



Joint Session of the States General

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE JOINT SESSION OF THE STATES GENERAL
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INVESTITURE OF HIS MAJESTY KING WILLEM-ALEXANDER
IN THE NIEUWE KERK IN AMSTERDAM ON 30 APRIL 2013

Your Majesty,

In tradition lies strength.

Today, for the seventh time in two hundred years, the States General are meeting in joint session for the investiture of the sovereign. This meeting forms part of a tradition that dates back to the very inception of our Kingdom. The strength of this tradition lies in the close bonds between the peoples of our Kingdom and the House of Orange-Nassau. Indeed, these bonds stretch back more than two centuries further to the Father of the Nation, Prince William of Orange.

It is in this tradition that the members of the States General and the delegates of the States of Aruba, the States of Curaçao and the States of Sint Maarten gather here today to perform their allotted role: acting as representatives of the people. The sentiment among the people can be expressed in three words: welcome Your Majesty!

These words alone are not sufficient, however, as the law prescribes that the oath you have just sworn should be answered by us in an investiture declaration, which we must then, one by one, swear or affirm. The relationship between the King and the peoples of the Kingdom is enshrined in the Charter for the Kingdom and in the Constitution. This makes the oath or affirmation into a confirmation of a reciprocal constitutional duty of the Head of State on the one hand and the members of parliament on the other.

Our society has changed since 1980. It has become more diverse, faster-paced and more globally oriented. Just as society has evolved, so have the rule of law in our democratic society and the constitutional monarchy. Against this background we mark today the transition to a new generation – a transition expressed eloquently by Queen Beatrix in her speech announcing her abdication.

We look back on her reign with great gratitude. With her unwavering sense of duty, virtually inexhaustible energy, wealth of knowledge and warm involvement, she has defined the role of the sovereign in a truly impressive manner. She has been the binding force at moments of national joy and national sorrow. Just how much respect and appreciation she has garnered in the course of her reign became apparent yet again after the announcement of her abdication and deserves to be emphasised here once more.

Your Majesty,

It is with confidence that we look forward to your reign.

This confidence is inspired by the dedication with which you have prepared yourself for the throne, by the manner in which you have fulfilled your role as Prince of Orange and by the wisdom and talents of both your parents. Like your predecessors you stand for the continuity and stability of our Kingdom.

In the new era that starts today, you will define your tasks in a contemporary manner. In doing so you will choose your own points of emphasis and play a cohesive, representative and supportive role as you see fit. Cementing relationships, building bridges by identifying shared values, is something that is close to your heart. As we have seen, this capacity to engender mutual understanding does not end at the borders of the Kingdom.

You are blessed with the support of your spouse, who is always by your side, and of your three daughters, who as they grow older will indubitably from time to time generously provide you with their own insights. And on this festive day it should not go unmentioned that we have here in our midst your eldest daughter, Princess Catharina-Amalia, for the first time in her capacity of Princess of Orange.

Your Majesty,

We renew today the bonds between the peoples of the Kingdom and Your House. A strength rooted in tradition. We, the members of parliament of all countries of the Kingdom, wish you strength and blessing in the fulfilment of your task.