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Press Release

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The Department of Statistics (STAT) released today main results of its Household Budget Survey conducted in 2015.

The Household Budget Survey (HBS) is used to collect income and expenditure statistics from households. These statistics are used for a variety of purposes namely:

- Determining how much is spent by households on different essential categories such as food and clothing in order to calculate the inflation for St. Maarten
- Providing data for the national accounts, by which estimates of the Gross Domestic Product of St. Maarten are derived
- Providing data for a satisfaction and balanced living analysis which will be used to determine the national poverty line

This survey was last carried out in St. Maarten by CBS Neth.-Antilles in 2004/05.

Fieldwork for the latest HBS was conducted in 2015, over a period of 8 months from April to December. Participating households responded to a series of questions about how much they spent on certain items within a specified time period.

In addition, participating households maintained an Expenditure Diary, where all spending was tracked for a 2-week period.

Based on the results of the survey and the expenditure diaries, total household expenditure in 2015 is estimated at ANG 1,127,682,705.79. That means the average household in St. Maarten spent approximately 80.5 thousand guilders, which is more than double the amount in 2004/5 which was 40 thousand guilders.

Total household expenditure is further divided into various expenditure categories, and below we discuss the different percentages of total expenditure attributed to each category. Since 2004/5, Sint Maarten has updated their methodologies to mirror that of the international standards and classifications, and therefore the number of expenditure categories increased from 9 to 12. For this reason, rather than laying one chart on top of another for direct comparison, we compare the two results side by side wherever possible.

In 2004/5, the largest part of the households' budget was spent within the category 'Accommodation', this accounted for almost 40% of the total. In the updated classification, Accommodation, or 'Housing', as it is called, is combined with 'Electricity, Water, Gas and other fuels', and accounts for 32% of household expenditure, a decrease.

'Transport and communication' was the 2nd highest category in 2004/5, accounting for just over 20% of household expenditure. In the latest HBS, Transport and Communication is split, but 'Transport' is still the 2nd highest category with 17.5%, while expenditure on 'Communication' accounts for 6.5%. After combining these two categories, the 2015 figures show an increase to 24%, from 20.2% in 2004/5.

In the other directly comparable categories, the percentage of household expenditure attributed to 'Food and Non-Alcoholic beverages' dropped from 10.3% in 2004/5 to 8.1% in 2015, 'Healthcare' expenditure dropped slightly from 2.7% in 2004/5 to 2.1% in 2015. 'Clothing and Footwear' dropped from 6.9% to 5.2%, and 'Alcoholic beverages, tobacco and narcotics' dropped from 1.3% to 0.4%.

The remaining categories are not directly comparable across the years, because of the different splitting of the household expenditure categories.

In the 2015 HBS, 'Miscellaneous goods and services' is the 3rd highest category, accounting for almost 12% of household expenditure. This category includes things such as purchase and repair of jewellery, watches, clocks and other personal articles, acquiring life or burial insurance, as well as services offered in hair salons, beauty parlours and barbershops.

'Furnishings, household equipment, and routine household maintenance' in 2015 accounts for 7% of household expenditure, 'Recreation and culture' accounts for 5.2%, 'Education' for 2.3%, and 'Restaurants and Hotels' 2.1%.

