



Democratic Party St. Eustatius

Party Program

2011 – 2015

Let's Face the Changes Together!

January 2011

Table of Contents

Mission statement.....	2
Constitutional structure.....	3
Our government apparatus.....	3
Island secretariat.....	4
Economic affairs department.....	4
DROB.....	4
Empowerment of Department Heads.....	4
Infrastructure.....	5
Roads.....	5
Harbor.....	6
Airport.....	6
Electricity supply.....	7
Water distribution.....	7
Telecommunication and IT.....	8
Waste management.....	8
Government Administration Building.....	8
Our economy.....	9
Tourism.....	9
NuStar Terminals.....	10
Small & Medium Enterprise.....	10
Agriculture & Fisheries.....	11
Other economic activities.....	11
Healthcare.....	11
Education.....	12
Personnel.....	13
Social Affairs & labor.....	13
Youth & Family.....	14
Women & Gender affairs.....	15
Culture & History.....	15
Sports.....	15
Environment.....	16
Housing.....	16
Spatial planning.....	16
Justice.....	17
Taxes.....	17
Finances.....	18

Democratic Party St. Eustatius
Party Program
“Let’s Face the Changes Together”
Island Council Elections March 2011

Mission Statement

Guided by the slogan “Let’s face the changes together” the principal mission of the Democratic Party is to lead St. Eustatius in the process of the implementation of the constitutional changes that were introduced on October 10th 2010. At the same time, through rejuvenating and improving the quality and transparency of government, the DP will rebuild trust and confidence in Government.

The era that lies ahead of us all and the road to the future will not be without challenges. The new constitutional structure should bring more prosperity and security for our people. The DP realizes however that, although well thought out, as a community we are entering uncharted territory, which means that we may encounter glitches and obstacles along the way. Therefore it will be the task of government to assertively monitor and evaluate the developments and be a leader in negotiating solutions with the goal that during this term of government the structure will be fine tuned, resulting in the most optimal situation for all of us.

The DP is now more than ever dedicated to bring about political, social, economical and cultural improvement to our island. Now is the time to take the challenges head on and lead our island into a better and brighter future. Now is also the time to actively involve the youth of Statia in politics and policy making and groom and prepare them for when the time is there for them to take over the reigns of government.

It is the strong intention of a DP government to focus on their core tasks of running the island. Although subsidies towards institutions such as the St. Eustatius Housing Foundation, the Tourism Development Foundation, the Historical Foundation or the Public Library, remain there, the primary responsibility for these organizations will lie by their respective boards and directors. Government involvement in boards, management and staff will no longer continue. With all these entities service agreements (zorgcontracten) will be introduced. These contracts will endeavor to safeguard the proper financial management of these organizations.

Constitutional structure

The structure of public entities BES has been chosen because of the special status of the islands. Through the difference in culture, economical development, demographic and geological situation and the distance from the main land, the islands did not fit into any established structure that exists in the Dutch Kingdom. For this purpose Statia has become a public entity based upon a Dutch municipality. This unique structure offers the opportunity to create a tailor made structure that best fits our very special circumstances. The WOLBES and other relevant laws have been created for our islands in order to support this model.

The DP fully realizes that our people did not choose this option, but intended to remain in the Netherlands Antilles. As this option became impossible as none of the other islands did support it, the party believes that the structure we now have will best serve the interest of Statia and its people. The agreement reached that after the first five years a thorough evaluation will take place allows the island to fine tune and improve the new system. The DP is favoring to hold a referendum before this first five year term will expire in order to allow the population to speak out on the road that has been chosen and whether adjustments need to be made.

The new constitutional structure includes the introduction of dualism. Although some politicians do not approve of this system, the DP believes that dualism will improve the functioning of government. The fact that the commissioners can no longer be member of the Island Council will increase transparency of the governing process, makes the commissioners more accountable for their actions and strengthens the position of the Island Council as the legislative body elected by the people.

