



**Minister Plenipotentiary Josianne Fleming-Artsen National Statement Presentation to the 38th
Session of the UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 4, 2015**

Honorable President, Honorable Director General
Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President, it is an honor and distinct pleasure for me to stand here at this 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference and its 70th Anniversary to share the vision and accomplishments of Sint Maarten on behalf of the Minister of Education, Culture, and Sports, the Honorable Mrs. Rita Bourne-Gumbs.

Firstly, I wish to extend congratulations to you Mr. President on your election as President of the 38th session of UNESCO General Conference. I would also like to extend congratulations to the people of Montserrat on achieving Associate Membership with UNESCO.

Mr. President, in keeping with the goals of UNESCO, Sint Maarten has met several objectives through its focused initiatives of educational, cultural and technological efforts. It is important to note that Sint Maarten as a new country within the Dutch Kingdom is investing and contributing to the visibility and importance of UNESCO as a World organization that upholds peace, intercultural understanding, cultural diversity, gender equity, scientific cooperation, and quality education.

A number of initiatives such as consultations, trainings and conferences, which were funded by the Government of Sint Maarten, The Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the UNESCO, have contributed largely to the development of Sint Maarten Cultural Heritage.

On the issue of Cultural Heritage, Sint Maarten can sound the drums of its contribution to preparing, building, restoring, and preserving its cultural heritage: A mouthful of committed goals, achieved, and to be achieved.

Since 2013, much has transpired on an island that allowed culture to be taken for granted. Sint Maarten hereby announces proudly that on the issue of Cultural Heritage, a National Consultation and a Joint Training for the implementation of the Strengthening of capacities of ARUBA, BONAIRE, CURACAO, SINT EUSTATIUS, SINT MAARTEN, and SURINAME, for implementing the Convention for the Safeguarding of INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE has led to the drafting of Sint Maarten's First Intangible Cultural Heritage INVENTORY List.

On the issue of disseminating and implementing the core principles of the World Heritage and Strengthening Institutions, Sint Maarten is creating a local network of heritage experts.

In May 2014, the Government of Sint Maarten acceded to the Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, and looks forward to submitting the nomination of the ICH element, the Ponum Dance, the dance of emancipation.

Mr. President, building young people's knowledge and their understanding of Cultural Heritage is important for the sustainability, safeguarding, and inventorizing of Sint Maarten Cultural Heritage. The results of the 2013 Youth Round Table conference provided a Youth Desk, which serves today as a mechanism for youth empowerment.

Sint Maarten reconfirms its continuous support and sponsorship of the Resolution to reinforce UNESCO's strategy in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

As for Communication and Information, St. Maarten established its ICT policy in 2014, and is ready to host its first Caribbean Technology & Education Conference (C-TEC) in November 2015, funded by the UNESCO, the Government and Private Sector of Sint Maarten.

Various communication tools were developed in partnership with the Korean and Jamaican National Commissions for UNESCO, which enhanced the visibility of the Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO. These partnerships should be fostered to enhance the capacity of the National Commissions in the Caribbean region.

The Memory of the World Programme of UNESCO that was introduced to Sint Maarten by the Kingston Cluster Office and the Secretariat of UNESCO have inspired a submission of a nomination to the international registry.

In closing Mr. President, the call for the safeguarding of Sint Maarten cultural heritage is urgent and critical. Sint Maarten moves forward to support and invest in its cultural heritage both tangible and intangible, and will invest in its documentary and digital heritage, enabling sustainability of our culture with

a focus on quality education and science, youth empowerment, cultural safeguarding, and communicative and technological investments.

Mr. President, Sint Maarten maintains its support to UNESCO for the advancement of its people.

I thank you!