

Tuesday, June 28, 2022: 10am -1pm

Location: Tejo Hall, Altice Arena

Interactive Dialogue 5: Promoting and strengthening sustainable ocean-based economies, in particular for Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries

Thank you Mr. Teleki for the opportunity to say a few words as a small island nation. It is an honor for Aruba to participate as part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Aruba, as a Small Island Developing State, is also a large ocean country. All activities, both in water *and* on land, impact our seas. Either directly or indirectly. From **source**, to sea. Nearly our entire economy is dependent on the sea, predominantly through tourism. The sea is also our **only** freshwater source through desalination. For *us*, there is a *dire* need to ensure we build *and* safeguard a **sustainable** blue economy.

Aruba has secured more marine conservation by introducing a list of locally protected species in 2017. And a marine park in 2018 comprising of four multi-use marine protected areas. And this has been further

expanded with a large majority of our mangrove and wetland areas in 2020.

We have reduced some sources of pollution by introducing a plastic **bag** ban. And since 2017, we have prevented close to **120 MILLION** single-use plastic **bags** from entering our oceans. We followed up in 2020 with a ban on high-litter single-use plastics. And Aruba could *very well be* the **first** country in the world to have included biodegradable plastics as part of its prohibitions.

Aruba's report on Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity valued our nature to almost 9% contribution to our economy, making this natural capital our 5th largest industry. For our economy and human well-being, it is essential to conserve this natural resource.

Considering the complexity and extent of the marine ecosystem, a small island such as Aruba *rarely* encompasses an *entire* independently functioning biome. To enhance and include the connectivity and biodiversity of the ecosystem, Aruba is **committed** to expanding the marine park to an **island-round marine protected area** and legally

introducing the **Rights of Nature**. This allows the safeguarding of the ecosystem services of the terrestrial and marine natural resources that we - *and all* future generations - are **highly** dependent on.

Through sustainable management, our marine and coastal ecosystem threats such as unsustainable exploitation, invasive species, *and* the many sources of pollution, will be mitigated. Applying regional and international best practices for the conservation of mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs, will **enhance** our biodiversity *and* our climate resilience, supported by Aruba's National Climate Resilience Council and its Action Plan.

We are **here** to learn from others, enhance our expertise and broaden our partnerships. But, we are also proud to share our story, as we support the Kingdom of the Netherlands in advocating for a holistic, collaborative and result-oriented source-to-sea approach.

Thank you. Or as we say in our native language Papiamentu, Masha Danki!