



United States Consul General David McCawley presents a copy of the book "The Caribbean" by Jacob Gelt Dekker, to Director of the Cabinet of the Curaçao Minister Plenipotentiary Ann Groot-Phillips at the American Book Centre in Amsterdam on Thursday. (Suzanne Koolega photo)

Jacob Gelt Dekker's book 'The Caribbean' presented

AMSTERDAM—The new book of well-known Dutch entrepreneur, philanthropist and writer Jacob Gelt Dekker, who has been residing in Curaçao for many years, titled "The Caribbean" was officially launched in Amsterdam on Thursday.

The author himself was missing at the presentation at the American Book Centre in Amsterdam because he is unfit to travel due to his critical illness, but he was well represented by his publisher Liesbeth Heenk of Amsterdam Publishers.

Heenk said the 300-page book in English, which Gelt Dekker started working on in July 2017, was hard to classify under one genre because it contained different elements of history, travel, fiction and fantasy.

The main character in the book embarks on a fictitious sea voyage around the Caribbean, stopping at many of the islands where he gets involved in all sorts of adventures. He is not alone on his boat. Accompanying him are Anansi the Spider, the trickster from the famous Caribbean tales, and The Flying Dutchman, doomed to sail the oceans forever and harbouring a terrible secret.

Together, they seek to establish the truth about the history of the Caribbean. Along the way, they encounter famous pirates and unpick tales of untold riches, but also retrace the steps of the region's slaves, and how events in Europe, the American colonies and Africa sealed their fates.

St. Maartener Maria van

der Sluijs-Plantz, who has been nominated for the prestigious position as a Member of the Council of State of the Kingdom for St. Maarten, read from a chapter of the book in which the main character anchors at a desolate island only inhabited by a king who was too greedy to share the many mangoes from his royal gardens.

American Book Centre co-owner Lynn Kaplanian Buller recounted how Gelt Dekker showed up at the book store many years ago and that she immediately hired the eccentric looking man. "He gave clients an honest opinion about books. One day he quit and he said that he was going to sail the Caribbean."

"[This is – Ed.] a unique book, written by a remarkable human being about a region that is so dear to me," said Director of the Cabinet of the Curaçao Minister Plenipotentiary Ann Groot-Phillips in her address. Gelt Dekker is an 'institution' in Curaçao with influence on the economic and cultural levels," she said.

According to Groot-Phillips, who has St. Maarten roots, Gelt Dekker has a sincere interest in Curaçao

and its people. "He is sincere in expressing his feelings and will do so whether people like it or not. His book is a loving tribute to the Caribbean region."

Befitting a philanthropist, the author decided that all proceeds of the book sale will go to the internship programme of the Fulbright Centre in Amsterdam which assists students to fund their studies in the United States (US).

Fabienne van der Bor of the Fulbright Centre spoke of Gelt Dekker as an extraordinary man with an extraordinary life, a generous spirit and a deep compassion for others. US Consul General in Amsterdam David McCawley also referred to Gelt Dekker's generosity and his free spirit.

During the event three exclusive colour copies of the book were printed on the press of the American Book Centre and sold to the highest bidder. Van der Sluijs-Plantz and two other persons in the audience won the bidding and paid 100, 110 and 120 euros, respectively, for the three books. The book is on sale in the Netherlands and Curaçao, and possibly in St. Maarten in the near future.

Disaster Preparedness Conference

Continued from page 1.

"In fact, failure is not an option, as the people of St. Maarten are depending on us to be prepared for whatever disaster may come our way. This morning we are gathered here to firstly reflect on what occurred pre, during and post the passing of the strongest hurricane to this island we call home and we are also here to ensure that we not only pay keen attention to our shortcomings but also to build on the foundation of positive actions that were executed."

"We not only bring together members of the EOC, but we also include key external stakeholders. There are organizations and departments in and out of Government that were not written into the previous planning and preparations, but definitely after our experience of last year need to be either at the table or fitted in structurally into the existing EOC organisation, as we must fill those missing gaps."

"We must seize the moment and change the way things have been done in the past. The final objective is critical and a departure from business as usual, the establishing of a National Integrated EOC Operation Plan. Upon taking office, I was told we have a disaster plan. The question is, where is it?"

"The answer is the 'Rampenplan' that is a written law and policy that does not speak to the average citizen. Going forward, I have made the establishing of a National Disaster Plan a priority and it must be completed ASAP. Collectively we have an obligation to the citizens of St. Maarten to provide pertinent information in preparation of any disaster."

"This National Disaster Plan has to be the bedrock and reference manual to any communication plan being executed in the future. If done properly, I expect this National Disaster Plan to be a working document that can be adjusted yearly by any ESF group as the circumstances may require. As a written document it can be used as a reference in Government, our schools and the private sector to prepare for any disaster."

"These plans are commonplace in other countries; therefore, St. Maarten should not be any different. In fact, we always pride ourselves on being the best."

Well, today I declare that we will have the best comprehensive National Disaster Plan."

The conference closes today, Friday.

SDGs, Dispute Regulation, Venezuela topics at IPKO

THE HAGUE—The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Dispute Regulation for the Kingdom, the situation in Venezuela and the consequences for the Dutch Caribbean are three main topics that will be discussed during next week's Inter-Parliamentary Consultation for the Kingdom IPKO.

The IPKO will take place in The Hague from Tuesday, May 29, to Friday, June 1, with Parliamentary delegations of the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten as participants. Under the chairmanship of Chairman of the Second Chamber's Permanent Committee Alexander Pechtold, the delegations will discuss common themes.

The IPKO will open on Tuesday morning in a plenary session at the First Chamber, the Senate. Addressing the delegations will be Senate Chairwoman Ankie Broekers-Knol, after which the heads of the delegations will speak.

After the opening, the delegations will talk about the recent developments in the individual countries. The situation in St. Maarten and the reconstruction will be a focus of attention. The sustainable development goals (SDGs)

and their status of implementation in the countries will be discussed. The SDGs are the objectives drafted by the United Nations (UN) for sustainable development worldwide.

On Wednesday, the delegations will talk about the Dispute Regulation, which has been a source of discussion within the Kingdom for many years. Also on the agenda that day are the political situation and economic crisis in Venezuela and the consequences for the islands.

As part of the theme "Sustainable economic development," the delegations will visit Wageningen University and a waste-processing company on Thursday.

IPKO ends on Friday with the signing of the agreements list and a joint press conference by the leaders of the four delegations.

The St. Maarten delegation is headed by President of Parliament Sarah Wescot-Williams of United Democrats (UD). Members of Parliament (MPs) Silveria Jacobs of National Alliance (NA), Wycliffe Smith of St. Maarten Christian Party (SMCP) and Roland Brison of United St. Maarten Party (US Party) are part of the delegation.

Correction

On page 9 of this week's Out 'n About the upcoming play was referred to as "The Inspector General," which is incorrect. The actual name of the play is "The Government Inspector." Out 'n About regrets the error.

Hospital Visiting Hours

Medical/Surgical, ObGyn and Pediatric wards

11:30am-12:30pm

3:30pm-4:30pm Children may visit

6:00pm-7:30pm

Intensive Care Unit

10:00am-10:20am

3:00pm-3:30pm

8:00pm-8:20pm

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