



BUDGET RESPONSE 2019/2020

How the Nature Island will thrive
after a brutal 20-year struggle to survive



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July 31st, 2019



INTRODUCTION

Madame Speaker, colleague Parliamentarians, fellow citizens of the Nature Island of Dominica, on behalf of the leadership and members of the United Workers Party TEAM Dominica – the Parliamentary Opposition of Dominica – duty calls me to respond to the 2019/2020 Budget Statement of the Dominica Labour Party Government delivered by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance less than 24 hours ago on July 30th, 2019.

The outrageous is now the norm. Deliberate, calculated limitation of the time to respond to a budget statement prepared over many months with input from an army of public officers under the watch of the largest Cabinet in the OECS. Sadly, we end the budget debate component of this parliamentary term with yet another example of the hostility to Parliament's oversight responsibility for public finances that this administration is proud to wear as a badge of honor.

In response to its near 20-year record of consistently achieving the worst economic performance results in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union, we stand on our commitment to develop and grow a model green economy that rewards enterprise, puts our people to work for decent wages, gives a fair chance to all and secures our place in the global trade of goods and services.

For too long, we have been going back to our future. Trying hard to move forward in better health, more wealth, progress and happiness but

finding ourselves trapped in the punishing cycle where the struggle to survive just gets harder and harder.

God has blessed us with his nature island of the world in which we have everything we need to take care of ourselves – our physical needs, our safety and security, our love and belonging, our emotional well-being, our hope and healing. But for two decades we have been running around in circles stuck with the sameness of the past and going nowhere fast.

Now we hear of a new Dominica... new Dominica in which the head of state makes excuses for the refusal of the ruling party to provide the people's money to secure elections with integrity as the backbone of our democracy

In this new Dominica we are supposed to embrace the crimes of bribery and treating, impersonation, fraud, the abuse of being in charge of the people's money, the purchase of overseas votes, lack of opposition access to the media and lack of campaign finance reform as standard features in our election

A new Dominica in which it is OK to lie, cheat and steal as pathways to the seat of government

A new Dominica in which the resources of Dominica are diverted to enrich foreign interests while Dominicans suffer

Let there be no doubt. A new Dominica begins with change, not fake, cosmetic change in the footprint of dictators... Real Change.

We respond today to the rising demand for change of government with the assurance that your United Workers Party Team Dominica is ready to end the governance of hopelessness and the politics of division and under-performance which has gripped our isle of beauty under the DLP administration over the past two decades.

In the words of the agriculture minister and member for the cottage constituency:

“We have been last for too long in this world. Dominica has been behind in too many things”.

Indeed, with this administration running things Dominica is:

- The smallest, slowest growing economy in the eastern Caribbean
- Last in the ability to facilitate citizens in meeting their basic needs for food, clothing and shelter
- Last in the ability to employ its own citizens
- Last in the quality of the social and economic infrastructure
- Last in the international trade of goods and services
- Last in the provision of credit for productive purposes
- Last in the provision of proper health care services

Last for too long... behind in too many things...

So much so that after agreeing with the experts that we lost 93% of our gross domestic product in 2015 flood waters and a further 226% in 2017 killer winds... as if we had any GDP left, we now double down to fool ourselves with a boast of doing better than our neighbours with a growth projection of 9% of the same GDP.

We remain fully committed to ensuring sustainable, harmonized growth and development in which every Dominican has an opportunity to have an education; proper health care; a job; an affordable home; a reasonable standard of living and quality of life, in a peaceful and secure social and natural environment.

We stand to serve on our values:

- Innovative Leadership
- Caring
- Honesty
- Integrity

- Accountability
- Pursuit of Excellence
- Continuous Improvement
- Teamwork

We ask our nature island people to hold us accountable for adherence to these values in our stewardship of the affairs of state.

The vision of the United Workers Party (UWP) Team Dominica, is to make our Nature Island the best place to live, the best place to work and the best place to enjoy life in the global community.

This is our team assignment... the duty and passion that commits us to realizing the high ideals of human advancement for all the people of our beloved country.

The education, training, work experience and life skills of the individual members of this team make us caring, innovative and analytical with strong capability to plan, implement, communicate, negotiate and succeed as a team.

Our team includes educators, engineers, environmentalists, project managers, medical doctors, health care administrators, lawyers, social service providers, IT specialists, communicators, agriculture specialists, community development specialists, sports administrators, youth development specialists, human resource management practitioners, logisticians, supply chain managers

We stand to serve on the solid foundation principles of equal opportunity, social justice and balanced, harmonious, people centered development

Who are we?

As Members of Parliament, we will uphold the highest ethical standards in both private and public affair.

We stand for A Professional Approach to Government

0. We will lead and manage with respect

0. we humbly admit that we do not have all the answers to the nation's problems and we will respect and be guided by the advice of my Professionals.

0. We pledge to respect state Property.

0. We commit ourselves to fair treatment for all, regardless of Colour, creed or Political affiliation.

0. we commit ourselves to empower Government Institutions and facilitate them to do their work - including Public Works, The Social Welfare Division, Village Councils and The Integrity Commission.

0. We pledge to give the state full value for money, and to demand from persons and institutions the same.

Our team focus will be on:

Nature island citizen engagement and participation that brings government, people, businesses, civil society groups and neighborhoods in a collective effort to make Dominica the real, authentic, one and only Nature Island of the World

good, transparent, accountable government with a bias to solutions, positive results, fair treatment and just rewards

education, health care, sports and entertainment opportunities, affordable land and housing for all

continuous improvement in the livelihoods and standard of living of all citizens

civility, responsible global citizenship and respect for diversity and unity of purpose in all citizens

a culture of values, attitudes and behaviors that will facilitate living in harmony with our natural environment allowing nature to work for us instead of working against nature

disaster prevention and management systems to prevent loss of life; avoid fatal damage to administrative, social and economic systems; mitigate damage to public and private property; and achieve speedy recovery and reconstruction

the best water quality, food security, clean air, green businesses, green jobs, climate resilience, minimizing our carbon footprint, reducing consumption and eliminating waste

Excellence in all our endeavors at home and abroad

We are passionate about rebuilding the livelihoods of all the people our nature island”

Truth be told the DLP Govt has done more damage to Dominicans than hurricane Maria. Hurricane Maria did physical damage to our property:

Hurricane DLP is doing physical, social, and mental damage to our nature island family

-Preaching hate

-victimizing those who don't agree or ask questions

-abusing the money and the materials which the international community has given to Government to help rebuild livelihoods

MARIGOT CONSTITUENCY

Those who claim to run things in Dominica, planned to run a pre-budget election campaign event in the village most victimized, neglected and discriminated against in Dominica over the past nineteen and a half years only to find out that Almighty God is the one who runs things in Marigot

Which is why Marigot is still standing...

Which is why the weapons formed against the chosen representatives of Marigot have not, cannot and will not prosper

Which is why the righteous, just, Christian people of good conscience in Marigot will never be forsaken, nor will they be condemned to begging bread.

We serve a mighty God – as the song says, a way maker, a miracle worker a promise keeper, a light in the darkness - and he will make a way even where the persecutors of this blessed village believe there is no way

Our cause is just. It is to become a self-sufficient, full employment eco city with modern education, health, sporting, and recreational facilities; a road network that effectively connects the residential, commercial, agricultural, tourist and recreational areas; 1st world water and sanitation services; 100% energy requirements from wind and solar; and a minimum 4G platform for world class ICT functionality

Our faith is beyond question; our courage is exemplary

With our indomitable will to win driven by our faith, our courage and our just cause... we press on for Real Change and we shall overcome

For almost two decades, the people of Marigot have been deliberately and systematically deprived adequate resources for the road network, housing, health, small business and village economy priorities for one of the most progressive and productive communities in this country.

Our admonition to this honorable house through the years bears repetition in this the final budget debate of the current parliamentary term:

A better Marigot means a better Dominica... a politically victimized Marigot means a Dominica operating below its capability for outstanding sustainable growth and development

Marigot lives matter

The 20-year effort to unite Dominica with hate and prejudice has failed miserably... Even our kindergarten children know and understand we cannot build Dominica with partisan, political pettiness and vindictiveness. And so, in the era of Real Change under your United Workers Party Team Dominica beginning this budget year, all ideas will contend and all talents and skills will be allowed to serve. All will be allowed to eat.

In the budget of 2017, an amount of 18.8 million dollars was provided over two years for construction of the new Marigot Hospital - 14.1 million by way of a grant from the government and people of Mexico and 4.7 million from local funds. 6.4 million would be spent in year one and 12.4 million in year two. It didn't happen.

In the budget of 2018, an amount of 20.25 million dollars was provided. 1.5 million in year 1; 9.5 million in year 2; and 9.25 in year 3.

In this year's budget, according to the estimates of expenditure outlined in the Public Sector Investment Program, the 2018 amount of 20.25 million dollars has been reduced by 6.45 million (32 percent) to 13.8 million.

