

2024 United Nations Annual Results Report

ARUBA, CURAÇAO AND SINT MAARTEN





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The Results Report is issued annually by the United Nations Office of the Resident Coordinator (RCO) in Trinidad and Tobago for the Dutch Islands: Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten. It collates contributions by the United Nations Country Team and RCO and is based on updates to the UNINFO platform (uninfo.org) by agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations as of 28 March 2025, as well as relevant supplementary information related to collaboration with the governments of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten to advance sustainable development.

UNINFO is a web-based tool for planning, monitoring and reporting which digitizes UN Country Teams' results frameworks. All financial resources are quoted in United States dollars.

Report designed by Byron Begumisa (layout) and Zhang Shuo (artwork)



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by the United Nations Resident Coordinator

It is with great pleasure that I present the first United Nations Annual Results Report focused on Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten—three dynamic Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and constituent countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This report reflects the deepening collaboration between the United Nations system and the governments, institutions and people of these islands in pursuit of sustainable development, resilience and inclusion.

Throughout 2024, our joint efforts yielded meaningful results across all four priority areas of the Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (MSDCF) for the Caribbean. From advancing trade facilitation, inclusive education and gender-responsive governance to supporting resilience in health systems and promoting ethical digital transformation, we have made progress despite a limited UN presence and constrained resources. I applaud the leadership and vision of the governments of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten whose commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and active engagement with the UN have been instrumental to these achievements.

This year was also marked by the strong participation of the Dutch Caribbean in the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) in Antigua and Barbuda. The joint delegation, led by the Prime Ministers of Aruba and Curaçao and the Minister Plenipotentiary of Sint Maarten, powerfully voiced the unique development needs and climate vulnerabilities of Caribbean SIDS. Their contributions helped shape the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), reaffirming a collective determination to chart a course toward resilient prosperity.

After visiting Aruba and Curaçao in 2023, I travelled to Sint Maarten in 2024 to meet with the country's leadership. What an immense pleasure to know that the UN is a relevant and valued partner for such dynamic and ambitious stakeholders!

As we look to 2025, the United Nations Country Team remains committed to supporting national development strategies, finalizing Country Implementation Plans and mobilizing partnerships and resources to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda. I extend my sincere appreciation to all our national counterparts, development partners and communities for their steadfast cooperation and trust. Together, we will continue building a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for all.

Joanna Kazana

United Nations Resident Coordinator for Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten and Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General



UNITED NATIONS TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, ARUBA,

CURACAO AND SINT MAARTEN



International Labour Organization (ILO)

IN E

WOMEN E

for Gender Equality and

the Empowerment of

Women (UN Women)



for Migration (IOM)



Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/ WHO)



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)



(UNCTAD)



United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)





United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) United Nations Children's

Fund (UNICEF)

unicef 🙆



United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

United Nations Office

for Disaster Risk

Reduction (UNDRR)



Government of Aruba



Government of Curacao



Government of Sint Maarten

DONOR GOVERNMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS



European Union



Netherlands

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS



Chapter

Key Developments in the Regional and Country Contexts



In 2024,

the Dutch Caribbean Islands of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten navigated a dynamic landscape of challenges and opportunities, balancing the imperatives of governance, economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and their unique relationship with the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Governance remained a critical focus in 2024, with Sint Maarten holding snap general elections in August, and Aruba conducting early general elections in December. Meanwhile, Curaçao's coalition government stabilized in spite of ongoing challenges. These democratic processes reflect the islands' resilience and their commitment to addressing complex governance issues within the broader framework of their constitutional relationship with the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In this context, the Mutual Regulation agreement signed in 2023 played a pivotal role in fostering cooperation and reform between the islands and the Netherlands in 2024, particularly in areas such as public sector efficiency and governance. However, the conditions attached to Dutch financial aid, including requirements for cuts to civil service expenses and pension costs, have posed challenges for local governments striving to balance autonomy with the need for external support.

Economically, the islands saw promising developments, with the continued recovery of the tourism sector bolstering regional growth. Improvements in the Caribbean Investment Climate Index (CICI) for Aruba and Curaçao highlighted advancements in creating favorable conditions for foreign investment.

All three islands faced persistent waste management challenges, with Aruba addressing overcapacity in wastewater treatment facilities through plans for a new water treatment plant, Curaçao exploring recycling and "waste-to-energy" solutions despite policy criticisms, and Sint Maarten combating plastic pollution through innovative recycling programs and government initiatives to improve waste collection efficiency.





Total Population (2024)



\$3.64b

GDP (current USD, 2023)



6.5% GDP growth (annual rate, 2024)



\$44,967

GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$, 2023)



Exports of goods and services (current USD, 2023)



\$3.63b

Imports of goods and services (current USD, 2023)



Foreign direct investment, net inflows (BoP, current USD, 2024)







Cruise Passengers (2023)

- 1. Central Bureau of Statistics Aruba, International Migrants Day Report, accessed 11 March 2025
- 2. World Bank Group GDP current USD Aruba, accessed 23 May 2025
- 3. IMF GDP growth (annual %) Aruba, accessed 1 July 2025
- 4. World Bank Group GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) Aruba, accessed 23 May 2025
- 5. UN COMTRADE Exports of goods and services Aruba, accessed 23 May 2025
- 6. UN COMTRADE Imports of goods and services Aruba, accessed 23 May 2025
- 7. UNCTAD Foreign direct investment, net inflows reported in Balance of Payments Aruba, accessed 1 July 2025
- 8. Central Bureau of Statistics Aruba, Labor Force Survey 2023, accessed 11 March 2025
- 9. Central bureau of Statistics Aruba, Total number of visitors, accessed 11 March 2025

6.5% **Economic** growth

In 2024, Aruba experienced a 6.5% increase in economic growth, according to the IMF. This was attributed to notable progress in infrastructure development and economic diversification, highlighted by an increase in public investment to support projects such as new hotel developments. Efforts to diversify the economy beyond tourism also gained momentum, with investments in renewable energy, information technology and financial services aligned with the government's Investment Strategy. Aruba expanded its solar and wind energy projects to reduce dependency on imported fossil fuels, supported the growth of tech startups through digital infrastructure upgrades, and positioned itself as a hub for regional financial services.

However, persistent challenges remain, including limited economic growth, job creation difficulties and the financial strain posed by an aging population. Labour shortages, particularly in the construction sector, caused delays in major projects and sparked debates over labor policy, with calls to streamline processes for hiring migrant workers to address workforce gaps. While strides were made in digital infrastructure, traditional infrastructure and social programs still require enhanced investment to address the needs of both residents and tourists. These mixed outcomes underscore the importance of sustained strategic planning for Aruba's long-term resilience and development.





155,826

Total Population (2023)



\$3.28b

GDP (current USD, 2023)



GDP growth (annual rate, 2024)



GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$, 2023)



\$155m

Foreign direct investment, net inflows (BoP, current USD, 2024)



8.6% of population

Self-identified Persons with Disabilities (2023)



43.2%

Employment rate (2023)



5,124,374

Total Number of Nights stayed by Visitors (2023)



0.3%

Agriculture, forestry and fishing (value added as % of GDP, 2023)



2.7%

Manufacturing (value added as% of GDP, 2023)



73.3%

Services (value added as % of GDP, 2023)

- 1. Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, Demographic characteristics, Census 2023, accessed 12 March 2025
- 2. World Bank Group GDP current USD Curaçao, accessed 23 May 2025
- 3. Centrale Bank van Curaçao en Sint Maarten GDP growth (annual %), accessed 1 July 2025
- 4. World Bank Group GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) Curaçao, accessed 23 May 2025

5. World Bank Group - Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP) - Curaçao, accessed 23 May 2025

- 6. World Bank Group Manufacturing, value added (% of GDP) Curaçao, accessed 23 May 2025
- 7. World Bank Group Services, value added (% of GDP) Curaçao, accessed 23 May 2025

8. UNCTAD - Foreign direct investment, net inflows reported in Balance of Payments - Curaçao, accessed 1 July 2025

9. Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, Disabilities Characteristics, Census 2023, accessed 12 March 2025

Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, Labour Characteristics, Census 2023, accessed 12 March 2025
Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, Tourism, Total nights by region 2023, accessed 12 March 2025

5.4% Economic growth

Curaçao made significant strides in economic growth, infrastructure development and tourism diversification. In 2024, the Centrale Bank van Curaçao en Sint Maarten noted that Curaçao's real GDP growth accelerated from 4.2% in 2023 to 5.4% in 2024. This was driven by increased private investments in tourism, construction of high-end hotels and expanding renewable energy such as wind farms, though challenges remained in fully diversifying the economy and addressing social inequality. This marks an increase from the 4.2% growth experienced in 2023. The economy, continuing its shift to a tourism-led growth model, outperformed expectations, supported by strategic investments aligned with the SDGs.

