

NETHERLANDS

**Speech of PM William Marlin at the UN High-Level Political Forum
(HLPF) on SDGs in New York.**

Mr. Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen

I bring you greetings from Sint Maarten one of the 4 autonomous countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Each of the four countries wholeheartedly embraces the Agenda 2030 and has its own political reality and therefore faces its own peculiar challenges, but we all share the belief that the key to success in attaining the SDGs lies in our willingness to form partnerships at the national, regional and international levels.

We have just presented our Voluntary National Review to the United Nations, which outlines the steps we have taken in implementing the SDG's.

St. Maarten, shares a 37 square miles island with a Territorial Collectivity of the Republic of France, and obviously has the biggest challenge in ensuring the achievement of the 17 SDGs identified in the 2030 Agenda.

For us sustainability has a very unique meaning; we have to keep improving the quality of life for all our citizens while functioning under the core principles of open government, integrity, accountability, transparency, sustainable development, social inclusion, and equality.

Tourism the main pillar of our economy, accounts for some 80 per cent of all economic activities.

Using the Millennium Acceleration Framework, St. Maarten has introduced measures to combat poverty and hunger.

Our latest National Household Budget Survey estimated that the average household in St. Maarten spent approximately US\$44,700 in 2015. More than double the amount a decade earlier.

We have been working closely with the PAHO, the W.H.O. and the Caribbean Public Health Agency to improve health care policies and services.

A National Health Insurance scheme is now being developed while a brand new hospital is also on the books.

We offer compulsory education and lifelong learning and we are improving our vocational and tertiary education levels to meet the growing demands for skilled labor.

We are working diligently on affordable housing, to provide especially for our young professionals.

The UNDP office provides support to the St. Maarten government in integrating the SDGs into our National Development Plan and policies that are now being drafted.

I can assure you, of our unwavering commitment to achieving the SDGs for the well-being of our people.

We stand ready to continue this important work in the future, and to report our further progress to the international community.

On behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, I wish each one of you much success in the implementation of your prioritized goals in the coming years.

I thank you.