There is no explanation. There is no commitment to complete construction of the new state of the art Marigot Hospital... And with the billions of dollars available to government from the sale of the passports of Dominica, the failure over five long years to build the new hospital in Marigot has nothing to do with money.

It is just pure petty, vindictive, partisan politics.

This hospital was first built in the 1920's by my grandfather Charles Burton and his construction team on land donated by Adolphous George with a 750-pound donation from a Canadian philanthropist and local contributions facilitated by the efforts of Martin Luther Boland.

The upgrade of the Hospital in the 1970's was initiated by the people of Marigot and funded largely by Mrs. Anaclet Thomas. The contractor was Mr. Thomas Davis.

The hospital was shut down under the watch of this government for termite infestation in 2014 – more than 5 years ago. A first, then a second health center intended as the interim health care facility pending the construction of the new hospital have been shut down for mold infestation. There is no health care facility in Marigot.

This new Marigot Hospital has become a ruling party platform of provocation and ridicule for the residents of the North East, particularly the people of Marigot. The injustice will be discontinued in this change of government budget year

In this year's budget an amount of 1.5 million is provided to correct the wave overtopping problem at Melville Hall that has been destroying vehicles with salt water for over a decade. This amount is 93% or 18.5 million less than the 20 million provided in last year's budget. Not a cent was spent. Budgeting money to deal with this issue and not spending it has become a deliberate display of disrespect that pressures the restraint of Christian people of good conscience. The injustice will be discontinued in this change of government budget year during.

We need money for small business development in Marigot.

In 2016/2017, government overspent a budget of 3.5 million by 10 million dollars for small business assistance in the constituencies represented by the Dominica Labour Party. There was no small business assistance for Marigot.

In May of 2018, a number of persons from Marigot attended a meeting with the Small Business Unit and filled out forms for assistance. Those who had bank account numbers were told that the assistance would be available within 2 weeks. The patient people of Marigot are still waiting.

An amount of 3 million was in the budget of 2018/2019 for small business development. Marigot was ignored. The amount of 5 million in this year's budget must of necessity have the name Marigot on it as priority number one... because the injustice will be discontinued in this change of government budget year

Last year, the Roadside Cleaning Program aka NEP finally arrived in Marigot for a few people after four years and a total spend of 50 million elsewhere in Dominica. 25.8 million was spent last year but only 8 million is budgeted for this year which suggests the programme is either on its way out or that constituencies like Marigot, represented by opposition parliamentarians, on which the eyes of the ruling party seldom fall will have their NEP funding cut.

Of the 180.2 million spent on housing since Maria, the Marigot Village Council has received 1.5 million dollars through the former Labour Party candidate and 0.5 million from the current Labour Party candidate – a total of 2 million belonging to the people of Dominica for Housing recovery Assistance in Marigot.

As far as we are aware, the average assistance per homeowner in Marigot is the lowest paid out so far by the Ministry of Housing. The discrimination is evident. Even so, Hundreds of home owners in Marigot are still waiting for their share of the Housing Recovery Assistance which more than a year ago was coming soon. The injustice will be discontinued in this change of government budget year.

The playing field at Concord needs urgent attention. And the excellent sporting facility at Lio Park regrettably abandoned by the government is still in desperate need of rehabilitation

Money is needed to rehabilitate a number of other feeder roads:

Baron/Tantan road

Captain Bruce/Windy lodge road

Myshall road, Craig road

Coffee road, Tantan/pagua link road

We also need money to bring a number of village roads up to acceptable standards:

Bull Hole, six acres Melville Hall link road

Valley road, North End road, Over gutter Road

Weirs School road

We need a new bridge at ManTiPo

Those needs will be provided for in this change of government Budget year. It will also provide for:

VILLAGE EXPANSION

1. Assistance for the Village Council to obtain legal ownership of Lio Park where there is land available for development of housing.
2. Assistance for Residents of Melville Hall to settle Land ownership and proper land development issues.
3. Solar street lights and fire Hydrants for the following areas:

Tantan

Coffee

Melville Hall

North End Road

Captain Bruce

We welcome the efforts by Domlec to increase village street lights, but there is still more to be done.

In this change of government budget year funds will be provided for:

1. Restoration of all village storm drains.
2. Expansion of the Mantipoe bridge
3. Construction of the Ellsworth Prevost retaining wall at Dam
4. Building of proper drains for all village roads.

5. Construction of Dam river retaining walls.

In Agriculture, this change of government budget year will see:

1. Restoration of the Point and Melville Hall Inland buying depots for the processing and packing of agricultural exports. to facilitate major exporters like Ellsworth Prevost, Chad Musgrave and Stacia Williams.

2. Restoration and development of the Agricultural Extension Office. We wish Extension Officer Revilius St. Rose a speedy recovery.

3. Assistance in the development of agro processing for small businesses like Eartha and Jason seamoss among others.

4. Assistance for fishermen with advance training as well as bigger and more sophisticated fishing craft.

5. Assistance to willing and proven shippers like Myrtle Africa to continue shipping and marketing our produce.

In EDUCATION, this change of government budget year will see:

1. Proper development and upgrade of the WSSS and Concord Primary Schools.

2. Government working with private preschools to ensure that the highest quality of education is delivered in the best working environment.

3. More tertiary educational opportunities for our victimized youth.

4. Construction of modern state of the Art Libraries equipped with the latest IT that will facilitate research activities at the highest level in Concord and Marigot.

5. The proper completion of the North East Education complex to include additional infrastructure as well as curriculum expansion.

6. Proper development of the Concord, Lio Park and Melville Hall playing fields to facilitate for track and field, Cricket, basketball,

netball, volleyball and lawn tennis. These facilities must have proper vending, seating, toilet, parking and shelter.

7. Reinstatement of the Free text book program as well as the tuition free program at all government educational institutions.

In TOURISM, the focus in this change of government budget year will be on:

1. Proper completion and development of the National Trail.
2. Marigot Bayfront development - Government working with VC and local stake holders to develop the entertainment strip from the Fisheries Complex to Last Flight in Melville Hall.
4. The continued development of the Sandbay beach as well as in the provision of increase access to the beach.
5. Development of the fisheries Complex to accommodate medium sized passenger ferries and other passenger boats coming from the French islands and other neighbouring territories.
6. Working with the MDC, the VC, carnival and other sports and culture groups to develop our Mayfest Activities and other attractions which would form part of an annual calendar of activities that would bring people to Marigot throughout the year. On behalf of my people of Marigot we recognize and applaud the contribution of the MDC under the leadership of Michael Pascal ably supported by persons like Ellsworth Prevost, Lois Bristol, Alven Abraham and Fortune James among others.

OUR KALINAGO PEOPLE

Congratulations to recently elected Kalinago Chief Lorenzo Sanford...

1. First order of business is to bring the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) into law.

Dominica is blessed to be the home of the only indigenous tribe in the Caribbean. As a government we need to appreciate this historical and cultural richness and recognize international conventions dealing with our indigenous people.

2. The ruling party has violated the ILO 169 since their ratification in 2002. To date they have failed to submit reports to the ILO as prescribed in this convention.

We are deeply concerned with the lack of implementation of the self-determination Clause in this convention as it relates to our Kalinago brothers and sisters.

This is true to the much talked about 10 million USD Venezuelan fund. From our understanding, this regime violated the ILO 169 with regards to prior and informed consent in dealing with the Venezuelan funds. A UWP Team Dominica government will repay the Kalinago people the balance of this money, assist them in putting the necessary mechanism in place, (KDC) implement and administer the various components of the proposal and adhere to the spirit and content of the ILO169 to their right to self determination

3. We are also aware of the Indigenous Peoples Plan Housing Recovery Project. Where 1,700 housing units were funded By the world bank.

We need to clarity for the Kalinago people as to reason for allocating them only 200 of these units.

We need to know whether, as stated in the proposal, residents who repaired their houses on their own funds will be justly compensated?

And why were the leadership of the Kalinago people totally sidelined in the design and construction process. Because as it stands there has been no communication with the community on the status of this venture. Another clear violation of the ILO 169..

For 20 years under this government our indigenous people have not seen any serious advancement in their status in their own land. The DLP has

focused on pleasing their individual supporters with little effort to uplift the indigenous community.

As a responsible government, UWP TEAM DOMINICA will as it's priority engagement with our indigenous people, start consultation on having their elected chief represent their interest in parliament. We will modify and modernize the carib act legislation to give greater autonomy to our indigenous people in deciding their economic and cultural development in areas of agriculture, education, tourism, sports and infrastructure development. Initiatives that will not only enhance their standard of living but also reflect their resilience, identity and spirituality.

BACKGROUND - BUDGET 2019/2020

For 19 long years, through budget after budget, this administration has spent more and more of the people's money on making people poorer, destroying their quality of life and rendering them more and more incapable of making their own money, being their own people, taking care of their families and living lives of dignity. Indeed, the most disgraceful performance record of this administration is the more money it receives to develop the country and help the people, the worse off the people become.

Year after year, we have called out the enduring obsession with the same old failed policies of exclusion, secrecy and petty political partisanship that have made a complete mockery of the parliamentary oversight responsibility for preparation of the national budget and the management of public finances.

