

## **Donation Letter**

Greetings from Accion 21, with our headquarters located at L.G. Smith Blvd. 120, Oranjestad. We are a recently formed political party that participated in the last elections, on June 25, 2021. We were grateful and honored to have won 3403 votes and the opportunity to have our party leader join the government as a member of Parliament. We have been humbled by the trust our constituents put in our party, and have been working tirelessly to uphold our values and hold those who lead us accountable.

We still very much believe, more than ever, that we can provide fresh innovative and educated solutions to our biggest pain points where traditional politics have failed.

## **Public finances**

Our debt burden has reached an unsustainable level, most of the financial mismanagement occurred between 2001-2017 during single party governments. Aruba is now one of the most indebted nations in the world, Debt/GDP and we also have one of the highest tax rates in the world. As Accion21 we stand with firm conviction that the government has the responsibility to be more efficient and accountable.

## **Education and Health**

Our educational system is crumbling even though it consumes 7% of our GDP. At present 83% of our population lacks secondary school education or equivalent, 42% only have elementary school and less than 7% have HBO/College or higher.

Our healthcare system represents 42-43% of our budget (increasing by an average 3% annually). Both AZV and SVB are under increasing pressure due to the aging of our population and the high prevalence of chronic illnesses that are costly to treat. The moment has come for a realignment of our priorities and a conscious choice for a different future.

## **Economy**

Our poor economic performance is a result of two main factors:

- 1) an oversized public sector that is inefficient, wasteful and perceived as highly corrupt
- 2) dysfunctional Central Bank regulation that is strangling our economy, growing the informal sector and creating greater instability to our financial system

There are 28 countries and territories in the Caribbean and Aruba spends the most per capita on its public sector and has the most expansive and burdensome compliance regulations in the region.

## **Social Crisis**

The social crisis which includes 68% of children living mistreatment (according to a recent SKOA study) requires urgent attention. Social services' lack of resources means that children suffering abuse are oftentimes left in situations where they are in danger of further abuse due to lack of housing options for example. We are failing our most vulnerable and the prevalence of sexual assault accompanied with lenient sentencing is a disgrace to our values.

## **Our Plan**

We believe the path forward begins with economic revitalization. The first step is fiscal reform with a move towards indirect taxation and the elimination of import tariffs. Lower corporate and personal income taxes are part of our party program as we believe any future austerity should be achieved by reducing public sector costs.

Reinventing our economy after the Singapore model is the way forward with territorial based taxation. Reducing the costs of doing business and bureaucracy are essential to our future growth and success.

All other countries and territories in the Caribbean, have more competitive tax rates and less burdensome compliance measures than Aruba. Hence there is definitely scope to modernize our tax system, streamline compliance and improve access to banking system (Directive 2014/92/EU) without running afoul of OECD guidelines.

A review of the budgets within our education and health sectors is imperative, at the same time we need to restore the people's trust in our educators and health providers. Accion21 proposes a focus on preventive care and ensuring that our education system prepares our children for the future without prejudice, both imperative if we are to prepare our population for the future.

The Covid-19 pandemic, though a difficult time for many, has also provided us with a once in a generation opportunity for bold structural reform and we need your help materializing that new future. We want your input; we want to hear which issues are important to you and we hope you will take action with us.

Current campaign finance laws limit donations from persons, corporations or institutions to Afl. 30.000,- to party and Afl. 20.000,- to candidates per calendar year. Our party constitution suggests a limit of Afl. 10.000,- per individual donor annually. Given the challenging economic circumstances we will be running a modest campaign that is mostly digital. However, we still need to raise more funds to help cover expenses including campaign manager, social media content, website, strategy, signage, press conferences, flyers, photoshoots, rent and utilities.

Every party member, candidate and I would like to ask that you consider a donation to our cause. Every contribution is deeply appreciated and will be applied towards bringing change to Aruba. Visit our website [www.accion21.com](http://www.accion21.com) or Facebook page for more information about our party and stay tuned for our program of action that will be published in May. We are always happy to meet in person or virtually and expand on our plans for reform.

In action and friendship,

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