

The Future of Crime Statistics in Aruba

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Contents

Summary	1
Introduction	2
Assessment of challenges.....	2
Opportunities	4
Conclusion	13
Literature	14

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Summary

Obtaining and developing crime and criminal justice statistics in Aruba is accompanied by challenges and opportunities. Some of the challenges that may impede the development of crime statistics are the lack of standards and common definitions, obtaining and maintaining commitment from data suppliers, inadequate operational and registration systems and the apprehension to release data. Considering that the Central Bureau of Statistics is in the early stages of obtaining data about crime and the criminal justice system, there are still many opportunities that may contribute to the development of crime statistics in Aruba. The role of CBS as a coordinator in the process of developing crime statistics is reinforced by entering into partnerships with stakeholders. Furthermore CBS possesses the expertise and experience to provide assistance to stakeholders in data collection and can guarantee the reliability and impartiality of statistics. International frameworks offer guidelines which can be translated into opportunities to develop a system of crime statistics. The United Nations Crime Trends Survey challenges countries to develop crime statistics through the use of common standards and definitions and the development of indicators. There are certain areas that require special attention such as child and juvenile justice statistics, as recommended by UNICEF. Statistics about crime and tourism are also essential for Aruba in maintaining and reinforcing the safety and protecting the tourism driven economy. Lastly, a crime victimization survey is necessary to complement administrative data, as well as providing vital information about experiences with crime and the criminal justice system.

Introduction

The Central Bureau of Statistics has recently set up a department with the sole purpose of developing a system of crime and criminal justice statistics in Aruba. No data on crime is currently readily available to the public, which only emphasizes the necessity of the efforts to obtain information about crime. The main purpose of this paper is to highlight the opportunities and challenges for obtaining crime statistics in Aruba. Statistics play a key role in evidence-based decision making, whether it be by the government or other organizations and institutions.

The purpose of having crime statistics is to enable governments, organizations and other stakeholders in the criminal justice system to make decisions regarding their policy based on facts. There are three areas in which statistics play an essential role for the actors in the criminal justice system. Firstly, for the administration of the agency itself to determine if the goals and objectives are effectively and efficiently being met. This is particularly important in the assessment of how and where to allocate (scarce) resources in achieving the tasks of the organizations. Secondly, statistics play a role in the planning process of the agency in attaining future goals, responding to issues and anticipating trends. Thirdly, crime statistics serve policy research and analyses in determining the effects of policy change, law or procedures and other types of environ-

mental or demographic changes. The purposes and uses of crime statistics make it clear that they are of essential importance to any stakeholder in the criminal justice system. In the following paper the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the efforts in obtaining crime statistics in Aruba will be presented.

Assessment of challenges

In the pursuit of obtaining data about crime in Aruba several stakeholders were approached in order to assess the data that is already available. The United Nations identifies four main producers of crime statistics, being the police department, the prosecution, the courts and the prisons. In Aruba these actors are represented by respectively: Korps Politie Aruba (KPA), Het Openbaar Ministerie, het Gemeenschappelijk Hof van Justitie and Instituto Coreccional Nacional, formerly known as the Korrektie Instituut Aruba (KIA). The assessment is useful to identify what information is registered, how it is registered and how it is analyzed. Although this may differ per stakeholder, common challenges can be identified, which will be presented in the following.

Lack of standards and definitions

A weakness related to the present form of data collection is that there are no national standards to which all stakeholders adhere to and there is a lack of common data defini-

tions. Furthermore, when data is collected for operational purposes, only limited attention is paid to the non-operational uses of the data. Subsequently only the data which are relevant to the stakeholders are collected and analyzed and data relevant for statistics and policy making is not a priority. Keeping administrative records is a resource-intensive activity for the actors in the criminal justice system. Imposing national standards to the system of data collection which is currently in place may evoke opposition from the stakeholders as it creates a heavier burden on the personnel and the system used for data registration. The lack of common standards and definitions makes comparisons within the data and between stakeholders difficult. To enable international comparisons, stakeholders should work towards the use of international standards and common definitions.