We have asked for the involvement of the parliamentary opposition at stages in the budget preparation cycle where it can meaningfully contribute to the annual revenue and expenditure planning exercise.

In 2015, in 2016, in 2017, in 2018 the budget response of the parliamentary opposition went to great lengths to demonstrate why the budgets of those years and the budgets of the 15 previous years lacked

credibility. We made the case that these Labour Party Budgets are not the products of an effectively anchored, bi-partisan parliamentary mechanism to decide on and fund the growth and development priorities of Dominica. We advised against the dangers of driving Dominica Labour Party paramountcy to supersede the authority of our nation's highest decision-making body, for partisan purposes like having parliament routinely rubber stamp approval of budgets that are not designed to (and therefore cannot) serve as tools to deliver the growth and development fundamentals of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

For four straight years we have come to this parliament with constructive proposals for improving the budget formulation process. The response has been a deafening silence. In this final budget before the change of government we highlight what needs to be done and will be done under the United Workers Party Team Dominica in the public interest of good, accountable government

1. We will enact Fiscal responsibility legislation establishing principles of responsible fiscal management and transparency.
2. We will use Sector Working Groups and Ministerial Public Expenditure reviews to bring together input from ministers, parliamentarians, public officials, the private sector, civil society organizations and private citizens
3. We will engage a Finance Committee of Parliament, the Budget Office and Sector Hearings to consider these contributions and transform them into action-oriented proposals for the betterment of Dominica.
4. We will engage a Finance Committee of Parliament to review and approve the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure
5. We will restrict the use of contingency warrants used to authorize unbudgeted spending, and the include in the budget, a contingency reserve for unforeseen or emergency spending
6. We will promote trust among citizens that government, is listening to and acting on their concerns, has a plan for achieving worthwhile

objectives, and will use the available resources effectively, efficiently and in a sustainable manner.

Under the watch of the UWP Government, budgetary allocations will be effectively implemented by the ministries and agencies of government to secure the intended development benefits. Revenue collection and spending as authorized in the budget will be subjected to proper oversight throughout the year by a properly empowered Public Accounts Committee, the Audit Department, the Budget Office and line ministries as appropriate.

We will amend the relevant Standing Orders of this House to ensure that the work of the Public Accounts Committee is released from exclusively dependence on reports from the Director of Audit and will not be frustrated by the obstructionist behavior of senior public officers waving off routine information requests with politically motivated legal opinions. There are actually sons of Machiavelli in this country who pretend to know not and understand even less that when the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee requests information on the public accounts of Dominica from senior public officers and they refuse to provide the information, then those senior officers are deliberately obstructing the work of the PAC.

The PAC will no longer be condemned to oversight of history while live revenue and expenditure performance goes unchecked.

A UWP government will discontinue the practice of silence on the implementation of budget allocations after approval by Parliament. Under our watch, there will be periodic budget performance reviews that allow parliament to note the trend of overall collection and spending and prepares Cabinet to reassess budget alignment with fiscal objectives and development priorities. We will have budget execution reports, including in-year and audited year-end reports designed to yield useful improvement messages on performance and value-for-money.

The parliamentary budget oversight focus will be on integrated budget formulation systems and monitoring procedures that are coherent and consistent across all levels of governance in the public interest.

GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION

1. Dominica's economy has suffered tremendously under the Roosevelt Skerrit regime and for the past 15 years or so we have witnessed a continuous decline in the critical areas of economic growth and employment creation. Consequently, we are witness to high and increasing poverty and increasing hopelessness across the country. This, notwithstanding the hundreds of millions of dollars at the disposal of the government on account of passport sales over the past few years.

2. The complete mismanagement of Dominica's economy was glaringly apparent with the way in which the post Maria recovery was handled. We saw a government completely unable to correctly handle millions in aid to the farmers and to the housing sector. So two years on after Maria we continue to suffer a steep and dangerous decline in the fortunes of the Dominican population. Nowhere is that more evident than in the growing social ills particularly among the youth, a situation, which threatens to tear our country apart. It is also apparent in the increasing number of people appealing to the government for assistance simply to make ends me. Madam Speaker you will agree with me that we cannot allow this situation to continue.

3. Take a look at revenue collection over the last few years. Outside of passport revenue VAT and other non-tax receipts are virtually flat, another sign of an economy stuck in reverse. Even grants, which years ago represented up to 25 percent of revenue at government's disposal is now well below 10 percent of total revenue.

For example, Capital grants are budgeted at 117.3 million this year. Of the \$126.0 million budgeted last year the actual receipts amounted to only \$9.7 million - 92% or 116.3 million than the 2019/2020 grant funding target of the only head of government with friends and the ability to attract grant funding.

On the expenditure side, a growing debt burden has meant that more and more of our scarce revenues are channeled into debt service payments. These payments combined with spending on wages and salaries account for over 55 percent of current spending. Madam

Speaker to compound matters government's capital expenditure program has been misdirected, wasteful and ineffective. Spending on infrastructure where it exists has done little to promote economic growth. No doubt issues of procurement and the handling of contracts in a less than transparent way plays a big role in this.

4. Madam Speaker the net effect of wasteful and misdirected government expenditures combined with stagnating non- passport revenue have done little to alleviate the country's fiscal situation. Ultimately, we can expect a continuing escalation of debt, growing fiscal deficits, little or no economic growth, and continued pain and hardship for the Dominican public.

5. This is why, Madam Speaker with this dismal prospect hanging over the country, I will spend some time explaining to the Dominican public what a UWP government under my leadership will focus on in order to: (1) reverse the more than 15 years of steady economic decline; (2) address the high and escalating rate of youth unemployment; and (3) stimulate the agriculture and other sectors. In the pursuit of these goals key performance indicators will be established including a growth rate of 5 – 6 percent per annum, fiscal surpluses of between 2 – 6 percent, targeted job creation of at least 3 000 new jobs within the first year, and a managed debt strategy.

Targeted Real GDP Growth of 5 – 6 Percent and Higher Employment

6. Madam Speaker we have known all along that one of the major reasons for the decline in our economy is the government's almost complete dismissal of the agriculture sector. My view, Madam Speaker is that if we can get the policy on this right, we can begin to turn our economic situation in the right direction. In that regard, we will set aside EC \$100 million from passport revenue to invest in a new and revived agriculture and fisheries sector with a focus on higher production levels and adding value through processing. At the same time, we will improve on the quality and variety of crops, irrigation systems, green houses, and a comprehensive feeder road network. Assistance will be provided to the

fisherfolk to increase their catch and farmers will be assisted in growing the necessary crops.

7. Madam Speaker the agriculture sector will be expanded to include the crucial essential oils industry, livestock and dairy, and poultry industries. To further complement this effort, we will provide tax and other fiscal incentives to the private sector to invest in agro-processing facilities, fish canning and other related activities, and marketing and shipping arrangements. In that regard, Madam Speaker our Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries will be reorganized and staffed in a manner that will successfully drive our new policy towards a sizeable segment of our population.

8. Bearing in mind, Madam Speaker the tremendous hardships that have befallen our people following Hurricane Maria, the construction sector will be given special attention. This will require some sacrificing of government revenue, but the immediate tradeoff will be higher employment in that sector. Specifically, there will be offered a targeted package of exemptions of taxes and duties on imported construction materials. The initiative will undoubtedly lead to a rebound in that sector, create upwards of 1,500 new jobs and help stimulate overall growth in the economy. Linked to this Madam Speaker will be a comprehensive Public Sector Investment Program, which I will explain in more detail later.

9. Another area that we will actively target Madam Speaker in our attempt to generate the economic growth and jobs that we seek is the services sector. Top of that list is the tourism sector. This is a sector that is constrained by a lack of proper air access, high accommodation and related costs, and reduced competitiveness compared to regional countries. As we have stated repeatedly Madam Speaker, we will build an international airport. However, in the meantime we will greatly increase spending on marketing our tourism product, including rejuvenating the World Creole Music Festival, Dive Fest and the Reggae Jazz festival. We will also seek for new initiatives in sports and eco-tourism. At the same time, we will also provide incentives to hotel and other accommodation owners, and target the growth of the cruise ship

industry. With regards to the other services Madam Speaker we will encourage Private Sector investment including increased flows of Foreign Direct Investment that can help generate employment including in retail trade, home industries, craft and other similar initiatives. To this end, we commit to creating the enabling environment and putting in place the structural reforms through which prospective investors will play their role in helping to move our country forward. More on this later.

Prudent Fiscal Policy and Sustainability

10. Dominica's revenue base Madam Speaker has stagnated at around 30 percent of GDP for many years. This is linked directly to the inability of the Regime to generate economic growth. As an urgent policy action we will aggressively move to increase that base by at least 50 percent over a three year period. This will involve a review of the existing tax regime, making more disposable income available by addressing appointments within the government service, and increasing the minimum wage.