One of the main reasons for the dismantling of the Netherlands Antilles was the fact that the islands wanted to get away from Curacao as the main island and the double layer of government. Statia and the other BES islands therefore were looking for direct ties with the Netherlands. It has the appearance now since we went over into the new structure that Bonaire is taking over the role of Curacao. This DP government intends to prevent this at all times. To strengthen the direct link with the Netherlands it is also of importance that Statia will get some kind of representation in The Hague. This representation will establish direct ties with the parliament, the individual political parties, the various ministries and the Dutch government in order to advocate the specific interest of our island.

Our government apparatus

The DP realizes that the manner in which the government apparatus is functioning is far from satisfactory. It is the intention of the Democratic Party during the coming term of government

to make drastic improvements in its organizational structure, the efficiency of government and the services towards the general public. The following steps therefore will be taken.

Island Secretariat

As of January 1st a new permanent island secretary has been appointed. This appointment comes after a vacuum of a number of years. The DP realizes the extreme importance of a capable island secretary, who is the highest ranking civil servant and who is responsible for the proper functioning of the government apparatus. The party also is of the opinion, in light of our new constitutional structure, that this person not only needs to be an expert in the field but at the same time also has a strong affiliation with the Dutch government procedures and knows his way around in the Dutch governmental environment. We believe that we have found such a person in the newly appointed secretary. We expect from the island secretary that he will be able to reform the civil service and upgrade the standard of performance all with the goal to improve the internal workings of government as well as the service towards the general public.

Economic affairs department

For many years there has not been any functioning Economic Affairs Department. Since economic development is of utmost importance for the island and Government has a very important facilitating roll to play in the economy the DP has started the process to identify individuals with the right qualities to give substance to an Economic Affairs Department. It is the intention that this department will advise government on economic policies, facilitate and help improve the investment climate and last but not least improve the service towards the business sector in general.

DROB

The DP will reorganize the department of ROB. For this purpose a decision has been taken by the Executive Council to hire additional personnel to fill existing vacancies. The department needs to function more as the management agency of the government's spatial planning policies, rather than that it is carrying out infrastructural works itself such as (re)surfacing our roads. By taking this approach the department will become more effective and at the same time the economy will be strengthened and jobs will be created as the actual infrastructural work may be carried out by the private sector.

Empowerment of Department Heads

The DP government sees the need to upgrade the civil servants. This is also applicable in the case of our department heads. It is the intention of a new DP government to decrease the workload of the commissioners by empowering the departments by giving them more responsibility over governing programs and policies directly related to their departments.

We believe that this does not only improve motivation within the government apparatus, but it also will have a positive impact on work satisfaction and productivity. The DP is of the opinion that there is sufficient quality and knowledge among the civil servants and that they are well capable of taking responsibility to carry out the government programs and policies.

Policy making is the responsibility of the Island Council and Executive Council. The responsibility for implementation of these policies should rest by the civil service. For this purpose they need to be well equipped with the necessary knowledge, staff needs to be adequately trained and educated and proper housing and equipment is a necessity.

It is the intention of the DP, in close cooperation with the civil service and particularly with the department heads, to improve the quality of the output of the government apparatus.

To reach this goal the necessary funding will be sought for training programs to improve the skills of the civil servants and the quality of the various departments.

Infrastructure

The DP will give special attention to the general infrastructure on our island. Proper and adequate infrastructure will contribute to the quality of our living environment and is a necessary ingredient to support and facilitate our economical development. The island will not be able to compete with the region and the rest of the world and will fall behind when facilities like IT infrastructure, our roads, our ports and accessibility cannot meet the standards of the 21st century. In an inventive and aggressive manner funding needs to be found and allocated in the Island Government budget as well as through other means to finance much needed improvements.

Roads

The heavy rains throughout 2010 have had a detrimental effect on the roads which were already in a rather poor state. The road fund, established a number of years ago appears to be largely insufficient to maintain and improve the road network on the island. At the same time the traffic and the number of vehicles using our roads are increasing almost on a daily basis. A two prong approach unavoidably will be required.

To improve the roads additional funding need to become available. For this purpose assistance may be acquired from the Dutch government. This may be based on the fact that as a public entity no assistance can come from a province, since Statia resorts directly under the Ministry of Interior Affairs (BZK).

