325 million and the BW at 311. And then, on page 35, the document also mentions the resistance ratio, and in the *toelichtingboek*, they calculated it by doing the available resistance of 50 million guilders divided by the required resistance, which then was a result of 0.96, and then the *toelichtingboek* mentions that as "*ruim voldoende*", more than sufficient. The

faction believes that it has to be above 1.0. Anything below one would then represent that we don't have enough capacity. The faction is of the opinion that the *toelichtingboek* is giving a false indication of our capacity, and it misrepresents our financial vulnerability. The faction thinks that that also has to be adjusted because anything below one is too low, and in our own calculation in the *toelichtingboek* is at 0.96.

The faction continues and mentions that by the investments it's listed in the column to be 28,336,000 guilders and then in the bottom it incorrectly states it at 22,080,000 guilders; it's off by almost 6.2 million. That's a significant difference in the capital expenditure budget.

The faction would like to ask the Minister of Finance where she puts or values the weight of advice from SG, department heads, legal advisors in your cabinet, and your chief of staff. How does the Minister look at the weight of the advice of the legal advisor, chief of staff, SG, department head, and section head? How does the Minister look at the weight of the advice of legal affairs, the SG of TEATT, and department heads of TEATT? How does the Minister view external advice, such as NRPB, from external consultants and external legal?

The faction indicates that the Minister mentioned in the presentation that one of the reasons why we have the budget that we have today is because the Members of Parliament indicated that we want to have the budget here as fast as possible. That may be true, but the Members of Parliament never said not to execute the proper way. In the letter of March 3rd, 2025, the Minister of Finance mentioned that in conjunction with the national accountability ordinance and our Constitution, she wishes to inform the Parliament of the incidental subsidy for Carnival at 600,000 guilders and that we have to do a budget amendment or that the budget that was coming would include this.

The faction has not heard any Member of Parliament say not to bring the budget, including these items. The urgency that we had in March is now three months late. What happens now to Carnival, among others?

The faction noted that in one of the Ministers' prior responses to questions posed by the faction, the faction asked, in particular, for all of the payments above 50,000 guilders. In the response, the Minister said that this can be done and will be done and sent to us in a confidential route. The faction notes that weeks later, in the budget debate, the faction will ask again before the

Public meeting if this can be done and sent to the faction. This would mean that not just Carnival has to be fixed, but other items that were paid without a ratified budget will also have to continue to be put in this budget. It's very difficult to hear Ministers mention, "We can't pay the officers because we have to follow the rule of law" or "We can't pay teachers; we have to follow the rule of law", but it's so convenient that we could pay other items like Soul Beach and former staff of cabinets that were not part of the budget either. Were staff or individuals that ran on your party paid out without a legal basis? No ratified budget, they were not budgeted. Were they paid?

The faction mentions the recently held meeting, where questions were posed regarding Soul Beach. The faction would like to make it clear that the faction is happy that we could provide new avenues for extending the low season. What the faction is unhappy about is the unfair treatment for other local entities that have proven events to extend the low season like the Oualichi Festival that has been cancelled this year because of lack of support. When asked, they said they needed 5% or 10% of what Soul Beach was granted.

The SXM Music Festival, with guaranteed individuals that need significantly less than Soul Beach in terms of sponsorship or support and brings more people than Soul Beach, also gets chopped in half by the current administration. Did Soul Beach, the entity, the LLC, the American company, request a subsidy? According to the subsidy ordinance, the entity has to request a subsidy. Did Soul Beach do that?

Is Soul Beach, the entity, a foundation? What does the subsidy ordinance say specifically about the entities that are allowed to request subsidies? Does it also mention in that same ordinance that the entities have to be non-profit? Has the government denied other local entities, outside of foundations, any subsidy request stating that we do not subsidize businesses? Has the government last year, the year before, and in the last decade denied any business, BV, NV, sole proprietor, or even foundation, because of the business aspect of its request for subsidy because of the subsidy ordinance? Including those requests that fall under ECYS.

The faction notes that there is a lot of talk about how many individuals Soul Beach attracted. The faction believes that this is very easy math to solve. According to the Minister of Finance, when the question was posed, if Soul

Beach got or received any tax holiday, prior; it was no. Did Soul Beach request or get any tax exemptions? The answer was yes, it was requested, and it wasn't granted. Did Soul Beach request then only online tax exemption? And was that granted?

How much taxes did Soul Beach pay on every ticket? How much paid VIP, because VIP was a different price? That's 5% on VIP tickets and 5% on the regular tickets. For all the different tiers of tickets, can we get the final number before the Public meeting on the amount of taxes we have earned based on the ToT on every ticket?

What is the total amount given to Soul Beach? What is the government's contribution? What is Finance contribution? Did GEBE contribute? Did TelEm contribute? Did the Airport contribute? Did the Harbor contribute? What is the total contribution by the government and the government-owned entities to Soul Beach?

The faction notes that in January, in the prior budget, the question was asked if Soul Beach requested the government to pay for venues because the question was how come Carnival has to pay for their venue, and now Soul Beach gets venue exemptions. Did Soul Beach request venue exemptions or venues to be paid by the government?

In January, it was asked if Soul Beach requested specifically to have officers and or extra security for their events. It was stated in January, "That's unknown, or the minister is not aware of that." Did the government request any additional officers to come in from Aruba or Curacao to help with Soul Beach?

What is the cost of that request? Which line items were used? How was it built up? What is the total cost, and where did the budget post come from? The faction believes that we can't say we don't have money, especially not for the justice workers, but then we put an extra burden on them to work for Soul Beach and then for the other areas we don't have money. We don't follow a legal basis, so we find additional money to bring in officers, specifically for Soul Beach.

What's the difference between an LB and an MB? When do we use an LB, and when do we use an MB? Which one of those two was used to pay for the officers of Soul Beach? Can the decree for Soul Beach officers be sent to Parliament?



The faction indicates that in a previous meeting it was stated that the departments within the ministry of Finance were not consulted for an advice of half a million dollars. SG department heads were not consulted on a project, an assignment, a subsidy, an LB, or an MB of over a half million dollars. Did the Minister approve it? If not, who is the acting Minister of Finance?

Was the Soul Beach event a joint collaboration with the ministry of Finance? The faction understood that the ministry of Finance contributed a certain amount of money. Is this a joint event? How much money was contributed?

The factions mention a statement made in a press briefing by the Minister on what happened in Aruba and that the ministry is going to do research on why they left Aruba and the value for Sint Maarten. The faction would like to know if the Minister did the research and what was the result of the research. The faction would like to know the final tally of all the requests from Soul Beach, the entity. The faction would like a list of everything that they requested from the government.

The faction would like the Minister to provide the travel expenses of the last 6 months on travel, per Minister and per cabinet. Have any gone over the budget? If any has gone over the budget, what amendments were made to supplement this? If amendments were made to supplement the travel of cabinet and Minister, which line items were used? Which departments were affected by the travel of cabinet and Ministers?

Can we get a total amount of consultants per cabinet and Minister? Marketing, PR, legal, everything. The faction would also like to see the budget post amounts per and the total value of those contracts.

The faction mentioned that the Prime Minister, in a press release, was chastising the former Prime Minister about comments that were made seemingly on social media. The Prime Minister mentioned some key things: betrayal of the oath, ethically problematic, and legally reckless. The faction would like to know if the Minister of Finance believes that the Minister of TEATT betrayed her oath, acted ethically problematic, or legally reckless.

Were the decisions made to take out more than a half million dollars out of our treasury; how was that done? How did this transfer happen if it didn't

follow the right procedures? Everything above 50,000 guilders needs to have an LB or procurement process. The faction believes that this was legally reckless.

The faction would like clarity regarding comments made about insurance payments. The insurance was approved by the Council of Ministers in December. However, that was not the argument; the argument was to pay your bills; it is June 1st, the height of the hurricane season. It is important you don't want the insurance companies complaining that they are not getting money. We've seen what happened during Hurricane Luis and Irma. When was the payment made for the insurance company that was approved in December? How much is the cost of the premium? Is there an LB or MB attached to this payment? When did those individuals sign? Can a copy of any one of those decrees be sent to Parliament before the Public meeting?

The faction continues and mentions that in the presentation from the Minister, a lot of the concerns that were sent from Parliament were addressed. The faction noted that in June, the Cft also released their advice on the *uitvoeringsrapportage* for quarter 4. The government, in its presentation, showed the actuals versus the budget for quarter 1. The faction would like to ask the government for the actuals up to this point.

Where are we with the *uitvoeringsrapportage eerste kwartaal*. The faction would like to see the whole report. Can we get the report of the draft report?

The faction would like to know, if we are doing way above average for the first quarter, why do we keep telling vendors that we have liquidity issues? The faction would like to know the liquidity position of the government today, in January, March, and November of last year.

Pertaining to Capex, how is Capex supposed to be used? How do we spend Capex money? The Cft's concern is that the government has 100 million guilders and it is not able to spend the money fast enough. Why is the government not spending the money that is there already? When is the government allowed to touch Capex money? What is the interest on the Capex loans?

What are the Capex amounts on the budget, on the account, of the last three months itemized? Not the total. What was it three months ago, two months ago, and the last month?

The faction would like clarity on all the rural projects done under VROMI, is that being done under the Capex or is that being done out of *gewone dienst*. Is that the money of the prior administration that's fixing the roads, the prior road plan of the former Minister of VROMI, and Capex 2023-2024? Or is that *gewone dienst* money being used?

When we look at the presentation from the Minister, we see that a significant amount of revenue is being generated from taxes, but the *vergunningen* is about half. Every other area in government, besides Finance, is lagging behind. Why are we not collecting from the ones that we need to collect from?

The faction states that the National accountability ordinance elaborates very clearly on the role of the Minister of Finance. The Minister ensures the nation's financial stability, transparency, and adherence to the legal and constitutional mandates. The faction does not get when the Minister states that Soul Beach and the payments are not in her purview.

The faction will repeat some of the questions going back to the statements of the *toelichtingboek*. In the *toelichtingboek*, the faction mentioned the resistance ratio, but that was not answered. The faction asked about the investment discrepancy of 28 million compared to the 22 million, the faction didn't get any answers there. Regarding the payments of the subsidized schools, the Minister goes on press briefing and talks about the payments to the subsidized schools. The Minister of ECYS comes out and puts an article out that says the school boards have to handle this within their subsidies. The Minister today says an advice has been signed to be able to pay out the subsidized schools. Is the amount that the Minister is referring to pay out the subsidized schools budgeted in 2025?

If so, when we look at budget 2024, which the ministry is already operating under, for example, if you look at the Catholic school board, it actually has more budgeted than in 2025. So, why wasn't it then paid out already? What was the issue? Since we are operating based on the budget for 2024, why wasn't

it paid out? Are we paying an additional amount, or are we paying within the amount budgeted for 2025?

Dividend tax. The faction would like to know where we are in that process of the dividend tax. Has it already gone to legal affairs, fiscal affairs, *Raad van Advies*, and the SER?

The faction is happy that the Minister mentioned the tax reform and the process the government has chosen.

The faction mentions the emergency clause that is currently in this budget. The faction would like to know, within the last 5-10 years, how many times have that clause been used and why?

What is the political motivation, since the Minister knows it is political motivation?

The faction mentions the *hardheidsclausule* that the medical center got. Why did the medical center get it but not the Airport? What is the reason you would give it to the medical center, but you will not give it to the Airport? What are the risks involved in approving the *hardheidsclausule* for the medical center, knowing that it has been rejected already in the past? What are those risks for government? What are the risks concerning taxes? What are the risks in general?

The Minister clearly stated the challenges the government has with outdated systems in the financial reporting and within the tax department. At the same time, this is the government administration that did not appeal the process for a new tax system. Where are we now with that process with that new tax system? Did the government or the Minister request the Netherlands or TWO to continue with Bearing Point?

The faction would like the Minister to confirm if the ministry of Finance contributed to the Soul Beach advice. How much did they pay? And why did the ministry of Finance contribute to this advice?

The Minister also mentioned that we cannot divulge individual taxpayers' information, which the faction agrees, but according to the subsidy ordinance, the entity must report on the expenses. The subsidy ordinance requires the entity to explain how all that money was spent. Can the Minister confirm this or not?

The Minister mentioned that she's not aware of any illegal payments. Was Soul Beach paid legally? Did they follow the right ordinance, the legal basis, to be able to get paid?

What was the legal basis to pay out Soul Beach? What was in the agreement? What did Soul Beach require of government for the event to happen? What did the government require of Soul Beach for it to happen?

Does the subsidy ordinance mention that an entity has to be a non-profit to be able to request funds? This is not a Soul Beach-related question. This is a subsidy question.

Is it required to have a foundation to request a subsidy?

In terms of the travel budget, was it 450 spent or 450 left?

Can a copy of the decree for Soul Beach be sent to Parliament, MB or LB?

The faction would like to note that the Carnival was paid by 200,000 guilders by the prior government out of the festival's budget post which is a subsidy line item. The former government did not increase the amount to pay it out.

The faction mentions the *hardheidsclausule* once again. Can Parliament be sent the legislation based on the *hardheidsclausule* and what the requirements are for that?

The Minister also gave a fluctuation of the liquidity. Can we get the end liquidity of the last five months sent to us?

Now that the adjusted version of the Budget 2025 is before us here in Parliament, the faction would like to know if the Minister of Finance stands fully behind it. Can the Minister of Finance give her word that a situation that transpired and that led us to budget 2025 2.0 would not happen again? The faction would like to know if proper due diligence is being executed this time around.

Seeing that we are already halfway through the year, can the Minister provide some kind of a surplus or deficit that is expected? Is it still in line with the initial projections? We now have actuals, at least for the first 5 months, that are definitive and can't change. What should we expect, more or less? And why?

Can the Minister share some of the feedback received from the Council of Advice in the draft 2025 2.0 budget and the amendments? Were there any warnings, recommendations, or areas of concern that we should be mindful of?

What is the Minister's view on cutting the salaries of Ministers and Members of Parliament? Is this something the Minister or the current government is actually exploring? And if so, what kind of realistic savings could this bring into the budget? Can the Minister provide an estimated impact of, for instance, 10% or 25%? The faction mentions that some coalition members mention even 50%. What would this mean for the budget?

There has been recent coverage about the ministry's refusal to grant tax breaks to the market vendors. The faction would like to know if the Minister can explain where this came from and whether the Minister is in favor of such relief. And more importantly, what, if any, is the ministry doing to assist those market vendors in this dreadful situation that they're experiencing? The faction remarked that it is of the opinion that this is self-created by the government, in particular the Minister of TEATT, by not continuing with plans that were set in stone prior to her taking office.

