

## Brief on UNESCO Meeting on Capacity Building on Heritage Conservation in the Caribbean SIDS *Philipsburg, St. Maarten, 8-13 May 2014*

UNESCO and the Government of St. Maarten, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Affairs hosted a meeting on *Capacity Building on Heritage Conservation in the Caribbean Small Islands Developing States (SIDS)*, in Philipsburg, St. Maarten from 8 to 13 May 2014. The main objective of the meeting was to strengthen professional capacities for the effective implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention in the Caribbean Small Islands Developing States with a view to increasing the representation of sites on the World Heritage List.

This meeting was a follow-up to the Caribbean training courses in the preparation of nomination dossiers for World Heritage held in Jamaica (2012) and Antigua and Barbuda (2013). The first part of the meeting was a focus group discussion on *Eastern Caribbean Coastal Fortifications serial trans-national nomination* among the representatives from Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Maarten and St. Vincent and the Grenadines from 8-10 May 2014. The second part of the meeting focused on the Kingston Action Plan 2013 and the Caribbean Capacity Building Programme (CCBP) with the participation of representatives from 17 Caribbean states.



*Field trip to Fort Amsterdam, Sint Maarten, 11 May 2014*



*Meeting on Fortifications, Sint Maarten, 8 May 2014*

The official opening took place on 10 May 2014 at the Sonesta Maho Convention Hall in St. Maarten with messages from **His Excellency Governor Eugene B. Holiday**, the **Hon. Prime Minister Wescot-Williams**, the **Hon. Minister of Education, Culture and Youth Affairs Patricia Lourens - Philip**; and the Director and Representative, UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean, Ms **Christine Norton**. All the speakers highlighted the significance of the meeting for the Caribbean SIDS particularly 2014 being the International Year of the Small Islands Developing States and emphasized the important role of culture for the development of SIDS and the need for the inclusion of culture and sustainable development in the elaboration of the post 2015 development agenda.

The meeting brought together representatives from 17 Caribbean states (**Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, The Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago**) Caribbean experts from Barbados, representatives from ICOFORT, UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the Field Offices in Kingston and Havana.



Participants with H. E. Governor Eugene B. Holiday during the Official Opening, Sint Maarten, 10 May 2014

During the meeting participants discussed the serial trans-boundary / trans-national nomination for the Eastern Caribbean Coastal Fortifications, took a field trip to Fort Amsterdam, reviewed the progress made since the adoption of the *Kingston Action Plan 2013* and discussed the future actions for the Caribbean Capacity Building strategy.

The meeting concluded with the *Philipsburg Declaration* which emphasized on the way forward to 2015 aimed at strengthening professional capacities in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in preparing nomination dossiers. Participants also made a commitment to continue their efforts towards implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention in their respective countries and come fully prepared to share their experiences at the next meeting to be hosted by St. Vincent and the Grenadines in July 2015.



Hon. Minister Patricia Lourens-Philip speaking at the Closing event, Sint Maarten, 13 May 2014

The meeting finally concluded with the closing remarks by the **Hon. Minister of Education, Culture and Youth Affairs Patricia Lourens – Philip** who thanked the participants for accepting the invitation from St. Maarten and encouraged the group to foster their partnership and network on heritage conservation in the SIDS.