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While improved access to finance for small businesses has provided momentum for economic diversification, challenges persist in fully transitioning from traditional sectors to a more diverse economy. The reliance on tourism therefore leaves Curaçao vulnerable to external shocks. Social programs aimed at reducing inequality and improving living standards have seen limited progress, and the need to align workforce skills with emerging industries remains a pressing issue. There has also been a 27.7% reduction in the number of graduates from the University

of Curaçao between 2017 to 2023.



SINT MAARTEN



42,577 Total Population

(2022)



\$1.62b GDP (current USD, 2023)



3.1% GDP growth (annual rate, 2024)



\$49,826

GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$, 2023)



\$37m

Foreign direct investment, net inflows (BoP, current USD, 2024)



6.5% Unemployment rate (2022)



84.0% Household Internet Availability (2022)

1. Sint Maarten Department of Statistics, Census 2022 – Demographics, accessed 12 March 2025

- 2. World Bank Group GDP current USD Sint Maarten, accessed 23 May 2025
- 3. Centrale Bank van Curaçao en Sint Maarten GDP growth (annual %), accessed 1 July 2025

4. World Bank Group - GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) - Sint Maarten, accessed 23 May 2025

5. UNCTAD - Foreign direct investment, net inflows reported in Balance of Payments – Sint Maarten, accessed 1 July 2025

6. Sint Maarten Department of Statistics, Census 2022 – Labour, accessed 12 March 2025

7. Sint Maarten Department of Statistics, Census 2022 – Living Accommodations, accessed 12 March 2025

3.1% Economic growth

Sint Maarten's economic growth slowed from 3.8% in 2023 to 3.1% in 2024, according to estimates in the December 2024 Economic Bulletin of the Centrale Bank van Curaçao en Sint Maarten. In collaboration with the Netherlands and the World Bank, the government signed agreements to improve water quality and access, reflecting a commitment to sustainable development. In 2024, Sint Maarten emerged as a vocal advocate for global issues, including climate resilience and economic sustainability, leveraging its leadership position to address the unique needs of SIDS in international fora.

Natural disasters and the Covid-19 pandemic both significantly impacted the GDP of Sint Maarten. Electricity disruptions due to underinvestment in power generation continued in 2024, constraining economic activity and affecting public confidence. Sint Maarten faced ongoing challenges with crime and violence, particularly in urban areas, as socioeconomic inequalities and limited resources for law enforcement continued to strain efforts to improve public safety and community resilience.

Chapter

UN Development System Support to Sub-regional and National Priorities in 2024



programming into four Priority Areas all signatories to the UNMSDCF.





Shared Prosperity and Economic Resilience



Equality, Well-being and Leaving No One Behind

OUTCOME 1

♦ More productive and competitive business ecosystem designed to improve people's standards of living and well-being.

OUTCOME 3

National governments and regional institutions use relevant data and information to design and adopt laws and policies to eliminate discrimination, address structural inequalities and ensure the advancement of those at risk of being left furthest behind.

OUTCOME 4

People in the Caribbean equitably access and utilize universal, quality and shock-responsive social protection, education, health and care services.

OUTCOME 2

The Caribbean has fully transitioned to a more diversified and sustainable economy that supports inclusive and resilient economic growth.





Resilience to Climate Change Shocks and Sustainable Natural Resource Management



Peace, Safety, Justice and the Rule of Law

OUTCOME 5

Caribbean people, communities and institutions have enhanced adaptive capacity for inclusive gender responsive disaster risk management, and climate adaptation and mitigation.

OUTCOME 6

Caribbean countries manage natural resources and ecosystems strengthening their resilience and enhancing the resilience and prosperity of the people and communities that depend on them.

OUTCOME 7

Regional and national laws, policies, systems and institutions improve access to justice and promote peace, social cohesion and security.

OUTCOME 8

People in the Caribbean and communities actively contribute to and benefit from building and maintaining safer, fairer, more inclusive and equitable societies. Being regional in scope, the UNMSDCF was designed with the needs and challenges of Caribbean SIDS in mind. It offers robust complementarity with the ABAS plan to achieve the SDGs in all global SIDS.





Results Report 2024, Dutch Islands

Achieving Cooperation Framework Priorities, Outcomes And Outputs

The United Nations system work in Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten has demonstrated notable progress across the four strategic Priority Areas. Across these Dutch Islands, efforts have focused on strengthening institutional capacity, advancing policy alignment and enhancing social protection frameworks. In 2024, there was a particularly strong emphasis on trade efficiency, customs modernization and economic resilience under Priority Area I- Shared Prosperity and Economic Resilience. Through Priority Area 2- Equality, Well-being and Leaving No One Behind, gender mainstreaming initiatives have strengthened coordination between national gender mechanisms and civil society, while health system resilience efforts have addressed key challenges such as noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), mental health and social protection for vulnerable populations. Meanwhile, Priority Area 4- Peace, Safety, Justice and the Rule of Law interventions have supported digital resilience and ethical AI governance, equipping the Dutch Islands with stronger governance frameworks to navigate emerging technological and migration-related challenges.

Despite these advancements, activities under Priority Area 3- Resilience to Climate Change and Sustainable Natural Resource Management, which focus on disaster preparedness and climate resilience. have seen significantly lower implementation, underscoring the need for increased investment and engagement in these areas. While some initiatives have supported school safety and media resilience for crisis preparedness, the limited scope of interventions signals an opportunity to further align with regional climate adaptation priorities. Strengthening resilience-building efforts—particularly in education systems and community-based disaster preparedness—will be critical in ensuring long-term sustainability.

Capacity development and technical assistance accounted for 30% of implementation support, reinforcing institutional frameworks and strengthening national capacities. Collaboration between government, NGOs and the private sector has been instrumental in advancing key initiatives, particularly in gender mainstreaming, health resilience, and digital transformation. Institutions in Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten are being equipped with the tools needed to drive sustainable development outcomes. Moving forward, ensuring a more balanced approach across all four Priority Areas will be essential to fostering equitable and resilient progress in the region.





based on the gender equality marker

realization of human rights, Based on the human rights marker

MODE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN SYSTEM'S INTERVENTIONS IN THE DUTCH ISLANDS



Sub-Regional Results

SDG COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR ARUBA AND CURACAO



Recognizing that citizen engagement and education on the SDGs is crucial, Aruba and Curaçao embarked on a communications drive to deepen public awareness about the value of the SDGs to individual citizens, and how national policy priorities can be advanced at community level.

From October 2023 to March 2024, the United Nations Office of the Resident Coordinator partnered with governments in Aruba and Curaçao to design a bespoke SDG Communications Strategy for each country. The strategies encompass a menu of activities to improve SDG communications, including the incorporation of SDG content into education at all levels of the national curriculum and the integration of relevant SDGs into policies for every sector of national development. Alongside the Strategy, each government was equipped with an investment plan to tap into global development funding for SDG Communications initiatives and campaigns. A monitoring and evaluation framework was also created to support implementation of the strategy and ensure continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of SDG-driven communications to the public.

To familiarize key players with the strategy and equip them with the tools to confidently communicate on the SDGs, a series of workshops and seminars was conducted for Government stakeholders, the SDG Commissions, business leaders and civil society.