On the other hand, the income derived from road tax need to be carefully evaluated. A different system of taxation may be required, whereby tax will be levied based upon the size or weight of the motor vehicle. The latter may also have an additional positive effect.

In time this may result in a reduction of the number of large SUVs and trucks that are using our mostly too small and narrow roads.

Harbor

An improvement and expansion project, funded under the SEI program, to the tune of about 5 million dollars has been started early this year. This project will improve the accessibility of our island by sea. Also a dingy dock and facilities will be created to make the harbor better able to cater to yachting tourism. The DP is well aware of the fact that, although very necessary, these measures are mainly aimed at the short term. A long term solution for our harbor is very much required. A harbor study carried out last year can form the basis for this solution. In this study the possibilities of constructing a new harbor road in Southern direction as well as a possible relocation of the commercial activities of the harbor have been researched. Both solutions aim at the improvement of the touristic function of Lower Town by reducing the movement of heavy transport through this area.

Also in this respect inventive solutions need to be identified and a public private partnership (PPP) with NuStar Terminals deserves serious consideration. Both the island government and NuStar have in this a common interest. It is the intention of the DP to explore ways of cooperation with NuStar Terminals with the multiple goals to have better harbor facilities, better accessibility of the island by sea and an improved tourism product.

Airport

Both for local traffic as for tourists the airport will remain our major port of entry. To accommodate this traffic a number of improvements have to be carried out.

Although in the SEI program funding has been allocated for the construction of a new terminal building, this project has not yet been carried out. The main reason for this forms the new constitutional relation we have with The Netherlands resulting in compliance with stricter aviation rules and regulations. In concrete this means that the planned construction is too close to the runway and a new location for the terminal building, most likely in the Concordia area, need to be identified. It is the intention of the DP to speed up this process and commence the construction of the new terminal building which will highly enhance the first experience the visitor will have of our island as will it improve the quality of service towards the traveler. As a first step an airport master plan, drafted by the Ministry of Traffic, is expected to be completed by May 2011.

Ideas that were floating for the expansion of the runway require more study and research. To venture into this the DP will develop a vision on Statia's touristic product.

In particular it needs to be established how many hotel rooms should be constructed in the medium term to support this vision. After this, careful evaluation needs to be carried out to the length of the present runway and the need for expansion. In the meantime the state of maintenance of the runway need to be established and funding identified for possible resurfacing.

Electricity supply

Especially since the breaking up of the Netherlands Antilles the role of NV GEBE is up for discussion. A decision has to be made how to go forward and how and by whom electricity will be supplied to the island. The DP is of the opinion that it is not necessary to continue the present situation whereas NV GEBE owned by the three Windward Islands supplies Statia with electricity. In particular the fact, that the government of St. Maarten is seeking to dismantle the power company, threatens the quality of service to the people of Statia.

Also in this case serious consideration will be given to public private partnership with NuStar Terminals in combination with a newly to be established Statia electricity company. In any event an analysis should be made within short to establish in what form quality electricity supply and distribution can be guaranteed at the best possible rate to the consumers on Statia while guaranteeing the same level of benefits and employment to the existing employees. In this matter the DP also intends to seek cooperation with the island of Saba.

Although over the years attempts have been made in the direction of the use of renewable energy, we are still lagging behind of the rest of the region. The DP intends to have sources of renewable energy, such as wind energy, solar and geothermal energy to form part of the energy mix with the goal to reduce dependency of fossil fuels as well as to keep cost of electricity for the consumer on an acceptable level.

Water distribution

Let it be known, shout it out from your rooftops, that once again the Democratic Party of St. Eustatius has fulfilled a long standing promise to the People of Statia. The work on the long awaited water distribution network will start at the beginning of 2011. All major inhabited districts, such as Oranjestad, Jeems, Golden Rock, Bay Brow and Concordia will be hooked up to the distribution network. This will be a tremendous improvement and will lift the island into the 21st century. Water is a basic commodity any civilized country cannot do without. The DP will strive to find ways and means to bring proper drinking water also to other areas on the island.