The faction indicates that the Minister stated in the presentation that all seven amendments were fully incorporated and that the delay revealed the need for better coordination. Can the Minister explain what new safeguards or coordination procedures are being considered to prevent this from being the situation again this time around?

The faction continues and states that the presentation also mentions that SOAB will assist in developing a clearer amendment handling process. Can the Minister explain how that process will work and who will be involved? When can we expect the first draft?

Can the Minister specify which areas underperform or over-perform in Q1 and how that impacts the expectations moving forward? Given that the delays occurred between January and April, what impact did this have on the ministries being able to execute their programs? Was any funding stalled? Is there any backlog now that needs to be caught up?

The faction would like feedback from each ministry as to their current challenges with the non-ratification of the budget.

As it regards the BOPP, the faction noticed a discrepancy when page 21 is compared with page 56. Can clarity be provided regarding this?

Legality of certain payments. Is the faction to understand that the Minister is saying that yes, you did things wrong, but you didn't know it was wrong when you were doing it, and now, in hindsight, the discrepancies with the payments can be seen? The faction would like some clarity on that.

The faction mentions the whole Mullet Bay saga. The faction requested clarity but was told that there is confidentiality and privacy. It can maybe be confidential to the public, but it can never be confidential to Members of Parliament. Mullet Bay touches on the heartstrings of every Sint Maartener. The faction reiterates its request for submission of every document since January to now, in terms of the communication and the efforts made to acquire Mullet Bay for the people of Sint Maarten.

You can say that you want to secure Mullet Bay with your mouth, but if it is not reflected anywhere in the budget, not even a proper plan of approach, then it is that we are being set up for failure. There is no way that the government can secure millions within 10 days to guarantee the purchase of Mullet Bay if given the opportunity.

The faction heard about an NDA. If this is the case, can the Minister, through the confidential route, provide the NDA so that Members of Parliament can have a better understanding?

The faction mentions that on one of the slides mentioned article 2 adjustments and the total figure recalculations. Can the Minister explain, in layman's terms, how the totals weren't being updated during the amendment and the incorporation process? What created the ripple effect, and has this ever happened during previous administrations?

Regarding the multi-annual outlook that is included in the budget. What assumptions were used to forecast the 2026 and 2027 income? The reason the faction poses this question is because right now, internationally, with tariffs and all the different things that are happening around the world, the faction would like to know how the current global and regional economic instability contributed to these projections or are they just projections based on old numbers and not taking modern day current situations into account.

Soul Beach. What is the Minister's view and position on the event and the related public funding? Does the Minister agree with the Minister of TEATT's claim that the festival generated three million in economic activity? Were there any returns, directly to government coffers, from that investment? Or was the benefit limited to the private sector activity?

The faction mentions Mullet Bay and that a motion was brought during budget 2025 1.0. The faction was told, "We don't need to do this," and "We are working on this already". The faction was of the opinion that this would only be more support to get the ball rolling. The faction indicates that it hasn't heard about Mullet Bay since. The faction noted a press briefing in which the Prime Minister emphasized the point that Mullet Bay is in Sint Maarten and it would remain in Sint Maarten, but the faction also saw in Curacao, where they are saying that they own Mullet Bay. They do have majority shares in Mullet Bay. With the motion, the faction only wanted to safeguard Sint Maarten's best interest. The faction is of the opinion that we are being set up for failure. It is happening because we are not seeing anything taking place.

Hence, the faction would like to be provided with every decision and action, every meeting that took place since the passing of the 2025 budget, since the passing of the ENNIA amendment to now, which relates to securing Mullet Bay for the people of Sint Maarten. The faction recalls that there was some sort of a clause where Sint Maarten would have 10 days to secure the funds. The faction would like some clarity on this point.

Subsidy Process and Justification. The faction mentions that the faction submitted a letter to the Minister of Finance relating to the Sint Maarten Carnival 2025 subsidy. There were several questions asked.

Since the 2025 budget has not been published or ratified, how was the transfer of funds made to the SCDF? If the funds were taken from the 2024 budget and considering that there was no budgetary allocation for Carnival made in 2024, which line items were used to finance this incidental subsidy? What was the legal basis for the payment? Will the same legal basis be applied to facilitate other outstanding debts, for instance, the justice workers and the back pay? In the faction's opinion, the law was broken to pay for certain things and not considered to pay others. The faction would like clarity on that. The response received on March 3 from the Minister, in the ending of the letter it says on



February 27, the COM resolved to rectify this oversight by adding the subsidy amount of SCDF and a line item subsidy budget post 8270 from the ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Traffic, and Telecommunication to the budget amendment for 2025. Here we are back with the budget 2.0, 2025, and the faction doesn't see it anywhere reflected. Are we being set up for failure when it comes to the passing of this budget? Commitments are being made on black and white, and they are not reality in what we have to approve here.

#### Ministry of General Affairs

The faction mentions that the Prime Minister had a recruitment trip to the Netherlands, and subsequent to that, there was an article released that stated that there were 30 jobs filled through that recruitment drive. The faction notes that that sounds like it was a success. The faction would like to get an overview of the positions that were filled and the start dates of the new recruits. The faction would also like that to be divided per ministry and which jobs were filled by these 30 applicants.

Seeing that PNO falls under the Prime Minister's purview. The faction would like to know, as it pertains to investigations, if someone is suspended pending an investigation, if the government is obligated to present the findings to this individual upon completion of the investigation, seeing that they were suspended because of it. Can the Minister give some more clarity on that?

The faction would like to know how many employees the Department of Foreign Affairs had at the beginning of the Minister's tenure and how many are now left.

Pertaining to GEBE, the faction indicates that it is understood that there's now a tender as it pertains to the generators because now there is a question as to which brand will be purchased moving forward. What are the options as it pertains to brands, and when will the order be placed? And who will make this final decision? Is it the management board or the supervisory board? Who makes this decision?

The faction would like to know what the status is on the sexual harassment cases that are now pending under the Minister of General Affairs.

The faction would like an overview of the supervisory board of WINAIR. The faction would also like a column with the appointed dates of these individuals.

The faction continues and mentions that it was made public that NRPB has a million-dollar tender to shred tires. The faction would like to have the report where the cost of the shredding machine was explored. The faction assumes that if the choice was made to do a public tender for shredding tires, the option of buying a machine was explored prior to that.

As it pertains to the recent article where the islands secured a set of allocated funds for alternative energy, the faction believes that Sint Maarten was allocated a sum of 33 million Euros. The faction believes it was the SDE+ funds and that this is something that the prior administration was busy with, but at the time of allocation, it was put on hold because of a lack of policies and laws. Seeing that the money has now been allocated, the faction would like to know what policies are now in place or what policies and laws are now in process.

Seeing that the most prominent choice as it pertains to alternative energy would be solar, the faction would like to know how many certified solar installation companies the island currently has. What are the plans for the use of the recently procured funds? Will a permit strictly be required before installing solar panels? Under which conditions would one be denied or delayed?

Who is legally authorized to install solar panels under these laws or potential policies? How will the quality and accountability of these installers be ensured?

What technical and safety standards must a solar panel installation meet? How are these going to be enforced?

Is someone legally required or will be legally required to report the installation of any solar equipment to GEBE? What will be the consequences of not doing such?

What are the official fire safety regulations concerning solar panel installations? How will compliance be monitored? Who will be liable?

The faction indicates that these questions are asked because monies are allocated and reserved, and the faction doesn't think the island can get to spend

these funds until policies and laws are made, but if we spend time trying to get the funds allocated, the faction hopes that time is also spent creating these laws and policies.

The faction notes that in 2018, as it pertains to insurance, the government had underinsured its buildings and properties and got an insufficient amount of funds for hurricane damage, and several schools weren't even covered. There was much commotion based on the insurance of properties. Has this payment been made?

As it pertains to the policies from the companies, what exactly are the properties insured for? What are the amounts? What were the appraisals? What is the status as it pertains to the own risk? Can the Prime Minister give a full account pertaining to all things insurance?

Tender procurement law moving forward for the country. What is the status of that? Is one being made?

The faction would like to know the status of the function book for the firefighters. What is the status of that? How far is it, and what is the hold-up? When can they expect it to be completed?

The faction would like to know if the BIG law being worked on by AZ. If so, why is it being done by the ministry of General Affairs and not the ministry of VSA? Why is the BIG law not being done by the relevant Minister?

The faction would like to know how updated we are with the financial statements of the government-owned companies. Can all of them be submitted to Parliament? Including the financials of SOG.

The faction would like clarity on whether the TWO falls under the ministry of General Affairs. Do Ministers have their own sections within TWO? Why is the BIG law being handled by the Minister of General Affairs and not the VSA Minister?

It was noted that the insurance was paid in October. When was the insurance paid, and has it been paid? When was the LB signed or MB signed?

Regarding the financial statements from SOG, the faction hopes it can be sent in writing or given to us physically before the Public meeting.

The faction would like the Minister to provide the travel expenses of the last 6 months on travel, per Minister and per cabinet. Have any gone over the budget? If any has gone over the budget, what amendments were made to supplement this? If amendments were made to supplement the travel of cabinet and Minister, which line items were used? Which departments were affected by the travel of cabinet and Ministers?

Can we get a total amount of consultants per cabinet and Minister? Marketing, PR, legal, everything. The faction would also like to see the budget post amounts per and the total value of those contracts.

Follow-up from May's National Hurricane Preparedness Meeting. The faction noticed that there was a meeting of the ESF. The Prime Minister led the first national hurricane preparedness meeting back in May together with the Office of Disaster Management. The faction would like to know what steps have been taken since that meeting. Have the shelters been inspected and prepared? Has the staff training been completed? Are the supplies in place if we are faced with a storm or some sort of natural disaster?

Is there any sort of support for vulnerable families? The Office of Disaster Management has been encouraging persons to prepare their emergency kits, which is customary. Secure their homes. But not everyone can afford that. The faction would like to know if the ministry is looking into providing any sort of assistance to families that are struggling to get prepared. The faction recalled during the previous government administration, a lot of home repairs and roof repairs and all those things to assist vulnerable families, seniors, and so on in the community. Hence, the faction would like to know if anything of that sort is being considered now, during this, or even before, or just to assist persons in that regard. If not, what assistance is being considered by the government?

The faction also mentioned the shelter pre-registration program for emergency sheltering. Is that still active and being carried out by this current administration?

The vehicle readiness check. The faction notes that in August of last year the government was delivered several new vehicles, including fire trucks and ambulances. Are all those vehicles currently up to date and running? Have they experienced any problems? Is there a maintenance schedule to take place to ensure that they are storm-ready in the event we are hit with a natural disaster?

Procurement Transparency. The faction would like to know why it did not receive a response from the Ministry of General Affairs regarding the procurement of fire department and ambulance vehicles purchased with NRPB funds. The faction seeks a full response to the February 13 letter, including a timeline of the tender process, identification of winning bidder(s), total cost and cost breakdown per vehicle (particularly SUVs and pickups), and total quantity of vehicles purchased. The faction notes that the ministry of VROMI has responded, however the ministry of General Affairs is yet to provide its share of the answers.

Wildfire Preparedness. If a wildfire breaks out in the hills, is anything in place to back up the firefighters, like extra manpower resources, or is there a clear response plan? What are we doing as representatives to secure this?

Government's Legal Strategy and Outcomes. The faction notes a significant decline in the government's success rate in court cases. What is the Prime Minister doing to safeguard the government's legal and best interests?

Is there concern that ministries may be losing cases due to weak legal arguments or intentional inaction? How is the Prime Minister ensuring that legal teams or advisors are well-prepared and strategically sound in defending government positions?

As it regards the questions regarding the vehicles. The faction would like a price breakdown for each of those vehicles.

The faction would like feedback from each ministry as to their current challenges with the non-ratification of the budget.

#### Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication

The faction mentions the Marketplace. The faction would like to have the drawings for the first and second designs. Regarding the evaluation committee of the Marketplace, who was in it? The faction would also like to have their findings in writing.

The faction mentions the thread and the email communication between Royal Caribbean and the ministry. Did Royal Caribbean approve the initial design? What was their feedback? The faction would like to have these emails.

Was VROMI included in the TOR for the new design? Was there a TOR for the new design, and did VROMI contribute to deliverables that were placed in the TOR? Which budget post paid for the new design? Was there a tender for the new design? How much did the new design cost? Who paid for the structural calculations to be done, and who paid for the soil test? How much did the soil test cost? Who's paying the vendors for damages of lost business?

The faction would also like to have the building permit for the initial design. As of today June 9<sup>th</sup>, is the ministry of TEATT in possession of the building permit for the new design?

Soul Beach. The faction would like the report on passenger arrivals for the months of April, May, and June from the years 2016, 2023, 2024, and 2025. The same goes for the report on stayover tourists during those same time periods.

The faction would also like to know the amount sponsored to the Regatta in 2023, 2024, and 2025. The same goes for Carnival, and the same goes for the Oualichi Festival.

How much visitors did the Oualichi festival have in 2023 and 2024?

How much was sponsored to the SXM Festival in 2023, 2024 and 2025? What was the amount of visitors for the SXM Festival 2023, 2024? Have all local contractors that worked with or for Soul Beach been paid? Is there a commitment, or has there been a commitment given by Soul Beach to the government about the festival returning next year?

How many people come to the island for Carnival? What was the amount in 2023, 2024 and 2025? How much did the average tourist spend for Carnival during those years?

Has the government regulated food storage with the various food suppliers on the island, and was the cost for such? Will there be a control team put in place to prevent price gouging?

The faction mentions that the safety of the country prior to, during, and after the disaster is needed. Do we have the reserves to pay for said security when it comes to police officers from other countries, or will this be covered by a third party? If not, how much is budgeted for such?

The country has insured itself for disasters through the Caribbean-led insurance CRIFF fund. For how much exactly, and what are the terms to receive such funds? Are those funds part of the government disaster calamity fund?

Regarding capex, the faction notes that there's mention of a beautification project of Philipsburg. Recently, the Minister held a town hall on the matter where it was understood that the bricks were being evaluated on whether to keep them or replace them with asphalt. Does this fall under the purview of the Philipsburg beautification project that falls under the ministry of TEATT, or does this specific part fall under the ministry of VROMI? The faction would like to know who will be paying, seeing that the Minister did say that drainage will be tackled, and the faction didn't see anything of the sort as it pertains to VROMI in the budget. The faction would like to know if this falls under the ministry of VROMI as it pertains to payment or does it fall under the ministry of TEATT? Where can this be found in the ministry of VROMI if it does fall under VROMI?

