

Nov 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

## **ROCOGNISING THE ROLE OF PEOPLE, LEADERSHIP, RESOURCES AND INSTITUTIONS**

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### **Introduction**

History is replete with examples of leaders who, being ahead of their time, made pronouncements that were only recognized for their profound meanings years after being uttered or published. It is also an unfortunate reality that many societies failed to recognize the significance of the leadership offered by individuals, only to come years later to accept their mistakes and folly in refusing wise counsel. The importance of leadership that is wise, experience and knowledgeable, that sees potential and is able to draw out the best from others, even when they themselves lack the confidence must never be taken for granted. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has benefitted from such leadership, and the voters in recognition of this has re-elected the Unity Labour Party lead by our experienced, knowledgeable, and dedicated comrade leader to forge ahead with our country's development. Recently, our comrade leader has presented another gem, for the consideration of our people in outlining the ULP's overall strategy to national development and the systematic way things are done by our forward-thinking government. We are asked to reflect on the statement "nothing is possible without people, nothing is doable without leadership, nothing is attainable without the mobilization of adequate resources, and nothing is sustainable without properly crafter institutions". The 8 words we are urged to pay close attention to are, possible, people, doable, leadership, attainable, resources, sustainable and institutions.

### **Developing our People, Providing Leadership**

When the ULP came to office in 2001, it was met with an undesirable situation that affected our human resource as a country that being the inadequate training especially at post-secondary and university levels. The preparation was woefully even worst as only 40% of out 11-year-old were provide with space in secondary school, raising questions about the other 60%. Our ULP government had the plan to build a modern, competitive, many-sided, post-colonial economy and knew that this was not possible without a well-trained and prepared population. The education revolution was implemented to address this situation, to train and educate our people to be the drivers of this new economy that would take SVG forward. The components of the education revolution were ambitious, and included universal access to secondary education, expanding post-secondary options in the traditional areas as well as adding new and emerging programs, adult and continuing education, and significant investments in university education. A policy like this one required bold and decisive leadership, the kind that took on the World Bank and other agencies that warned against the stated timeline for the implementation of universal access to secondary education. Just a few years earlier, the leadership of the then NDP government that determined the universal access would only be up for consideration in 2030 and deemed it impossible with the full agreement of the World Bank. That moment in time was testament that nothing is doable without quality leadership, and our government lead by comrade Ralph, showed the international agencies, the incompetent NDP, that it was doable and attained universal access to secondary education by the year 2005. Today because of the quality of the leadership and the dedication of our people, who have benefitted immensely from the very successful education revolution, our country is well on the way to building that new economy. It all started with leadership that insisted that it was doable, working with our people who made it all possible.

## **Resource Mobilisation, and Sustainable Implementation**

The herculean task needed to bring SVG to this point involved the implementation of a number of very costly initiatives, requiring a level of funding that was beyond our local capacity. One can remember the response of the former leader of the NDP, when pressed on the matter of funding for the AIA if his party was elected and the existing partners were to withdraw their support. His response defined his leadership and doomed him as the emphatic response “the project will be dead” was his conclusion having asked the interviewer who inquired of him whether he would go seeking alternative funding sources “find it where”? It underscores the absolute necessity of mobilizing resources if we are to attain any success in delivering on our mandate. The construction of the Rabacca bridge and other bridges, the AIA, the modern port, roads, hospitals, schools, climate adaptation projects, essentially everything we need to accomplish all required the mobilization of financial resources. Our country’s leadership over the last 23 years has developed partnerships with agencies and friendly countries that have enabled us to mobilize adequate resources to deliver programs and projects for the benefit of Vincentians. To achieve sustainability for the initiatives implemented by the government, a very systematic approach is being taken to create institutions that will provide the governance framework within which the initiatives are implemented. Take the expansion of tertiary level education through the creation of a community college, that is governed by its own act as just one example. Our government continues to adapt the approach of putting institutional arrangements in place that would ensure the long-term implementation of the programs in a most efficient manner. This approach is evident in many other cases, including the creation of BRAGSA, the Accreditation Unit and the FSA among other institutions that are responsible for various elements of government’s

policy. This very systematic and holistic approach to policy development, implementation and sustainability is one of the many reasons that the ULP has been so successful in government since 2001.

## **Conclusion**

The statement by our comrade, shows the significance of people, our leadership, resources and institutions working together to achieve the stated goal of building a modern, competitive, many-sided, post-colonial economy that is at once local, national, regional and global. Our country is part of a global village, where change occurs constantly and to respond to these changes, we must have a well-prepared people, with responsive leadership ready to take on challenges. It is worth remembering that nothing is possible without people, nothing is doable without quality leadership, nothing is attainable without the mobilization of adequate resources, and nothing is sustainable without properly crafted institutions.