



Marigot, Monday, January 6, 2020

Joint Declaration from The Elected Majority
Saint Martin
Meeting with The Collective Têtes Ensemble

The elected officials of Saint Martin hosted a delegation from the Collective Têtes Ensemble on Friday, January 3, 2020. This meeting provided an opportunity for a rich exchange of ideas and the creation of a joint plan of action.

The Collective had previously sent a list of their principal demands, and the officials thanked them for their preparative work. The main grievance, the implementation by the French government of the new PPRN in anticipation of coastal flooding, was the subject of a constructive dialogue and a joint decision that a new PPRN should be written. The discussions also touched on various subjects that are related to serious, long-term social unrest.

At the end of the meeting, the officials and the members of the Têtes Ensemble Collective agreed on the central question, which was the cause of the recent tensions on the island, of the **Plan For Prevention of Natural Risks (PPRN)** in anticipation, as it is important for the future of the island and its residents, both socially and economically. The fears related to the ownership of land and living there are real issues.

The French government has decided to send a task force led by Préfet Dominique Lacroix, intended to "provide an opinion on the parameters of the new PPRN."



If the government has refused until now to listen to the local officials, the members of the Collective, and the population, who have been asking for several months that the PPRN be revoked, the decision has been made to welcome this task force and see if we can help them see our vision for our island and our future.

Let There Be No Mistake, This Task Force Is Our Last Chance To Get The Government To Listen To Us

The issue is that the PPRN caused a major social crisis. Sadly, this is not new for the residents of Saint Martin. The Collectivité has been hard at work for several months, in spite of the obstacles they have encountered, to establish a proactive political policy that meets the needs of the island and the legitimate expectations of the population.

As president Daniel Gibbs announced in his speech at the last territorial council meeting: "2020 will be the year for social cohesion and development."

Numerous social and economic programs, especially those favoring young people, have been launched by the Collectivité and included in the discussion of budget guidelines validated by the territorial council on December 20, 2019.

Definitive actions have already been planned for the first quarter of 2020.

1-In the fight against poverty (Plan pauvreté):

- Aiding in the creation of Maisons d'Assistants Maternelles (MAM) or childcare assistant centers, to help improve the support of small children on the island.
- A sustainable, volunteer system for social services for children.
- The Contract for Young Adults to prolong social services for children to the age of 21.



- Reinforcement in the fight against RSA fraud.

2-The social policy of the Collectivité plans to focus on economic solidarity and social innovation:

Five actions have been planned for the first quarter of 2020:

- The creation of a civic mission for the environment and neighborhood beautification.
- The creation of a personal aid service for senior citizens (intended to help older people get around the island).
- The creation of a Territorial Center for social economy and solidarity to structure this sector of the economy and support project leaders and businesses.
- The opening of a subsidized grocery store to help families in difficulty.
- Organization of a Social and Employment Conference in the near future. The goal is to work in conjunction with the neighborhoods to understand their needs and identify actions that complement their own social programs.

3-In the field of education

- The validation, with the INSPE, of training for teachers for the CRPE 2020 exams, to help them prepare properly.
- The installation of educational games in kindergarten classes in all of our public schools took place in 2019.

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4-In the area of professional training

- The creation of a Conservatory of Arts and Métiers in Saint Martin. A meeting on December 20, 2019 with the assistant director of the National Conservatory of Arts and Métier allowed for conditions to be put into place.
- The Collectivité had already created its Professional Training Project 2018-2020 to allow Saint Martin residents to improve their skills in a chosen field. Several qualifications are open, and 26 training modules are



currently available to promote professional advancement for islanders.

The Collectivité and its elected officials intend to amplifier their efforts by way of new programs established over the next two years, and to meet the challenge of the social crisis that was ignored for too long.

In the same light that the Collectivité recently signed a **convergence plan** with the French government for the development of public infrastructures that comprise social, educational, or athletic facilities, we have proposed that the government support the Collectivité, while respecting each other's areas of jurisdiction, in establishing a **social convergence plan**.

This should be developed as a partnership, with ongoing presentations to the public.

However, it is important that the partners take on their own responsibility to improve the current social situation.

Thus, in a constructive dialogue without concession, the French government will be asked to assume full responsibility in such areas as the fight against illegal immigration, the fight against delinquency and drugs, as well as ensuring safety and public order.

The elected officials, in response to the members of the Collective, have proposed the same timeframe as for the mission PPRN, to create a serious proposal for social convergence, **a period of three months**.

The Collectivité has also committed itself to the creation of **working committees** to respond to the grievances relevant to its jurisdiction.



To this end, a working committee on the theme of young people will meet starting in mid-January under the supervision of 1st vice president Valérie Damaseau.

A working committee on the theme of urbanism will also meet as of mid-January, this time led by 4th vice president Steven Patrick, to examine questions related to rules concerning construction and the regularization of titles in the "50 pas géométriques" zones.

The Collectivité is committed to organize **urbanism services offices in the neighborhoods** during a period of time to allow those persons residing in these coastal areas to have individual meetings to discuss their situation and get information on how to regularize their situation.

Please be reminded that the Collectivité is committed to regularizing as quickly as possible the titles for land located within the "50 pas géométriques" as determined by law.

In exchange for the commitments it has made, the majority party of the Collectivité seriously requests that the Têtes Ensemble remove any blockades that were planned and to interact with public services so that a complete clean-up of the area around Sandy Ground can take place as quickly as possible, and to allow the population to return to its normal way of life.

In keeping with the declarations made by the Collective during this meeting, protestors are no longer blocking the Jérôme Beupère and Aline Hanson schools in Sandy Ground and they can reopen their doors as of Tuesday, January 7, 2020, which gave the Collectivité time to clean the classrooms to meet obligatory hygiene requirements.

The meeting has allowed for a joint *modus operandi* with the members of the Collective Têtes Ensemble to support a PPRN that respects the specific needs of Saint Martin and work to



solve the social grievances that fall under the jurisdiction of the COM.

The Collectivité was present on Monday, January 6, 2020 at the prefecture to work on the questions raised by the Collective Têtes Ensemble. However, we are counting on the responsibility and willingness of each of the players in this crisis (French government, Collectivité, Collective), to advance together toward a more peaceful Saint Martin, more representative of its specific nature, and with more solidarity.