The faction continues and notes regarding the beautification project in town and that nothing was made mention of the monuments in town. 60% of the monument list can be located in the Philipsburg area, and nothing of the sort was mentioned in the presentation for the Philipsburg beautification project. Was this intentional? Is this still pending? What role do the monuments play in the Philipsburg beautification project?

The Clem Labega Square is slated to be funded and getting a facelift by the Windward Islands Bank. Seeing that there are still no plans for the location of the old government building, Clem Labega Square goes hand in hand with that as it pertains to a master plan. Before monies are spent on the revitalization of Clem Labega Square, the faction hopes that a more holistic plan is already known on what will be done to the property directly across the road from it. If you're spending money on revitalizing a particular area, the faction would hope that it is a more sustainable idea where, depending on the plan that comes later for that location where the prior government building resides, that we won't have wasted money because the Clem Labega Square would have a different use.

What is the plan for the location where the old government building resided, and how does that correlate with the construction and revitalization ideas for Clem Labega Square?

Carnival. How do we quantify the merit, investment, and economic gain of Carnival? How is that quantified? The faction understood that the incidental subsidy for Soul Beach was decided based on merit and investment for economic gain. So, the faction would like to know how the merit, investment, and economic gain of Carnival is quantified.

The faction continues and would like to know if the Minister of TEATT will answer the questions that were posed regarding Soul Beach.

The faction would like the Minister to provide the travel expenses of the last 6 months on travel, per Minister and per cabinet. Have any gone over the budget? If any has gone over the budget, what amendments were made to supplement this? If amendments were made to supplement the travel of cabinet and Minister, which line items were used? Which departments were affected by the travel of cabinet and Ministers?

Can we get a total amount of consultants per cabinet and Minister? Marketing, PR, legal, everything. The faction would also like to see the budget post amounts per and the total value of those contracts.

The faction inquires from the Minister when she took office what exactly was already in place for the marketplace? The faction would like to know if there were terms of reference drafted, building permits issued, or contractors selected. What remained to be done?

The faction would like to know from the Minister's perspective about all these steps that were taken or need to be taken in order to execute the whole marketplace project. Minister, can you walk us through the full timeline of what happened under your watch?

Can the Minister explain why she announced that this project would be a priority? The faction inquires if the marketplace is still a priority for the Minister today. How is this being reflected in the actions of the Minister?

What is the real issue holding this up at the moment? Across which department or ministry? Can the Minister clarify what exactly the vendors will receive?



The faction would like the Minister to share a timeline of the remaining milestones, soil test, bidding processes, construction start, and projected completion for the marketplace.

Since the relocation, how were the vendors feeling at first, and how do they feel now based on the Minister's understanding?

What has the ministry done to assist the vendors and the hardships to date? What real solutions are being considered to assist the vendors? What can happen in the here and now?

The faction continues and mentions Soul Beach. Did the festival meet the expectations in terms of financial return and positive exposure? The faction would like the Minister to give a clear and balanced view.

How were the preliminary returns calculated? The faction saw some calculations that came from the Minister herself. How was this calculated? How was it measured? What factual data was used? Did the tax office provide the returns?

The faction would like to know what role the Tourism Bureau played in organizing this festival. How was the festival marketed? Does the Minister feel that it has reached the full extent of its potential?

If we host Soul Beach again, will the ministry make it a point to include local artists and talent more prominently in the event for future reference?

Also, the faction would like to know what is the Tourism Bureau's strategic vision right now, especially regarding the diversification beyond cruise ships and big events. Has the bureau done any specific satisfaction surveys or feedback sessions with hoteliers, taxi drivers, and small business owners? If so, what came out of those? What are the results? How will we act on the feedback given?

The faction would like to know if statistics could be given as to how many flights we had in May of 2024 compared to May 2025 to justify the 3,000 persons that came to the island to Soul Beach.

Based on what the faction was told, in order for Soul Beach to host their event at this particular local establishment on the Dutch side, this individual had to sign an agreement to give them 30% of their profit. The faction mentions that

we are talking about public funds being used to subsidize an event and local businesses are being exploited. The faction has a serious concern regarding this. Hence, the faction would like to know what is the Minister's view on situations like this.

Can the Minister clarify those specific situations, and is the ministry aware of it, and how does the ministry plan to combat these situations?

Did the French side put up half of the investment?

The faction mentions the marketplace. The faction believes that it is high time that we become a bit more transparent and that the Minister gives a realistic timeline as to how we can move forward. We are dealing with real-life people, and the faction believes that they deserve some clarity. We are here now. How can we move forward?

Is it an option to use the old building permit to just continue and get off the ground?

The faction continues and requests the NDA regarding Soul Beach, which was mentioned in previous meetings. Can this be provided?

The faction took note of the fact that the SER is going to the entire economic picture. The faction would like to know if there is a particular timeline for that based on their workload and all the different laws that they have to evaluate. How long will it take?

The faction would like feedback from each ministry as to their current challenges with the non-ratification of the budget.

#### Ministry of Justice

The faction would like to know how many persons are waiting to serve time. Can the Minister provide a copy of the proposal from the lawyer representing the inmates association? What did the Minister receive, and when did the Minister receive that information?

Is there a legal basis for electronic monitoring? If not, what law is the prosecutor using, and why can't the Minister use the same thing? Isn't the funding coming out of the justice budget? How much does the government spend on an inmate per day?

When the government builds the new prison, what would the cost of the country be for staff, food, electricity, and water for maintenance? The new prison should supposedly hold 200 inmates, so the cost would be times that amount. Can Sint Maarten carry those costs, and where would the extra cost of income come from? How much money would be made available for the rehabilitation of inmates?

The faction makes note of a conversation that was had with justice workers where it was stated that "justice workers spend so much time dealing with these inmates to get them where they are, and once they get where they are out of the blue, they receive 10 times as much attention than we receive as justice workers and that if we would spend just an iota of the attention that we give to inmates on the civil servants being the justice workers they might have more batches of LB's done by now". Can the Minister provide an overview of the remaining batches and when these can be expected with dates and timelines?

The faction mentions notaries. Has there ever been an assessment done on the carrying capacity of notaries on the island? What is the current status as it pertains to the workload? Are they keeping up with the demand, and how is this measured?

**The** faction understood that the inmates won a court case and have to be placed back in Point Blanch and not be scattered all over the place. Is this true? How much time does the government have left? What is the cost now to put all the prisoners back to Point Blanch, and how does the Minister plan to address this? What is the total cost for the prison fire repair, and how far is the government with repairs? What is the current timeline? Where are the funds coming from for the repairs? Which line item?

The faction would like the Minister to provide the travel expenses of the last 6 months on travel, per Minister and per cabinet. Have any gone over the budget? If any has gone over the budget, what amendments were made to supplement this? If amendments were made to supplement the travel of cabinet and Minister, which line items were used? Which departments were affected by the travel of cabinet and Ministers?

Can we get a total amount of consultants per cabinet and Minister? Marketing, PR, legal, everything. The faction would also like to see the budget post amounts per and the total value of those contracts.

Budget Adequacy and Emergency Preparedness. The faction inquired if the Minister believed there was enough in the current budget to properly deal with emergencies. If not, what will be done to secure additional resources? Here we are debating a budget to be passed, and I've heard the Minister mention even during the last budget debate that finances seem to be an issue. Hence, if the government is presenting a budget for Parliament to pass but saying in advance that it is not enough, it's not adequate, and it's not correct.

Has there been a shift from the earlier "2025 Budget 1.0" to the now revised version "2.0"? What changes have been made?

The faction saw an article where reference was being made of justice workers not being properly insured with life insurance and other insurance and that came right after the incident at the House of Detention. The faction would like to know if there's any truth to this. If so, what is being done to address this point? The faction finds it hard to believe. Is this indeed the case? And if this is the case, what are we doing as representatives to remedy this situation? Where do we need to shift money from? How can we shift priorities to make sure that this is not the case?

Human Resources & Staffing. Does the 2025 budget allocate sufficient funds for the recruitment and training of new prison guards, police officers, and support staff? What is the multi-year plan for staffing and retention in the justice sector? The faction also mentions addressing burnout and overwork due to chronic understaffing.

Prison System & Inmate Welfare. Given widespread acknowledgment that the current detention facility is inhumane. We all know that the new prison is coming, but the project has been delayed and is still some years away. Does the Minister have sufficient resources to address immediate needs ahead of the delayed new prison construction? If not, how much is required? What short-term measures are being considered for the Repairs, Safety, and Staff and inmate welfare? How does the Minister plan to address this? Is a "*nota van wijziging*" being prepared to secure emergency funding and address those issues?

The faction mentions oversight and accountability. Has the Council of Advice commented on the ministry's spending, particularly regarding the prison and staffing shortages? Can the Minister give some insight into these points if

they were pointed out? What were those comments, and how is the ministry responding?

After the fire at the House of Detention, there were different departments and groups that stepped in to help. Is there money reserved in the current budget to support such future joint responses with police, fire services, and the Red Cross because we saw how they all stepped in after the incident at the prison? Is there enough flexibility in the budget to handle this emergency? Is there money set aside to help the ministry call in help from other organizations or professionals if a similar situation were to happen again in the future?

Since the new prison won't be ready anytime soon, the faction would like to know what is being done in the meantime to keep the current prison safe and functional. Are there plans for smaller fixes that the ministry can put in place this year to ease some of the pressure?

After the fire, a lot of follow-up actions were needed. What is the plan to deal with all these extra costs, and what has this amounted to thus far?

When the fire happened, the inmates had to be moved to police holding cells in Simpson Bay, and even some had to be sent off island. Was there enough flexibility in the budget to handle this emergency? Is there money set aside to help the ministry call in help from other organizations or professionals if a similar situation were to happen again in the future?

The faction would like to know, based on the support that Sint Maarten has been receiving from Aruba, what was the cost of the assistance received from Aruba or other entities? How much is it costing, and how does the ministry plan to cover these costs?

What is needed to facilitate the return of the inmates because of what eventually happened in terms of the court ruling?

Do we have to pay for the assistance from Aruba and Curacao? Is it a low amount? Can this be clarified?

The faction requests once again clarity as it regards the life insurance for justice workers. Is the faction to understand that all uniformed frontline officers will be included now? If so, the faction believes that that is a great idea.

The faction would like feedback from each ministry as to their current challenges with the non-ratification of the budget.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport

The faction mentions NSI, the sports department, and SMSF and would like to know who is responsible for policy and who is responsible for execution.

The faction continues and mentions the construction of the LB Scott Sports Auditorium. This summer, there have been a lot of events scheduled, and they are prone to cancellation because of the construction of the renovations of the LB Scott Sports Auditorium, mainly the flooring and a cooling system. The cooling system via ways of ECYS and the ministry of TEATT, and the flooring via means of the NRPB. What is the timeline for these projects? Are the events that are slated for the summer in jeopardy?

Who maintains the playgrounds? Does this fall under the sports or the VSA budget?

The faction notes that recently, there has been 2.3 million invested from capital expenditures in sports investments. Are these investments insured? When the faction looks at the maintenance budget from the budget amendment 2024 and the maintenance budget from the current budget 2025, the faction sees no increase in that budget. There was an investment of 2.4 million but no increase in the maintenance. Can the Minister explain that correlation? The faction would like to have the construction schedule for school gyms and sports facilities that are slated to be done by the NRPB.

The faction would like to make a clarification regarding the former interim head of PWAS. The Minister said that the report of the investigation was shared with all relevant stakeholders. When other Ministers come to this house, they refer to Parliament as a stakeholder. Does the Minister consider Parliament a stakeholder?

The faction notes that what is for the eyes of the Minister should also be for the eyes of Parliament, and if the Minister is open to submitting the redacted report confidentially to Parliament, the faction has no issues with that. But to get a summary that is third or secondhand information and often the message can be lost. The faction would prefer to get the original report redacted if need be

but as confidentially to Parliament. The faction would take that version over the synopsis.

The faction would like to follow up on the statements made regarding the incident that MP Doran mentioned. A student referred to indicating that "all you always want us to respect you all, but you all don't do it for yourselves". The faction would like to know what and or how do we respond to the student. How do we respond to these incidents involving MPs?

The faction mentions the vocational training school. Can the Minister clarify if the school has an official status as a secondary school? Is it a trade school, is it a behavioral school, is it a special needs school? If it doesn't, what is the current trajectory to be able to establish this official status?

The faction would like the Minister to provide the travel expenses of the last 6 months on travel, per Minister and per cabinet. Have any gone over the budget? If any has gone over the budget, what amendments were made to supplement this? If amendments were made to supplement the travel of cabinet and Minister, which line items were used? Which departments were affected by the travel of cabinet and Ministers?

Can we get a total amount of consultants per cabinet and Minister? Marketing, PR, legal, everything. The faction would also like to see the budget post amounts per and the total value of those contracts.

The faction mentions that a lot of students have been approaching the faction asking for information on how they could sign up for the BOPP program, which is the business outreach program. **The faction inquires if** the budget could be increased by approx. 50,000 guilders to accommodate more students. The faction is willing to come up with an amendment to facilitate this.

Kindergarten Enrollment & Late-Born Children. The faction reminded the Minister of the motion brought during Budget 2025 to allow children born after October 1 to enter school if cleared by testing, which was rejected under the premise of existing solutions. As of June 9, no such policy has been implemented or communicated, and parents are again being turned away. The faction would like to know what the status is of the promised project. Will it be implemented in time for the August 2025 school year?

As it regards the attendance of the four-year-olds, can Minister provide a list of the school boards when the meetings are held so that their sentiments on the whole situation can be clear?

Regarding the BOPP, the Minister stated that there was no budget available. The faction believes that this wasn't properly motivated. The faction also believes that a Cg 50.000,—can be found somewhere to allow an extra 50 students to get the opportunity. The students don't only depend on it for job experience but also to have some sort of income in the summer as well. Can this be looked at? If not, the faction would just come up with a budget amendment, which the faction would actually like to avoid.

The faction would like the Minister's view on the disturbing video received last night involving a Member of Parliament who is a member of the party of the Minister. Violence anywhere is a problem, and we cannot have Members of Parliament acting in this manner.

The faction would like feedback from each ministry as to their current challenges with the non-ratification of the budget.

#### Ministry of Public Health, Social Development, and Labor

The faction indicates that in January, the faction gave the Minister a list of revenue-generating ideas and would like to know what the Minister has done since then as it pertains to revenue generation. Which projects will be implemented moving forward to generate revenue?