PRIORITY AREA 1



Enhancing Trade Efficiency and Customs Modernization in Aruba and Curaçao

The implementation of UNCTAD's ASYCUDA system in Aruba and Curaçao modernized customs operations, improved trade efficiency and boosted revenue collection, thereby fostering a competitive and resilient trade environment with stronger transparency and fewer inefficiencies. In Aruba, UNCTAD worked with the Department of Customs to introduce digital services which streamlined cargo processing and express shipment clearance, reduced transaction times and increased predictability for businesses. By 2025, automation extended to private warehousing procedures, enhancing operational efficiency and aligning customs processes with international best practices.

Similarly, in Curaçao, UNCTAD partnered with the Ministry of Justice to implement Conditional Duty Waivers and improve accounting reconciliation, leading to improved duty management transparency and accuracy. In 2025, measures to enhance control over discrepancies, infractions and offenses reinforced compliance with customs regulations. The availability of digital services and tailored automation solutions in both territories has facilitated more efficient customs procedures, reduced administrative burdens and contributed to economic growth.





PRIORITY AREA 2

Enhancing Capacity and Collaboration between National Gender Machineries and Civil Society Organizations to Mainstream Gender

UN Women's Caribbean Multi-country Office supported coordination and knowledge exchange for National Gender Machineries and civil society organization, allowing for streamlined and comprehensive state reporting to regional and international Gender Equality fora. Their quarterly meetings of regional National Gender Machineries and regional Civil Society Organizations provided a

forum for Dutch Islands' stakeholders to share information on programs and initiatives and provide feedback to UN Women on each country's priority needs., The Gender Coordination body in Aruba, CEDEHM, regularly participates in this meeting.

Fortifying Health Resilience: Integrated NCD Prevention and

Management in the Dutch Islands



National health authorities in Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten have joined forces with PAHO/WHO to advance comprehensive strategies for NCD prevention and management, reinforcing resilient, people-centered health systems in alignment with the 2030 Agenda. In Aruba, efforts are underway to update the National NCD Plan, guided by findings from the PAHO/WHO NCD STEPS survey. Sint Maarten has completed data collection for a national survey on NCDs and risk factors, with detailed analysis planned for 2025. In Curaçao, a comprehensive analysis of the NCD landscape, followed by an inclusive stakeholder consultation, is actively shaping the forthcoming National NCD Plan of Action.

In a complementary effort, health systems were strengthened through the adaptation of strategies aligned with the HEARTS in the Americas Initiative. In Aruba, the government has deployed evidence-based approaches to address public health challenges, while in Sint Maarten, PAHO/WHO's support in adapting the HEARTS-D protocol has led to the development of a National Protocol for the prevention, management and control of type 2 diabetes mellitus. PAHO/WHO support for multidisciplinary collaboration involving general practitioners, internists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, diabetes nurse educators and insurance representatives has further bolstered primary care by standardizing protocols for screening, diagnosing, treating and managing type 2 diabetes and hypertension.

These initiatives, in partnership with the Aruba Ministry of Justice and Social Affairs, the Aruba Ministry of Tourism and Public Health -Department of Public Health, the Curaçao Ministry of Health, Environment & Nature, and the Sint Maarten Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labour-enhance national capacity to implement targeted health interventions. As a result, they drive evidence-based decision-making and promote universal health coverage. By fostering multisectoral approaches to risk factor management and clinical care, the UN and its partners in the Dutch Islands are reducing the burden of NCDs and enhancing health resilience.

Together, these integrated strategies not only provide critical insights for future policy and strategic planning but also strengthen health systems to deliver quality, people-centered services. This comprehensive approach to NCD prevention and management is a vital contribution to sustainable development, ensuring that national health systems are better equipped to meet current challenges and future public health needs.





Strengthening Mental Health Policies and Services for Resilient Health Systems

Across Aruba, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten, PAHO/WHO has worked with national partners to advance efforts to strengthen mental health policies and services and enhance national capacities to address mental health challenges. . In Aruba, findings from the STEPS survey revealed high levels of suicide ideation and electronic cigarette use among youth, prompting discussions with the Ministry of Justice to develop targeted mental health and substance use policies in alignment with PAHO/WHO guidelines. In Curaçao, mental health gap training fortified community mental health services, improving access to care. Meanwhile, Sint Maarten has made significant progress in updating its Mental Health Plan, with completion expected in 225.

These initiatives, supported by PAHO/WHO in collaboration with national health authorities—including the Aruba Ministry of Justice and Social Affairs, the Aruba Ministry of Tourism and Public Health - Department of Public Health, the Curaçao Ministry of Health, Environment & Nature, and the Sint Maarten Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labour—contribute to the development of comprehensive and multisectoral mental health strategies. By improving policy frameworks, expanding mental health services, and addressing key risk factors, these efforts align with the 2030 Agenda's goal of ensuring access to inclusive and resilient health care systems.

Fostering Community-Based Protection and Social Inclusion

In 2024, UNHCR's community-based approach in Aruba and Curaçao enhanced access to rights, resources and social protection for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant communities, fostering inclusion and resilience. In Aruba, UNHCR partner HIAS implemented outreach programs tackling social isolation and integration challenges through leadership training, empowerment workshops, and awareness-raising on labor rights and mental health. Participatory assessments and focus groups identified key community needs, while local organization CEDE Aruba's WAW Mobiel initiative expanded outreach and child protection services in neighborhoods that host a high number of refugees and migrants. These efforts align with Aruba's Nos Plan, Nos Futuro strategy, strengthening social cohesion and equitable development while advancing SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). In Curaçao, UNHCR's support for Venezuelan artists helped amplify migrant and refugee experiences through Zona de Ilegales, a film series reaching over 10,000 viewers globally. Collaborating with Bos di Hubentut, UNHCR facilitated the multilingual distribution of Love Protect Yourself and Building Boys' Empathy, engaging 2,500 local, migrant, and refugee children in activities that promote empathy and integration. Additionally, PSI Skuchami's psychosocial project addressed PTSD, anxiety and depression among displaced youth, improving mental well-being and resilience. These interventions contribute to SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 by strengthening child protection, fostering informed communities and promoting social inclusion through education, advocacy and mental health support.

PRIORITY AREA 3

Improving Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Resilience in Caribbean Schools

UNDRR worked with the Curaçao Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and the Sint Maarten Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport to reinforce disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate resilience through the Caribbean Safe Schools Initiative (CSSI), chaired by Sint Maarten. Through technical assistance and political support, UNDRR facilitated the expansion of CSSI's scope, including the integration of extreme heat as a critical factor in education policy and school safety planning. Originally launched in 2017 at the First Caribbean Ministerial Forum on School Safety, CSSI serves as the regional framework for advancing school safety, aligning with the Worldwide Initiative on Safe Schools (WISS). UNDRR's engagement strengthened governance at the national level by fostering intersectoral collaboration and aligning disaster risk and climate adaptation policies with education strategies. UNDRR and its government partners facilitated knowledge-sharing through targeted webinars and technical support for policy integration. These efforts advance SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 4 (Quality Education) by enhancing institutional capacity to manage disaster risk and climate adaptation within education systems, ensuring safer and more resilient learning environments for Caribbean students.

Strengthening Caribbean Media Resilience for Disaster Preparedness

UNESCO, in collaboration with regional partners, has enhanced the capacity of Caribbean media organizations to deliver timely, accurate and life-saving information before, during and after crises. A hybrid regional workshop, Crisis Preparedness for Journalists and Broadcasters, convened in Jamaica with support from UNDRR, the Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU), the Media Institute for the Caribbean (MIC) and CARIMAC-UWI, provided training to 93 participants across Caribbean SIDS including Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten. The workshop strengthened risk assessment capabilities, crisis reporting skills and disaster response coordination, and fostered critical collaboration between media outlets and emergency response agencies. By investing in media capacity building and cross-border knowledge-sharing, this initiative strengthens disaster preparedness, contributes to climate resilience and advances gender-responsive risk reduction in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.