Review of the tax regimes

11. Madam Speaker with regards to the review of the tax regime. We will undertake a complete review of the existing VAT, income and other taxes regimes. The focus will be on improving its efficiency through increased tax collection and reducing the burden on both consumers and producers. Dominica's income tax and VAT rates are among the highest in the Caribbean Region. These rates can be streamlined with a view to putting more money in the pockets of workers. While the rates are reduced, we will compensate by drastically increasing the number of people working as we have outlined. Madam Speaker, this is not rocket science. With more people working and having more money to spend they will impact the services sector and other small business thus further increasing employment and growth.

12. The review Madam Speaker will not stop with the working population. We have already talked about a temporary removal of

taxes and duties on construction material. We will Madam Speaker tackle the issue of high taxes on the manufacturing and the Tourism sectors. In particular, we will reduce the VAT rate on hotels from the existing 15 percent to 5 percent for at least one year in the first instance. Taxes on the manufacturing sector will be zero rated and we will stop the wanton tax exemptions on vehicle imports. Instead we will ensure a more equitable tax rate, which is affordable to all, and not seen as being punitive. Tax incentives will also be given to small businesses that can demonstrate the ability to employ at least 5 persons. As part of that review we will reevaluate alien land holding and property taxes with a view to ease the excessive debt burden and also to improve on the number of land owners who can then use their land as collateral. Ultimately Madam Speaker we estimate that with this thorough and complete review of the tax regime will be able to broaden the tax base all with a view to contributing to job creation and increased economic activity.

Non tax revenue and grants

13. Madam Speaker the focus on non- tax revenue will give special attention to the Economic Citizenship Programme. We understand that this revenue stream will continue to be an important part of government revenue for some time yet. Our aim will be to tighten its administrative structure, reporting and accountability. The fee structure will be reviewed and its administrative oversight strengthened in an effort to maximize revenue collections. In addition Madam Speaker other non tax revenue streams will be similarly revised and changed where appropriate.

14. Grant financing, which for many years provided a great source of funding has declined steadily over the years. We will Madam Speaker initiate a robust program around Climate Change mitigation and implementation measures, which will have the buy in of the donor community. Projects built around the pursuit of a green industry consistent with the Nature Isle concept will be submitted for grant funding. This will help ease the burden on loan financing and help in the financing of the robust Public Sector Investment Program, which we plan to undertake. We will Madam Speaker stress to the donors our aim of developing

alternative renewable energy sources, poverty alleviation, and job creation. The goal is to drive up Grant financing to at least 35 percent of Revenue from its current level of around 5 percent.

Current and capital spending

15. Our goal Madam Speaker is to streamline government spending by reducing waste and improving efficiency within government operations. This will ensure that current spending on non-wage and interest payments will be kept at a minimum.

16. At the same time Madam Speaker we will immediately implement the Public Procurement Act, which will strictly guide the granting of contracts within our Public Investment Program (PSIP). To further strengthen oversight and to ensure that every cent of public expenditure is accounted for we will set up within the Ministry of Works a Special Projects Team that will follow through on overseeing project tendering, monitoring and implementation. The Team will also be responsible for identifying Public Investment Projects that strengthen our resilience to climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. Given our susceptibility to climate change including more severe hurricanes, flooding and the possibility of other natural disasters we will explore funding options from donors, which will allow us to dramatically increase our spending in those areas.

17. More importantly Madam Speaker the projects undertaken will be in support of our stated growth agenda. In particular, we will continue to pursue the development of alternative energy sources including solar, wind, hydro and geothermal. Successful implementation of these investment projects will lead to reductions in the cost of energy, which is one of the major impediments to the growth of a buoyant manufacturing and tourism sectors. Beyond that Madam Speaker, we will undertake the rebuilding and refurbishing of our hospitals, schools, bridges, ports, and medical centers across the island. The financing of these projects will come from donor financing, loans and proceeds from the Citizenship by Investment Program.

18. Our robust PSIP will be supported with an increased emphasis on stimulating private sector growth. This will take the form of incentive programs for investors wishing to invest in the identified priority areas of agriculture and tourism. A rapid increase in private sector investment will help spur growth and have the added benefit of freeing up our resources to focus on other areas within the budget.

Like the 18 that have gone before it, this budget will facilitate stagnation and further decline in the growth engines of agriculture, tourism, light manufacturing, renewable energy and the cultural industries. It will allow the oversized (gonflay) Cabinet to preside over widening and deepening poverty and increased joblessness

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Resilience - The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself to increase its capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures. (ISDR)

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND BEING RESILIENT

The Impact Statement for the Comprehensive Disaster Management's Strategy for 2014 – 2024 is: Safer, more resilient and sustainable CDEMA Participating States through Comprehensive Disaster Management

Five critical factors are factors are encapsulated and reflected in the statement, either explicitly or implicitly, which are

1. The need to ensure that lives and livelihoods are saved;
2. The need to ensure that property and assets are saved/safeguarded;

3. The concept of resilience being paramount in an understanding of the guiding principles directing action at all levels;
 4. The critical link between Disaster Risk Reduction and its integration into the National Sustainable Development agenda be forged and understood; and
 5. The need to focus on vulnerable groups and overarching issues related to vulnerability within communities and stakeholders.
- The Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy for Dominica cannot be implemented since there is no Legislation to drive the Strategy. (Disaster Legislation still in draft from 2014)
 - This Strategy was supposed to be mainstreamed throughout all sectors/ Ministries. Resilience needs to be mainstreamed.
 - The office of Disaster Management (ODM) is woefully understaffed and ill equipped, lacks capacity to help build community resilience to hazards and increase the country's capacity to respond and recover from hazardous events. This can be achieved this through education, awareness and training programmes within communities. ODM is a Reactive Office.

Much is made of the boast that we are to become the first climate resilient country in the world. The climate resilient challenge is not new to us. We have been pursuing a low carbon climate resilient development strategy since 2012 with support from climate finance donors and development cooperation partners.

Over 100 million dollars of climate change donor money was available. What exactly did we achieve? In 2015 Tropical Storm Erika flooded away damages estimated at 100% of GDP... and in 2017 226% of GDP went south in devastating winds and flood waters of Hurricane Maria. How much of the damage visited on Dominica in those two disasters was the result of things that had to be done that were not done?

The resilience we expected never materialized because the climate resilience initiative had no philosophical or cultural moorings, no people consensus, no youth buy-in and through it all, the foundation principles of democratic governance were excluded from the leadership and management of national affairs.

A resilient country means resilient people, united in purpose, working together – all for each and each for all – under resilient systems of democratic governance

Resilient people means people with resilient sources of food, clothing; resilient shelter; resilient means of livelihood. Resilient people are God fearing, independent and empowered people who take individual responsibility for their well-being and progress and commit to collective responsibility for national development and the advancement of global civilization

The 2012 strategy told us that “Dominica has more than 100 pieces of legislation relating to the environment and natural resource management some dating back over one hundred years which focus on dealing with specific problems rather than taking an integrated approach to managing natural resources and the environment in a sustainable manner.

The strategy revealed that “There have been a number of reviews of Dominica’s environmental and resource management legislation over the past 15 years which have all come to the conclusion that comprehensive environmental and natural resource management legislation is an urgent priority in order to prevent irreversible environmental damage to the natural resources upon which Dominica relies for sustained economic and social development.

We learned 7 years ago that “A review under the GEF-funded Sustainable Land Management (SLM) project determined that consolidated Environmental and Natural Resource Management legislation is required as an urgent national priority in order to address the gaps and deficiencies.

Consequently, this Cabinet of 18 ministers agreed 7 long years ago to commence the consultation process to develop and draft comprehensive Environmental, Climate Change and Development Legislation for Dominica in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General.

According to the government's own climate resilient development strategy "This new legislation is expected to establish key legal and institutional frameworks needed to effectively implement Dominica's Low-Carbon Climate Resilient Strategy. Government expects to enact this new legislation by the end of 2012".

For more than four years, a draft of the proposed comprehensive legislation - the Climate Change, Environment and Disaster Management Act - has been bounced around between consultants and government officials. It is yet to reach the Parliament of Dominica.

A whole term of doing nothing about legislation to facilitate climate resilient development ends with Cabinet's own report card of failure cleverly presented in the introduction of the Climate Resilient Executing Agency of Dominica engineered to do the work Cabinet confirms it cannot do to another Cabinet

SO the legendary cannot-do Cabinet is no longer responsible. Others will get it done and the wish rides on a star that in 4 to 5 years, before the end of 2023, when the sun sets on this legislation, Dominica will be the first climate resilient country in the world, laughing in the face of climate change disasters and defeating the ravages of category 5 storms. For such is the stuff that the dreams of this cannot-do Cabinet are made of.

Ministerial responsibility for climate resilient development was assigned one year and four months ago... it was an assignment that confirmed the absence of skills and competencies for climate resilient development in the Cabinet for the better part of the last 19 years.

Did that make a difference? Are we any more climate resilient now than we were 16 months ago? Absolutely not. A cannot-do Cabinet is a cannot-do Cabinet regardless of what fancy arrangements are engaged to give a different impression. The truth is never fooled.