Commitment

Developing a system about criminal justice statistics requires the participation, cooperation and commitment of the stakeholders who are responsible for the supply of administrative data. Obtaining the participation has proven to be a challenge in Aruba because not all stakeholders are able to independently give permission for the cooperation, but need approval of the respective government ministry, which oversees the concerned department. The success of developing crime statistics is dependent on the commitment of the

government and/or senior managers. Without the approval of the government and departments in the criminal justice system, the Central Bureau of Statistics cannot obtain the kind of data needed to develop a system of crime statistics. Obtaining and maintaining commitment, cooperation and participation from stakeholders is a continuous process, which is crucial for the supply of administrative data because they form the basis of crime statistics.

Reluctance

The reluctance to register, analyze or release crime statistics may impede stakeholders to develop crime statistics. The reluctance of supplying data may be associated with the fear of bad publicity as crime statistics are a direct reflection of the work and effectiveness of the organization and/or crime prevention policies. What governments and stakeholders should realize is that maintaining a high public profile for statistics may also have its advantages. By making statistics available to the public, other agencies can profit from the information for their process of decision-making. Furthermore, awareness of the existence and importance of statistics may contribute to higher response rates when doing research (Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Statistics Division, 2003).

Administrative records

The method in which information is registered determines the quality of statistical data. All stakeholders in Aruba utilize a computerized operational system. Deriving statistical information from operational systems is dependent on the quality of the system being used and also on what information is entered into the system. Operational systems collect information that is essential for administrative purposes of the organization and don't automatically translate this information into useful crime statistics. Furthermore, the quality of the administrative system is determined by the quality of information which is entered into the system. The accuracy, consistency, and timeliness of the information entered may differ per individual, division or organization depending on differences in definitions.

The operational systems used by the stakeholders in Aruba have limitations that are inherent to the systems. This entails limited or inconsistent data entry and/or limited options for inquiring certain information. The query possibilities are limited to data which is only useful for administrative purposes and cannot quickly produce (all) data necessary for statistics and policy-making.

Opportunities

The challenges for obtaining crime statistics were previously mentioned. Fortunately, with the cooperation and commitment of all or-

ganizations involved, all these challenges can be met with solutions and opportunities which will contribute to the goal of developing criminal justice statistics in Aruba. The following opportunities can be identified.

Coordination by CBS

The role of the Central Bureau of Statistics as the main statistical source makes it the designated organization to act as a coordinator between units that generate information. CBS operates independently from stakeholders and government and plays a key role in obtaining data to develop crime statistics. CBS can achieve this by entering into partnerships with stakeholders, providing the necessary expertise and guaranteeing the reliability and impartiality of statistics. More details on the role of the Central Bureau of Statistics will follow in these segments.

1. Partnerships

The first step in acquiring crime statistics is getting the commitment of stakeholders in the criminal justice system. In the short period since CBS has started the process of acquiring administrative data, cooperation agreements have been drafted for all the above mentioned organizations, resulting in a solid partnership with KPA. CBS is still pending approval from the Ministry of Justice to enter into agreements with the remaining actors.

Partnerships make it possible for CBS to stimulate and improve registration, analyses and

dissemination of data. In the initial assessment conducted by the CBS, it has been established what administrative data is currently available, how this data is being registered and how this data is being analyzed. All stakeholders have welcomed the idea of CBS aiding their organization with improving the data registration and transforming the raw data into statistics that are useful for their own operations as well as crime statistics. All stakeholders recognize the fact that they don't possess the necessary knowledge to develop crime statistics. All actors also recognize the need for statistics in contributing to evidence-based decision making. Establishing partnerships with all stakeholders will ensure the development of crime statistics in Aruba.

2. Expertise

As was mentioned before, the actors in the criminal justice system have indicated that their organization doesn't possess the expertise and/or personnel necessary to develop indicators, register, analyze, and publish data about crime. Data producers are dedicated to producing data relevant for administrative purposes and producing data for statistics may not always be a priority.

