

My people

After much deliberation, my family and I have decided that I should heed the call from the numerous persons who have called or met me personally and openly expressed their hope and confidence in me to come back on the leadership scene in the community to be a voice for the voiceless, hope for those in despair and a reason to believe that as a people, as a community, and as a country, we can be better!

Indeed, fellow residents, I am more than humbled to know that you have me in such high esteem and though I had no intentions to get back into active politics, my gut instinct was that I could not resist such passionate pleas at this time in our development. Indeed, I cannot promise you milk and honey, but I can affirm my resolve to work with all stakeholders and that includes you and everyone else who have your genuine holistic development at heart

Indeed, this unifying approach for persons to represent us at the highest level by Team Dominica United Workers Party is a true manifestation of democracy in action. This is a world of difference compared to the ruling Labour Party who will secretly plan and take actions in your absence and try to force their deceptiveness down your throat on one hand and humiliate some on the other.

Almost twenty years ago, the Dominica Labour Party took over the helm of governance of this country and today as we ask ourselves what have we achieved during the last two decades, we come to the sad and shocking realization that our country and our communities have not ventured very far at all.

Rather, we have all seen the level of decadence which has proliferated in our communities mirrored in sky rocketing unemployment, escalating poverty, mushrooming crime and violence, shabby and crumbling infrastructure and we can go on at a time when our neighbors in the Caribbean continue to make steady strides in moving forward. Yet there are those who want you to believe that this is the best that you can be and that you should not question the status quo in your search for a more full filling life.

Indeed, the parliament is the highest decision making body in the land and the decisions taken can have far reaching implications on generations to come, even the unborn child. Therefore, selecting persons to represent you at this level cannot be a gamble nor based on handouts or a few hundred dollars. You and I have seen the result of this approach including the economic doldrum in which we have found ourselves during the past nineteen years.

The level of representation which we need going forward calls for all of us to think hard of our future wellbeing, not based on instant gratification and dependence on others as this decision will determine what type of education your children will have, whether you or your loved ones will die in a hospital that is understaffed and poorly equipped lacking even the most basic medication while the close associates of the Labour Party are flown overseas by helicopter for health care which should be available in our country.

It will decide whether you as a hard working man or woman will find the enabling environment to grow and be productive or whether you will be trapped in a communist-style society or like crabs in a barrel where one person is in charge and you have to continue lining up like groveling chickens to be fed at the whims and fancy of a selected few. It will decide whether you as a proud and dignified young man or woman have to continue toiling under NEP to care for yourself and family with a disgraceful monthly pay of EC\$600.00 a month!

Can you support yourself, build yourself a home, save for the future and provide for your family on ES\$20.00 a day?

In my view, it is a deliberate and carefully planned strategy by this government to impoverish Dominica so that with nowhere to turn we will be grateful for the crumbs that fall from their lavish table and therefore be eternally grateful to them for coming to our perceived rescue. And indeed, many of our people have fallen victim to this deception. But, thank God many have already seen the light and have decided that we deserve better, we can be better and that we must do better.

What is the success rate of this administration in attracting foreign investment as well as to grow local ventures which will spur on economic development and in the process generate decent jobs and increase foreign exchange earnings for you as a people? What factors caused Ross University to relocate to Barbados after 40 years of operation in Dominica?

How many agro processing plants are in operation today? How many gallons of water do we export to other countries in the Caribbean? What has been the growth in the tourism sector that can give us hope? Today, all our once productive agricultural lands lie in solitary abandonment yearning for productive use. Yet there are those who will want you to believe that we have never seen better days!

In any small developing state like ours where foreign direct investment is hard to come by and resources are limited, we must view the closure of indigenous businesses and the relocation of others such as Ross as major national issues which simply cannot be treated lightly. The loss of Ross means no more tours to the community, no more health fairs from the school, no more employment opportunities for our people and we can go on.

The Salybia constituency and Dominica by extension have never seen darker days but hold on fellow residents because the torch of freedom has been lit and it's dazzling light is sweeping across our valleys, hills and mountains at a frightening pace for Roosevelt and his band of mercenaries. And we know as the indigenous people of Dominica, we are not being left behind. No, not this time!

We will lead the way as our ancestors have done because the failed promises of all shall eat have too many of our people on the brink of scavenging for daily survival. This cannot be morally right in this land where our ancestors lived harmoniously with plenty.

Fellow residents, it irks my heart when attempts are made by this administration to silent our efforts, punish our people and undermine our God given potential. In this respect fellow Kalinagos, one of my first order of business will be to follow up on the US\$10 million grant given to the Kalinago people by the Government of Venezuela in 2008 which was meant to facilitate critical intervention initiatives which would serve as the catalyst to eradicate this dependency syndrome that the Labour Party is just too happy to cultivate and nurture in the community.

For almost 20 years, where have we gone and what progress have we made? The Labour party claims that we are the best in the Caribbean. If this is the case, then why must the Labour party try to insult your pride and dignity as a trained professional, a hardworking man and woman, a proud Kalinago, an ambitious youth by coming to your homes and asking you what do you want from them at the eve of an election? How can sheets of plywood and galvanize or checks of \$1, 500.00 cash equate to the fulfillment of your dreams and aspirations?