Telecommunication and IT

The DP is realizing that the standard and quality of our telecommunications network is not up to par with the rest of the world. Drastic improvements have to be made to be able to be competitive and to offer an infrastructure that will facilitate and attract investment in the economy of Statia. This investment is needed to maintain and improve our standard of living, to create jobs for ourselves and our children and to make the island to become more self reliant and less dependent on outside financial assistance.

In the meantime the Dutch government has already approved the financing of a fiber-optic cable to Statia, which will largely improve our bandwidth allowing high speed internet coming to the island.

At the same token the quality of land lines and mobile phones service have to be drastically improved. Also rates for our telecommunication services need to become more competitive. To achieve lower rates and at the same time improve the quality of service, possibilities for strategic alliances, mergers and other forms of cooperation by our local telephone company EUTEL NV need to be seriously studied. The DP intends to support all efforts management and board of EUTEL NV will make to this extent.

Waste management

Although a number of studies and advises have been compiled, waste management has been neglected during a number of years. The present landfill is reaching its capacity and no other location is available. Under the SEI some funds are available for short term waste management solutions. The DP intends to do the following:

1. Consider privatization of the garbage collection;
2. Separation of garbage and recycling;
3. Research possibilities of combinations of waste management and generation of energy;
4. Seek cooperation with islands in the region

One of the bottlenecks for proper waste management is the cost involved and the burden this forms for the Island Government budget. In the present situation the producers of waste do not pay for the service of garbage collection. The DP intends to introduce a fair garbage collection fee for businesses as well as private households in order to cover some of the cost of garbage collection.

Government Administration Building

The facilities in which the government apparatus is forced to do their work is below standard. Not only are the accommodations inadequate, cramped, in a poor state of repair and old, they are also scattered all over town, making it very difficult to properly govern the island.

The DP also is of the opinion that this situation has a bad influence on the motivation of the civil servants, their productivity and the quality of service rendered to the general public.

It is the intention of a DP government to have a new government administrative building constructed during the coming governing period. Inventive ways and means will be sought to finance such a prestigious project. One option is to sell the Fire Department, which has become a Dutch responsibility, to the Dutch government and allocate the funds that become available to (partly) finance construction of a new administration building.

Our economy

Tourism

Over the years we are hearing that tourism is or should be the engine of our economy. In reality this however is still not the case. As a people we are lacking a real tourism spirit. Our tourism infrastructure like hotels and activities are far from sufficient to even have Statia qualified as a tourism destination. The accessibility of the island by air as well as by sea is inadequate and not tourism friendly. The government is not really stimulating investment in the tourism sector. The DP is intending to turn this around and come with a pro-active program with the aim to expand the tourism product, as the second economic pillar next to the oil terminal on the island. Tourism will be utilized as a catalyst for the other industries, particularly construction, transportation, handicrafts, agriculture and fisheries. The inter-sectoral linkages are of prime importance to the development of the island and the parallel development of these industries. Tourism is therefore of vital concern to government.

Areas that require special attention will include:

1. **Hotel capacity**

Development of the so called Jovinro project in Lower Town will be stimulated as will expansion and upgrading plans by existing hoteliers. A strong campaign will be started to attract prospective hotel investors. In particular the development of the Lower Town area and the former Maison sur la Plage will be stimulated. The aim will be the construction of a minimum of 150 additional hotel rooms during the coming governing period. Also other touristic development will be stimulated and facilitated

2. **Other tourism activities**

Development and/or expansion of other businesses and activities catering for tourists such as restaurants, diving, hiking, car and scooter rentals, souvenir shops etc. will be stimulated.

3. **Development Upper Town**

The development of shops and small business in the upper town area will be stimulated, thus making the town more lively and attractive for tourists.

4. Airlift

Airlift out of St. Maarten will be drastically improved to accommodate tourism to the island and at the same time to accommodate local travel. Also airlift from other destinations such as St. Kitts and Puerto Rico will be explored. The service of our local carrier Winair needs to be improved. Together with the Dutch government solutions for our airlift will be sought that will be most beneficial for Statia.