Guided by the fundamental principles of statistics, the role of the Central Bureau of Statistics ensures that data is gathered, analyzed and published according to scientific standards and methods with high regard for professional ethics and adhering to international

standards. Official statistics serve not only the government but also the public with data about a wide variety of subjects. Official statistics provide in the public's need for impartial and trustworthy information.

For many years the Central Bureau of Statistics has made endeavors for obtaining crime statistics from different actors in the criminal justice system in Aruba with not much success. Crime being an ever popular and important issue in the public discourse, has warranted the necessity for putting in place a division with the sole task of acquiring crime statistics. Such a task adequately pertains to an expert with a broad working knowledge of the criminal justice system as well as the scientific and statistical background to adequately bring in perspective crime and crime related issues. The need for a specialized division is also recognized by the UN in the following statement.

"Experts in crime and victimization, criminal justice policy and program administration must play a key role in designing the statistical series; in developing the concepts and definitions to be employed; in planning and conducting the analysis; and in preparing the outputs" (Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Statistics Division, 2003, p. 4).

Seeing that the process for acquiring data from the different actors in the criminal justice system is still in the early stages, there is still much work to be done in ensuring the quality of the data, achieving data uniformity

and the use of standard classifications and international indicators. The role CBS plays in this process is essential for the future of crime statistics in Aruba.

3. Reliability and impartiality

Statistics should be reliable and impartial to maintain neutrality and objectivity. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs acknowledge the following.

“One essential obligation of a national criminal justice statistics program is public accountability. This obligation cannot be effectively fulfilled if the national justice statistics program is viewed as one subscribing to a political ideology or subject to interference by the Government in power. The program must be, and must be seen to be, impartial and objective.” (Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Statistics Division, 2003, p. 4).

Reliable and impartial statistics is important to guarantee the credibility of statistics which is essential for maintaining the cooperation of data suppliers and ensuring that data users can rely on the quality of the data. The Central Bureau of Statistics is the institution officially assigned with the collection, processing and publication of statistics. In this role it operates independently from the government and stakeholders, warranting reliability and impartiality.

International framework

International organizations such as the UN have developed indicators on crime statistics in an effort to make crime statistics internationally comparable. Where national governments, who are the main users of crime statistics, fail to create the necessary framework through policy, the international framework can be used as a guideline to obtain statistics on indicators. The framework serves as a guideline to specify what is measured and why it needs to be measured. Policy-based framework sets priorities and indicates which factors need to be measured to enable good decision-making. The advantage of having a policy-based framework is that it can be tailored to the priorities and needs of decision makers. The same flexibility is also one of its weaknesses because policy-based framework is subject to frequent change and can thus differ significantly from time to time and from country to country. On the other hand, international standards and indicators form a clear and conceptual framework to guide data collection where a national policy-based framework is missing. Policy is influenced by priorities of the government and departments. To guarantee continuity in the indicators and type of data which is collected, there should be a more stable basis. Institutions working in the criminal justice system should work towards being in compliance with international standards and best practices. Adequate, relia-

ble and comparable statistics are a prerequisite for evidence-based decisions.

United Nations Crime Trends Survey (UN-CTS)

The United Nations distributes a survey amongst countries to collect data on the incidence of reported crime and the operations of criminal justice systems with the goal of improving the analysis and dissemination of that information globally. The questionnaire is intended for the main four components of the criminal justice system, being the police department, the prosecution, the courts and prisons. The survey challenges countries to

develop national crime and justice recording systems (Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Statistics Division, 2003). In the following table an overview is presented of the statistical information requested by the UN. Additionally the survey requests information about results from victimization surveys, highlighting its importance as a complement to administrative statistics.

The table gives a general overview of data which needs to be collected in order to construct criminal justice statistics. The information requested in the UN-CTS serves as a guideline and basis for collecting data on crime and the criminal justice system.