We warned that there was a need to rationalise and coordinate the work of CREAD with the various project implementation units that have been established to support ongoing recovery and climate resilience efforts.

For example, the Project Management Units set up under the three World Bank Projects (Dominica Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project (DVRP), Dominica Emergency Agricultural Livelihoods and Climate Resilience Project, and Dominica Housing Recovery Project). We advised that a key function of the CREAD should be the sole implementing agency for such projects to ensure effective harmonisation and coordination.

We were ignored.

CREAD represents an admission by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet of Ministers that they are incapable of providing the leadership and management required to deliver on the promise to make Dominica the first climate resilient country in the world

The CREAD legislation passed in December 2018 effectively relieved the constitutionally authorized Cabinet of ministers of the fundamental responsibility to build a climate resilient Dominica in every respect and every aspect and pass this sacred national duty to a parallel Cabinet – a stranger to the constitution.

The Climate Resilience Execution Agency of Dominica (CREAD) has since been operationalized with a complement of staff based on an approved organizational structure. For the period of its existence (8 months), the taxpayers of the country have not seen the benefit and cannot soundly justify the existence of such an organization, especially given the high operating budget. The approach to achieving the objective of CREAD is very suspect.

Consequently, since the onset of CREAD, there has been a further level of demotivation among public servants; particularly those in senior positions. These officers reported diligently to serve in whatever capacity that may be assigned to them; to facilitate the transition from any sort of destruction back to some sort normalcy. The reporting mechanisms

between CREAD and the Public Service is in a state of chaos; from all reports it appears that the role of CREAD if anything provides another layer in an already saturated bureaucracy. This is particularly hurtful for our engineers who worked tirelessly to clean-up and supervise re-establishment of the road network after Hurricane Maria. Instead of proposing some means of allowances or incentives, for these patriots, persons are now being paid exorbitant salaries with full allowances to issue another level of instruction without the provision of additional support or resources to facilitate the daily activities of these officers within the public services.

Eight months later, still no CREAD parliamentary oversight committee and information has not been forthcoming on the composition of the CREAD Policy Board required to approve projects that CREAD will oversee or implement. The Loubiere to Bagatelle road was earmarked for implementation under CREAD – what has been accomplished to date? Furthermore, the focus of CREAD appears to be on climate resilience only in the context of hurricanes. What about other disasters? What is CREAD's role in the implementation of the National Resilient Development Strategy that the Prime Minister referenced? Is that part of CREAD's mandate and if not what is CREAD?

A United Workers Party government will focus on the skills, competencies and capacities that characterize a climate resilient Dominican - the tools that he/she must be armed with to withstand and/or bounce back when the misfortunes of climate strike

The defensive skills and competencies should he/she have to deal with natural disasters

The capabilities he/she will need:

To avert indeed help to prevent the looting on steroids observed post Maria

To stand up against the politicization of relief supplies and look out for neighbors instead of rejoicing that the anti-resilience conduct of politicians in power resulted in personal benefit?

To be proactive, innovative and resourceful in recovering personal and community property and building back better

We will increase the resilience of public infrastructure to natural disasters in order to boost investment by protecting private capital and the ability to produce, transport and export after a natural disaster.

We will bolster construction codes and revise zoning procedures to enhance the resilience of public and private infrastructure as a matter of top priority

The United Workers Party will make Dominica resilient in every respect and every aspect; and we will shift our people from personal ambition to the resiliency of a larger Nature Island vision in the course of becoming the best place to live, work and enjoy life.

AFTER MARIA

We had lives to mend; people to shelter; bodies to feed; a broken society to heal; farms to replant; an economy to fix; roadways and bridges to rebuild; health, education and utility services to restore and so much, so much more.

How did we respond?

Our brothers and sisters at home and abroad, the international aid agencies and disaster relief organizations, the development cooperation partners and the entire global family of countries, people and governments represented by the United Nations rallied with empathy, purpose and commitment to assist us in this time of severe humanitarian crisis.

We were blessed with courageous, dedicated efforts above and beyond the call of duty from patriots at home and abroad as well individuals and organizations from neighboring and distant lands to secure a new improved Dominica. We thank them all. We thank as well the forgotten

thousands like me who repaired their properties and put their lives back together without one red cent, a sheet of galvanize, a block, a piece of wood or a nail from the state.

Much has been accomplished, but much more remains to be done and we would have been further along the recovery road if, instead of paying lip service to the truth that it cannot do it alone, government had, in the spirit of good democratic governance allowed all ideas to contend and all hands to be on deck.

Parliamentarians representing over 40 percent of the electorate in a parliamentary democracy were completely shut out of the state's relief, recovery and reconstruction program funded by the voluntary contributions and tax dollars from Dominica and the rest of the world. Parliament – the country's highest decision-making body – was completely side-lined to facilitate partisan vote-catching antics

No inclusiveness; no unity of purpose – instead we further divided what was not united; no elections with integrity; no fairness; no equity; no equal treatment of all of God's children; no respect for the constitutional rule of law; no parliamentary oversight for the operations of government; no acts of parliament to articulate and enforce climate resilient behaviors; no transparency; no accountability; no proper alignment of resources to strategic initiatives

As a result of the failure to provide sound democratic governance leadership for Dominica's post-disaster management responsibility to date, unity of purpose eluded us and things fell apart:

1) Food aid was not distributed fairly, equitably and transparently to all citizens based on need and according to the level of their need. In the past week, large quantities of relief supplies that expired either in containers at the port of entry or in the stores of the Office of Disaster Management (ODM) were dumped.

2) Relief supplies, livelihood restoration grants and housing recovery assistance paid for by tax payers at home and abroad were commandeered as the property of the Dominica Labour Party and

distributed in the names of Government MPs and prospective DLP election candidates

3) Thousands of tons of relief supplies were backed up at the main port of entry, while needy citizens struggled to find food.

4) Leadership and management performance fell well short of daily reports and promises painting a rosy picture

5) Thousands lost hope and left

Yet we hear the government did wonderfully well.

NATURE ISLAND OF THE WORLD GROWTH ENGINES

The budgets of the past 19 years have not worked because they have moved the narrative on economic advancement further and further away from the need for a national development philosophy that is in harmony with our true Nature Island character and identity.

This Nature island Development Philosophy gives meaning and purpose the agenda for change that will make Dominica the best place to live, the best place to work and the best place to enjoy life.

In accepting ourselves as Nature Island people, we accept that all human beings are considered divine and deserve to be treated equally. We accept that nothing in nature lives for itself and living for others is a rule of nature. We accept the responsibility to take care of ourselves as much as possible in the quest for lives peace, freedom and human dignity. We accept the challenge of living in harmony with the nature... protecting the natural environment, recycling, conserving, using renewable energy systems...

Agriculture

UWP Team Dominica will build a productive agricultural sector supplying local needs and trading a mix of high-value nature island products in global markets. This is pivotal to local food security and the sustainable growth of the Dominica economy. We will modernize the industry and

make it attractive to our young people by expanding market-driven production of high value foods, herbs, spices, livestock and marine products; better land use policies; and innovations in farm technologies, transportation and marketing. We accept the abundant blessings of Land, Water and Plants and their importance in feeding us, clothing us and sheltering us in life supporting ways and allowing us to help other nations to do the same. That's the first culture. Agriculture! How we FEED clothe and shelter ourselves and how we fund our participation in global affairs and our integration with the family of mankind by helping others to feed, clothe and shelter themselves.

On the Nature Island our plants on the land provide food and drink as well as materials for clothing and shelter. The myriad shades of green, the flowers of beauty model resilience and decorate our lives. We breathe clean air; we drink clean water; We eat natural food. On the nature island our food and drink should be our medicine and our medicine should be our nature island food and drink. Our herbs should heal the nation. Our herbs should heal the world. Therefore, no plant or herb should be illegal in the nature island of the World.

We will ensure that our agriculture secures our health and wellness by making us self-sufficient in natural food and drink and providing plant based solutions for our medical needs. By sharing these blessings with a world in need, we will grow our economy and generate wealth like we have never seen before.

In this change of government budget year, we will begin a comprehensive post maria rehabilitation program for coconuts, coffee, cocoa, avocados and breadfruit

Ideally, with 20,000 acres of our fertile land growing a well-planned, market driven mix of bananas, plantains, coconuts, root tubers, coffee, cocoa, cashews, ginger, vanilla, herbs, spices, cannabis and nature island flowers we set the stage to earn hundreds of millions of dollars annually from the export of these commodities and the health and wellness products that can be manufactured from them. Thousands of new sustainable jobs will be created and equitable value-chain participation

for all stake holders in the industries developed around our gift of nature island plants will ensure fair shares of the benefits of wealth creation for all.

In this basket of high performers in the global trade of agricultural products, Cannabis, because of its versatility in providing medicinal, food, clothing and shelter solutions offers the greatest growth prospects for our Nature Island economy

There is therefore an urgent need for Dominica to consider and come to terms with the issues involved in humanizing, legalizing and industrializing cannabis in the interest of national health, wellness, and resilient economic development.