The faction notes that it is public knowledge that the Minister has admitted that he hasn't fully read the SAAHA. Has the Minister, in the meantime, read his own law? What budgetary implications would this have on the budget moving forward?

In the most recent meeting with the Minister of VSA, it was made known that the Minister was having issues as it pertains to NRPB with the communication between the ministry and NRPB as it pertains to the mental health institute construction. The NRPB told the Minister very nicely to "speak to me through the Prime Minister ."The faction would like to know if the Prime Minister has made any provisions with the NRPB in order for the Minister of VSA



to have a direct line of communication with them as it pertains to the mental health institute project.

The faction would also like to have the numbers as it pertains to endometriosis, PCOS and fibroids on the island. What provisions will the new hospital have for these?

The faction would like to state that it is disappointing regarding the revenue-generating ideas after being in office for 6-7 months and having conversations, for the only thing to be named being labor fees.

Regarding the mental health institute and mental health in general, the Minister listed a couple dozen projects that he would like to execute in the coming year. The faction mentions that money is needed for that. The faction does not see how, with the current revenues that government generates, money will be allocated to the ministry in order to do this. In other words, the Minister would have to find his own means or contribute more towards the coffers. And to hear that only increasing labor fees, the faction thinks that this is underwhelming after a period in office.

The faction would like to give the Minister an additional idea to think on and refer back to the other ones that were given in January. Currently the inspection department is working on rounding up a process on being able to fine stores, once controllers go to the store and for example see expired goods on the shelf. Right now, there's currently nothing that gives the controller any powers to levy a fine on the establishment. The faction would like the Minister to look into if the fine that would be levied will be per infraction or per item.

The faction would like to know about the communication with the NRPB as it pertains to the mental health institute and the construction of it. It is understood that the Minister had a moment with the NRPB, but the Minister is still not in possession of the master schedule. The faction mentions that it explained that there is static and you have dynamic. The only thing that the faction got out of the answers of the Minister is that the NRPB is saying that we have a dynamic schedule and that it is prone to change, and you will get it after it changes. But even that one is prone to change. Why can't you get it now? Why is the Minister still not in possession of the master schedule? The Minister was asked in a prior meeting what all is going to be in the mental health institute. The Minister answered, but we find out today that the preliminary meetings for

design were only held this week. If a draft design isn't even readily available, how can the Minister answer the questions that Parliament posed a couple of weeks ago pertaining to the amenities for the mental health institute?

The faction understands that the Minister can have a list of items that will be handed over to the architects, but to give a definite answer on yes or no and there's no preliminary design, the faction believes we're running behind time where that is concerned.

Labor issues. The Minister said that citizens can file a complaint in the event of any labor issues and can escalate it in a court case. At the beginning of the Minister's term there were one or two complaints that came up where in communication, the Minister shared that there are labor gaps. The faction expected 7- 6 months later that the Minister would be able to come back and say, "This is what we plan to do with these labor gaps." Instead, the faction gets a generic answer.

What is the ministry doing moving forward to address these labor gaps? The faction acknowledges that the Minister is very hands-on, but the faction would like to know what the Minister did to follow up to make sure that processes like that eventually can be solved.

The faction mentions the prevalence numbers of fibroids, PCOS, and endometriosis. To hear that those numbers aren't readily available, the faction questions how seriously Sint Maarten takes these issues. Fibroids is 20 to 80% of women by the age of 50. Endometriosis globally is 10%. PCOS ranges between 6 and 27% of women. If you know anyone with these issues, it's very painful. To hear that an entire hospital is being constructed and these issues have not even been a conversation, the numbers not being readily available means that if there was a conversation by now, those numbers would have been available. The faction doesn't believe that the priority is there. What does the ministry have as plans in addressing these issues with the medical center?

The faction would like to clarify that at no point was it mentioned that the labor fees implementation was moving too slowly. The faction would like a list of things that will make money from the ministry.

Regarding female illnesses, endometrioses, and PCOS, at no point did the faction make any assertion that SMMC is not capable or they are not working on

those illnesses. The faction notes that medical professionals are duly busy with it and take it very seriously; what the faction said was what were the sentiments that were brought to the faction.

The faction would like to know about the travel budget and travel expenses. If the Minister went over the travel expenses, the faction would like to know by how much and where the Minister took the money from to cover these costs.

Regarding the legal budget post, it was mentioned that there's a legal staff of 129,000 guilders. In addition to that, the Minister mentioned that that same budget post is being used to pay other businesses and persons. Is the Minister using that to pay other legal persons and businesses? Is it only being used to make legal payments or advice?

The faction notes that the Minister mentioned a white paper in response to a question posed, and it was said once it's available, it will be shared with Parliament. The faction would like to know who is executing this white paper. Is it the whole Council of Ministers? Is it specific Ministers? Is there a cost involved? Does every ministry have to participate? Was an advice made and approved by the Council of Ministers for this white paper? If this advice exists, when was it approved in the Council of Ministers?

While this white paper is being executed, what happens now with the trajectory of the consultants on that project? Did the government put this on halt while we wait for this white paper? What is the expectation of this white paper? If the white paper states that "we're not ready for cannabis," are we going to then stop the consultations and the project? What is the goal of this white paper?

The faction would like an update on the progress of the hospital.

Has the ministry done any controls on the staffing and employment of the individuals working at FINSO? Even for the subcontractors.

The faction took note of the fact that SZV has put up a large portion of the money to be able to finance this project, but it will be very concerning to the faction is now the same entity isn't paying their SZV premiums.

Has SZV asked for any increase in OZR payments? How much, and has any payment been made? If not, why not? And if the plan is to pay, when?

The faction mentions the issue regarding the taxi drivers. Currently, there are taxi drivers that do have medical coverage. Why are we having to reinvent the wheel? The faction believes that two things can happen at the same time. They are not mutually exclusive. There are taxi drivers right now that have insurance. Why? Because they set up a foundation. The foundation ensures that they cover all the costs and ensure that the agreements are kept.

The faction mentioned that the discussion was while we work on the SAAHA legislation; in the meantime, we want to ensure that our people have coverage. Why can't we just continue the same thing? Create another foundation, put them under it, and ensure the same agreements that were made for the other tax drivers we do. The faction doesn't get why we just can't follow this trajectory.

The faction would like to ask the Minister for an update on the SZV in terms of the CEO position. Where are we with that, how many candidates, and where are we in the process?

Regarding OZR, the Minister of Finance indicated that for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter actuals versus the budget amount, we have made an estimated 20 million guilders plus. The faction would, therefore, like to know if the Minister has gone to the ministry of Finance to get the funds that the Minister needs to be able to supplement or to make payments that are owed to SZV and the backlogs. If we have this extra money, why are we having all these backlogs in terms of payments?

The faction understood that this administration is working on the civil servant's contribution, and that is one of the reasons we have a backlog in terms of payments because of the 10% of civil servant's contributions that does not come from government side. The faction would like to get an update on that between the ministry of VSA and the ministry of AZ. Is it true that the Ministers are working on finalizing the civil servant's contributions in terms of OZR?

The faction mentions the SZV maintenance plan. Can the Minister confirm if he was updated on this? Can the Minister confirm with SZV if they had such a

plan? If they submitted a plan to the government? What has happened with that plan? Was the Minister ever updated on that plan?

The faction mentions a loan that SZV has, where they pay a minimum of 60.000 dollars a year on interest unnecessarily. We were in the process of finalizing the loan. The plan was to remove the loan and have SZV take the money out, and the government just pays a little extra on the monthly payments. This way, we would not have to pay directly 60.000 dollars every year. The faction would like confirmation from SZV on this loan that exists. Has the Minister had any discussions with the Minister of Finance or AZ on plans on eliminating the interest rate? Can you also confirm with SZV if there were any plans or recommendations we were working on to eliminate this loan?

The faction would like the Minister to provide the travel expenses of the last 6 months on travel, per Minister and per cabinet. Have any gone over the budget? If any has gone over the budget, what amendments were made to supplement this? If amendments were made to supplement the travel of cabinet and Minister, which line items were used? Which departments were affected by the travel of cabinet and Ministers?

Can we get a total amount of consultants per cabinet and Minister? Marketing, PR, legal, everything. The faction would also like to see the budget post amounts per and the total value of those contracts.

The faction mentions that the public was informed that over 2.6 million dollars in grants were secured to support mental health care, healthcare regulation, and the national healthcare professional register. What has been done since the funds were received? What is the timeline for the implementation, and how is the ministry ensuring that local professionals, not just external consultants, are going to be part of this process? The faction would also like to know the Minister's vision on this and how he plans to get it done.

While the Minister commits to publishing clear updates on how those grant funds are being spent, such as deliverables, milestones, and which agencies or consultants are carrying out the work, the faction would like to know if the Minister is willing to share that information.

Mental Health Campaigns. The faction would like to know regarding the "It's OK Not to Be OK" campaign in May. What follow-up services were made

available? Were individuals referred to long-term mental health care as a result of this campaign?

But what is in place for those who came forward or shared their struggles? Were there any long-term service referrals or any follow-up activities as a result of this campaign? We have to ensure that it goes beyond. How is the ministry ensuring that awareness leads to actual care access? The faction applauds the ministry for this point.

The faction mentions that in February, the ministry entered into a 30-month partnership with Trimbos Institute, funded by the Trust Fund and coordinated with the NRPB.

What has actually started so far under this agreement? Which parts of the long list of deliverables? How does the ministry ensure that approach remains relevant to our local realities, not just those external models? Because the faction does not believe in a one-size-fits-all approach. Hence, the faction would like to really know how this applies to our current state of affairs. How does the ministry see it helping our community?

The faction mentioned that in May, the Minister made a public statement reminding businesses to follow proper labor protocols during layoffs and restructuring. But is the ministry conducting any checks on these companies to see if they're actually complying? Are workers being contacted or even given easy access in order to report certain violations?

What is the current state of affairs in regards to that, to make sure that the violations are being addressed and the workers are being treated fairly?

As it regards the NRPB and bids and contractors, the faction would like to know what the Minister is doing to safeguard our local product. What is the plan of approach?

The faction refers to a letter submitted regarding food safety. Should Sint Maarten ban harmful additives that are banned in the EU, for example, certain potassium bromate titanium and dioxide? Can the Minister see the need for the importance of this?

Should a negative list of food additives be established officially in Sint Maarten? How can clear multilingual ingredient labeling and warnings be

mandated? It will be clear to the consumer what is in it. How are we now as a country going to look out to safeguard what we let our people consume? Or at least have enough warning so that they know what they are consuming.

Should a cancer registry and food safety surveillance system be established?

How can public awareness about additive risk be increased? What penalties should be applied for non-compliance? So, non-compliance of persons that resell products that can be banned.

How can packaging be ensured to be safe and non-misleading?

Should pre-market approval of food products be required via the ministry of Health?

How can data sharing with international health bodies improve?

Should additives with credible health risks be banned under the precautionary principle?

How can synthetic dyes be effectively regulated and phased out?

What resources are needed to proactively safeguard food safety enforcement?

The faction indicates that we have observed the sale of high-sugar products in schools on the school premises during school hours. What measures are being implemented to prohibit the sale of such items or even control the amount that is being distributed?

The faction would like feedback from each ministry as to their current challenges with the non-ratification of the budget.

#### Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure

**How** much has been spent from the road resurfacing budget to date? How much is still left? How much has been spent on road markings? The faction would like the documentation of the height service done for the Sucker Garden Road and the LB Scott Road.

The faction would like to have the mixed designs for the Sucker Garden Road, Point Blanch Road and the L.B Scott Road. With regards to the road resurfacing project, what has been different in the manner of execution or planning as it pertains to the ones done prior to the Minister's tenure? At the beginning of the Minister's tenure, the Minister made a lot of bold statements that things would be done differently. Now that an x amount of roads have been completed, the faction is curious as to what the differences have been. What is the status of the side road project? Is the schedule up to date, or is it incurring delays?

The faction continues and notes that a couple of months ago, the Minister had an article where he stated that he would be cracking down on illegal garages. The faction would like to know the status of these and if there have been any garages closed since December. There was also going to be a crackdown on removal orders of construction structures. The faction would like to know what the status of these are. How many removal orders have the Minister signed off since December?

The faction mentions that there is a new boom going towards Blue Marine. The faction would like to know who owns that land; is it government land, or is it private land? If it is private land, since when has it been private land?

Regarding the erosion problems in the hills, the faction would like to have an update, especially as it pertains to South Reward, Mary Fancy area, and Ebenezer.

The faction makes note of the email thread between TEATT and VROMI concerning structural calculations and the possible requests or discussions surrounding that. The faction would like to have a printout of that. If names or certain things have to be redacted, that will be fine.

Who is part of the zoning team? The faction would like to see the memorandum of basic principles for the zoning. Can the Minister provide the preliminary draft zoning plan? If it is ready, has it been presented to COM?

The faction would also like to be provided with the findings of the stakeholder analysis. What is the communication strategy? Have the internal VROMI consultations taken place, and can the Minister give a short summary of the findings? Have public consultations begun? If so, how are they going? Has the



preliminary zoning plan been discussed with the public? If so, can the Minister give us a synopsis of that?

What is the current status of the building permit backlog, and what is the number? How many permits have been signed since January? What is the number of building permits that have been signed since January? How many building permits does the department have in its possession for over one year? The faction would like to know what the Minister is doing about this.

The faction notes that about two months ago, the Minister made it public that there's bribery happening in the permits department and that he will be investigating. Has the Ministry of Justice been involved in this investigation? Does the ministry have any leads? Has anyone been suspended? Has anyone been fired? Has anyone been questioned? What is the status of this investigation?

The faction would like to know which projects the ministry has executed outside of the road resurfacing and the side road project. The motion pertaining to zoning, pond protection, beach policies, and beach access was presented by a member of this faction. Has the ministry done anything with it since it was passed? If so, what has been done, and what is slated to be done? The faction would like to have timelines.

The faction would like to know if the stormwater pumps are operational. If yes, what is their capacity? When will the stormwater pumps be installed, which have been lingering for years, and who has that responsibility? NRPB or government.

Is there a calamity post for the government to tap into for disaster relief for residents with regard to food, water, and building materials? If yes, where exactly is that budgeted?

Seeing the time frame we have gone through with the landfill to still not have it reprofiled and the IRMA landfill still not removed, are we ready for another wave of debris if a serious hurricane hits the island? If not, what is the suggested solution, and what is the price tag for this solution?

The faction would like some clarification on the different materials that are being used now for the road resurfacing project. Can the faction get an overview of which materials the Minister is referring to?