Advancing Digital Resilience and Ethical Al Governance in the Dutch Caribbean

Through a comprehensive effort to strengthen digital resilience and promote ethical, inclusive digital transformation, stakeholders from Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten have been empowered navigate emerging socio-technological to challenges. Led by UNESCO in collaboration with CARICOM, The University of the West Indies (UWI), the Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica and the CBU, the Caribbean AI Initiative has advanced policy development, capacity building and public awareness to counter disinformation, hate speech and digital harms. This initiative has positioned the region as a leader in ethical AI governance, with the development of the Caribbean AI Policy Roadmap reviewed by CARICOM's Ministerial Council on Trade and Economic Development (COTED) and integrated into regional policy discussions. Public webinars, university engagements and masterclasses have expanded digital literacy, while calls for a regional cybersecurity framework underscore a commitment to safeguarding online spaces. The Media and Information Literacy and Community Resilience Program has further equipped youth and marginalized communities with critical media literacy skills, using libraries as hubs for inclusive learning. Additionally, the Open Educational Resources (OER) Initiative has enhanced equitable access to culturally relevant tools, culminating in Caribbean learning representation at UNESCO's 3rd World OER Congress, where the Dubai Declaration on digital public goods was adopted. These efforts contribute to fostering inclusive and ethical digital citizenship, ensuring that Dutch Caribbean societies are equipped to leverage technology for sustainable development while mitigating associated risks.



Enhancing Asylum Systems and Legal Protections in Aruba and Curaçao



In 2024, UNHCR collaborated with the governments of Aruba and Curaçao to strengthen institutional capacity for managing asylum processes and legal protections, reinforcing human rights governance and compliance with international standards. In Aruba, the Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI) assessed the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) system, resulting in key recommendations to streamline procedures. A four-day workshop trained officials from DIMAS, Immigration and Guarda Nos Costa, equipping them with improved decision-making tools, while legal assistance services mitigated risks of detention, deportation and refoulement for asylum seekers. Strategic interventions secured court rulings against unlawful deportations, reinforcing Aruba's Nos Plan, Nos Futuro strategy and advancing SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

In Curaçao, where the absence of a formal asylum system leaves displaced individuals vulnerable, a roundtable discussion engaged legal experts and officials on the application of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in asylum cases, fostering inter-island cooperation. UNHCR provided direct legal representation and helpline support to asylum seekers, ensuring access to justice and protection. Curaçao's participation in the Cartagena +40 regional meeting in Chile further strengthened international collaboration, aligning national asylum policies with global human rights standards. These efforts, in line with Curaçao's Building on Strengths strategy, contribute to institutional resilience and social inclusion, advancing SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). By reinforcing legal frameworks, expanding asylum protections and empowering displaced individuals to access justice, these initiatives promote systemic resilience and social equity, ensuring stronger, more inclusive governance structures in the Caribbean.



Expanding Resettlement Pathways for Refugees and Asylum

Seekers

In 2024, UNHCR and its partners enhanced resettlement efforts in Aruba and Curaçao, providing durable solutions for refugees and asylum seekers facing significant protection challenges. In Aruba, where local integration remains constrained due to restricted access to healthcare. employment and education. resettlement emerged as a crucial protection tool labor against risks such as exploitation, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and refoulement. UNHCR facilitated timely identification and submission of cases meeting resettlement criteria, ensuring vulnerable individuals could access safety and fundamental rights in third countries. Similarly, in Curaçao, the absence of a national asylum system and limited local integration opportunities heightened the need for resettlement as a life-saving intervention.

UNHCR prioritized cases based on urgent legal and physical protection needs, including exposure to exploitation, healthcare inaccessibility, and risks of refoulement, securing pathways to stability for those in need. These efforts align with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by safeguarding human rights, fostering global responsibility-sharing and strengthening protection mechanisms for displaced populations. The transformative impact lies in creating access to safety and stability while advancing a more resilient and inclusive protection environment in both countries

Results in Aruba







PRIORITY AREA 1



Advancing STEM Education to Drive Aruba's Green Energy Transition



Aruba is now poised to accelerate its green energy transition through high-quality STEM education, after UNDP partnered with government and academia to deliver the Sustainable Island Solutions in Science, Technology, Energy and Mathematics (SISSTEM) initiative. In collaboration with EU, supported by UNDP in partnership with the Aruba Monuments Bureau, the Government of Aruba, and the University of Aruba, UNDP has strengthened national capacity to accelerate the green energy transition. UNDP supported the renovation of the university's Maria Convent building so it could house the SISSTEM Faculty. Now, the university can equip students with inaugurated in April 2024, the renovated Maria Convent building now houses the SISSTEM Faculty, equipping students with advanced STEM training critical for sustainable development. The facility, inaugurated in April 2024, accommodates 35 enrolled students and 10 ongoing PhD research projects, with 7 Bachelor of Science and 1 Doctorate graduates to date. Research advancements developed at the SISSTEM faculty, including innovations in reverse osmosis technology and coral DNA registration, are already enhancing local water treatment systems and marine conservation efforts.





By expanding access to high-quality STEM education, the initiative UNDP and its partners in Aruba have contributed to the mitigation of the 'brain drain,' effect on the workforce, which better positions the country to harness the skills and potential of its young people so they can contribute to fostering a skilled workforce in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). national development. SISSTEM is building a knowledge-based economy and reducing reliance on tourism and fossil fuels, which bolsters Aruba's progress on SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities.

"SISSTEM gave us the chance to work on real-world projects that impact Aruba's future. We've collaborated with our community, gained new skills, and created solutions for a sustainable tomorrow." For students like Joel Riven Rajnher, the program represents more than just education—it's a platform to shape a sustainable future for Aruba. "SISSTEM gave us the chance to work on real-world projects that impact Aruba's future. We've collaborated with our community, gained new skills, and created solutions for a sustainable tomorrow," Joel shared. Research advancements, including innovations in reverse osmosis technology and coral DNA registration, have enhanced local water treatment systems and marine conservation efforts. By building a knowledge-based economy and reducing reliance on tourism and fossil fuels, SISSTEM contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

Through its innovative, community-driven approach, the initiative is positioning Aruba as a regional leader in sustainable development and scientific research.

Joel Riven Rajnher,

"

University of Aruba SISSTEM student

"The SISSTEM faculty...is making a great impact in the community by reaching out to the private and public sectors, who are the backbone of Aruba's economy. Thanks to research in new technologies in reverse osmosis and coral DNA-registration, a shift was made possible to a more efficient water treatment system, as it reduces costs and boosts productive time and finds corals that are more resilient to climate change. As of November 2024, the faculty enrolled 29 Bachelor- and 6 Master students and had 7 Bachelor and 1 PhD graduates. At the moment, there are 10 running PhD-research projects ongoing, which is the highest number of enrolments since its inception."

Humphrey Vrolijk,

Policy Advisor for the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce and Industry of Aruba

Expanding Healthcare Access for Undocumented Migrants in Aruba

The IOM Aruba Free Clinic has significantly improved access to essential healthcare services for undocumented migrants and vulnerable populations. In 2024, the clinic provided primary healthcare and preventive services to 1,153 migrants, and refugees, host-community members, addressing barriers to medical access. It issued 405 general medical vouchers, facilitated specialized care for 27 HIV-positive patients in partnership with Horacio Oduber Hospital—including consultations, medication and

lab tests—and delivered urgent dental care to 10 individuals. By offering free consultations and medicine vouchers, the clinic has reduced the risk of untreated conditions escalating into costly complications, thereby alleviating pressure on emergency services and the broader healthcare system. This initiative supports national development priorities by promoting equitable healthcare access, contributing to more resilient and sustainable public health outcomes in Aruba.









Enhancing Employability and Social Integration Through English Education



The IOM Aruba English language program, implemented in partnership with Fundacion VeneAruba Solidaria, has strengthened the workforce, fostered economic stability and enhanced social integration in Aruba by enabling refugees and migrants to become active contributors to the local economy and forge sustainable livelihoods. In 2024, the initiative provided English classes to 52 refugees and migrants, equipping them with vital language skills to access employment in Aruba's tourism sector. By improving their communication abilities, participants gained better job prospects which increases their prospects for long-term integration into the local workforce. Beyond employability, the program also enhanced social inclusion, enabling participants to build connections, engage in community activities and experience less isolation. Additionally, improved language proficiency empowered them to navigate resettlement challenges more effectively, access essential services and positively impact their overall well-being.