5. Sealift

The DP government will support and as much as possible stimulate ferry services out of St. Kitts and St. Maarten

6. Tourism awareness programs

The DP government will stimulate tourism awareness programs at schools to create a better tourism mindset by the youth.

7. Role of the Tourism Office

The St. Eustatius Tourism Development Office will be able to independently carry out tourism promotion and marketing for the island with an annual fixed budget. Where possible the DP government will assist the foundation to attract additional funding and stimulate partnerships with the private sector.

NuStar Terminals

The oil terminal is by far the largest economic activity on the island. Indirectly almost all businesses on Statia profit one way or the other from the activities of the terminal, being it the hotel sector, restaurants, car rentals, taxi drivers, supermarkets, retailers, hardware and construction companies etc. The development of districts such as Concordia, Princess and lately White Hook can be directly contributed to the activities at Tumble Down Dick.

It is therefore that the DP government will maintain friendly but professional relations with NuStar Terminals. The expansion plans presented by the company will be evaluated based upon their merits. Point of departure will be the benefits the expansion will have for our economy, our labor market, income for the government coffers etc. On the other hand keen attention will be given to the environmental impact a possible expansion will have for the island and safeguards need to be built in to prevent any negative consequences for the island in the immediate as well as distant future.

Small & Medium Enterprise stimulation

The SME sector in Statia is underdeveloped. Although there are many small businesses, the profit margins are very limited if at all. The bottlenecks are the small scale of our economy, lack of proper education, training and managerial and administrative skills, a largely uneducated workforce, limited credit possibilities etc.

On top of that many small businesses have fallen victim of a poor tax regime under the former Netherlands Antilles, resulting in low tax compliance. The recent drastic improvement of tax collection has resulted for many businesses in relatively high tax debts.

Under the SEI program US 140,000.00 is available for SME development and support. The DP sees the importance of programs like this aimed at strengthening the sector and will look for ways and means for the program to become sustainable also after the SEI funding will be depleted.

Agriculture & fisheries

The DP will review the role of the agricultural department. We are of the opinion that government should merely play a facilitating role instead of running the fisheries and slaughterhouse as a government department.

Ways and means will be sought to stimulate private initiative in the areas of intensive horticulture, fisheries and husbandry.

The department of LVV is working on a permanent solution with regard to the roaming animals. A new DP government fully supports this and expects that this issue in this governing period will be a thing of the past.

Other economic activities

The DP government will also be open for other types of economic development as long as they fit into our economic mix and form a positive contribution to our economy. The initiatives of the Medical School need to be supported in order to expand the school.

Healthcare

Healthcare is privatized. The Queen Beatrix Medical Center and its staff has been transferred to the newly established St. Eustatius Healthcare Foundation (SEHCF). The DP government intends to continue on this road. We support the merger of the Auxiliary Home with the QBMC, but do respect the position of the Home as an independent organization and their need for sufficient securities safeguarding the interests of their part of the organization after a merger.

Also we will do all that is in our power to support the foundation with their plans for a new healthcare center for Statia. For this purpose among other things land will be made available for the construction of this new healthcare center.

Healthcare now is the direct responsibility of the Dutch government. This does not mean that a DP government no longer feels any responsibility for this sector. The DP sees it still as one of government's main tasks to see to it that our citizens receive proper healthcare and therefore will be in a continued dialogue with the Dutch government and the SEHCF.

As of January 1st the general health insurance BES has been introduced for which the “Zorgkantoor” is responsible. As of this date all legal residents on the island are insured under this program and entitled to the basic healthcare package. The insurance has replaced BZV, SVB and private insurance policies. The structure of the general healthcare insurance is quite unique. As a result of this errors and hick ups may occur. The DP government will monitor any developments and where necessary we will see to it, as the representative of the people that adjustments will be made when necessary.

For Statia and Saba a helicopter will be stationed permanently on the airport of St. Maarten. This helicopter will be used for emergency evacuation, whereby the patient will be picked up and transported to the hospital that can best take care of the injury or illness. Primary hospital for Statia will remain St. Maarten. In very urgent cases and when the St. Maarten hospital does not have the facilities do deal with a particular case, the patient will be flown to Guadeloupe. The DP is aware of the reservations that many have for Guadeloupe and therefore will monitor all cases very closely. In the event handling of our patients will not be satisfactory we will immediately intervene with the responsible agency in order to find an alternative solution.

