

January 29th, 2021

Aruba Council of Ministers
L.G. Smith Boulevard 76
Oranjestad

Your Excellencies,

With concern and a sense of urgency we request action and an update on reform plans for Aruba. Projections for tourism recovery in 2021 indicate ongoing financial difficulty for all companies that depend on tourism for their income. This is the year the pandemic will have its biggest impact on the economy. After the CDC decision requiring return testing for traveling to US, the forecasts are being adjusted downwards. This exacerbates the difficulty in recovering our tourism and our economy. While in 2020 many companies could still hold on with the aid offered by government and reserves, in 2021 reserves have disappeared and support will dwindle.

The private sector needs tools that offer the possibility to restructure or innovate. For the economy to grow, businesses have to survive and build. This requires the tools requested in past by the private sector and are for a grand part listed in Aruba's Master Plan. Most importantly, they are also reflected in the conditions set by The Netherlands (landspakket) related to the government's liquidity loans.

The government has publicly stated that they agree with the goals set in the "Landspakket" and that with our own Master Plan we can achieve this reform. However, we do not see any sense of urgency or progress in initiating the reform. If there is any progress, then there is no transparency in the process.

We realize that the process to introduce the Kingdom laws and the COHO will take time. However, Aruba cannot afford to stand still and wait.

We hope our public servants understand their primary responsibility towards the wellbeing of the community. The wellbeing of the community needs to be regained with difficult reform while we keep our population safe and healthy. 2021 needs to be a year of action. If the government provides the necessary tools, the private sector can make the necessary plans and innovate towards a higher level of productivity and recovery. More jobs can be saved by offering businesses the opportunity to reorganize and transform. The alternative is a larger number of companies closing their doors and a more severe job loss in our community.

We urgently request for actions to be taken towards the planned reform, including labor law reform, and for our organizations to be included in the process of defining the specifics of the reform. It is of high priority that Aruba transforms to a dynamic and productive labor market and an active economy to build a stronger future. We remain pending of your invitation to collaborate on the reform, with labor law reform as highest priority.

Sincerely,



Tisa LaSorte
AHATA President



Frank Snijders
ATIA Chairman



Omar Tromp
KvK President

cc: VNO