Through its Ethical Recruitment and Work Permit Support initiatives, IOM Aruba , in partnership with Fundacion VeneAruba Solidaria, has contributed to a more inclusive and sustainable labor market, benefiting both migrants and the broader Aruban economy. IOM Aruba's collaborative advocacy efforts led to a landmark policy adjustment easing work permit requirements for Venezuelan migrants, expanding opportunities for over 10,000 undocumented individuals to formalize their employment. IOM Aruba worked with partners to strengthen government capacity and offer legal orientation, work permit guidance and regularization support to 655 migrants, with 164 receiving direct assistance in securing employment. These efforts fostered economic stability, self-reliance and social inclusion while addressing systemic barriers to labor market access. Additionally, the Ethical Recruitment Program promoted fair labor practices, ensuring transparency, worker protections and employer compliance with ethical hiring standards.







Empowering Migrant and Refugee Children Through Education and Psychosocial Support



The Sinja Merdia Afterschool Program, implemented by IOM Aruba in partnership with Fundacion VeneAruba Solidaria, has combined educational and psychosocial interventions to improve learning outcomes for refugee and migrant children, enhance their emotional well-being and empower them to successfully integrate into their new academic and social environments. In 2024, the program provided academic support to 104 refugee and migrant children, offering personalized language instruction in Dutch, Papiamento, and English, along with tailored assistance in other school subjects. Social workers facilitated mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), helping children navigate adaptation challenges and fostering resilience. Additionally, IOM Aruba launched a summer school program, ensuring continued access to education for migrant and refugee youth facing systemic barriers. Financial assistance was also provided to vulnerable families to cover school and insurance fees, enhancing long-term academic stability and social integration.

Enhancing Access to Essential Services Through Humanitarian



This approach strategically aligned transportation support with other key interventions, optimizing resources and maximizing impact. By ensuring that vulnerable populations could reach essential services, the initiative contributed to reducing poverty and fostering long-term resilience, reinforcing Aruba's commitment to inclusive and sustainable development.



Strengthening Mental Health Support for Migrant Families

The MHPSS program, implemented by IOM Aruba in partnership with Fundacion VeneAruba Solidaria, has strengthened social protection systems to enhance resilience and reduce poverty. In 2024, the program provided tailored mental health services to 216 refugees, migrants and their families, addressing trauma, stress and adaptation challenges. Through individual and group counselling, community-based support and awareness-raising workshops, the initiative fostered emotional well-being and resilence. A key component was integrating MHPSS with healthcare and social case management, ensuring a holistic response to the needs of displaced individuals. By reducing stigma around mental health and promoting access to psychosocial resources, the program empowered migrants and refugees to seek support, strengthening their long-term well-being and integration. This initiative has played a crucial role in creating safer, more supportive communities reinforcing Aruba's commitment to inclusive social protection and sustainable development.



Comprehensive Protection and Case Management for Migrants in Aruba

IOM Aruba, in partnership with Fundacion VeneAruba Solidaria, has strengthened social protection systems to enhance resilience and reduce poverty. In 2024, the Protection Case Management initiative provided tailored support to 655 migrants, facilitating their integration and regularization. Legal orientation services guided beneficiaries on their rights, obligations, and pathways to legal status, including assistance with employment and rental contrats.

Additionally, personalized case management services addressed essential needs such as housing, healthcare, and education, ensuring migrants could access critical resources. By integrating legal support with holistic social case management, the program not only met immediate needs but also fostered long-term stability, self-sufficiency, and community cohesion. This initiative has reinforced Aruba's commitment to inclusive development, safeguarding the well-being and rights of migrants while promoting their successful integration into society.

Building Resilience and Stability: Food and Housing Support for Vulnerable Populations

In 2024, two key initiatives implemented by IOM Aruba in partnership with Fundacion VeneAruba Solidaria provided essential support to vulnerable refugees, migrants and host-community members in Aruba facing economic hardship and displacement. The Nourish and Thrive initiative delivered critical food assistance by distributing 148 food vouchers via a debit card system, tailored according to family size and vulnerability assessments. These vouchers covered essential groceries and hygiene products for an average month, thereby reducing food insecurity and promoting overall well-being. Complementing this, the program enhanced nutritional awareness through culturally sensitive workshops led by certified nutritionists, empowering beneficiaries with guidance on balanced diets and effective resource management to support healthier lifestyles.

Simultaneously, the Short-Term Rental Support initiative addressed the pressing need for stable housing by providing rental assistance to 60 vulnerable individuals for up to three months. This financial support safeguarded beneficiaries from harsh living conditions, violence and exploitation, enabling them to secure safe and stable shelter. With stable housing in place, affected individuals were better positioned to pursue employment, education and healthcare opportunities, laying the groundwork for long-term integration and self-sufficiency.

Together, these integrated efforts underscore a comprehensive approach to disaster risk resilience and sustainable development. By offering direct food assistance, nutrition education and housing support, the immediate needs of refugees and migrants are addressed and the overall resilience and long-term stability of displaced populations can be enhanced. These measures contribute to reducing both food insecurity and housing instability, ultimately fostering healthier, more resilient communities that can transition toward sustainable, independent living.



Policy Support and Advocacy at the Gender Equality Forum ahead of SIDS4



UN Women co-hosted a Gender Equality Forum with the Caribbean Development Bank in May 2024 in Antigua and Barbuda, ahead of SIDS4. The forum featured more than 200 stakeholders from more than 40 countries, of which Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten were included. These participants represented a wide range of constituencies and sectors committed to keeping gender equality at the centre of the SIDS agenda. The forum called on attendees to SIDS4 to ensure that gender equality, women's human rights, and the empowerment of women and girls were prioritised, by mainstreaming gender equality in respective national plans and policies. UN Women representatives also engaged in high-level meetings with representatives from SIDS, including Aruba, as well as from international organisations including the Caribbean Bank and CARICOM Secretariat. The event concluded with a Communiqué, which was presented to the conference to influence the SIDS4 Outcome Document. It contributed gender-focused recommendations to the ABAS, ensuring that gender equality was a core component of the global development agenda for SIDS.

PRIORITY AREA 3

Empowering Forcibly Displaced and Stateless People Through

The provision of multi-purpose cash assistance, implemented by HIAS in partnership with UNHCR, has strengthened social protection systems in Aruba, aligning with the Nos Plan, Nos Futuro National Development Strategy.. In 2024, cash-based interventions (CBIs) supported 32 vulnerable households comprising 83 individuals which face legal barriers to employment and income generation. By providing direct financial relief, the initiative enabled recipients to prioritize essential needs such as food, shelter and medical care while preserving their dignity and reducing risks of poverty and exploitation. The autonomy afforded by CBIs empowered refugees and asylum seekers to make independent spending decisions, fosterina resilience and self-reliance. This intervention advanced SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by addressing immediate financial insecurity and promoting inclusive social support systems. By reducing economic vulnerability and enhancing social inclusion, the initiative contributed to Aruba's broader efforts to build a more equitable and resilient society.







Strengthening Protection and Awareness to Combat Human Trafficking

The Safe Haven Support initiative, implemented in collaboration with the National Coordination Center Against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling, has enhanced government and civil society capacities to address human trafficking and protect vulnerable migrants. In 2024, 659 participants—including civil servants, NGOs, and community leaders—received specialized training on identifying, referring, and assisting trafficking victims. These sessions, tailored to the needs of different stakeholder groups, improved the local response system, ensuring timely and effective protection services. By equipping frontline responders with the knowledge and tools to combat trafficking, the initiative reinforced Aruba's commitment to building a safer, more inclusive society. Additionally, Safe Haven Support provided emergency shelter, legal aid, medical care and psychosocial assistance to at-risk migrants, empowering them to rebuild their lives with dignity. This comprehensive approach not only strengthened institutional frameworks but also fostered greater community awareness and action against human trafficking.

Facilitating Safe and Efficient Refugee Movements

The Refugee Movement Support initiative has strengthened governance mechanisms to protect human rights and ensure the safe, organized relocation of refugees. In 2024, IOM Aruba facilitated the movement of 110 individuals, providing logistical coordination for transportation, accommodation and medical health assessments in collaboration with the IOM USRAP hub in El Salvador. Close cooperation with Aruba's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Aruba Migration Department ensured compliance with local regulations, minimizing delays and disruptions. By streamlining refugee processing and enhancing institutional coordination, this initiative contributed to a more efficient and humane migration management system, reinforcing Aruba's commitment to upholding human rights and facilitating safe refugee resettlement.