The public health (GGD) will remain the responsibility of the island government. For this task we will receive support from the GGD Limburg Noord.

Education

Education is one of the departments that since January 1st 2011 are the responsibility of the Dutch government. The DP admits that the quality of our educational system, through a variety of reasons, has been deteriorated. One of the reasons undoubtedly has been the limited funding that could be made available in the island budget. We expect that this tide now will be turned and that there will be sufficient funding for quality teachers, schoolbooks and other learning materials.

The fact that education is no longer on the island budget does not mean that a DP government will now sit back and relax. We intend to closely monitor all developments and remain in the forefront whenever it concerns the education of our children.

The DP realizes that not all kinds of education can be provided by government. We therefore encourage and where possible support any non-governmental initiative aimed at educating our community, being it youngsters or adults through private programs. In this respect one can think of computer literacy classes, language classes, on the job trainings to enhance skills among others. We strongly believe that anyone who wants to upgrade him or herself or who wants to continue their education should at all times have the opportunity to do so.

They should be encouraged, motivated and where possible be supported by government. A well educated population is the cornerstone of any society.

The DP also will look into the possibilities to attract a Dutch university to the island. Similarly to the Medical School there may be a market in this respect. A university or just one or two faculties will undoubtedly enhance the status and image of the island and at the same time it will be a welcome addition to our educational system and our economy.

Personnel

A new job evaluation system has been implemented in 2010. It is the intention of the DP government to place emphasis now on the level and quality of the human resources rather than on the expansion and growth of government. The goal hereby should be a better and more professionally functioning government apparatus, better service towards the public and an increased level of job satisfaction by the civil servants.

Also key positions, which are vacant in some cases for a large number of years will be filled. These positions include the function of harbor master, head economic affairs and head of finance.

Social Affairs & Labor

Social Affairs have become the responsibility of the Dutch government but will have the keen attention of the DP government. The DP supports the gradual increase of the AOV age to 65 as the aging population is making the system more and more expensive. At the same token the AOV has been increased to Nafl 920.00 per month, with the intention to index this amount annually based on the cost of living. Although this increase is a good first step the DP recognizes that the amount of the AOV is still below an acceptable level. Therefore a new DP government will monitor the situation closely and will do all in its power to see to it that the AOV will be raised eventually to a more acceptable level.

The responsibility for work permits has been transferred to Dutch government. The government had requested this since insufficient capacity was available within our government apparatus. Annually discussions will be held with the Dutch government to see whether this responsibility can be transferred back to the island government.

The DP has noticed that a so-called one stop shop window together with the issuing of residency permits did not yet materialize as was anticipated. We do see the importance of a smooth process of handling work- and residency requests and will therefore monitor the developments and we demand improvements where and when required.

We see the great importance of the need for foreign labor for our business sector and therefore are opposing a system that will isolate Statia from the rest of the world as a result of the overprotection of our labor market. In particular we will seek flexibility of movement of persons carrying a Dutch passport, notwithstanding which part of the Kingdom they are originating from.

It is the intention of a DP government to stimulate investment that will result in jobs for our local people. It is our responsibility to make sure that our kids, who return to the island after finishing their education abroad, have an opportunity to find a job that matches their qualifications and skills. The investment that we as an island are making in the education of our children should in some way or fashion benefit the development of Statia.

Youth & Family

The youth are the future for our island and from their midst will come our future leaders. However it is clear that morals and values in particular among our youths are on the decline. Also the preparedness and willingness to achieve higher education is decreasing. This is a very worrisome development. The DP therefore applauds the initiative of the Dutch government with the opening of the Center for Youth & Family and hopes this will have a positive effect on the target group. This however should not relieve the island government from its responsibility towards youth and family. Therefore youth employment programs, career guidance, teenage pregnancy, safe sex and HIV/AIDS, programs and other projects and programs stimulating the youth will be developed and undertaken.