Component	Information requested
Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police personnel by sex • Total police budget • Number of crimes recorded, by type of crime • Number of persons brought into initial formal contact with the police and/or the criminal justice system, by type of crime • Number of persons brought into formal contact with the criminal justice system, by adult/youth and sex
Prosecution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecution personnel by sex • Total prosecution budget • Number of persons prosecuted, by type of crime; by adult/youth and sex
Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of judges by status (professional, lay) and sex • Total court budget • Number of persons brought before criminal courts, by disposition (convicted, acquitted, other) • Number of persons convicted, by type of crime • Number of adults convicted of any type of crime, by type of sentence • Number of persons convicted, by adult/youth and sex
Prison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of adult and youth prisons, penal institutions and correctional institutions; number of spaces (beds) available • Staff in adult and youth prisons, by sex • Total prison budget • Number of persons incarcerated on a given day, by category (awaiting trial, sentenced, etc.)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average length of detention for adult prisoners awaiting trial (time between arrest and pronouncement of guilt or innocence) • Average length of time served in prison by adults after conviction • Number of convicted prisoners on a given day, by adult/youth and sex • Number of persons on probation on a given day, by adult/youth • Number of persons on parole on a given day, by adult/youth
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Vulnerable groups; children, youths, women

UNICEF (2013) recently published an analysis about the situation of children and adolescents in Aruba. There are some areas in which crime statistics can contribute to a better understanding and improvement of issues affecting the situation of children and adolescents. According to the UNICEF (2013) report, child abuse and neglect, including physical, psychological and sexual abuse, is an area where there are no statistics available to ascertain the prevalence of this phenomenon in Aruba. In a pilot research conducted in 2008 amongst organizations that deal with victims of child abuse and neglect, it was concluded that 1 in 15 children in the ages from 0 to 17 years are victim of abuse or neglect (Guda, 2008). Improving registration by agencies in the criminal justice system will result in adequate administrative sources, providing information about the incidence of child abuse reported to the police and prosecuted by the public prosecutor’s office. UNICEF recommends creating an information system enabling tracking, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of policies and programs on specific age groups (UNICEF, 2013, p. 61).

Juvenile delinquency receives special attention in the political and public discourse. The Ministry of Justice is responsible for an integrated youth policy, in which different actors in the criminal justice system participate. The development of juvenile justice indicators can contribute to the protection of juveniles in conflict with the law. The UN has developed indicators that serve as a framework for measuring and presenting figures about juveniles that have come in contact with the justice system. A general recommendation of UNICEF (2013) is to develop programs and initiatives to prevent juvenile delinquency by obtaining information and deepening the knowledge about children, adolescents and women on the island. Juvenile justice indicators will furthermore serve as a basis for more effective youth policy. The juvenile justice indicators provide a framework for measuring and presenting specific information about the situation of children in conflict with the law. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has chosen indicators in the following table to monitor the situation about children and juveniles who have come in contact with the juvenile justice system (UNODC, 2006, p. 10-25).

Juvenile Justice Indicators		Definition
Quantitative Indicators		
1.	Children in conflict with the law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children arrested during a 12 month period per 100,000 child population
2.	Children in detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children in detention per 100,000 child population
3.	Children in pre-sentence detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children in pre-sentence detention per 100,000 child population
4.	Duration of pre-sentence detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time spent in detention by children before sentencing
5.	Duration of sentenced detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time spent in detention by children after sentencing
6.	Child deaths in detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of child deaths in detention during a 12 month period, per 1,000 children detained
7.	Separation form adults (while in detention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of children in detention not wholly separated from adults
8.	Contact with parents and family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of children in detention who have been visited by, or visited, parents, guardian or an adult family member in the last 3 months
9.	Custodial sentencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of children sentenced receiving a custodial sentence
10.	Pre-sentence diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of children diverted or sentenced who enter a pre-sentence diversion scheme
11.	Aftercare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of children released from detention receiving aftercare
Policy Indicators		
12.	Regular independent inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of a system guaranteeing regular independent inspection of place of detention Percentage of places of detention that have received an independent inspection visit in the last 12 months
13.	Complaints mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of a complaints system for children in detention Percentage of places of detention operating a complaints system
14.	Specialized juvenile justice system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of a specialized juvenile justice system
15.	Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of a national plan for the prevention of child involvement in crime

Also related to the above mentioned areas of concern is domestic violence and violence against women. In a research paper published by A. Marval ,2014, a first attempt was made to put in perspective the situation regarding domestic violence by reviewing police registration and registration from organizations dealing with victims of domestic violence.