In 2024, IOM Aruba strengthened government and civil society capacities to foster social cohesion and uphold migration-related human rights, bringing together 2,443 beneficiaries from local communities and migrant populations. A key milestone was the unveiling of a mural created by both migrant and local artists, symbolizing inclusivity and the idea that true development is measured through happiness and well-being. This initiative reinforced the importance of social harmony alongside economic progress. Additionally, in celebration of Aruban National Day, IOM organized educational workshops and interactive activities that allowed local and migrant children to explore Aruba's history and traditions, fostering mutual understanding and friendships. Further strengthening community ties, IOM hosted beach clean-ups, where migrants and locals collaborated to preserve Aruba's natural environment, reinforcing shared responsibility for the island's future. By promoting inclusivity, cultural exchange, and environmental stewardship, these initiatives contributed to a more equitable and united society.



Raising Awareness on the Legacy of Slavery Through Interactive Exhibitions

4

In commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Routes of the Enslaved Peoples Programme, the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean, in collaboration with the Aruba National Commission for UNESCO and local partners, brought the Rijksmuseum's traveling exhibition Slavery. Ten True Stories of Dutch Colonial Slavery to Aruba. Held between September and December 2024 at locations such as including the Scol di Arte, Educampus Aruba, the National Archaeological Museum, the National Archive, and the National Library, the exhibition engaged over 500 visitors. Through detailed posters featuring personal narratives from the Dutch colonial era, coupled with QR codes for interactive learning, the initiative deepened public understanding of the transatlantic slave trade's impact. Educational conferences, lectures, and cultural activities further contextualized Aruba's unique history, including a special poster on the enslaved individual 'Thomas' and a documentary on the seven-generation history of the Ecury family, supported by the Aruba National Archives. Minister of Finance and Culture, HE Ms. Xiomara Maduro, emphasized that such exhibits help Arubans better understand their history and identity. This initiative, made possible through collaboration with the UNESCO Outreach Program on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery, fostered historical awareness, cultural reflection, and dialogue on the enduring legacies of slavery in the region.





PRIORITY AREA 1



Strengthening SDG Monitoring and Policy Alignment in Curaçao

To enhance evidence-based policy-making and legislative processes, the Central Bureau of Statistics and the SDG Committee of Curaçao collaborated with UNDP to develop a standardized SDG reporting tool. This initiative focused on creating SDG indicator sheets for six priority SDGs: SDG 1 (No Poverty), Good Health and Well-Being, Quality Education, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth and Life Below Water. These six SDGs encompass 85 unique indicators that guide the country's sustainable development efforts. In 2024, significant progress was made with the development of 44 indicator templates, which will serve as the foundation for an SDG reporting dashboard. These templates will improve data collection, tracking and analysis, enabling policymakers to assess progress, identify gaps and allocate resources more effectively.

Complementing this, UNDP conducted a comprehensive review of Curaçao's national planning framework, producing three critical SDG reports: the Policy Alignment Mapping Report (PAM), the Budget Allocation Tagging Report (BAT) and the Indicator-Based Performance Review. These reports assessed the alignment of 45 planning documents and 14 budget documents, analyzing how national policies and financial resources support SDG implementation. Together, these initiatives reinforce one another by ensuring that data-driven insights from the SDG reporting tool inform national planning and budgeting, while the policy and budget analysis strengthens institutional coordination and financial alignment with sustainable development priorities. By integrating SDG data into decision-making processes and ensuring policy coherence, these efforts enhance transparency, accountability and progress toward Curaçao's sustainable development goals within the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

Supporting National Priorities to Provide Sustainable Assistance to Migrants



In 2024, IOM's targeted interventions in Curaçao delivered measurable improvements in the quality of life for migrants, directly supporting the National Development Plan and advancing the Caribbean UNMSDCF. By providing cash for rent and humanitarian transportation (CBI), IOM enabled families in the informal working sector to securesecured stable housing and access to essential services, reducing their vulnerability to homelessness. Postnatal care, along with the distribution of maternity and newborn kits, improved maternal and infant health outcomes, enhancing access to critical health resources. Dental health services and HPV testing initiatives empowered individuals improved access to with preventive healthcare, contributing to long-term well-being.

The charity shop/information hub, coupled with food vouchers and hygiene kits, strengthened social safety nets, while after-school and integration activities fostered community cohesion and youth engagement. Educational support through school kit provision enabled children to continue their education, aligning with SDG 4 on quality education. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)MHPSS initiatives addressed emotional resilience, enhancing individual capacity for coping with crisis.

These efforts collectively accelerated progress toward SDGs and national priorities, demonstrating a transformative shift from assistance-based responses to sustainable, rights-based outcomes. By focusing on tangible benefits to people's lives, IOM's work exemplifies integrated, impactful UN system collaboration.



Expanding Healthcare Access for Migrants and Refugees in

Curaçao

In response to the healthcare access gap faced by migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Curaçao, the initiative led by Fundashon Salú pa Tur and UNHCR has supported undocumented populations with overcoming legal and financial barriers to healthcare access. The absence of insurance coverage for these groups exacerbates their vulnerability, leading to poor health outcomes and heightened risks. This intervention aligns with Curaçao's Building on Strengths strategy by addressing health inequities and ensuring the protection of the most marginalized communities. While UNHCR continues advocating for the formal inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in the national healthcare system, this initiative has served as a crucial safety net, offering general medical care and specialized maternal support. This project contributed to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), reinforcing resilience and promoting health equity in the region.



Results in Sint Maarten





Advancing Digital Resilience and Ethical Al Governance in the Dutch Caribbean

The UN Resident Coordinator's first visit to Sint Maarten from 30 September to 1 October, 2024, was an important step toward strengthening collaboration with the Government and development partners on a range of issues, including climate adaptation, citizen security, child and social protection, and youth development. In all meetings, key issues such as access to concessional finance, improving data infrastructure, and fostering regional cooperation, as well as the UN system's capacity to support Sint Maarten as a constituent member of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, were identified as potential enablers of more effective international cooperation.

The partners in Sint Maarten who met with the Resident Coordinator included the Governor, Prime Minister, Speaker of Parliament and departments and ministries of the Government of Sint Maarten. Discussions were also held with the Sint Maarten Development Fund, UNICEF Sint Maarten, and the World Bank's Sint Maarten Trust Fund Programme. Together, these organizations represent key stakeholders interested in close cooperation with the UN system in 2025.

Three cross-cutting and recurring themes emerged from these dialogues, highlighting critical areas for collaboration between the Government of Sint Maarten and the UN to maximize transformative co-benefits. These were climate change adaptation and access to finance; citizen security, organized crime and border protection; and youth development and education. Several regional and country-specific follow-up actions were identified and will be the subject of continued discussion within the UN Country Team, as well as ongoing dialogue with partners in Sint Maarten.

Enhancing Public Health and Infrastructure in Sint Maarten's Dutch Quarter

With funding from the European Commission, UNOPS is implementing a water and sanitation project in Sint Maarten's Dutch Quarter to provide sustainable sanitation infrastructure, thereby significantly improvinge public health and environmental conditions. The project aims to upgrade and complete the aging sewage system, which is currently at critical risk of failure., ensuring sustainable sanitation infrastructure. Additionally, enhancements such as sidewalks and street lighting will contribute to increased security and overall community well-being.

In parallel, UNOPS is advancing a rule of law project in Sint Maarten through the construction of a state-of-the-art correctional facility designed to meet the highest international standards., currently in its first phase, with construction commencing in late 2024. The project has secured a \$52 million budget for its second phase, which commenced in late 2024. With the planned design set to focus on social, gender and environmental considerations accompanied by cutting-edge security features and reintegration support, the facility will reflect Sint Maarten's commitment to enhancing human rights, dignity, and rehabilitation. It will include spaces for education, health care, family visits, professional workshops, and recreation—reinforcing a holistic approach to rehabilitation.