The faction would also like a list of the removal orders.

The faction notes that a question was posed regarding the erosion in the hills and that the Minister answered that they are exploring retention ponds. The faction does not understand the correlation. Can the Minister explain what he meant by retention ponds as it pertains to the erosion problems in the hills?

The faction would like clarity on the calamity post and where the faction can find it.

The faction mentions that the Sucker Garden pump will be out until December. The faction would like to know what the plan is for the interim if we were to encounter heavy rainfall between now and then.

As it regards the boom, the faction understands that the boom was issued with a permit from VROMI. Can the Minister explain the thought process behind that and the advice on that? The faction would also like to see that advice.

The faction would like to request the initial and second design drawings for the Marketplace, seeing that it also went through VROMI and all communications through emails that were had with TEATT concerning the matter since July 2024.

Can the Minister verify if there are 580 building permits open as of today outstanding? Between January and now, there are about 50 permits approved. Can the Minister confirm those numbers?

Regarding the road going towards Blue Marine that the ministry recently gave a permit to build a boom on, the faction would like to know how long that road existed and the amount of years the access road is now in existence. Is the Minister aware of the precedent that is being set with that decision?

The Minister of VROMI and the Minister of TEATT had a meeting where the market vendors were informed of the delay and the reasons for the delay. The faction indicates that in this meeting, it was said by the Minister of TEATT that the holdup was because of internal sabotage within the VROMI ministry. Can the Minister explain this? Can the Minister confirm if this is really the case? Why did it have to be said via the Minister of TEATT first and not the Minister of VROMI if it is true?

Is it indeed a VROMI-related issue? Is it a TEATT issue? Is it a communication issue between VROMI and TEATT? Why did the Minister of TEATT point the finger at the ministry of VROMI and use the word sabotage?

The faction would like to have a list for the upcoming 12 months regarding the projects the Minister plans on rolling out. Can the Minister divide them into which projects he will be paying out of the direct budget and, which projects will be paid out of Capex, and which year of Capex?

The faction would like to add to the question already posed about the boom and access road towards the Blue Marine and Pointe Pirouette. Can the Minister confirm if at the entrance of Blue Marine there is already an existing Boom? Can the Minister confirm if there is already at the entrance of Pointe Pirouette already an existing boom with security guards for both? The faction does not understand the need for the third boom at the beginning of the access road. Can the Minister motivate that, and can the Minister describe how this does not seem like class segregation? The faction would like to have the advice for this permit.

The faction mentions the forensic audit. Is it indeed a forensic audit? Is it an audit? And who will be executing this forensic audit? The faction thinks that the Minister referred to TWO, but the faction doesn't think that TWO does forensic audits. Can the Minister explain which entity will be doing this? If it's indeed a forensic audit, if not can the Minister rectify that word? Can the Minister clarify that?

The faction noted that in the previous budget debate, it was said by the Minister of TEATT that we were going to get garbage bins for Great Bay. We are 6 months removed from that promise, and the faction has not seen it delivered. Where are we with the garbage bins for Great Bay?

The Minister mentioned that if you do not build within a year, your building permit can be immediately revoked. Is there a plan from the Minister in his vision, or the ministry, that will review all these building permits and ensure that they avoid future issues pertaining to civil works? Is the Minister going to review building permits that are a year or older?

The faction would like to know when the bid for garbage is supposed to go out. When do the contracts end?

Continuing with the civil works. Civil works is now a very big topic. The issue with the civil works is that it is a big topic, but the public is not getting proper answers. There is no clear distinction on who, what, when, and how the ministry operates.

The faction indicates that if you look at some of the hills in Cole Bay, you see some excavation works happening. Do all these excavation projects have civil works permits? Has the ministry gone in to assess if they do or do not? Someone mentioned to the faction that they saw slave walls by one of them. What does the ministry do in terms of civil works permits, slave walls, the Culture Department?

The ministry mentioned that the civil work permits will be done on a case-by-case basis. Doesn't this show some sort of discrimination? What are the criteria to start the review? The Minister mentioned the impact of the permit. Who determines the impact? How heavy is the impact? Where is the documentation to say this one is impacting society more than this one? How do you determine that?

The Minister also mentioned large impact or large projects. What is a large project? You can have a small project that impacts society even more than a big project depending on where it is and how the design is and water flow and septic and sewage. Can Parliament get proper documentation so that we can disseminate to the public how the Minister is planning to deal with civil works going forward? The faction would like a very clear answer on civil works permits going forward.

The faction is seeing concerned developers, some that feel targeted, and some that feel they can get away because of who is in government. The faction thinks that that should never be thought of or talked about by the citizens of Sint Maarten.

Regarding the statement of the Minister on the backlog of the building permits, can we get an answer regarding the process that the ministry takes? Are we using the FIFO system, first in, first out, in terms of permits coming in, first in, first out? Or is it going to be pulling out permits, and someone works on this? Who determines the prioritization in terms of the importance of building permits?

Is the government going to give priority to our projects even though they were last minute or weren't done properly over private citizens? Do projects that the government put on bid get priority over other projects?

Where are we with the marketplace design? Is it true that the reason we do not have the marketplace is the lack of effort by VROMI? Can we get clarity on that?

The faction would like a copy of the first building permit, the first design, and the second design. Has the Minister ever gotten the results of the soil test? Can we get the results of the soil test?

The faction stated that it had some complaints from certain developers that feel targeted and said that the Minister is allowing a lot of projects in the Simpson Bay Lagoon area to continue to be built without following the approved building permit and do not have civil works permits. Can the Minister confirm that all the projects within the Simpson Bay Lagoon are in line with their building permit and have civil works permits?

In the presentation by the ministry of Finance they mentioned a backlog of 22 million guilders in *erfpacht*. In January this year when the question was posed to the Minister regarding *erfpacht*, with the request for the top 10 offenders and the amounts. The Minister then said he needed more time. Can we have the top 10 offender amounts, and what has the Minister done since to collect this money? This current government came in and ended the procedure of the previous government in collecting the backlog in *erfpacht*. What is this government doing to be able to collect the 22 million guilders?

Regarding the garbage process and bidding process at NRPB, can the Minister confirm if any bidding process for the tires, garbage, or anything related to VROMI was stopped?

The faction would like the Minister to provide the travel expenses of the last 6 months on travel, per Minister and per cabinet. Have any gone over the budget? If any has gone over the budget, what amendments were made to supplement this? If amendments were made to supplement the travel of cabinet and Minister, which line items were used? Which departments were affected by the travel of cabinet and Ministers?

Can we get a total amount of consultants per cabinet and Minister? Marketing, PR, legal, everything. The faction would also like to see the budget post amounts per and the total value of those contracts.

The faction would like to know if the defense notes and all those different documents that should be working and functioning in the government's best interest, from VROMI, with regards to building permit cases in the last year, can be provided to Parliament. Can the building permits, court cases, all the related documents, and or advice for those particular court cases be provided to Parliament as well? For the last year.

The faction would like to know what classification is being used when a civil works permit is being issued. How is that described in the National Gazette? Can the Minister give an example of that? Can this be provided to Parliament? The faction would like to know regarding the millions of guilders left to execute road works and other great infrastructure projects in terms of the sewage connections to homes. The faction notes that it doesn't see any of that taking place, but the faction does see the road works happening. How much of those funds have been spent thus far? What is the ministry's vision plan in order to increase the speed in which this is happening? And does the ministry run the risk of losing those funds if they are not spent in a timely manner? Has a request already gone in for budget 2026 to get more capital expenditures budget to continue the great work in terms of paving all the roads, paving all the side roads, and also putting together more home connections for sewage? The faction believes that this will alleviate a lot of the sewage situations that we see persons complain about on the island.

The faction is requesting all the documents related to Rainforest Adventure. The issuance of the land, which Minister signed the deed to issue the land, which discount agreements were made when it comes to the scaling of the amount to be paid. The faction would like all those documentation because it was told that a tax exemption/long lease exemption write-off took place within the last two months by the Minister and the Council of Ministers. The faction would like to know if that is true. Was there any request to substantiate that, and what would be a reason to write it off? The faction doesn't see the ministry or the Minister writing off the long list owed by private citizens that struggle to pay their long lease every year.

The faction continues and indicates that it had a few questions regarding the landfill tipping fee. The faction wants to understand why there is a rush to push it through private law. If there's doubt, why not just complete the ordinance? The faction remembers that the law, the ordinance by the NRPB, had to be completed at the end of 2022. Then it became the end of 2023, and now we're hearing the end of 2025. Can the Minister get an indication from the NRPB why this is taking so long?

The faction is aware that over the last couple of years, there have been so many different proposals, so many draft ordinances and so many studies being conducted in order to regulate our waste situation. If almost all of the key elements are there already, the faction would like to know why it would take another 6 months. Why is it taking so long? Can some concrete dates be provided to the Minister from the NRPB?

What is the status of the temporary workers that were in the ministry of VROMI to assist in expediting building permits? Are they still employed? If not, why not? What is the Minister's intention?

If, a request from, the homeowners of Kiwi Drive, Lime Rd., Cassava Dr. Marigot hill Rd., Cocoa Plum, Raspberry, decide to put a boom or request for a boom, would that be granted to the ministry of VROMI? If not, why not?

The faction urges the Minister to do his research and come back with the correct answer regarding the scaling and Rain Forest. The faction wants to confirm that no special price scaling was given once the deed was issued back in 2016. Was there a special tariff given? If not, can the Minister provide the deed and provide what tariff is being paid and what is being paid by others in the area for residential and commercial purposes?

Was a request submitted to write off what was already owed for the land exploited for all those years in exchange for giving back?

Can the Minister give a list of all major developments that are currently active in construction and that are valued at over 2 million guilders? Can the Minister list the locations?

What is being done to stimulate and guide Philipsburg? What is the involvement of VROMI in the Philipsburg beautification, if any?

Can the Minister indicate the permit applications and indicate the value of those that are in right now that are over 2 million guilders?

How many civil works permits have been requested to date for 2025? How many civil works permits have been granted in 2025? Based on the request date and the issue date, what is the average processing time for this year for civil works permits in days?

Regarding the clean-up that we see taking place on the landfill, the faction would like to know if the Minister has detailed information on the whole bidding process for that.

The faction indicates that the Minister mentioned that a forensic audit is taking place. What does the Minister mean? Can the Minister give some clarity on that?

The faction would like to receive the report regarding GEBE and relief, even if it is via the confidential route.

The faction would like feedback from each ministry as to their current challenges with the non-ratification of the budget.

**The United People's Party-faction** has taken note of the draft and has the following questions and remarks.

Ministry of Finance

The faction notes that the Council of Advice refers to a form that must be used to inform Parliament. This form was not included with the file. Can a copy of this be provided? Was the format followed when informing us in the letter dated March 4, DIV number 5201?

Why was this recommendation from the Council of Advice regarding the authorization of Ministers to sign on behalf of the country not taken up? There is still no explanation that this authorization must be followed up with an LBHAM as per article 46, second paragraph, part B, of the National Accounting Ordinance.

Even though in the Minister's "nader rapport" to the Governor, it is indicated that this had been taken up. Please explain why. The faction notes that



there seems to be a conflict somewhere, or if the faction missed it, can clarification be provided?

The Council also recommended that the matter of urgency be removed, as this is all the more undesirable since the possibility of review by the Constitutional Court is excluded in the case of emergency procedures, undermining its role in the legislative process and in the system of checks and balances.

In the amendment from the government in January, which has also been taken up in this budget, budget post 40, a new section titled "Minister's Legal Cost" has been included with a budget of 60,000. What will this be used for?

There's also an additional 10,000 for representation costs. What is this, and what is it to be used for, exactly? Similarly, budget post 4010 – Minister of Finance Cabinet for Third Parties – has increased by 60,000. What is the reason for this increase?

Is a budget amendment for 2025 still expected?

When it came in January, it was stated that a budget amendment would come in May. So now that we're dealing with this, is a budget amendment still expected? The faction asks because the faction still doesn't see any revenue-generating measures in this budget.

The Minister prides herself on having an on-time budget. The faction would like to know when we can expect the 2026 budget since we're still dealing with 2025. Is it still the intention to have it done on time?

After delving into all the amendments that came from government, the faction also noted that there were many amendments – specifically 55 for Justice; IS-469 has 13 for EYCS; IS-468 has 26 for ECYS. The faction also notes 17 for the Ministry of Finance. The faction would like to know why. What measures have been put in place to avoid such errors in 2026?

The Minister of Finance spoke about the possibilities of a format for amendments. The faction would like for this format to definitely be sent before the Public meeting and also to ensure that we have smooth sailing for Budget 2026 when it comes.

The faction notes that if one is listening, one would say this is not a budget meeting—this is a Soul Beach meeting. The reason is that the Minister does not quite understand how this works. The fact that the Minister is straying away from the questions will only attract more questions.

The Minister speaks about political motives. What seems political to the faction, is the fact that now everyone is running from Soul Beach like a hot potato.

If the Soul Beach was a major success, with thousands of persons, would they have run? Because the Minister of TEATT doesn't pay—the Minister of TEATT does not decide for the entire Council of Ministers. Was the Minister required to sign the advice?

The faction is pro-economic stimulation. The faction is pro-festivities. However, what the faction is not pro is the misappropriation of funds. The faction does not know if funds were misappropriated. The only way the faction can find out is by asking the person in charge of the government coffers and the government funds. When it comes to the funds and everything being allocated correctly, the faction expects that from the Minister of Finance—and that is what the faction is not getting.

The faction said thanks for the presentation and the beautiful words concerning maturity from the side of Parliament when it relates to the way Parliament handled the first Budget. The faction remarked that it is somewhat ashamed that the faction didn't follow its thoughts on the first Budget regarding the numbers. The faction will not make that mistake again.

The faction inquired about how to put an amendment together. The faction is waiting to see this.

The faction mentioned complaints concerning the tax office are coming to the faction's attention. Hence, the faction would like to know if the Minister of Finance can inform the Parliament if the tax office has also been hacked, like GEBE. It is impossible that after companies are closed for years, the tax office is still requesting documents that were already submitted. This causes much stress in the business world. They have to go and ask for new documents, and the faction thinks it's crazy. Can the Minister of Finance look into what is going on there?

Is there any regulation on how much a bank could request in bank fees? Is there a cap on that? Are there any plans to establish a National Bank of Sint Maarten, seeing that our banks are foreign?