When we included medical marijuana in our 2014 Manifesto – our Social Contract with the people of Dominica - as part of the plan to modernize and grow Dominica’s vital agricultural sector, we were guided by growing legalization of cannabis and the economic potential of cannabis extracts resolving unmet medical needs of patients worldwide.

The Prime Minister, continues to fall further and further behind regional leaders on another important socio-economic issue with massive nature island development implications

we will take a wholistic approach to building a viable cannabis industry that will protect traditional stakeholders and ensure no interest group is left behind in sharing the health, wellness and economic development benefits.

News reports from around the world allow us to witness how an industry in two to three years is energizing already robust economies, how jobs are being created... people are excited about learning new things, creating new non-harmful products... and just like that agriculture is now cool again for young people with all the opportunities for new employment in the cannabis products industry.

In this change of government budget year Dominica will get on board to take advantage of the increasing opportunities for job creation, foreign exchange earnings and a wealthier nation.

In addition, the availability and affordability of cannabis-based medicinal and wellness products will significantly reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases and thereby lead to a healthier nation.

A share of the global cannabis industry can deliver the lift we desperately need for the rural economy and strong livelihood restoration. As such, our Agenda for Change will have the legalization of cannabis with strict regulations to protect our children as a pillar to revive the vital agricultural sector in Dominica and as a fundamental part of the overall strategy for economic resilience.

Fisheries

Our fisherfolk need assistance in growing their businesses, which will in turn give them the ability to produce more. We are determined to implement plans and programs that will achieve that goal. In contrast to the sporadic and selective assistance currently being employed by this inept Labour government, the United Workers Party has devised a programme that will not only provide valuable assistance to fisherfolk, but will also allow them to grow successful fishing businesses.

FSGIP

The “Fisheries Sustainable Growth and Investment Programme” (FSGIP), rests on the premise that fishing is a business and it is necessary to make the investments that will facilitate its profitable growth and long term sustainability. Financed through a special revolving fund established at the AID Bank, the FSGIP has three (3) components;

- A Business Investment “package” prepared for our fisherfolk that will allow them to develop their trade, increase their catch, and facilitate individual long-term economic security. The first phase will comprise of fifty (50) packages, with more added as needed.
- An Infrastructure Development plan that focuses on modernizing our fisheries infrastructure; docks, piers, terminals, markets, fish houses and repair facilities.
- A Retirement & Medical plan (FiRM) that utilizes a portion of monies repaid and places them into a Social Security Retirement account and Medical Insurance account.

Fully implemented, the FSGIP will position our fisherfolk to take advantage of the growing need for fresh fish, both at home and abroad.

Investing in the Future

The Business Investment portion of FSGIP is meant to equip our fisherfolk with the necessary equipment that allows them to establish, build and operate a successful fisheries operation. It is an opportunity for them to acquire new tools and equipment at extremely favorable terms with minimal outlays.

To get this programme off the ground, we will provide the initial investment capital to purchase and assemble fifty (50) Fisheries Investment “packages”. All fisherfolk will be invited to take advantage of this programme. It forms part of the United Workers Party’s plan to stimulate the economy by providing seed capital that will allow our fisherfolk to immediately begin building their businesses.

Each “package” includes;

- New fiberglass boat with outboard engine
- New safety and medical equipment and supplies
- New marine communications equipment

New fish-finding equipment

To finance this segment of the FSGIP, we will establish a \$10m revolving fund at the AID bank. A special unit in the Fisheries Ministry will be established to put together the individual “packages” and to manage the approval process. In its initial phase, we will make available fifty (50) Investment “packages”, fully financed through the fund and payable over a fifteen (15) year period with a six (6) month grace period. To keep costs at a minimum for our fisherfolk, all equipment will be VAT-free.

The Fisheries Sustainable Growth and Investment Programme is designed to rejuvenate our fisheries industry which will lead to a secure financial future for our fisherfolk. A United Workers Party government will do what it takes to ensure that our economy is repaired and its productive sectors are once again productive. The FSGIP is but one of our many planned investments in the future of all Dominicans. It will be a major pillar in the economic revitalization of our country. Key aspects include;

Tourism

UWP Team Dominica will leverage the abundant blessings of green bestowed on our Nature Island to optimize the job creation and other economic benefits of Tourism. We will create a Nature Island visitor economy programme of special events, sports and festivals, along with health and education engagements that offer the lovers of nature a safe haven of peace and tranquility in a troubled world. Sharing our idyllic green spaces over time with the majority of human beings on planet earth will drive strong sustainable economic growth.

The Nature Island Development philosophy offers the lovers of nature around the world a brand in the advancement of civilization that can identify with and support to succeed especially in recognition of the fact that the true Nature Island of the world will automatically become, the first climate resilient country in the world. This will be nature’s safe haven of peace and tranquility in a troubled world that most human beings on planet earth would want to visit.

VISIT THE NATURE ISLE OF THE WORLD and LIVE!!!

The Best Air Quality in the World

The Most Surface Water per head of population

The First Terrestrial World Heritage Site in Caribbean

Best Oceanographic Forest in the Caribbean

The Rarest + Largest of the Amazonia Parrots

The Only Year Long Island Habitat of Sperm Wales

Four Mountains over 4k High

The Largest Boiling Lake in the Western Hemisphere

Two Freshwater Lakes; 1 among the deepest in the World

Most centenarians per capita in the world

It is a very serious offense against humanity for the isle of beauty, the isle of splendor; the nature island of the world; the nation with the most generous blessings of green per capita on God's earth to have so many of its precious children frustrated, sick, unemployed and condemned to hopeless dependency in lives of everlasting poverty.

The Three Lakes Project

Bringing 100's of Jobs, 1,000's of Tourists and 1,000,000's of Tourism Dollars to Valley

Dominica is blessed with a abundance of Natural Beauty unmatched in the Caribbean but we've been unable to monetize the country's assets to the benefit of our people. There are many reasons for that but one unmistakable fact is the inability of the present government, in office for a generation, to come up with ideas to develop the country, leading to long term prosperity.

In the valleys and mountains above our capital lies the beautiful and scenic residential communities of Laudat, Trafalgar, Wotten Waven and Fond Canie. Surrounding them is Nature in abundance; flora, fauna, our falls and lakes. With few exceptions, these assets have not borne economic fruit to these communities and the country at large. We have a plan to reverse that; its called The Three Lakes Project.

Every year during the tourist season, thousands of cruise visitors grace our shores, looking for places to go, our natural assets to explore; none are capable of visiting our most prized natural asset, the Boiling Lake, and that is due to the fact that it's an all-day hike. But imagine if they could! We're going to make that happen.

The Three Lakes Project concept is designed to bring hundreds of new jobs, none of which exists presently, to the citizens of The Valley, while opening up our lakes to visitor traffic. It includes the construction of an aerial tramway connecting all three lakes. The concept has five (5) phases, the first four (4) of which will be constructed concurrently:

1. Visitor Reception Terminal in Laudat

A Visitor Reception Area will be built in Laudat. This facility will function as a terminal and will include a number of amenities including restaurants with dining capabilities, washrooms, rest areas, and a welcome center where visitors will be able to purchase their passes to ride the Shuttle and Tram. There will also be a designated parking area for all vehicles; no vehicle will be permitted to travel to the Fresh Water Lake. This terminal will also serve as the jump-off point for visitors to Ti'Tou Gorge and the surrounding valley.

2. Lite Rail Shuttle

A Lite open-air electric rail system will be constructed. The system will use the current road and will link the Fresh Water Lake with the Visitor Reception Terminal. Visitors to the lakes must park their vehicles at the Terminal's parking areas and choose either to hike or take the rail shuttle to the Fresh Water Lake.

3. Aerial Tramway Terminal at Fresh Water Lake

An aerial Tramway terminal will be constructed at the Fresh Water Lake. This terminal will be the home platform for the tramway system and will be staffed by additional tour guides and maintenance staff. From this terminal, visitors will be able walk to the Fresh Water Lake or they may choose to board fully-enclosed but transparent gondolas for a ride that will take them over the Fresh Water Lake to the Boiling Lake, while enjoying the views of the mountains and valleys beneath them. Each gondola will have a tour guide as well.

4. Viewing and Reception Platform Above Boiling Lake

A tramway terminal will be built above the Boiling Lake and will include a viewing platform that allows visitors to look down at the Boiling Lake from above. The terminal will include a sitting area, lookout points with long-range viewing binoculars, and a restaurant, and will be staffed by more tour guides. A hike trail will be built from this platform to the Valley Of Desolation, allowing hikers to make the trip if they so desire.

5. Aerial Tramway to Boeri Lake

The tramway terminal at the Fresh Water Lake will be extended to facilitate the construction of a second aerial system to the Boeri Lake. When completed, any citizen or visitor will be able to, for the first time, visit all three lakes within one day.