UNOPS is also engaged in collaboration with UNODC to support justice sector reform, focusing on rehabilitation, reintegration, and broader systemic improvements. Furthermore, Aruba has expressed interest in a similar justice sector initiative, with initial UNOPS technical assistance already underway. This initiative aligns with broader efforts to strengthen national institutions' capacity to deliver resilient healthcare services by promoting sustainable infrastructure, improved governance, and enhanced public service delivery.



Child Resilience and Protection Project by UNICEF the Netherlands

The Child Resilience and Protection Project (CRPP), implemented by the Government of Sint Maarten in collaboration with UNICEF the Netherlands, and support of the World Bank Trust Fund for Sint Maarten, aimed to strengthen the capacity of the education and child protection systems to address and respond to the needs of children and adolescents resulting from natural disasters and external shocks. This \$5 million project was implemented between January 2021 and December 2024.

The project had three programmatic components:



UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport; The University of the West Indies; the Court of Guardianship and the Methodist Agogic Centre Primary School on this landmark initiative.





school staff completed burnout assessments



After School Program and Early Childhood Development Centre staff at 24 schools received training



Positive Parenting Support Programme (PPSP) facilitators and 18 master trainers trained





National Child Protection Platform - Developed a 5-year strategic plan, operational plan, and multi-annual work plans







58

Growing Up Safe Magazine published (11 online editions, 4 print editions) to support capacity building in care professionals.

HurryCane Run game launched in schools to teach hurricane preparedness



"What if I Told You!"

Short film featuring students of the Methodist Agogic Center Primary School, highlighted mental health, societal expectations of men, and the role of parents and caregivers

Valuable contributors to the success of this project were the utilization of integrated, youth-centred approaches, diverse public and private sector collaboration, community engagement, and ensuring project frameworks are embedded within existing systems for long-term sustainability. For example, a key outcome is the planned institutionalization of the Positive Parenting Support Programme in the Division of Community Development, Family, and Humanitarian Affairs by 2027. The Child Resilience and Protection Project has therefore been instrumental in building a stronger, more resilient system for children and adolescents in Sint Maarten. By addressing critical needs in psychosocial support, child protection, changing social norms and disaster preparedness, the project has laid the groundwork for durable positive change.

Results Report 2024, Dutch Islands

Regional and Global Cooperation

4th International Conference on Small Islands Developing States

As SIDS, the Dutch Islands remain acutely vulnerable to climate change, with rising sea levels and extreme weather events underscoring the urgency of robust adaptation strategies. Aruba, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten actively participated in SIDS4, held from 27 -30 May, 2024, in St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda. The conference, themed "Charting the Course Toward Resilient Prosperity," convened over 3,500 participants to address sustainable development challenges faced by small island states. The resulting ABAS serves as a vital framework for addressing these shared vulnerabilities. prioritizing climate resilience concessional financing and sustainable economic development.



Delegations and Leadership

The Kingdom of the Netherlands was represented by a unified delegation led by Aruba's Prime Minister Evelyn Wever-Croes. The delegation included Curaçao's Prime Minister Gilmar Pisas, Curaçao's Minister of Economic Development Ruisandro Cijntje, and Sint Maarten's Minister Plenipotentiary Patrice Gumbs. Their collective presence underscored a commitment to regional cooperation in addressing shared challenges such as climate change, economic vulnerability and post-pandemic recovery.

Key Themes and Contributions

During the conference, the delegation emphasized the unique vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), focusing on:



Climate Change: Advocating for increased support to mitigate and adapt to climate-related impacts.



Economic Resilience: Highlighting the need for diversified economies and sustainable development strategies.



Post-Pandemic Recovery: Discussing strategies to recover from the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

These discussions contributed to the formulation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), a renewed declaration aiming to guide SIDS toward resilient prosperity over the next decade.

Participation in the Local2030 Islands Network Summit

Minister Gumbs also participated in the 3rd Island Leaders Summit organized by the Local2030 Islands Network during SIDS4. This summit focused on enhancing data capacity, fostering public-private partnerships and promoting regenerative tourism as pathways to sustainable development. The summit also saw the launch of initiatives like the SIDS Centre of Excellence and the SIDS Global Data Hub, aimed at supporting data-driven decision-making in island nations.

The active involvement of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten in SIDS4 reflects their dedication to collaborative efforts that address the pressing challenges facing SIDS.

68th Session on the Commission on the Status of Women

In March 2024, UN Women hosted the Prime Minister of Aruba, Vice Prime Minister of Curaçao and then-Prime Minister of Sint Maarten at 68th Session on the Commission on the Status of Women 2024 to discuss global and Caribbean women's advancements.



Vice Prime Minister of Curaçao, Ruthmilda Larmonie-Cecilia; then-Prime Minister of Sint Maarten, Silveria Jacobs; Prime Minister of Aruba, Evelyn Wever-Croes

The UN Women Multi-Country Offices for the Caribbean and the Pacific jointly organised the side event, "Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) and Gender Equality—Charting the course toward Resilient Prosperity for All using a gender lens" at CSW68. The event focused on SIDS discussions surrounding the vital importance of recognising the transformative potential of gender equality, social inclusion and women's empowerment in addressing the essential challenges for securing a resilient and prosperous future. Closing remarks for the event were delivered by the Prime Minister of Aruba, Her Excellency Ms. Evelyn Wever-Croes.



On 22-23 September 2024, the Summit of the Future was held with an aim to modernise global governance to better respond to current global challenges such as climate change, peace and security, technological advancements and the pressing need for agile and inclusive international cooperation. To engage youth from the Dutch Islands on the core principles of two of the Summit's main outcomes - the Declaration for Future Generations and the Global Digital Compact - the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten facilitated an interactive Virtual Youth Dialogue on 26 September 2024 with youth from all three Dutch Islands.

The Resident Coordinator, Ms. Joanna Kazana, underscored that young people are not just beneficiaries of multilateral processes but active agents of change, and their involvement is vital in shaping policies that will directly impact their futures. The discussion centered on the themes of intergenerational solidarity, youth participation in policymaking and climate action. Participants also reflected on how these themes could be applied locally to tackle pressing challenges within their home countries.

Youth participants proposed that the UN and Dutch Islands' governments collaborate to:



Formalize Youth Participation in policy-making



Ensure Dutch Caribbean Representation at International Fora



Support an Inter-Regional Knowledge Transfer Mechanism for Youth



Preserve and Cultivate Indigenous Languages



Foster Access to Research and Situational Analyses to Solve Development Challenges



Invest in Digital Infrastructure



Prioritize Youth-led Environmental Initiatives



Support Sustainable Tourism

2.3 Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

In 2024, the UN Country Team (UNCT) deepened its engagement with Aruba, Curacao, and Sint Maarten through strategic partnerships that mobilized resources and expertise to advance the 2030 Agenda. Notable among these efforts was the expansion of multi-stakeholder collaborations, including strengthened ties with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the European Union (EU), and regional private sector actors. The UN leveraged these partnerships to drive financing solutions for critical areas such as climate resilience, digital transformation, and social protection. For instance, the UNDP-led Blue Economy Initiative in Curaçao facilitated public-private investments in sustainable marine industries, fostering both economic growth and environmental stewardship. Similarly, UNICEF partnered with national governments and civil society organizations to improve education financing mechanisms, ensuring more equitable access to quality education for vulnerable populations.

South-South and triangular cooperation also played a key role in bolstering SDG progress across the Dutch Caribbean. Aruba and Sint Maarten benefited from technical exchanges with other SIDS, particularly in renewable energy and disaster risk management. The UN supported these efforts through targeted interventions such as UNDRR's initiatives in strengthening early warning systems. Additionally, UN Women collaborated with governments to enhance gender-responsive budgeting, aligning public expenditures with commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment.

In response to the ongoing challenges faced by refugees and migrants in the Dutch Caribbean, the UN strengthened its engagement under the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V). The UNHCR and IOM provided direct assistance, legal support, and livelihood opportunities for displaced populations, working closely with governments and local partners to ensure inclusive service delivery. UNICEF played a critical role in supporting access to education for migrant children, while PAHO/WHO enhanced healthcare services to meet the needs of refugee and host communities alike. These efforts reinforced the Dutch Caribbean's commitment to upholding human rights and social cohesion while advancing the SDGs.