In the previous Budget 2025 discussion, the faction asked for the court cases, those that were pending, those that were lost, and what they cost the country. Can the Minister of Finance provide the faction with those numbers per ministry? The faction mentioned that he believes he got a reply from the Minister of Finance but no other reply from any of the other Ministers about pending cases. This then means to the faction that they are not aware, but either way, it is the Minister of Finance that pays the bills; hence, the faction would like to have this from the Minister of Finance.

When a loan is requested for a specific project, do we look at how we are going to pay that loan back, or do we leave it up to our kids to figure it out? Is a plan put together? Let's say we request from Capex 10 million to do project A. Is that project going to create revenues, or do we have plans to cut costs to get that 10 million plus the interest back? How is that put together?

Can they show how much we have saved this year by not printing new number plates and what or how this government is planning to make use of these savings?

The faction notes an increase in *personeel van derden* and inquires if the Minister of Finance could let the faction know exactly what projects these funds have been allocated for. If you go from 0 to 75,000, then that obviously means that you have a project in mind that is going to cost 75,000 eventually. What is that project going to bring to the coffers of government? What projects have been allocated for these funds? What are the benefits for the country?

What cost-cutting measures and revenue-generating measures has the ministry implemented in the last year? The faction is not talking about since February or January when we had a budget, but the faction is talking about the last year since this administration is in government.

The faction would like the **Minister of Finance** to provide the room tax from the years 2023, 2024, and 2025 for the months of February, March, April, and May. If we had an extra 5,000 people here, it should show in the room tax.

The faction mentions that every month while in TEATT, the ministry received a report from the airport which stated exactly how many flights and how many passengers came and where they came from. This was something that this faction put in place while they were in government so they could direct the marketing in one way or another and see where the monies were spent. If the Minister could also send those reports from those same months, then the faction could see if the numbers make any sense.

#### Ministry of General Affairs

The faction would like to know what the status update is for retroactive payments of LB's for firefighters? Faction thinks that we speak on justice workers, but the firefighters are being ignored, and they play a very, very significant role in our community as well.

Is the fire department retroactive pay included in this budget? How much will we need to pay these firefighters for 2025?

The Minister made mention of the recommendations for BTP when it pertains to fuel costs. However, what are these recommendations specifically? How soon can the people of Sint Maarten have relief? Are these recommendations in line with any of the suggestions made by the motion that this faction presented and which was passed by Parliament?

The faction understands the Minister is doing his due diligence, but something has to be done. Every day, we are seeing complaints from the people of Sint Maarten who are being cut and who cannot find the means and ways to pay the 50% or the percentage required for electricity to be restored.

The faction urges the Minister to look at the TOT. What we're having is double taxation. TOT is being passed on and passed on, and when you take 5% and pass it on six times, you have 30%, and it falls on the consumer in the end. Even the government is charging the TOT. When we look at the breakdown of the gas, whether it's an increase or decrease, something as simple as ensuring that the TOT is removed will bring significant relief to the people of Sint Maarten.

During the 2024 budget amendment debate, this faction presented where it shows that the fuel tankers and the companies are charging TOT. And when you look at the TOT ordinance, the Minister of Finance has the ability to

create exemptions for any vessel or company that is transporting fuel. That would bring immediate alleviation to the people of Sint Maarten because the amount that the faction showed that SOL was charging just based on TOT was thousands of dollars. That will bring immediate relief because the cost is being passed on and falling on the doorstep of the consumer. The faction urges immediate action while we wait on BTP.

Budget Post 30 – Minister of General Affairs – other goods and services was increased by 400,000. Why such a drastic increase? What are the plans for this?

Why is there an increase in salaries across the board for all Ministers? The faction notes it was done in the 2025 budget as well. The Prime Minister increased by 8,769; the Minister of Finance by 8,410; then Justice by 2,663. But what was interesting – the faction notes that there was no increase for the Ministry of VSA.

The faction notes the importance of the Mental Health Master Plan for country of Sint Maarten. The Minister of VSA said he was not able to get access due to NRPB stating that they fall directly under the Prime Minister and that he would have to ask permission for such.

The faction would like to know if the Minister of VSA has ever reached out to the Prime Minister for such a document.

The faction would like to urge the Minister of General Affairs to request this document and then also discuss and submit it to the Minister of VSA – since, for some reason, it seems as if the Minister of VSA is in a whole other building and he can't walk down to the Prime Minister. Or is it such that the Prime Minister has received it, and communication is not good between the Prime Minister and the Minister of VSA? Because the faction cannot understand why the Minister of VSA cannot get it from the Prime Minister or why the Minister is not requesting it from the Prime Minister.

The faction would like to know about indexation of scales. Is this in progress, especially seeing the increase of minimum wage over the past couple of years? The faction notes that there are persons that are working in the government apparatus that are under the minimum wage because there has

been no adjustment for many years. What are the plans for such? Is this in the pipeline? If so, please indicate.

The faction will hold the Minister equally responsible come July 2025 if the people of Sint Maarten do not receive relief as promised by the Minister today, publicly, for GEBE. The motion was passed. The time for excuses is over. The faction is happy to hear that the Minister went through the BTP report, but the faction hopes that the Minister's word will be as gold and that the Minister can follow through with the wishes of the majority of the Members of this Parliament to bring relief to the people of Sint Maarten.

Do we have a problem with "we"? When it's a local at the helm, we find every single thing wrong. The untimely passing of the former temporary manager—and then all of a sudden, GEBE went quiet. And everything is still far from perfect. When there was a local director at the airport—say one, say two—we had everything to say. Now, there's a change at the head of the airport, and the faction is barely hearing anything of the airport. Why are we so afraid of ourselves and have the energy to fight ourselves but not fight together?

GEBE is not forgotten and will not be forgotten until it's fixed and until we can carry out the goal and the wishes of this government, opposition, and the late temporary manager—which would be to get GEBE where it needs to be.

The faction mentions that a Member of the faction sent two letters to the Minister concerning the mold in the Government building. If there is no mold, why are ministries and departments moving out or working from home? The faction also requested the reports on the various tests that should have been done between now and then. The faction has not received these. Can the Prime Minister make these available?

Who is responsible for the renting of buildings? Can the Prime Minister give a small elucidation on how it works? When a department needs to move somewhere, who does all the work? Who checks the contract? Who sends it out on bid? Can the Minister give an outline of that?

Can the Minister give an outline of the cost-cutting measures that were done in the last year? The faction wants the government to look good. Tell the people how you save them money and tell them how you plan to make some more money.

Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication

The faction would like to know what is the hold up with the Marketplace. The faction understood that there's a problem within VROMI, and something was done wrong within VROMI, and the holdup is at the VROMI department at the moment. So, if the faction is wrong, correct the faction, but the faction believes that we need to get the process going ASAP for the people.

The faction notes that the Minister of TEATT stated, pertaining to the Marketplace, that the ministry is waiting on the building permit. The faction specifically asked what the holdup is—whether it pertains to something from VROMI. The faction didn't get a clear indication or clear answer. The faction does not believe it is getting a clear answer.

Soul Beach. While the faction is not against any aspect of it, the funds—there is an impression that something was not done right as it pertains to the funds.

The Minister of TEATT does not pay. The Minister may write advice—and the staff may write the advice. But at the end of the day, the financial persons have to agree or disagree.

Was the advice approved unanimously in COM? And was the advice required to be signed by the Minister of Finance?

The faction recalls that once, the Minister of TEATT was actually willing to present to Parliament the JZW report on such and then, when the faction spoke to the Minister of Finance once about requesting it, the Minister said it could not be sent.

Can the Minister of TEATT present to Parliament the JZW report on the advice for Soul Beach?

And lastly, the faction would like clarity on what exactly is the problem with the Marketplace as it relates to the ministry of VROMI.

The faction would like an update on how many licenses have been distributed by the Ministry of TEATT. The faction would like an account of how many were given in the last year. This includes amendments, new ones, gaming,

fishing, and all licenses distributed by TEATT. The faction asked if this all could be provided. Could the faction have those numbers?

In the last budget debate, we spoke about the issues with the driving exams. Have any of the ideas been implemented that we spoke of in the previous Budget 2025 discussion, and what has been done since? The complaints keep coming, and the frustration increases.

The faction mentions that he heard of the nice plan to have a meeting regarding Philipsburg. Philipsburg master plan, but when the faction looked in the Budget, it saw 50,000 allocated. Hence, the faction is curious to know how the Minister is going to revitalize Philipsburg with 50 thousand. Or was the 50 thousand just to put a plan together? The faction is of the opinion that that would be a very expensive plan. The faction continues and states that too much buildings are still broken down from hurricane and the owners of the building cannot afford to do something with it. The faction believes that it is important that we, as a tourist destination, find a way to make that look pleasant.

Can the Minister give us a real update on the Marketplace? The faction would like a real outline of this.

What cost-cutting measures and revenue-generating measures has the ministry implemented in the last year?

Soul Beach. The faction mentions that a Member went to every event every night. The faction did not want to speak of what it heard or any camera tricks with pictures.

The Minister of TEATT also mentioned four specific resorts or hotels where all the Soul Beach people, including the 20,000 people, stayed. Could we see the reports and room tax, specific from those?

The faction wants clarity, honesty, and a plan moving forward. The faction would like a plan on this is where we are today. If we are going to do this next year, these are the pitfalls, these are the things we want to do better, these are the numbers we are expecting, and this is the revenue that will be generated from it.

Can the Minister provide the correspondence regarding Royal Caribbean not approving a design? According to the faction, that was never the case.



### Ministry of Justice

Will a budget amendment be required to address the emergency costs associated with the recent crisis at the prison?

Last week Friday, the government, judges, and the prosecutor visited the prison. Today, we finally see in documents that the prosecution admits that the prison is inhumane. Today, a verdict was rendered against the Ministry of Justice for the actions taken in the transfer of prisoners to Simpson Bay. While the Minister has the ability to create the MB and label the building a prison, there are international standards that must be minimally followed.

Now, the faction understands that an expert who was along with the Minister was brought in and flown in for this process. The faction would like to know what kind of expert is this person. What is this process that this person is supposed to be working on? How much is this person being paid? How come we can find money to pay this person — which the faction can very much assume is expensive — but yet the inmates have basic needs that are not being met?

All kinds of articles giving updates on the situations, but from the faction's investigations, many were not factual. The only thing at this moment from investigation being worked on is the electricity. Inmates are deprived of sunlight, but yet we have money to pay these expensive experts from the Netherlands.

The faction has heard that the money to build the new prison was coming with alternatives, but it is not yet released because proper planning and execution are not in place. The Minister of Justice published that the prisoners were allowed to make phone calls due to the fact of no visitation. Based on research, to the faction's understanding, this is also incorrect. Prisoners are not allowed to make phone calls right now.

The Minister said visits are suspended due to safety concerns — also incorrect. They're suspended because the rooms are being utilized at this moment, nothing to do with safety concerns. But we are trying to present a reasoning that allows us to use specific articles in different ordinances.

We saw the "Committee van Toezicht" say: The Minister is violating and overstepping. The committee also states that while the Minister may give this reasoning for suspension of visit, the Minister has done it five times and the

Committee says fix it immediately. The Minister says inmates are getting sufficient sunlight — obviously, by the ruling today (June 10), that's not the case.

Dutch Marines, Navy, Coast Guards, guards in Pointe Blanche prison — we have guards from Bonaire, guards from Aruba, and guards from Timbuktu coming. What is the financial ramification of such? We have guards that are not presently showing up to work. Was a call made to gather the troops and ensure locally that we have enough?

Apparently, 35,000 euros was given by the Netherlands for renovation and purchasing of new mattresses at the police station — but yet none of the toilets were working, and only last week Wednesday they started to fix the toilets at the police station because the judges were going to visit on Friday. Now, we can find the money to fix the stuff when we find out that the judges are going to visit. Sewage water was running.

Members of Parliament, both opposition and coalition, have sent letters, sent requests, and sounded the alarm.

The alarm has been sounded way before the riot. Members of Parliament have not only spoken on this fact because we did not want to be seen as only being there, and once we leave, the prisoners are forgotten. The faction has continued to say that prisons weren't made for dogs — they're for human beings. And at any given moment, we are fathers, we are mothers, we are brothers. At any given moment, something can alter any one of our lives, and we can end up there.

Inmates are sleeping on the ground due to heat. In 2021, three cases of the European Court for violation of human rights were handled. The clients received around 3,000 euros compensation and their lawyer fees. If it happens again, who will pay for Country Sint Maarten?

What the Minister doesn't seem to understand is that if you release inmates earlier with a monitoring system, you can actually see better if they have been rehabilitated in their adjustment back into society. In the recent court case, the judge asked: why aren't you releasing prisoners due to lack of capacity?

Well, today now, the judge gave you the ammo to do what you need to do as a Minister of this country.

When last has the Minister received a report from the Central Board of Probations? How quickly can the Minister urgently assess all current inmate cases to gather a synopsis of the following: scheduled releases, crime category, severity, violent/nonviolent, stage of sentence, type, and length of sentence, whether conditional or unconditional?

As asked in the Justice meeting — what is the plan for training of personnel? In the letter of the Minister to Parliament dated March 4, the Minister indicated that one of the amendments suggested on January 25 through the "nota van wijziging" IS 470 was not for new expenditures but to make adjustments to critical vacancies. Can the Minister explain which vacancies are these?

The faction sees in the "toelichting" there are 24 budgeted vacancies. Is this accurate, and does the Minister see this fulfillment possible in 2025?

The faction notes that the judge rendered a verdict for inmates to be transported within 24 hours, and every day after that is a fine between 5,000 and 50,000 guilders. Where will this cost come from? Should the prisoners not be transported back within 24 hours?

The faction indicates that the Minister of Finance clearly stated that the delay or non-payment of justice workers has nothing to do with the delay of the 2025 budget. If that is the case, then the faction would like to know from the Minister of Justice what the hold up is with the payment? If the delay in payment has nothing to do with the 2025 budget, then why hasn't the payment process started? And when is it intended to pay the justice workers of Sint Maarten?

Also, for the budget post 5202—for the prison and jail— 118,882 for "projects and activities." But in the *toelichting*, there is no description of what this money will be used for. Can an explanation be given as to what this 100-plus thousand will be used specifically for? We need to ensure that it is going towards the right things.

The faction notes that the Minister stated that the last update from the Probationary Board was received on June 5. The faction would like to know what the findings were of such . Did any inmates qualify for early release or probation? Will this be taken up immediately, seeing the prison conditions and lack of space?

Speaking of the electronic monitoring system, the faction would like to know specifically what the difference is between the penal code of the Netherlands and that of Sint Maarten. The faction also refers to Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire. Curaçao, for example, has article 137.

