

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Additional US\$47.5 Million Financing to Strengthen Sint Maarten’s Human Capital Post-Hurricane**

**PHILIPSBURG, August 23, 2018** – Two new projects for a total of US\$ 47.5 million in grants from the Sint Maarten Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience Trust Fund financed by the Government of the Netherlands have been launched. The first project provides training and stipends to unemployed and underemployed residents in the wake of hurricane Irma and the second will help bring the Sint Maarten Medical Center, including a new hospital building, to standards that can withstand extreme weather events.

*“These two grants are a testament to our commitment to build back better,” says **Sint Maarten Prime Minister Leona Romeo-Marlin**. “With the new funds, we plan to invest in the people of Sint Maarten; their job skills, livelihoods and health care. Strengthening our human capital is a key part of the successful recovery of our country.”*

The **Emergency Income Support and Training project (US\$ 22.5 million)** will provide income support to under-employed and unemployed persons, who are not currently working in the wake of hurricane Irma and declining tourism revenues. Approximately 1,800 people will receive skills-training in exchange for a stipend over the next 18 months. The project builds on a successful first phase which provided 700 under-employed citizens, more than half of these women, with training and a stipend. In addition, the project will develop a Social Registry which will allow the authorities of Sint Maarten’s to improve the efficiency of the country’s social protection system and to identify the most vulnerable populations when providing assistance in post-disaster situations.

*“The beauty of this project is that it builds on a successful initiative by Sint Maarten’s private sector. Businesses in the tourism sector have led the response to mitigate the impact of the sudden rise in unemployment,” says **Frank Weekers, Steering Committee Representative for the Netherlands**.*

The **Sint Maarten Hospital Resiliency and Preparedness project (US\$25 million)** will contribute to the critical rehabilitation of the existing hospital and construction of a new and larger facility, more resilient to climate shocks. The project will contribute to a rise in the new hospital’s bed capacity from 66 to 110, improvements in the scope and quality of health services (new operating theaters and larger areas for ambulatory care), a reduction in costly overseas medical referrals, and will strengthen preparedness and delivery of medical services in case of future emergencies and extreme weather events. This project will be implemented by the Sint Maarten Medical Center Foundation.

*“The objective is to provide the people of Sint Maarten with access to a broader range of*

*healthcare services on the island in a safer and more resilient facility, better prepared to deliver health services in case of another disaster,”* reaffirms **Michelle Keane, World Bank Program Manager of the Sint Maarten Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience Fund.**

**About the funding:**

The World Bank manages the US\$ 580 million (Euro 470 million) [Recovery, Recovery and Resilience Trust Fund](#), established in April 2018 and financed by the Government of The Netherlands, to help Sint Maarten build back better and increase resilience following the devastation caused by hurricane Irma. The World Bank estimates damages and losses related to the hurricane at US\$ 1.38 billion and US\$ 1.35 billion (both about 129 percent of GDP), respectively.

**Contacts: In Washington: Christelle Chapoy, (202) 361 4255, [cchapoy@worldbank.org](mailto:cchapoy@worldbank.org)  
In Sint Maarten, Giselle York, (721) 520-4560, [Giselle.York@sintmaartengov.org](mailto:Giselle.York@sintmaartengov.org)**