

To the Prime Minister of Aruba  
Het Excellency Mrs. Evelyn Wever-Croes

And

To the Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Culture  
Her Excellency Mrs. Xiomara Ruiz-Maduro

L.G. Smith Boulevard 76  
Oranjestad, ARUBA

Oranjestad, March 24, 2020

Your Excellencies,

We have received the “Nota van Wijziging” (hereinafter: NvW) on the 2020 budget. After studying the NvW, we have found that the decisions made in reaction to the COVID-19 Coronavirus Crisis to be insufficient to keep as many businesses as possible afloat and as many as people as possible employed in the near future. It is essential that decisions made now allow Aruba to bounce back as fast as possible after the crisis subsides, as is being done in many other countries. **The plan currently presented by the government is unacceptable and places Aruba’s possibility for recovery in severe danger.** As per S&P Global, Aruba is considered the **#1 country in the world that is most economically vulnerable to the COVID crisis.** Our government **must** realize that commerce creates economic activity and is the **only** source of income for the country. At this time, it is imperative that solutions are put in place to bring investment and economic activity into the community as fast as possible. With such activity, there will be re-employment.

1. The stimulus package for the SME business community has been estimated at AWG 40 million. This is not even 20% of the amount estimated for FASE and isn’t nearly enough. Private sector representatives had proposed, at your request, various measures to retain cash flow for businesses, and we do not see any of the recommendations reflected in the NvW.
2. There are no details mentioned in the NvW on the contents of the stimulus package.
3. The additional costs of medical equipment and information sessions of AWG 2 million seem understated, unless part of the expenses is included in the increase of the AZV budget of AWG 250 million.
4. **There is no mention of measures to reduce public sector personnel costs.** As the Prime Minister herself repeatedly mentioned, the COVID crisis affects us all and **the burden should be carried by all.** We repeat the possible measures that could be taken by eliminating:
  - a. Bashi Premie
  - b. Voorjaarspremie
  - c. Najaarspremie
  - d. Salary increases
  - e. Overbruggingstoelage
  - f. AZV+
  - g. Ter beschikking toelage
  - h. Change pension system to defined contribution system
  - i. Significant reduction of salaries and/or apply “no work/no pay” rules.

Such a cost decrease will spread the burden between employees in the private sector as well as public sector, and not place the burden solely on the employees of the business community.

The COVID crisis is **unlike any other the world has ever faced.**

We have proven to be willing to work with the Government of Aruba on limiting the long-term and disastrous effects of this virus on our economy and the community's wellbeing. Unfortunately, the government has **again** made unilateral decisions and not considered the input from the private sector nor included us in any of the follow up discussions regarding measures and necessary relief.

The NvW indicates that the Government of Aruba has no understanding for the severe impact of this crisis on our economy, and we urge you one more time to accept the extended hand of the private sector groups to help achieve maximized resilience for our island.

With kind regards.

C.C.: Parliament of Aruba, attn. Chairman, Mr. J. Thijsen LL.M.  
Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Mr. Glenbert Croes.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_



ATIA



AHFA



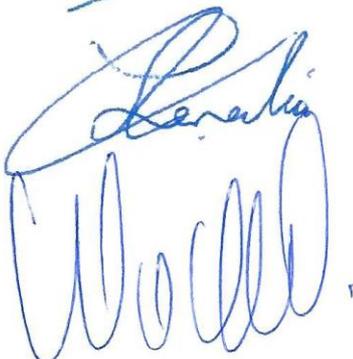
CWA



K.V.K.



A.C.B.A.



A.T.S.A.

W.A.B.