The faction notes that the Minister keeps saying we cannot use electronic monitoring as an alternative for sentencing. The faction cannot speak for anyone else, but what we are trying to do is have electronic monitoring exactly in line with what the Minister has stated—for early release due to cell capacity issues.

The faction believes we are now in line as to why and when electronic monitoring can be used—as a process for early release and not as an alternative.

The faction would also like to note that, despite the issue of cell capacity, we must ensure that we remain in line with human rights conventions and do not violate them, especially Article 3 and Article 5.

Article 5 is specifically relevant. When the faction looked at the case with the European Court, it was stated that, under further complaints under Article 5, the Joint Court had failed to conduct an adequate examination of the possibility of suspending the person's detention. This is very important. A person's liberty, once taken away, comes with rules and regulations. But we should look for every adequate possibility for suspending such —and this is where electronic monitoring comes into play.

The faction asked the Minister how much was spent for the assistance provided by Curaçao and Aruba. The question was simply: how much?

The faction would like to know if Sint Maarten were to lose a court case again due to a violation of human rights, who would bear the cost? It was said that it would be a shared cost. The faction would like to refer to an article 2018, which stated that Parliament wants, the gentleman's, fine to be paid by the Dutch government.

Let us do what needs to be done. Let us ensure that we are not in violation of human rights obligations, because Sint Maarten will carry the brunt of it.

The faction mentions that this question was asked in the previous budget debate, and it is hearing even more now regarding residency permits and how

fast they're coming out of the department. The faction has gotten calls and messages from people that have been waiting for over a year, some a year and a half, some even two years. So, what is the plan? The excuse of staff is no longer acceptable. How many residency permits are still awaiting to be signed? What is the plan? The faction mentioned that they haven't seen any increase for the immigration.

The faction mentions the safety in Philipsburg. The faction mentioned that the Minister was informed that there was a project that had already been paid for. The faction asked who was responsible for ensuring that projects were executed once the government paid for them. The project involved Levers (*Hefbomen*) in Philipsburg, which was already paid for. The faction would like to know if the Minister has already looked into that and where it is.

The faction mentions the Crime Fund. What can we do to bring the funds to the government? The faction gives an example of a politician committing a crime, and he is convicted and has to pay back 10 million guilders. Do these funds go to the Crime Fund? Who does the investigation is paid by the government? If the politician stole, he stole from the government. What can we do to bring those funds to the coffers of the government? Is there any legislation that needs to be changed? What needs to happen?

The faction cannot understand how the government is robbed; the government does the work to receive the funds, and then the money goes elsewhere. But when a fine or court case is lost, then the government has to pay it back, not the Crime Fund.

The faction went looking and noticed the articles of the Crime Fund article 5.1 regulating the Crime Fund, which states that each year, when submitting the Budget, the Minister submits a policy plan identifying the projects that are eligible for financing from the fund. Is there such a policy plan in the Budget for this year? Will this plan be presented this year, and if it has, could we get a copy of it?

The faction is unsure if this question solely falls under the Minister of Justice. The faction gives the example of a car parked in Philipsburg but not properly parked. The police pass by, see this, and call the tow truck. The car is taken away and put off by the towing company. The car is not picked up. Or there is a stop on the road, the car has no insurance, a tow truck is called, it's

picked up, it's parked up. The tow company is now responsible for ensuring that this car is not damaged, but the car has been there for 3 to 6 months. No one picks up the car. Who's responsible for the cost of the tow company?

Is there a policy plan from the government for how long the car is allowed to stay there under their possession, and when will it be retrieved and put, for example, behind the government building, auctioned and collect those fees and pay back the company?

It's disconcerting to hear that after you gave me a job, that you are left with a bill. Can the Minister elaborate on how that works?

The faction understands that this company was told that the location where they are they no longer can use it. That there is a plan for that location. Can the Minister inform which plan that is? Is there anything in place to be built there? If not, what is the plan when it comes to towing cars away?

#### Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport

The faction would like to know what is being done to increase school security. Right now, we don't see many school fights, but that doesn't mean that we cannot work on the issue until it starts again. So, what is being done, and what will be the cost to increase school security?

What are the educational reforms? The faction is not seeing anything on educational reforms to ensure Sint Maarten's enhancement of our educational system.

The faction notes the issues going on in America now—what is the update with students going to the States? What is the plan? The faction sees right now there's a hold-off on issuing student visas. Especially the plans for those students that attend English-speaking schools.

What are the thoughts of the Minister on opening the study lists? ₣

The faction would like to ask the Minister: At this moment, how many students do you have attending public school that are considered undocumented? Persons that are born here but do not have a Dutch passport? How many students do we have attending public school with that issue? How does this affect the educational level of our country? The faction notes the

following example: a person does well, excels well, graduates high school, but doesn't have the correct documentation to go away to study. It limits our educational level—besides them going to USM—but it hinders our educational level to a high school level.

Is there a plan in the future to build more schools? Sint Maarten is ever-growing. Let us plan for the future because the faction foresees that we will need more schools.

The faction doesn't want to say that he anticipated what actually took place, that it was going to happen, but the faction had a deep gut feeling when the Minister was asked if all the MOUs with the universities in place. And when the Minister was asked do you have any plans to expand those MOUs? The faction remarked on what happened with Fort Lauderdale. What plans are in place to remedy the Fort Lauderdale problem? What are the plans with our kids?

The idea would have been to get more universities involved with Sint Maarten for our kids, and the only way you can do that is by either visiting them or inviting them here. The faction mentions that it didn't see that. What the faction did see was a budget cut. This was not what the faction had expected.

The faction mentions that we complain that other countries celebrate their day bigger than us here on Sint Maarten. The faction believes that this is due to poor planning from the government side, because no one should be able to celebrate their day bigger than us here on Sint Maarten. The faction gives as an example his recent work visit to Anguilla. The faction mentions a letter that was sent to the Minister last week in regards to the Sint Maarten Day celebration and to celebrate it big through earlier preparation. Where would the funds come from if the Minister could see herself that way? For example, like what they did in Anguilla, a competition between districts and who decorates their district more patriotically, and there are prizes then for the community councils of those districts. If not, the faction would like to know so that a budget amendment could come for that.

#### Ministry of Public Health, Social Development, and Labor

The faction would like to know what are the Minister's plans for SZV. SZV has sounded the alarm, over and under, and is estimated to lose between 19 to 26 million for this year. The faction has seen no plans for SZV.

What is the update with the GHI, what is the update? Is it back from the SER? When are we planning to get this done? When are we going to start the debate?

Is the health levy still under the ministry of VSA? The faction sees the Minister of Finance making announcements. The faction sees the ministry of TEATT making announcements. When the health levy was originally planned — for those who may not know — it was planned with the synopsis that the government will make an agreement whereby funds can be regularly scheduled to help supplement SZV at a sliding scale.

How much is available in 2025 for incidental subsidies for mental health? The faction also asked the Prime Minister for an update on the master plan, so this question will be asked to the Minister of VSA just to see the answer. Has the Minister made contact with the Prime Minister to request the master plan from NRPB, in which they stated that the Minister can only get from the Prime Minister?

The faction heard of the new elderly initiatives and commends the Minister of VSA for such. The faction would like to know if the Minister intends to make a pilot project. What is the Minister's end goal with such? Will new legislation be developed, or will current legislation be amended to specifically assist with the venture?

The faction notes that there was a policy left and approved by the previous Council of Ministers that will increase the amount of financial aid that seniors receive. What is the update with such? Is the Minister aware of this? And now that the Minister is aware of it being stated now, will the Minister look into this and ensure that also the financial aid requires an indexation due to the minimum wage increase? And also, once this is done, can a ramification be presented as to the effect that it will have on the budget moving forward?

What is the update on the legislative trajectory created with the LVO for ambulance and personnel to ensure that they receive critical benefits awarded to them, such as the fire personnel and police?

The faction sees the legislation for cannabis is listed in the governing program. So, what is the process at this moment? Can a timeline be provided? This also has to do with the budget, as it is projected to bring revenue to Sint



Maarten once approved by Members of Parliament—if approved by Members of Parliament. What is the status? Has work begun with the legislative trajectory? Can the Minister provide an update on the budget?

The faction notes that the only revenue-generating measure seen in the budget is one that the faction put forward, which is the tourist tax—the health levy. So, the faction would like an update on that as well. Is it back from the SER? And what was the feedback? And when can we expect the debate to start on this legislation?

The faction, while listening to the answers presented, was reminded of the saying, “If you can’t convince them, confuse them.” Simple questions: What is the amount of XYZ? We go to Spain and back and not given the amount. The faction asked about the plans for SZV, and the Minister stated a list of things that are “in the pipeline” or “in progress” to save SZV. The Minister made mention that SZV has been sounding the alarm for years.

The faction notes that 90% of the stuff that the Minister listed was during the tenure of the former Minister. The faction has heard zero during the Minister’s tenure that is new, to save SZV. 90% of the stuff listed by the Minister was stated before; the alarm was raised recently again, whereas SZV stated last year, they were estimated to lose 19, and this year in the upwards of 20-something million. It’s a big hole that we have to fill. It’s not going to be filled overnight.

But if the faction asks a question and the Minister finds it prudent to say the alarm has not been rang recently—but before, then the faction would like to know: what is the Minister doing now, during the Ministers tenure? If SZV collapses, the country in turn collapses. Over 70-something percent of the country is dependent on SZV—and even more now since we have raised the limit.

We scream; we kick about ENNIA with 3,000 plus policyholders—what will happen with tens of thousands if we collapse with no medical coverage? Let us take SZV very seriously.

The faction asked about the SER and the SAAHA —and the Minister said the SER will provide meetings with them to go ahead and better discuss. The

faction wants to understand what more needs to be discussed. The faction questions the lack of urgency currently. What is the projected timeline?

The faction mentions the Health levy. In the meeting with Cft, they also said we would give approval for such because it would help SZV. The essence of this law is to assist SZV. You cannot have the outside world paying directly to SZV. So, the government then said they would agree whereby a portion would be paid to help to alleviate the strain on SZV. The government of Sint Maarten owes SZV hundreds of millions. The faction notes that something that was done by the former government in discussions with the former Minister of Finance to raise OZR fee, and this was done not once, but twice. Is that also the plan of this government? The health Levy is extremely important. The faction hopes the Minister can take ownership of it, because it belongs not only to the country, but specifically to the Ministry of VSA, Finance and Justice. The faction is alarmed to hear the Minister say it falls under the Ministry of Finance because the essence of the law that was presented was to help save SZV. The faction then asks the follow-up question: has the Minister read the law? Has the essence of the law changed? The faction urges the Minister to own it and save SZV.

The faction is concerned about the master plan. The former government had to fight to ensure that money was allocated for the mental health project. There was a meeting with the steering committee. After this meeting, they not only provided what we needed—they provided more. This mental health project is extremely important. Then the former Minister secured the 14.4 million. And today, it is something as simple as a master plan.

The faction, however, notes that the Minister is still not in possession of the master plan. The faction hopes that it's going to be done before the Public meeting.

SZV 1B. This would allow sole proprietors, including drivers and bus drivers. The faction supports entrepreneurship. If you're a Dutch citizen, you are able to open a business under yourself, but you are not able to be insured. This has been left—right there on the desk. This legislation has gone through the SER, JZW, and the Council of Advice, and "Nader rapport" is to be presented—what can be taken up and what cannot be taken up.

Our seniors are rejected from insurance once they reach pension age—rejected at a government level. It's then sent to SZV, and SZV takes it up on a

humanitarian basis—illegally, but on a humanitarian basis—otherwise our seniors would not be insured. Has the urgency changed?

The faction notes that SZV, by providing this humanitarian-based service every year during the audits—because it is not legally feasible, it is negative.

Something as simple as in SZV 1B—legally, we are only supposed to be referred to Curaçao. During the tenure of the previous government, SZV received not one, not two, but three unqualified audit reports—showing clear improvement in the status of SZV.

The faction is sounding the alarm again because the people of Sint Maarten are on the brink of a healthcare crisis.

The faction mentions that a Member spent a few days in the foster care conference, and the biggest cry was the stipend that foster parents receive. Foster care parents' stipend is 240 guilders, which is not enough. We all know, any one of us who has kids, that that is impossible, and you do not want people to just take foster kids for the money. The faction believes that it should be properly compensated. The Minister indicated that there is an idea. We still have time. The faction states that if there is no idea of how and where we could increase that, then the faction believes that a budget amendment is in place for that.

The faction mentions chronic diseases in Sint Maarten. Why does the patient who has a sickness that cannot be cured have to go back every month to see a doctor or specialist to get the same medication, which is costing the country money if it's chronic?

What cost-cutting measures and revenue-generating measures has the ministry implemented in the last year?

#### Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure

Landfill announcement. The faction sent a letter on April 2. To date, no answers have been received, so the faction will ask it here, whereby the answers may be received. In the letter dated April 2, the faction questioned the Minister of VROMI regarding his announcement on the intention to establish an entry fee at the landfill. While the faction fully supports initiatives aimed at providing

improvement and sustainable waste management, the faction is concerned about the legal foundation of this proposal.

Based on the understanding of the faction of the current legal framework, the faction has serious reservations as to whether the Minister of VROMI has the authority to implement such a fee under the existing national ordinance governing waste management, which includes household waste, bulky waste, liquid waste, commercial waste, car wrecks, and other categories, considering that the ordinance does not appear to provide provisions for the establishment of an entry fee for the landfill. The faction respectfully requests clarification regarding the legal basis for this decision and an update on how it will impact the 2025 income projections.

Is it projected? If it was projected and there's no legal basis, how will this impact the projection?

Please provide a copy of the policy or proposal regarding the introduction of the entry fee at the landfill.

Can the Minister confirm whether this policy has been formally published and made available to the public? If so, when?

What is the legal basis for the proposed fee, particularly in relation to the national ordinance waste disposal, and whether it has been reviewed and approved in accordance with the appropriate legal procedures? Please indicate whether any amendments to the national ordinance are being considered. If so, have these amendments been introduced in Parliament for review?

How many building permits are pending, and what is the cost in fees that the government would have received if these were approved?

Can the Minister give the faction an idea of how it works when our citizens are experiencing sewage water running in the streets and what they must do? These questions might seem random, but if someone calls you and says, "My child is getting sick having to smell septic water all day." then yes, it becomes a problem of the country.