A DP-Government needs to compose an innovative Youth Manifesto, detailing a wide range of policies and programs. The youth are one of our most valuable resources and should be given all opportunities to be heard. The Promotion of the following will foster a stronger and better community and lead to a better and stronger Statia.

- Sound spiritual values;
- minimal crime;
- high quality education for all;
- maximum economic empowerment;
- maximum entertainment/ recreational opportunities;
- maximum healthy lifestyle options;
- positive image of young people;
- maximum opportunities for artistic expression.

Women & gender affairs

The office of women and gender affairs has earned its existence in the government organization and will therefore also in the upcoming governing period be supported fully by the DP government. The rise of domestic violence and the decay of values among our adults and adolescents may warrant upgrading of existing personnel and the expansion of the office with a social worker.

Culture & history

St. Eustatius has a rich culture and history that is reflected in the numerous historic buildings and sites on the island. The historical museum is one of the best in the Caribbean. The DP government will work towards preservation of our historic treasures as much as possible in a manner that they will become an integral part of St. Eustatius of today. Preservation of historic buildings and sites should not be a goal on its own but these objects should also have an added value to our modern lives and the economy of the island.

The DP government is recognizing the importance of our national cultural events, the annual carnival and Statia day celebrations. Therefore the DP will continue to facilitate and sponsor these events.

Other private initiatives with the goal of promoting our island cultural and as a tourist destination will also be stimulated. Our Culture Department will be challenged to develop a program geared towards making our young people more culture minded as well as regenerating cultural activities that are threatened for extinction. For example the string band, steel band, song writing, dress making, Island cuisine and outdoor cooking and baking to name a few.

Sports

We will provide more opportunities for our athletes, coaches and organizers to engage in high level training programs. This will encourage other youngsters and adults to become involved in sports and provide discipline, teambuilding, good sportsmanship/fair play and health benefits opportunities for all.

- A seasonal program should be created whereby all sports are given ample opportunity to organize their discipline.
- Start a sport scholarship program, whereby needy and deserving students are allowed to travel overseas for college and university studies.
- Promote interscholastic competition in basketball, cricket, baseball, volleyball, football athletics, and board sports.
- Develop playing fields with lighting in Princess Gardens, Concordia and White Wall.

- Empower the St. Eustatius Sport Foundation to manage and finance all sports.
- Build a modern baseball and football stadium and upgrade/maintain all our facilities
- Promote lifetime sport participation.
- Utilize and train experience and retired athletes to work as trainers, coaches, referees and umpires.

Environment

As we all know the environment is a global concern. It is our duty to preserve a good and healthy environment for those who come after us. There will be a number of basic issues that will have the special attention of the DP government. Foremost the island needs to become cleaner. From the part of the government this means that garbage collection and disposal need to be improved. From the part of the community this means that more awareness needs to be created of the necessity to keep the island clean. In this respect we do not only mean roads and other public areas. Also awareness programs have to be designed to encourage Statia's residents to upkeep their homes and gardens and keep them free of garbage and debris. STENAPA, as well as other environmental organizations need continuous support in their efforts to preserve nature. As in the case of preserving our history also here counts that as much as possible the effort should coincide with and have an added value to our living environment and the economy of our island.

Housing

As a result of a fast growing population there is a shortage of low income and middle class homes. Also regularly projects undertaken by the oil terminal are putting a heavy strain on the availability of houses and apartments. In the last two decades, mainly because of financial constraints, no major housing projects have been executed. In the coming governing period it is the intention of a DP government to find ways and means to turn this tide, and facilitate the development of housing especially for the low and middle income population.

As of 2011 the government will limit its involvement in the Housing Foundation. The commissioner of housing will no longer be the chairman of the board. This will allow the Foundation to move more freely and strengthen the ties they have with Woonlinie, the Dutch housing foundation with which they have formed a partnership. Through this partnership funding will become available to construct new homes.

Spatial planning

Last year a strategic development plan has been drafted for the island. This plan contains a vision on how we would like to see the island develop in economical, social and environmental way.