2.4 Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

Based on agency updates to UNINFO, there was a collective expenditure of \$4.3 million in Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten in 2024. The financial overview in Figure 1 shows a concentration of resources under Priority Area 1- Shared Prosperity and Economic Resilience. Work aligned to Leaving No One Behind advanced with less than half of the previous priority area, with \$1.24 million and recorded expenditures of roughly \$764 thousand , or over half of its available budget. Agency activities covering Climate Change and Natural-Resource Management, was modestly funded at only about \$43 thousand, of which \$27 thousand had been used. UN system work focused on Priority Area 4- Peace, Justice and the Rule of Law, held an allocation of about \$639 thousand and had spent approximately \$480 thousand, reflecting an execution rate of roughly 76 percent. Together, these figures reflect a strong skew in favour of economic resilience activities, highlighting the need to identify bottlenecks to improve implementation in other areas.

Figure 2 below shows when the data is disaggregated by agency, fund or programme, UNDP and UNHCR led the resource landscape, together accounting for the majority of both allocated and expended funds. Notably, UNDP utilised \$2.7 million to complete the SISSTEM initiative. Agencies such as IOM, PAHO/WHO, UNCTAD, UNESCO and UNDRR operated at smaller scales, with UNESCO and UNDRR overseeing the smallest resource envelopes.

A geographic review of expenditure in Figure 3 below offers further insights into country-specific expenditure patterns. Aruba's executed resources total nearly \$3.7 million with the bulk devoted to Shared Prosperity and Economic Resilience. Curaçao recorded \$520 thousand in spending, distributed across social-protection, justice and economic-resilience activities, whereas Sint Maarten's executed resources amount to about \$63 thousand and concentrated on Leaving No One Behind priorities. Across all three islands, Climate Change and Natural-Resource Management received comparatively modest resourcing.

Looking at expenditure towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Figure 4 below, UN System work in the Dutch Islands contributed to the achievement of 10 SDGs. SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) was overwhelmingly supported, with at approximately \$2.6 million (or almost two-thirds of total spending) is tagged to this goal. This reflects the strong emphasis on capacity-building and regional cooperation. Health-related work under SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) accounts for around 10 percent of the total, while efforts aligned to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) on reduced inequalities and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) contributed about nine percent and eight percent respectively. All other SDGs commanded relatively modest shares of overall expenditure, each receiving less than \$170 thousand.

Figure 1: Total Available and Executed Resources per Priority Area in 2024 - Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten



Figure 2: Total Available and Executed Resources by Agencies, Funds and Programmes in 2024 -Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten



Figure 3: Proportion of Total Executed Resources per Priority Area in 2024 - Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten



Figure 4: Total Executed Resources by Sustainable Development Goals in 2024 - Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten





Chapter

Into the Future – UNCT Key Focus for 2025

The future development of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten requires a collaborative, tripartite that brings together approach national governments, regional partners and international organizations to address shared challenges and advance a unified vision for sustainable growth. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) remains committed to strategically tackling urgent priorities in 2025 and beyond, including climate change and the blue economy, sustainable tourism and diversification, value-added and digital transformation. Agencies have also outlined clear plans to continue advancing health care and gender equality in the future.

To enhance long-term impact across the Dutch Caribbean, the UNCT will strengthen partnerships that promote evidence-based policymaking, capacity building, and the institutionalization of development gains. Central to this approach is the pursuit of innovative solutions and the mobilization of sustainable resources to ensure continuity and resilience.

The UNCT is committed to playing a key role in enhancing coordination among development partners, with the goal of optimizing resource mobilization and ensuring programmatic coherence. In 2025 and beyond, efforts will focus on aligning domestic and international, public and private financial flows with national SDG priorities. This includes facilitating blended finance models, supporting innovative instruments such as green and blue bonds, and advancing data-driven planning for more efficient resource allocation. Through these efforts, the UNCT aims to accelerate progress toward the SDGs, while reinforcing resilience and sustainability across the Dutch Islands.

PAHO/WHO supporting comprehensive health care in the Dutch Islands



In collaboration with the Aruba Ministry of Justice and Social Affairs and the Aruba Ministry of Tourism and Public Health – Department of Public Health, efforts are underway to advance health equity for Persons With Disabilities through the development of the National Plan for Rehabilitation Services and Assistive Technologies. This initiative is scheduled for completion in 2025 and aims to strengthen policies and programs that enhance access to essential rehabilitation services and assistive technologies, ultimately improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

PAHO/WHO will continue partnership with the Curaçao Ministry of Health, Environment and Nature, to further significant progress made in 2024 toward strengthening the country's response to NCDs. A comprehensive analysis of the NCD landscape was completed, revealing that over 70% of deaths in Curaçao were due to cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and respiratory conditions—largely driven by modifiable risk factors. This analysis informed a multi-sectoral stakeholder consultation involving representatives from government, academia and medical practitioners, leading to the development of a National Strategic NCD Plan of Action, set for finalization in 2025

The plan aims to improve governance, enhance coordination mechanisms, and promote integrated primary healthcare strategies to better prevent and manage NCDs. Other planned activities in Curaçao include reducing the impact of HIV, tuberculosis, STIs, and viral hepatitis. Technical cooperation will support the implementation of action plans to strengthen essential public health functions, including measurement, target setting, monitoring, and assessment. Policy options, tools and technical support will also be provided to enhance the resolution capacity of primary health care and expand access to comprehensive, quality health services, with a focus on vulnerable populations.

In Sint Maarten, collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labour is expected to advance key health initiatives in 2025 to enhance mental health services and strengthen health security. The update of the National Mental Health Plan, now in its final stages, will incorporate a dedicated suicide prevention strategy to improve access to quality, people-centered mental health care. Additionally, efforts to bolster Sint Maarten's capacity to rapidly detect and respond to potential health emergencies will commence in Q2 2025, reinforcing compliance with International Health Regulations (IHR). Several initiatives are also in progress across all three islands. PAHO/WHO is supporting national ministries in Aruba to update its National NCD Plan using data from the NCD STEPS survey, while Curaçao is finalising its National NCD Plan of Action following a multi-sectoral consultation. In Sint Maarten, analysis of a national population-based NCD survey will inform future policies. Additionally, environmental health initiatives will expand, with Aruba launching discussions on air quality and healthy environments, Curaçao determining activities to address poor air quality, and Sint Maarten improving disaster preparedness through a PAHO/WHO-EU collaboration on SMART shelters and shelter management training.





UN Women strategically advancing Gender —— Equality and Women's Empowerment

Going forward, UN Women MCO - Caribbean will implement a GBV initiative in Aruba, building on resource mobilization efforts from 2024 that secured \$38,000 through collaboration with the UN Women National Committee Netherlands. This project aims to enhance the capacity of justice sector actors and civil society organizations to effectively manage cases of sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, trafficking and cyber-related crimes while promoting women's empowerment. The start-up phase, set to begin in Q2 2025, will focus on establishing frameworks for improved management and survivor case support. Additionally, the implementation of Aruba's National Gender Policy will be supported in 2025.

In Sint Maarten, UN Women will build on its 2024 engagements with the National Gender Machinery within the Ministry of Social Development, Labour & Welfare to strengthen gender mainstreaming across national and regional policies and programs. Following two virtual dialogues held in 2024, further collaboration with civil society organizations, including faith-based groups, will be prioritized to enhance institutional capacity and policy integration. This initiative will focus on fostering multi-stakeholder coordination, ensuring gender-responsive governance and embedding gender considerations into policy frameworks, aligning with SDGs 5 (Gender Equality) and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

Looking ahead, UN Women will complete country profiles for Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten in 2025 which will be finalised and used to inform the 2026-2027 workplan and next Strategic Note. These efforts aim to drive long-term structural change in policy development and implementation, reinforcing a more inclusive and equitable society in the Dutch Caribbean.





UNITED NATIONS

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, ARUBA, CURACAO AND SINT MAARTEN



