

Doing Business to create Broad Welfare

VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland are choosing a new course: **Doing Business to create Broad Welfare**. In addition to economic growth, the business community prioritises the creation of an inclusive society – with work and equal opportunities – and a sustainable living environment. With this new course and a new perception of our role in society, we intend to shape a new Rhineland model.

These are our ten action points for for Doing Business to Create Broad Welfare:

- 1. We will strive to make the Netherlands a frontrunner in the fields of digitalisation and new technologies.** Knowledge is our only raw material. Innovation is crucial. Private and public investment in research and innovation will be increased to 3 percent of our GDP. The foundation of fundamental research will be strengthened immediately, to ensure that our population will possess the knowledge to be at the forefront of developments even in twenty years' time. We will see to it that the Netherlands remains a very attractive country for top talent. Strong ecosystems will be the drivers of innovation.
- 2. We choose a climate-neutral, circular society.** This is a top priority. We can only achieve this goal in time if from now on we move fast and in big leaps rather than continuing to do 'a bit more of the same'.
- 3. We commit ourselves to strengthen and further expand European cooperation.** Dutch business increasingly operates across borders and the Netherlands champions an ever stronger Europe that plays a decisive role in the world, in the interest of our peace and security, as a force in the midst of geopolitical tensions and with a thriving internal market.
- 4. We want the business climate to excel, by virtue of our highly educated population, our tolerant society, our excellent infrastructure and our world-class financial services.** Our tax system must of course be competitive, but it should no longer be a conduit for capital that chooses to settle in the Netherlands purely for the purpose of tax avoidance.
- 5. We want the Netherlands to be an enterprising country.** Our country will therefore give priority to the creation and expansion of businesses as an engine of economic growth. The tax and regulatory system must be tailored to that objective, with a government that operates on the basis of trust rather than regulation (and takes action when that trust is betrayed).

- 6. We strive towards a country in which everyone has income certainty – even if they lose their job, are incapacitated for work, or are retired.** This calls for the establishment of an outstanding from-work-to-work infrastructure. As a result, the choice of a particular type of employment relationship will no longer be influenced by the tax and social treatment of income from work. Every form of labour will therefore be combined with a form of social security – and contribute to it.
- 7. We choose a country in which everyone is able to participate and has equal opportunities.** The quality of primary and secondary education is decisive in that respect, and must therefore be excellent. Pupils will also be encouraged to study natural sciences with a view to our digital and sustainable future. Children will not enter primary school at a disadvantage.
- 8. We choose a Netherlands that makes sensible use of its space.** Space is our scarcest asset. There are enormous challenges related to housing, nature, economic and agricultural activities, mobility, water, and the energy transition and each of these is competing for the available square meters in the Netherlands. Integrated choices will have to be made. This inevitably calls for central direction.
- 9. We intend to invest heavily in the major transitions we are facing (digitalisation, new technologies, sustainability).** We therefore want to help shape a substantial private-public investment agenda. We regard the assumption of new national debt to finance public investments to be a responsible step. In that way, we will be able to pass on to future generations a country that is not burdened with environmental debt and that has excellent prospects of meeting its needs in terms of broad welfare in a sustainable manner.
- 10. As businesses, we will take responsibility for the technical and social sustainability of our own activities and use our relationships with suppliers and customers to encourage them to do the same.** We will be transparent in our actions, including our tax position, and embrace the United Nations SDGs and the associated principles of the UN Global Compact.

What we mean by a new Rhineland model

- Under the former Rhineland model, businesses considered not only the interests of shareholders, but also of other stakeholders, such as customers and employees. The Netherlands has always adhered to this model and has not switched to the Anglo-Saxon philosophy with its focus solely on the interests of the shareholder.
- We are now taking this approach a step further, both in terms of thinking – as businesses, we take responsibility for an inclusive and sustainable society – and action – businesses will endeavour to actively contribute to resolving existing societal problems.
- An active contribution is particularly necessary as some of the problems facing our society are so large and so complex that the combined strengths of government (defining frameworks and providing direction), business (getting things done) and the public (the willingness to do something for others) are needed to address them. For a long time there has been a sense of 'everyone for themselves and the government for all', but the government cannot do it alone. We can only do it together.

#ondernemenvoornederland