The faction saw a post and thought this very amusing. This post was regarding a tender from the NRPB regarding Tires. This was for tires on the

dump. The faction found this strange because the faction knows of a young man that owns a tire center in Sucker Garden that once came up with a whole idea about what we could do with those tires, and the faction told him to bring and propose it to the government. The faction believes that the person did this. The faction thinks it is strange now to see it being tendered out via NRPB. Why NRPB? Is this not a government issue? Hence, the faction would like to get an explanation on that.

The faction inquires if the Minister has actually sat down with the Sint Maarten Housing Foundation since taking office and ran through their plans on getting our low-income homes in place. What was his conclusion? Were any requests made, and how is he planning to move forward with that?

The faction had a few comments on the answers given by the Minister of VROMI concerning the total cost of building permits. The faction understood that once a building permit is requested, a total cost price is associated with it. What will it cost to build that home, and what is the specific percentage for the building permit, one and a half percent? So when the Minister says that he cannot calculate it, the faction wonders if he didn't get his staff to put this in place on time, but that answer is still pending. Is staffing a problem in VROMI? The faction is asking this question so that the Minister could see exactly how much would have been in the government's coffers that would then give the possibility to hire more personnel. The faction believes that this is a problem straight across the board in government.

The faction is once again concerned regarding the tendering of the tires by NRPB. The faction understands the whole process, but at the end of the day, the NRPB sent out a tender, which will cost money. There is a proposal in government that will cost NRPB and the government nothing.

The faction mentions once again the Sint Maarten Housing Foundation. It relates to land and land allocation for social housing development. The faction wants to get the Minister's opinion on whether he understands the importance of the foundation and the trickle-down effect of many other things for the citizens of Sint Maarten.

The availability of land for the expansion of housing projects. Transfer of government-owned land in areas like Hope Estate and Upper Prince's Quarter that are already in reserve. Can the Minister facilitate this to make it faster? Can

the Minister streamline land policies and thus implement policies to expedite the allocation of zoning and land specifically for affordable housing projects? Increase the rental subsidies to suit the demand. The rental subsidies received now are outdated and are not working out. Can the Minister look into that? Access to project financing, for example, from the NRPB. 100 homes would mean a lot for the people of Sint Maarten.

Does VROMI have a housing department? If it does, is it functional? Do we have a housing policy from government? If we don't, does the Minister think that it is a good idea?

Does the Housing Foundation have a digital infrastructure in place? If they don't, is it an idea that via government, this could be requested via Capex?

**The Nation Opportunity Wealth-faction** has taken note of the draft and has the following questions and remarks.

Ministry of Finance

The faction would like to know what has been implemented since the 2024 budget to increase fiscal compliance. What other revenue-generating activities are being researched by the ministry, and what is the timeline, if there is any? What is being done to attract qualified individuals to work at the inspectorate and receivers? How does the ministry plan to tackle capacity issues that will soon be caused due to individuals going on retirement? What are the plans of the ministry to reduce the tax burdens of small businesses? Which new tax laws are currently under revision?

Since the minimum wage has been increased, are there any plans to adjust the income tax scales to reduce the burden on low incomes? Has the ministry considered including the items listed in the basket of goods in the list of exempted products for the turnover tax? Are there any plans to reduce the turnover tax percentage?

The faction continues and would like clarity on the mentioning of the Government working with an audit team to help bolster tax compliance; however, in this budget, there was no mention of the foundation. The faction would like to know what the status of the negotiation is.

#### Ministry of General Affairs

The faction would like an update on the JAJO commercial building case against the Government. The faction indicates that that building is currently used to house the national detective agency. The faction understood that the former Minister of Justice owns this property and took the Government to court and won. The faction also heard that there was a great financial implication for the Government. The faction would like some clarity on this matter, as it understood it's to the tune of over 500,000 U.S. dollars.

The faction states that the exam bureau was to be transferred to the old First Caribbean Bank on Cannegieter Street. The faction understands that this would no longer be and would like to know what is going on there and how much Government is planning to compensate the owners for the interruption of their business. The faction understood that there would be some sort of settlement.

#### Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication

What are the expected measurable outcomes of the 100,000 guilders investment in tourism product development? How will the return on investment be assessed? What key performance indicators are in place to track the success of campaigns like sweet St. Martin Spice and Fete de la Cuisine? How many direct and indirect jobs are projected to be created as a result of the tourism events and marketing campaigns outlined in the budget? How does the ministry ensure that growth in tourism contributes to long-term sustainable economic development and is not limited to seasonal consumption spikes? What is the expected economic impact of the MSC cruises campaign of 90,000 guilders, and how is the effectiveness of the cruise to stay conversation being tracked?

Is the budget allocation of 48,600 sufficient for meaningful and lasting revitalization of the Phillipsburg area?

To what extent is the ministry using data from the tourism exit survey and the tourism satellite accounts to inform and adjust tourism policies? The faction would like to know if contingency and recovery strategies are in place to protect tourism activities in the event of natural disasters or geopolitical disruptions.

How is the ministry working with the airlines to extend tourists' length of stay on the island? What efforts are being made to promote tourism in lesser-known areas of Sint Maarten to reduce congestion and promote equitable economic benefits?

Are there targeted marketing plans for returning visitors and repeat tourists using personalized content or loyal campaigns?

The faction continues regarding the MSC cruise, specifically in the allocation that's on page 77, where it states that 90,000 was raised based on a review of the 2024 national budget, particularly under the section related to tourism product development. The code number is 8240, and the marketing projects where this initiative was explicitly mentioned. The campaign aims to support a cruise-to-stay conversation strategy in collaboration with MSC cruises, encouraging passengers to extend their stay on the island either before or after their cruise. The faction indicates that the inquiry was motivated by the need to understand the anticipated economic return on this investment given campaigns objective to increase overnight stays and spending by cruise visitors additionally. The faction sought clarification on how the success and impact of this initiative are being measured and tracked, especially in terms of actual conversion rates, visitor expenditures, and long-term benefits to the local economy.

#### Ministry of Justice

The faction would like to know what the update on a total payout retroactive payment to the Justice workers and the Justice pensioners is. The faction indicates that it has mentioned previously that the Minister of Justice should prioritize the pension workers as the faction sees it very fitting to do so.

What discussions are ongoing to amend fees for the overall Immigration Services? Why can't the people who are requesting a Police Record receive this in a quick turnaround? What is the update on the national decrees for the remainder of the justice personnel? The Minister of Justice has only cosigned two batches while she's been in office for over six months. The faction mentions that during the tenure of the previous Minister, he delivered about six batches, including the two batches that the Minister recently signed off. These were initiated under the tenure of the previous Minister. When will the Minister of Justice put her foot down and get the work executed on these batches for the remainder of personnel in the ministry of Justice? The faction believes that this



lapse behavior is unbecoming, and work needs to be forthcoming for the people within the ministry and, by extension, the service that they will continue to provide for the people in this country.

The faction continues and would like to know what the update is on the police holding cells in Phillipsburg. What are the costs? The faction is of the opinion that our police headquarters, in general, is in a dilapidated state. Was there any assessment? If yes, how much will it cost the country?

The faction is of the opinion that the immigration processes are delayed way more than ever. What is being done to fix this problem? The faction understands from individuals within the community and different meetings that are being held with the interim head of Admittance and a member of the compliance team department that the former Minister was doing what he wanted and it was not correct. The faction indicates that this type of service and behavior is also unbecoming, and the faction will not accept any defamation of the character of the former Minister.

What discussions are happening regarding having all justice workers insured? The faction indicates that we are talking about liability, as we have already seen what took place in the prison. All justice workers are at risk. Those who execute as the officers in law enforcement and also the administrative personnel across the board. Are there discussions? What is the total premium? What will it cost the country to secure proper insurance for the justice workers?

The faction would like to know if the Minister knows that currently the inmates in Bonaire, that their rights are heavily being violated at this moment. The faction understood that they are not in the regular cells that they are supposed to be in. The faction understood that they are in asylum area or in a psych ward area, and that they're reaching out to their people here in Sint Maarten. The faction was also informed by one of the family members of an inmate in Bonaire pertaining to the complaints that the inmate gave his relative. The faction would like to know if the Minister or the ministry knows anything about this. Does the ministry know exactly where our inmates are placed in Bonaire and at any other relevant island where inmates were sent to or in the Netherlands? How long would it take for us to recover so that we can have them back here in Sint Maarten?

### Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport

The faction would like to know what specific steps are being taken to integrate student needs into a fully inclusive education system. Can the Minister provide details on the timeline and scope for the standardization of student assessments at primary and secondary levels?

Given the emphasis on lifelong learning, the faction would like to know how the curriculum reform will address the needs of adult learners and vocational training. How is the ministry addressing the staffing shortages and delays in hiring, especially among senior policy staff, which are noted as a risk in the budget? What improvements are expected from the revision of the job classification book and the teacher compensation study?

How will the ministry evaluate the success of implemented education reforms, and will the findings be made public? How does the ministry plan to ensure the long-term sustainability of the youth programs, such as the Business Outreach and Placement Program and the certified youth participation training initiative?

What actions are being taken to implement the recommendations from the early childhood development funding and policy review? How does the ministry plan to monitor and report on the effectiveness of schools' sports programs and the use of sports as a tool for health and community engagement? How does the ministry plan to ensure the long-term sustainability of inclusive education policies, particularly for students with special needs?

What steps are being taken to align vocational and technical education programs with current labor market needs?

How will the ministry monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented summer school policy and the Dutch language improvement strategy?

Given the limited budget for legal affairs and education legislation, how will the ministry ensure timely updates and enforcement of new education laws and regulations? What mechanisms are in place to ensure the investments made through the fostering resilience learning project, the FRLP, and the child resilience and protection projects, the CRPP, have measurable impacts on students' and teachers' well-being?

The faction would like Parliament to receive a detailed report on the Prince Willem Alexander school investigation, where the former interim head was also displaced pending an investigation. The director of the school was also moved by the former Minister temporarily because of what was happening at the school pending an investigation. The faction would like to know what the labor status is of the former interim head of the Prince Willem Alexander school.

Regarding the investigation at PWAS. The faction believes an investigation is an investigation, whether it's internal or not, but certain things that happen in an investigation can also lead to a criminal investigation. If there is a question about misconduct or even abuse against a student or students in a school by a leader, when the faction asks a question in Parliament, most of the time, it knows the answers. Parliament holds Ministers accountable, and not the other way around. We don't want a synopsis that is going to be drawn up. If a decision was made by the Minister, we, the people, because we here represent the people in this country, have the right to ask the Minister for an honest answer, be it open door or closed door. When it comes to that, Sint Maarten people are going to be put out of a job, and the faction will see the decision of the Minister; with an investigation, all parties are supposed to know what happened. Verbal or nonverbal. If somebody is going to lose a job or their contract is not going to be renewed and they are a young individual in this country, the faction needs to know the reason behind of it.

The faction continues and states that it stemmed from an investigation, and in a document that the faction has read, it didn't see anything about the relevant investigation that was noted. The faction would like the Minister to provide the necessary information because there is nothing confidential about it when the faction could read in an article that the Minister gave a detailed insight on the investigation, and when you speak to the relevant stakeholders or the individuals involved they themselves were not contacted by the Minister or had any discussions with them pertaining to what took place at PWAS.

#### Ministry of Public Health, Social Development, and Labor

The faction mentions that in Dutch it states: *“De volgende prioriteiten benadrukt: verduurzaming van de zorg fondsen, hervormingen gebaseerd op de aanbevelingen van de SAAHA worden ingevoerd om kosten te beheersen en toegankelijkheid van de zorg garanderen”*, regarding the Commission

mentioned in the notes for VSA. The faction would like to know when this Commission will be put in place. Who will be part of this commission? Who will oversee this Commission? How much will this Commission cost? Why is a Commission being implemented when the problems regarding the *zorgfondsen* have already been identified?

Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure

The faction mentions staffing shortages. With the key departments, such as the Staf Bureau, operating at only 29% capacity and the *beheersdienst* at 68%, how do you plan to address these critical understaffing issues? What recruitment targets have been set for 2025? What is the ministry's strategy to not only fill current vacancies but also retain skilled personnel across core divisions? By what timeline does the ministry aim to reach at least 90% of staffing capacity? What specific outcomes does the ministry expect from the new National Housing policy, and how will it directly address the current shortage of affordable housing for low- and middle-income families?

Can the Minister explain how the ministry plans to monitor and evaluate subsidies granted by the Sint Maarten Development Fund to ensure effectiveness, transparency, and alignment with the National Housing strategy?

Can the Minister provide a detailed timeline for the finalization, review, and implementation of the *VROMI Landsverordening* and its associated LBHam? How will the Minister ensure meaningful stakeholder engagement and public input throughout the zoning and legislative process? Will the results of the consultations be transparently shared?

What is the expected timeline for the completion of a single comprehensive *Bestemmingsplan* for the country? How will it address conflicting land use functions?

How does the ministry plan to strengthen the enforcement of environmental norms and reduce pollution in public and natural areas? How many inspectors are currently assigned to enforce environmental standards? Does the 2025 budget include provisions for expanding this capacity?

What concrete measures are budgeted for the 2025 budget to improve wastewater treatment and prevent flooding, particularly in residential

communities during heavy rainfall? What steps are being taken to implement a sustainable national waste management and recycling system? Will public education and incentives be part of this effort?

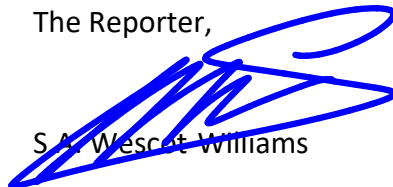
The faction continues and would like to know what specific infrastructure maintenance or upgrade projects are included in the 2025 budget and how they align with the goal of weather-resilient development. What is the ministry doing to ensure that public spaces, roads, and transport hubs are clean, well-lit, and properly monitored with working surveillance systems? What performance indicators or service level benchmarks will be used in the 2025 budget to evaluate whether infrastructure and public spaces meet accessible safety and maintenance standards? Given the number of consultant-led projects in the budget, the faction would like to know what is being done to ensure quality control, cost efficiency, and the transfer of knowledge to ministry staff. How is the Minister ensuring that consultants meet their contractual deliverables? Are there penalties or evaluation tools in place for underperformance?

How are the trust fund resources being managed for the projects under VROMI? What reporting or oversight mechanisms exist to ensure accountability? Are there internal efficiency programs or training initiatives planned in 2025 to improve the functioning of the ministry and reduce long-term reliance on outsourced services?

This report is to be considered the Final Report.

Stipulated in the meeting of the Central Committee of June 11, 2025.

The Reporter,



S. A. Wescot Williams