

Speech President of the Joint Session of the States General, Fred de Graaf, at the international press conference on Sunday 28 April 2013 in the Beurs van Berlage

- **Joint Session of the States General**

The investiture of the sovereign takes place in a joint session of the States General, which consist of the 75 members of the Senate and the 150 members of the House of Representatives. They are joined by the delegations of the States of Aruba, Curacao and of St Maarten from the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. A special investiture act states the entire procedure of the joint session. At the core of this session is the expression of mutual respect between parliament and the new King.

- **Investiture in the Nieuwe Kerk (or: New Church)**

After the abdication of Queen Beatrix, the investiture takes place in the magnificent New Church, not far from here on the Dam. For the seventh time in two centuries an investiture takes place in our Kingdom. Please allow me to point out that it is not a coronation. Although a crown will be present in the church, the Charter for the Kingdom and the Constitution form the most important elements during the ceremony.

- **Outline of the programme**

The joint session is opened by the president, myself, at half past one. His Majesty The King and the Royal Procession will enter the church at two o'clock. The Committee of Attendance will welcome them. This committee is chaired by of the Speaker of the House of Representatives Ms Anouchka van Miltenburg and consists of four other members of the States General.

His Majesty the King delivers an address and swears an oath on the Charter for the Kingdom and the Constitution. After which I will then deliver an address as President of the Joint Session. This is followed by the reading out of a Solemn Declaration stating the upholding of the rights of the King, which is sworn of affirmed individually by the members of parliament. At approximately three o'clock the session will be closed.

- **Over 2000 guests present**

There are approximately 2000 seats in the New Church. In addition around 300 staff members will be present, including the musicians and media technicians. The five main categories are:

1. the Members of the States General and their guests
2. the royal guests
3. the Cabinet, the Council of State and other authorities

4. the diplomatic corps and special foreign missions

5. a cross section of members of society

I would like to expressly name the three primary school classes and the 20 Dutch veterans from old as well as recent missions that will be present. In addition to that, 50 journalists will be present from around the world.

- Finally, I would like to point out three special aspects of the joint session:
 1. For the musical accompaniment of the investiture a beautiful and balanced programme has been put together, in consultation with the Prince and Princess. Four ensembles will be performing at the investiture. Their names can be found in the documentation. At the end of the session a special tribute to Queen Beatrix (then: Princess Beatrix) will be played. By the request of the States General Dutch singer/songwriter Herman van Veen has written a song that the New Amsterdam Children's Choir will perform, accompanied by the Matangi Quartet.
 2. The New Church will be festively decorated with an immense amount of flowers, that the Dutch flower industry (via Flora Holland) has so generously provided.
 3. A tribute will be made by the military, such as banners which can be seen hanging high at the entrance of the church.