

United Federation of the Windward Antilles

#46-C- A. Th. Illidge Road,

P.O.Box 459, Philipsburg, St. Maarten, N.A.

Telephone: 542-2168, Cell: 554-9524 Fax: 542-4624

Email address: ufasxm@hotmail.com or ufaunion@yahoo.com

27th March, 2012

Deputy Prime Minister
ATTN. Mr. Theodore Heyliger
Administration Building, Clem Labega Square
Philipsburg, St. Maarten

Honorable Deputy Prime Minister of Country St. Maarten,

The Board of the UFA gladly accepts your invitation scheduled for tomorrow the 28th March, 2012 at 10:00am in answer to our request. Here listed below are the requested agenda points which reflect the urgent problems of Country St. Maarten:

These are the urgent points that need to be solved:

1. Cost of Living
2. Service Charge
3. Minimum Wage
4. Short term contract
5. The need for the mediation process to speed up
6. Problems to be solved at Labor Department in a reasonable time frame
7. Sanctions for all organizations who are not complying because the employers do not have any respect for the Labor Department or its representatives and the UFA is totally against that.
8. Contract workers or replacement contractors must have stiff regulations not to create outsourcing which is causing labor unrest, poverty and crime such as manpower and replacement. There should be strict regulations to prevent outsourcing. Short time workers and contract workers should not replace permanent workers where they are paying them less wages creating poverty and crime and also creating labor unrest. We agree there must have seasonal employees but they must only work for the season.
9. The abuse of time share must be regulated. Time share don't want to take on any permanent employees for an indefinite period of time. Foreign companies established in St. Maarten must guarantee assets, property or money in case of bankruptcy and such like.
10. There must be unemployment funds that when the worker has been dismissed from the company, laid off, or terminated by the court because the employer says there is no more communication and if there is no more employment then those who are not employed should be compensated until they get a job. The premium must be contributed by tripartite the business, worker and government.
11. A labor court must be in place in order to speed up labor cases. Sometimes a year or two years goes by which is such a long time before they get their money. Especially a labor court for labor problems.
12. The UFA is the only labor Federation in St. Maarten and the UFA should participate in all tripartite discussions with business, labor and government. It is high time now that labor laws must be implemented for the welfare of the workers.
13. The youths must have scholarships for professional jobs and top jobs such as Managerial positions, sous chefs, supervisors and directors –professionals in various fields that the youths can participate in the economy of St. Maarten. We need people to work in low class jobs but also there is the need for our people to work in top jobs that is why it is imperative for them to get a scholarship to go

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abroad to study. To combat youth crime, the parents must work one job and not two jobs to maintain themselves and their family. That is why there must be three levels of minimum wage according to the workers ability: Ordinary level - NAF. 2000, Junior Level/Skill – NAF. 3000 and Senior Level/Skill NAF. 4000. Both wife and husbands have to do two and three jobs which apart from being too taxing it means that we are back in slavery. How can they take care of their children if they are not home to take care of them?

14. **For** a healthy and friendly island, government business and labor must sit down together and reason mutually for the welfare of St. Maarten based on the above mention points. The UFA is strongly of the opinion that the businesses dictate too much to the government and labor and that has to be stopped. We are tripartite and that has to be stopped. The UFA is also of the opinion that when there is representation inside and outside St. Maarten labor must be involved. The business must have proper representation and the workers must have proper representation. We as a Federation must participate in those committees and not only business.
a)WIFOL is not a union, federation or a confederation but is a foundation. How can members elect a foundation to represent them. How can the members elect the board of the foundation because the foundation does not have any members? It is difficult for a Foundation and a Federation to work together because a Foundation is for a business on a whole and a union/federation/confederation represents labor on a whole.
15. **Why** the Government doesn't build more trade schools in order to upgrade the youth and once educated they need to be placed in a job immediately according to their qualifications.
16. **Why** can't the employers pay the workers before the end of the month because sometimes they are paid late and at times they even get a bounce check and the workers can't get paid on time? All employees should be employed legally and not illegally where the taxes are being fraud.
17. The Dismissal Committee should be given more powers with a legal assistant and an accountant so that the workers could be well taken care of and get what is due to them.
18. The labor laws should be upgraded in its totality in order for the workers to participate in the economy.
19. We would like the Deputy Prime Minister to put rules and regulations in place for the companies to respect the Mediator because more times than not they are unaccounted for at meetings.
20. We would like the Deputy Prime Minister to put rules and regulations in place for the companies to respect the Mediator because more times than not they are unaccounted for at meetings.

Thanking you for your kindest invitation and we look forward to fruitful discussions and we will also like to prepare you for **six board members** attending the meeting.

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These are some of the points we would like to solve to prevent labor unrest. We know they won't be solved overnight. The way things are going presently, ten years would pass and nothing will be changed hence the need for a drastic change. The workers are quite concerned and that is why we would like the following points to be addressed.

Thanking you in advance for your time and cooperation

We remain yours truly,

Mr. Rignaldo Haize
President of the UFA

Ms. Melinda Lloyd
General Secretary of UFA

Mr. Willy Haize
Advisor of UFA