To support this project, funding will be made available to expand the roads leading up to Laudat, with safety being top concern. When completed, hundreds of new jobs will be created; tour guides, tramway operators, bus operators, staffing at the Reception area. A percentage of the fees collected will go directly to the Village councils in the Valley.

Fully completed, the 3 lakes project will generate millions upon millions of dollars in new revenue every year from visitors to our shores. It will also create hundreds of new jobs in the tourism industry; whether it may be tour guides, maintenance staff, gondola operators, restaurateurs, or bus drivers, these jobs are non-existent today but we will bring them to life

when elected into office. The fees collected will be able to finance many other projects in the Valley, including much needed improvements identified by the local village councils. It's a win-win for all.

Energy

Electricity rates in Dominica are very high - about twice the regional average. It's a serious burden on citizens and over 60 percent of the business community cite the high cost of electricity as a major constraint to doing business.

The believes geothermal project on which 15.6 million dollars will be spent in this budget from a total of 72.9 million ear marked for construction of a 7MW plant must be part of a renewable energy solution aimed at reducing the cost of electricity to less than 6 cents US per KWH. This price must include servicing and maintenance costs as well as the costs to service the loan for construction.

It is essential that the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) to be concluded with DOMLEC includes a requirement that the consumer price for electricity be kept as close to this level as possible if Dominica is to attract investments into a more cost competitive business environment.

It is understood that the power company wants to pass on to the consumer costs for hurricane recovery and for diversifying into renewable energy. This will in effect nullify any benefits from the geothermal development and should be avoided.

The renewable energy solution which, must also include hydro, wind and solar, will improve the reliability of the service, while lowering the dependency on fossil fuels. Hydro, wind and solar systems are less demanding in terms of distribution infrastructure and are eligible for grant financing from donor conservation funds. We need to introduce voluntary energy efficiency standards for lighting and upgrade the building codes for energy efficiency.

Housing

Dominica's housing sector was plagued with many issues immediately prior to the passage of Hurricane Maria on 18/09/2017. Foremost among the issues were the following:

- Overcrowding particularly in the low-income housing sub-sector
- A large percentage or stock of low-income households
- Low to insignificant private sector participation in the provision of housing units sites and services
- Ad-hoc involvement of central government in home renovation and new small housing projects
- Inadequate monitoring of construction activities
- Poor construction techniques
- High incidence of squatting on state lands
- Low levels of skilled and semi-skilled workers
- Shortage of suitable serviced housing land in the larger settlements
- Low level of affordable financing
- High incidence of uninsured and under-insured properties in the national housing stock

Hurricane Maria caused catastrophic damage to the national housing stock.

Hurricane Maria did not only cause extensive destruction, but it also exposed the any weakness in the sector.

Our National Housing Strategy will move housing areas in need of relocation, to suitable lands; provide solutions for new housing needs by settlement; and encourage local private sector participation in the supply and financing of affordable housing to low and middle-income households nationally. We will prioritize environmentally friendly design and construction of buildings that will minimize environmental impact and ensure renewable, efficient homes.

The UWP considers housing to be the most pressing need facing Dominicans at present. Alleviation of the current housing crisis in the immediate, medium and long-term is necessary for improving the confidence of resiliency and quality of life of our people. To this end the UWP will immediately assuming the office of government implement the following:

1. Allow duty free importation of building material up to December 2019
2. Reduce Value Added Tax on Building Material from 15% to 10%
3. Publicize government's policy for the equitable distribution of housing assistance to all deserving households as well as establish District Housing and Development Control Offices to manage the distribution of assistance and monitor the reconstruction in the construction sector generally
4. Specify minimum qualifying criteria to provide housing assistance from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$75,000 to all deserving/qualified heads of households/homeowners over a period of six months
5. Develop and implement a special package of assistance to meet the housing needs of vulnerable groups - persons whose houses were completely destroyed by Hurricane Maria; home owners whose hurricane damaged properties were not insured, seniors, low-income single parents and the disabled.
6. In consultation with Dominica's Building/engineering/Architect Societies develop a program of intense training to increase the number of skilled and semi-skilled construction workers by at least 30 percent over a period of six calendar months.

This will create a robust building effort in the short term and create skilled labor jobs for locals and our brothers and sisters in CARICOM for which existing registration and taxation of wages and salaries will be retained in the country.

Transportation

UWP Team Dominica will transform our transportation infrastructure for participation in the international trade of goods and services with the construction of a state-of-the-art international airport, the expansion and modernization of our sea ports for efficient movement people and cargo. We will build a modern public transportation system with clean energy vehicles and bus terminals that will facilitate safe, on-time, comfortable travel for school, business, work or leisure to people in all areas of Dominica.

Music Industry

Worth in excess of \$130 billion globally. Trivialized and largely disregarded over the years by the current regime. Despite of our significant contributions to the artform and the creation of the Cadence genre, there is the lack of serious effort to create a vibrant local industry with the potential to capture international niche markets.

The Association of Musical Professional (AMP) needs now to be empowered and elevated into a national body fueled by government's subventions until it is able to sustain itself

Immediate attention will be placed on providing training in all facets of music and music production within the TVET framework and the granting of scholarships to students willing to pursue training in.

- Functional and classical music
- Performing arts
- Sound engineering certification,
- legal practitioners' competence in entertainment law.
- Sustainable development of the Artform as a tourism product and contemporary culture.

We will implement mentoring programs at primary schools using of the skills and competencies of artistes like Cornel Phillip and Gomez Drigo. The cost of losing these talents is greater than the cost of producing thousands of brilliant musicians.

Music will be a major component of a national Export strategy which would help manage the issue of crime and violence through the creation of an alternative medium wherein youths could be mentored and gainfully employed.

We need to forge the concept that the industry is sustainably hinged on pride in country which could be ingrained at an early age by ensuring that all schools are staffed with teachers who are trained in music.

To ensure affordability of Musical instruments and Equipment.

1. There will be no import duties on a personal Musical instrument every 5 years for professional musicians.
2. No import duties on all musical instrument for beginners enrolled in musical education programs and training programs which are recognize by AMP

Expected Returns

The rapid advancements in technology has accounted for limited returns from album sales, giving rise to live performances being the major income earning aspect of this time. It is envisaged that royalties will become more lucrative when we strive towards ensuring that the music and film industries develop a greater bond.

Based on this reality a UWP Government will ensure that our musicians are prepared to capitalize on these trends. This will facilitate:

1. Job creation (Booking agencies)
2. Increase revenues from personal income and corporate taxes
3. Provide service to hotels
4. Propel an upsurge in night life tourism
5. Contribute towards crime reduction
6. Promote the islands internationally
7. Generate foreign exchange.

WCMF and promotion of Dominica

For too long our young musicians are simply used to “fill up” the lineup of our home grown shows. What image can be developed when locals are given the lowest spots on the show? It is high time that they are promoted as our ambassadors through a holistic approach which encompasses the inclusion of, dancers, stylists and designers (a full spectacle of strictly Dominican talent)

Learning curve

(Band & Crew) policies will be developed to ensure that there is shared experience between locals and foreign artiste/ personnel contracted for performances/production. We shall implement programs where our young people will observe, serve as interns or understudy these individuals all to build competence and sustainability within our local music industry. It must be emphasized that exposure to knowledge and the granting of younger ones the opportunity to understand the nuances is pivotal to achieving greatness.

We must reiterate that the cost of losing the opportunity is greater than the cost of paying those who are capable of preserving it!!!!

Jobs and Private Sector Led Growth

The Nature Island of the World philosophy opens the doors to significant new economic growth and job creation opportunities from the many export industries that will be created around our herbs, spices and flowers

We will set up a \$200 million fund to provide seed financing and guarantees for new and existing export manufacturing operations. The Nature Island Private Sector Transformation Fund will be financed by passport revenues and donor grants to facilitate the creation of at least 3,000 new jobs by 2021. It will facilitate the emergence and profitable growth of export industries in agriculture, tourism, renewable energy,

arts and culture along with new ICT based ventures in artificial intelligence and robotics

With the termination of the use of disposable plastic plates and cups we will provide appropriate incentives to local entrepreneurs to establish facilities for the production of disposable containers from the leaves and stems of bananas and other suitable plants. This will create new jobs and earn vital income from exports to regional markets.

The Nature Island Private Sector Transformation Fund will finance modern manufacturing plants for the production of Essential Oils, condiments, teas, health and wellness foods and skin care formulations

The fundamental underpinning to reforming and rebuilding the Private Sector remains the ability of companies to access capital from the formal financial system. Financial institutions, both bank and non-bank have shouldered significant losses as a result of the uninsured or underinsured risks associated with building and commercial credit. Of critical mention, is the Picard housing stock impacted by the temporary/permanent exit of Ross University. These external shocks will no doubt contract lending in the near term, making it difficult for companies to access available commercial credit to rebuild and restock. This inability will affect the employment stock and as a consequence, both the Personal Income Tax estimates and by extension the Taxes on Goods and Services from both the import end and the retail end.

We will engage the ECCB, to assess the credit quality and overall credit conditions within the country with an aim to work with financial institutions through their respective associations to create a pathway to unlocking commercial credit in Dominica, mindful of risk pricing.