Based on this vision a zoning plan has been drafted, which will be implemented early 2011. This zoning plan stipulates how and for which purpose the various sectors of the island may be used. The intention of the plan is to have the island develop in a responsible and sustainable way. The plan will be a living plan, which means that by changing views, developments or opportunities the plan may be adjusted to accommodate these changes.

With regard to the development and subdivision of larger parcels of land stricter rules have to be applied. Examples like the development at White Hook will no longer be allowed. It will be mandatory to first have the infrastructure in place like roads, electricity, water etc. before permits for construction of homes can be given. Also the DP government will not give out any lease land in areas where proper accessibility and utilities are not present.

Justice

In the coming years we will continue to strive for a safe living environment for the citizens of St. Eustatius. Many of the services of the justice chain have moved from the former Antillean Government to the Kingdom Government level. As such any desired changes must be negotiated with the Dutch Government. The performance of the new service organizations such as the public prosecutor, police, immigration /border control, court of guardianship, family guardianship, parole officers etc. will be closely monitored. Routine dialogue with the Dutch Ministries in these areas will be established. The planned expansion of the detention capacity on the Island is a requirement for the proper housing and re-socialization of our delinquents. In the field of crime prevention there is lots to be done. To improve the future perspective of our youngsters much more can be offered in terms of how they spend their free time. More can be done in the areas of sport, cultural, and social activities. Our students are performing below their potential in school and a large group remains stagnant after their secondary education, become drop outs, or return from the exterior without diplomas. Efforts must be made to curb this development. Learn and work programs need to be available for this group. NGO's and Church organization that do valuable work with our young people need to be stimulated and where possible have their resources pooled together to the benefit of more of our young people.

Taxes

The community and in particular the business sector is very concerned and worried about the introduction on January 1st of the new tax regime. Too long the information has not been readily available, incomplete and often inaccurate.

The DP is of the opinion however that the new tax system is a good one and a great improvement compared to the system of the former Netherlands Antilles.

In the old system of mainly direct taxes only a minority was burdened with taxes. In the new system, with a shift to more indirect taxes, nobody will be able to avoid contributing to the coffers of government. Another great improvement is the introduction of an income tax free sum of US \$ 9750.00. This means that all persons with an income lower than this will pay nothing at all. This group includes most of our pensioners and all persons who make less or a little over the minimum wage.

The DP party is aware of the concerns among the population with regard to the ABB, the property tax and the employers part for social and health insurance premiums. These concerns are already addressed to the Dutch government while developments are closely monitored. The DP will do all in its power to push for adjustments in the tax regime should it become clear that the system is resulting in a disadvantage for the population or business sector.

The island government will remain responsible for the collection of airport tax, road tax and a number of levies.

Finances

For the first time in history the island budget drafted for 2011 is balanced, which means all planned expenses are covered by income. This however does not mean that there is funding for everything that we want. Those expenditures have simply been pushed forward. The budget for education, healthcare (except for buildings), social affairs and fire department no longer are on the island budget but fall directly under the budget of the Netherlands. The total budget for this year is 10.7 million US dollars. The funding through the solidarity fund has been terminated and this has been replaced by a free sum (vrije uitkering) from the BES funds in the amount of 7.4 million dollars. The remainder has to come from income generated by the island government, though levies, license plate fees, airport tax, harbor income, dividend EUTEL etc.

It is the intention of the DP government not to implement new levies in the first year after the transition. In a time in which it is highly unclear what the impact will be of the new tax regime to the community, the DP finds it irresponsible at this point in time to raise existing island taxes and fees or to introduce new ones. In order to do so and still have a balanced budget, cuts have to be made. For this purpose the total travel budget has been reduced with 50%.

During the year 2011 a DP government will evaluate in what ways the government budget can be improved.

The DP party is fully aware of the challenges this new status will have. The party intends to face these challenges head on and deal pro-active with any stumbling block that presents itself. The party firmly believes that the island is heading in the right direction. Because of the changing times the party comes with innovative ideas to tackle all issues at hand. With a positive attitude and with the support of the people of Statia the DP is confident that Statia is on the road to a better and more prosperous future.

Let's Face the Changes Together!