Shouldn't your work speak for itself after 20 years? Supporters of the Labour party in the constituency, take a look around in the community. Are you satisfied with the progress that we have made over the last twenty years? Please tell us of the great achievements which our community has made during the last 20 years under labour. Is it that supporters of Team Dominica United Workers Party are the only ones thinking outside of the box?

Our civil servants, don't you think that you deserve better? What has been done over these years to allow you to become a socioeconomically independent person? Why must you be humiliated by having to swallow your pride having to depend on politicians to provide a home for your family and \$10 grocery bags in the pith of dark to feed your children? What has happened to our sense of self-worth? Isn't it time that we as a people keep those we elect accountable for the many opportunities that they have denied us as a people because of their reckless and vindictive approach to governance?

Tonight, fellow constituents, I am convinced that you have finally come to the realization that it does not mean because most of us were born in poverty, that we have to spend a life in poverty and still at the end die so poor, that our loved ones have to go to the Red Clinic for help to bury us. And for this awakening, a real doctor is here to assist in defining a new paradigm, a new hope, an empowered people!

Going forward, we understand the challenge is going to be huge. We understand that you have very high expectations of me and Team Dominica United Workers Party. It's for this reason ladies and gentlemen, of the Salybia constituency that I unreservedly declare my full intent not to come on the political scene for party nor government favor, but to play a pivotal role in establishing this foundation which we need to serve as a catalyst for our sustained economic development and people empowerment.

In this quest, I will treat the following as a matter of priority:

1. Establishment of the Kalinago Development Corporation which will serve as the catalyst for micro-enterprise development and the self-empowerment of you the residents of the Kalinago Territory. This will effectively address much of the problems caused by the dependency syndrome introduced by Labour. In addition, the KDC will be so structured that it will have the leverage to attract funding from the donor community and will not be entirely dependent on Central Government. This could inevitably lead to the establishment of our own financial facility at last.
2. Development of the Kalinago Territory as a model for successful community tourism with all the required infrastructure and support. This will also include a review of existing sites and facilities all the way to Antrizzle and the development/enhancement of others with potential for success. I'm pleased to say that an exciting concept for this undertaking already exists. This will inevitably bring hope to our many craft and souvenir vendors who depend on this trade to feed their families. No more will visitors only drive through and leave nothing in the form of visitor spend in the community. The establishment of microenterprises such as cocoa and coffee processing, exotic drink production and improving the quality of our unique craft products will be vigorously pursued as well.
3. Revitalizing the agricultural sector is critical to our success both from an economics standpoint as well as promoting good nutrition and providing wholesome nutritious food to feed ourselves first.
In this context brothers and sisters, we will take an aggressive approach at stimulating investments in this sector with a view to ramp up food production. Active consideration will be given to the establishment of a chicken farm to meet some of the food needs of our people while at the same time providing much needed decent jobs for our many unemployed youths in the constituency. The redevelopment of the coconut subsector and other tree crops will also receive major attention. Active consideration will also be given to facilitating at least five of our people in the constituency to become hucksters in an effort to secure better sales of the agricultural produce.
4. In education, we will take an in-depth review of what currently exists with a view to maximize productivity and yield better results. Active consideration will be given to the establishment of a technical institute right here in the constituency which will provide needed skills for the people of the constituency and people empowerment.
5. Strengthening the bond between the office of the MP and that of the Kalinago and Atkinson village Councils with a view to get maximum output on allocated resources and planning better will be high on my agenda. Increasing the subvention currently received by the Kalinago Council will also be pursued.

6. Revisit Kalinago Week with a view to rename it Kalinago Cultural Festival and moving it to a more appropriate time of year with a view to make this event a signature event on the national calendar. Thus, this will become a major revenue earner for the community. The Atkinson Sewinal Festival will also be reviewed with the intention to make this event our second national festival in the constituency and become an income generating opportunity for the community of Atkinson instead of what currently exists.
7. The Jolly John Park has the potential to be one of our main sporting facilities in the country. This too will be looked at closely with the intention to develop the facility where it could facilitate other community and national events.
8. Currently, we have five medical doctors from the constituency on island which includes Dr. Dwayne Laville of Atkinson. Every effort will be made to ensure that one of our medical doctors is stationed at the Salybia Health Centre to provide you with greater access to health care.

Fellow constituents, this is just an indication of the many exciting undertakings that your next Member of Parliament will seek to address on your behalf. Indeed, the expectations are high and the challenge will be great. But let's be guided by the belief that collectively we can achieve much.

In the coming days, weeks and maybe months, you will see members of my campaign unit and myself on a more regular basis. This I believe is important because I need to hear from each of you.

Listen for our upcoming events fellow residents. Meet our campaign unit and find out what's happening. When we announce activities, help in sharing the information and educate your friends and relatives. Bring them along to our events so they can better appreciate the new vision for communities because the dark days of labour is rapidly fading away, and they know that.

Finally, I could not have asked for a better campaign unit and to the team, I say hearts off for your professionalism and businesslike approach to starting off the campaign. We will maintain a very high standard throughout the period of campaigning and as your humble servant, I ask you to observe carefully the standard which we will be adopting and try your best to rise to the new level which we will be introducing to political activities in our communities.

Discuss the issues. But please, do so respectfully and peacefully.

For at the end of the day, we owe it to ourselves, our communities and our country.

May God bless us all.

Thank you.