UN Sustainable Development Goals Planning Mission
Aruba
15 - 19 May 2017
The SDG Commission of Aruba hosted a ‘United Nations Sustainable Development Planning Mission’ between the 15th and 19th of May 2017, in coordination with the visit of a group of experts. This six member team from the United Nations Sustainable Development Program (UNDP) conducted a MAPS mission, (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support), which is a methodology utilized by the United Nations Development System to support countries in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They met with national stakeholders to discuss the SDGs implementation with a six-team UNDP MAPS team. The team consisted of the following six members: Marcel Alers (Leader), Emery Kenroy Roach, Devika Iyer, Massimillano Riva, Ivan Gonzalez de Alba, and Richard Blewitt.

Several thematic group and private sessions were held where the community's opinions were taken into consideration in the forming of a comprehensive Roadmap for policy implementation. More than a 150 stakeholders participated in the session-filled weeklong event. A debriefing was given on the fifth and last day to present a draft roadmap for the implementation of the SDGs in Aruba. Though it is still a work-in-progress, the UNDP team made a comprehensive report and clearly highlighted the priority areas for support in implementing the SDGs in Aruba.

Prior to the team’s visit, the SDG commission in Aruba gathered numerous reports from different governmental and non-governmental departments and organizations. Collecting these important documents was essential in order to create a baseline assessment for the SDGs on Aruba, which however proved to be a difficult task. This baseline assessment will aid in creating the tailored Roadmap SDG implementation on Aruba up until 2030.

**No one left behind: Inclusiveness within the Process**

The Mission included sessions with a variety of stakeholders. Some were thematic sessions, focusing on the social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainability, while other sessions were more stakeholders group-focused, goal-specific and private. The latter group included representatives ranging from the for-profit sector, youth entities, parliamentarians, ministers, and different stakeholders with an interest and experience in awareness raising.

The overreaching goal was to gather as much input and data as possible from the participants and to ensure that the implementation process was as inclusive as can be, not only to ensure its holistic approach but also to ensure its longevity. The benefit of hosting a large national event, such as our ‘UN SDG Planning Mission’ on Aruba was that it aided with the public awareness raising of the SDGs at the national level. Developing a public appeal to the 17 goals was
determined to be vital in getting even more interested and invested stakeholders involved for achieving Agenda 2030.

**Collecting Data from Participants on the Fly**

It was important to get off on the right foot with the process, during the initial encounter between the six-member UNDP team and the 150 community stakeholders. The showcasing of a couple of online videos showed how global the global goals really are; the concept had to then be brought home to the local Aruban context. The team decided to gauge the participants’ understanding of the perceptions of the SDG's and what they meant for Aruba. Hence, an online polling system, in this case polleverywhere.com was used to extract data from our participants. Free online polls are currently employed in some school surveys and by companies, and are relatively easy to grasp for a variety of demographics. Once the participants had submitted their anonymous answers on their internet-connected devices, it then immediately became visible for all to see and allowed for the sequential presentations to be adapted to the stated audience's preferences and concerns. The exercise also functioned as a great ice-breaker as well, and the UNDP team appreciated the poll exercise so much, that they asked the SDG Aruba Team to share it with other Small Island Developing States.