One of the findings is that the registration of domestic violence and violence against women is often times incomplete, not uniform across different agencies and there's under registration, meaning that even when cases of domestic violence or violence against women are reported to the police they are not represented in the official registration (Marval,

2014). UNICEF further concludes, “Although there are many cases of domestic violence and child abuse and neglect, these issues remain hidden and underreported”(UNICEF, 2013, p. 54).

One of the main recommendations is thus to improve the registration by the police department and other organizations working with victims of domestic violence by introducing uniformity in the registration and using a separate system for registering domestic violence (Marval, 2014). The UN (2010) underlines that solid data on violence against women are critical to the development and implementation of sound laws, policies, strategies and prevention measures. The most comprehensive manner of collecting data on such violence is by conducting a dedicated population-based survey on violence against women. The adoption of guidelines and rules for data collection will greatly contribute to developing statistics on violence against women.

All above mentioned vulnerable groups are interrelated and issues concerning these groups require a systematic approach in order to achieve results. The absence of overall state policies means that policy guidelines change when government changes, limiting the achievement of long-term goals. Recommendations in the UNICEF report offer opportunities for developing indicators to comply with informational needs of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international treaties and obligations, while

guaranteeing continuity in data registration required for long term policy making.

Tourism and crime

Aruba is dependent on the tourism industry as a major source of income. Maintaining safety for visiting guests is essential for our image and the wellbeing of the tourism industry. An increase in crime victimization of tourists may have direct negative economic consequences for Aruba if visitors stay away because of fear of crime. The importance of protecting the safety of tourists has been emphasized by recent changes in the penal code, which was entered into force as of February 2014, making it possible to ban known perpetrators of (petty) crime against tourists from areas that can be considered as tourist areas. This order has to be given by a judge and the area has to be well defined in the sentence. Persons not in compliance with the court order can immediately be arrested for being in contempt of court and are removed from the tourist area. More severe punitive measures demonstrate the importance of tourists for the economy.

“One of the most consistent relationships identified in research is the link between tourist arrivals and tourist-related crime. “As tourist arrivals increase so do victimization rates” (Albuquerque & McElroy, 1999, p. 974). If the above statement is also true for the Aruban situation is unclear, because there are no figures to substantiate it. This is a specific

area which needs to get attention from the producers of crime statistics in order to make evidence-based decisions about how to target tourist-related crimes and thus protecting the image of Aruba as the “One Happy Island”. In data collection, agencies should separate out crimes against residents and crimes committed against tourists and visitors enabling the calculation of victimization rates for various crimes and determine the time and places where tourists are more likely to be targeted. Statistics make it possible to put in place effective measures to enhance the safety and thereby improve destination attractiveness. According to the plans presented by the government in 2013, special attention is to be paid to improving and enhancing the tourist product by focusing on safety (Regering van Aruba, 2013). The need for improving safety has already been recognized by stakeholders in the tourism sector, such as the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) and Aruba Tourism Association (ATA), through initiatives like the Aruba Hospitality & Security Foundation (AH&SF). The AH&SF supports a partnership between the hotel and hospitality sector and the police force by means of a ‘Visibility Team’ with the purpose of enhancing security by patrolling the hotel strip and areas frequented by tourists, targeting crime committed against tourists. Collecting, analyzing and releasing crime statistics warrants that crime rates cannot be exaggerated or downplayed to satisfy a certain interest. Rather the infor-

mation can be used by all stakeholders in guaranteeing the safety of visitors. Further endeavors should be made in developing these indicators.