2019 BUDGET NUMBERS – Issues of Trust

1. On account of the loud, inexplicable silence on the Venezuela Petro Caribe debt controversy we do not trust the 2019/2020 estimates.

The Prime Minister who has asked the world to help Dominica become the first climate resilient nation in the world is the same man who publicly denied for years a Dominica debt of over 100 million US dollars owed to Venezuela and then turned around and accepted forgiveness for the same debt he insisted Dominica did not owe.

And no, it is not insignificant that the Prime Minister was forced to accept the debt he previously denied in the presence of aid donors, development cooperation partners and governments from around world assembled at a high-level pledging conference for Dominica and other Hurricane affected islands in the region.

Where is the capital gain conferred by the act of debt forgiveness? Why is it not captured anywhere in the capital revenues listed in the 2018/2019 estimates?

We asked at the time of the debt cancellation and subsequently in this Parliament in May 2018, for a full accounting of the more than 100 million US dollars the Prime Minister now accepts Dominica owes Venezuela after telling this Parliament the country had no such debt. We asked who received the Venezuela loan of more than 100 million US dollars and how and when and into what account was it received. We asked what was the loan money used for and on behalf of Dominica to date? What is the balance available from the loan funds as at the date of forgiveness? And How soon will the entity holding the loan from Venezuela to Dominica present a cheque to government for the 100 million US dollars less any amounts legitimately spent for and on behalf of Dominica? We are still waiting for satisfactory answers

The Minister of Finance told us in Parliament on May 1st, 2018:

“The cancellation of the debt... the \$100M which the Venezuelans have indicated, it is based on their fuel supply of petroleum products over the life of the Petro Caribe Agreement. That is the 40%.

“So, what is being done now is, once he made the announcement, there is a reconciliation of invoices, bills and receipts because in this agreement

you have three different players. You have PDVSA which is the National Petroleum Company of Venezuela who is the supplier of the petroleum products. You have the joint venture of this with Venezuela and Dominica and you have the wholly owned state company, Dominica National Petroleum Company who holds a 40% deferred amount in trust...

“Once this reconciliation is done, those funds will be sent from the joint venture to DNPC and DNPC will now transfer these funds to the Treasury of Dominica to the Consolidated Fund to be used for national development projects to respond to the disaster and other aspects in Dominica”.

The money from the debt has been held by the DNPC, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Government of Dominica. So what other money from the debt does the joint venture company have to transfer to the treasury? It is the DNPC, the government’s company that must transfer the funds to the government’s treasury.

The struggling people of Venezuela and the hurricane affected people of Dominica whom the Venezuelans have made a huge sacrifice to help simply want to know where is the money?

2. Last year, I drew parliament’s attention to what appeared to be a discrepancy of 140.7 million dollars in the balance of the Citizenship By Investment account reported by the Finance Minister as at June 30th, 2017.

The explanation given for the discrepancy is that \$13.5 million is being transferred monthly from the CBI account to an airport development account. But the \$149 million said to be in the account as at May 31st, 2018, means, without more, that the airport account transfers took place in the financial year commencing July 1st, 2017 and therefore have nothing to do with the balance on the CBI account at the end of the previous year June 30th, 2017. Again, we need a proper explanation. What happened to the \$140.7 million? Where the money gone?

We also need confirmation of the 337.5 million estimated to be in the Airport Development Account as at today July 31, 2019. This is consolidated fund money. Where is it being held? IS it in Dominica? And if it is not in Dominica under what lawful authority is it being held overseas?

140.7 million plus 337.5 million = 488.2 million. The people of Dominica want to know the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about their passport money?

This year madame Speaker, the estimates disclose that revenues from the Citizenship by Investment program in 2018/2019 was 226 million, 180.6 million or 44% less than the budgeted amount of 406.6 million.

So now we have a huge problem... something is not right.

(display Gazette)

In the Dominica Official Gazette of Thursday March 14th, 2019, pages 87 to 121, Financial Secretary Rosemond Edwards reports a list of “Successful applicants under the citizenship by investment program” for the period August 2018 to December 2018 – five of the first six months in the financial year 2018/2019.

Our passports are being sold for 100,000 USD each. But there are persons who get passports as part of a family package for example where the price to each member would average out at approx 56.25K USD. And investors in hotel projects are required to pay 50K USD per passport.

We will assume that the average price paid for each of the 3961 CBI passports sold between August and December last year, was 50K USD.

3961 passports @ US\$50,000 = US\$198.0 million or EC\$537.9 million

Accordingly, the estimated revenue for the full year is EC\$1.291 billion

How did we end up with only \$226.0 million over one billion dollars less?

CONCLUSION

The UWP Team Dominica stands as the only party ready and able to lead the change that Dominica needs after the colossal governance failures that reduced Dominica to the indignities of poverty, joblessness and dependency over the past two decades.

Dominica deserves better. The people of this blessed nature island need a fresh start and real change. There is no question in their minds that the United Workers Party is the change.

This is why we stand equipped and ready to receive the people's mandate to lead and manage their affairs in government.

- **We will** reduce the size of Cabinet by at least forty percent
- **We will** pursue the appropriate constitutional amendments and enact legislation to limit the time in office for any Prime Minister to 2 five-year terms and to establish a fixed date for general elections every five years
- **We will** Introduce Development of Nature Island People education and training programs for schools and work places across Dominica
- **We will** Facilitate the critical role of women in creating and nurturing a balanced, harmonious, thriving nation... Maternity leave will be increased to 16 weeks
- **We will** Secure our children from neglect and abuse and ground them in the discipline of successful global citizenship
- **We will** upgrade the salaries of all public officers to make them competitive with the salaries paid to public officers in other OECS countries. A 3 percent salary increase for all public officers will be provided for in this change of government budget year
- **We will** ensure that it makes personal economic sense to be a nurse, a teacher and a police officer in Dominica

- **We will** appoint all public officers who are serving for more than one year without an appointment
- **We will** Build a national work ethic in which public officers are committed to serving the state instead of being forced to enslave themselves to the will of Government Ministers
- **We will** bring an immediate end to the practice of using the resources of Dominica to benefit outside interests with multi million-dollar contracts for work Dominicans are ready, willing and able to do
- **We will** create a new sustainable Nature Island Economy with agriculture, tourism, renewable energy, ICT, the cultural industries and a water industry as major pillars
- **We will** grow the economy by 7% per year, create 12,000 new jobs by 2025, and increase the minimum wage and old age pensions by no less than 50%
- **We will** increase the minimum wage to no less than \$1,000 monthly
- **We will** increase pensions to senior citizens from the public purse to no less than \$500 monthly
- **We will** reduce the cost and maximize the ease of investing and doing business in Dominica
- **We will** restore livelihoods and bring back regular income to families in the farming communities of Dominica. THIS MEANS:
- **We will** enact Legislation and Regulations to Legalize, Grow, Process and Export Cannabis, and cannabis-based health and wellness products
- **We will** provide agricultural inputs and farm labour financial assistance grants to farmers to boost output of a range of high value products for export
- **We will** purchase at least two refrigerated vessels to transport Nature Island branded primary and processed agricultural products in the Caribbean

- **We will** provide low interest loans, financial grants and appropriate fiscal incentives to deserving tourist service providers and manufactures for refinancing, refurbishment and expansion of their establishments
- **We will** construct an eco-friendly, state-of-the-art, international airport,
- **We will** expand and modernize our sea ports,
- **We will** open the Delice/Petite Savanne road and complete the Roseau Road Reinstatement Project... Overall, we will and upgrade our road network and bridges to the highest standards of resilience to natural disasters,
- **We will** fully reinstate, restructure and operationalize the Public Works Corporation
- **We will** eliminate Dominica's dependency on fossil fuels and reduce the cost of energy by at least 30% within five years
- **We will** ensure there is fairness, equity, proper accountability, and no political interference in government's housing assistance programme
- **We will** provide duty free importation of all building materials for an initial period of three years
- **We will** expand the port-folio of the Minister of Kalinago Affairs, and amend the Carib Act to meet the needs of our Kalinago brothers and sisters.
- **We will** restore primary health care systems and upgrade tertiary care
- The State **will** pay the tuition fees of all the sons and daughters of Dominica attending the Dominica State College
- **We will** criminalize the sale of Diplomatic passports and the abuse and/or misappropriation of revenues from the sale of passports
- **We will** criminalize discrimination and victimization against citizens denied assistance from the public purse to which they are entitled for human development needs

We call on our nature island people to continue to put the country first, irrespective of partisan allegiance. Let us not place party before people and country. Let us unite over this common desire for change, knowing that those whose failure and destruction we seek to change from cannot present us with the change which we need.

Come ye forward, sons and daughters

Of this gem beyond compare

Strive for honour sons and daughters

do the right be firm be fair

toil with hearts and hands and voices

we must prosper, sound the call

in which everyone rejoices

all for each and each for all

May the ancestors be pleased.

Thank you, Madame Speaker.