Crime Victimization Surveys

The primary source of crime statistics are formed by administrative data obtained from stakeholders in the criminal justice system. The data produced from these registration systems reflect the daily operational requirements of the organization and represent only crimes that are reported or discovered by the police. According to international research, there is evidence that a great amount of crime is not reported to the police and is thus not represented in crime statistics (Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Statistics Division 2003). The amount of crime that goes unreported form the “dark figure” of crime, meaning that there’s an unknown number of crime that is not represented in crime statistics. An alternative source for measuring and understanding crime is a victimization survey. The importance of complementing administrative statistics with information from victimization surveys was recognized by the United Nations in the 1990’s (UNODC, 2010). The advantages of victimization surveys are that they can give insights into the “dark figure”, as well as public perceptions about the performance of different agencies in the criminal justice system. This type of research can be very expensive

because of the large sample size needed to produce reliable estimates. Victimization surveys require a great deal of technical expertise and are most useful if they are carried out periodically, enabling comparisons through time.

Crime victimization surveys can provide extensive information on crime incidents. The survey consists of questions about victimization, fear of crime, attitudes towards the criminal justice system and it also supplies social demographic information. Furthermore, it provides more detailed information about the circumstances in which crime took place, such as the time and location, the relationship with the offender, financial loss, if there was physical injury and if the crime was reported. This survey cannot replace administrative data but can complement police reported data and provides essential information to policy makers. Joint publication of police reported statistics and victimization survey results, helps to inform the public about the full extent and nature of crime.

The Aruban government is focusing on strengthening community ties and improving the quality of life in neighborhoods through the project Bo Bario. This entails making structural improvements to enhance security and safety in the neighborhoods as well as social activities to get citizens involved in their communities. A crime victimization survey can deliver essential information about feelings of

safety in different areas on Aruba, and can give a better demographic profile about the inhabitants and contribute greatly to achieving the objectives of the government policy. Repeating this survey can give insights into how effective the government's efforts to improving and building better communities have been.

In the Population and Housing Census conducted in 2010, households were asked if they experienced any inconvenience from crime in their immediate environment. When the results are broken down by geographical area, they give an indication of the extent in which households experience inconvenience from crime. The zones with the highest percentage of households indicating they have experienced inconvenience from crime are shown in the following table.

Top 5 zones with highest percentage of households suffering from crime		
	2010	2000
Simeon Antonio (38)	47.8	13.4
Eagle/Paardebaai (22)	34.4	25.2
Socotoro/Rancho (26)	33.5	37.2
Pos Chiquito (61)	31.2	19.6
Sividivi (33)	31.0	38.6

Source: The Social Atlas of Aruba 2010 - CBS

In Simeon Antonio 47,8% of the households indicated that they experienced inconvenience from crime, compared to 13,4% in the year 2000. These figures are relevant for policy in determining where resources and efforts directed at crime prevention or measures for enhancing safety should be allocated.

A victimization survey has not yet been carried out in Aruba, but taking into account the above mentioned, there's a lot to be gained from data gathered by means of victimization surveys to complement crime statistics and inform policy makers. CBS has the technical knowledge and expertise to set up and conduct a crime victimization survey and is making efforts to obtain funding to make this project possible in the near future.

Conclusion

There are many opportunities in Aruba with regards to the establishment of crime statistics. The starting point of statistics is the registration of data, followed by the analyses and dissemination of data to contribute to evidence-based decision and policy making. The development of a system of crime statistics in Aruba is only in the early stages and is faced by many challenges that will have to be overcome. Fortunately, all challenges can be met with opportunities and solutions that will contribute to achieving the objective of obtaining crime statistics. The development of crime statistics relies greatly on the commitment of stakeholders and the government and their willingness to participate in creating and maintaining crime statistics. The United Nations Crime Trends Survey and the use of International standards and classifications serve as the basis of developing crime statistics in Aruba and provide guidelines to do so effectively. The Central Bureau of Statistics

possesses the expertise and experience to develop crime statistics, while guaranteeing its quality, reliability and impartiality. Crime statistics are essential for decision making by all actors in the criminal justice system and are the basis to be able to make factual statements about crime rates in Aruba and the safety of its citizens. In addition, crime statistics can help to strengthen and enhance Aruba as a safe haven for tourists, safeguarding the tourism driven economy.

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