

March 29th 2018

The Unity Labour Party - 17 years of tremendous progress

Introduction

March 28th 2001 will always be remembered as a very important day in the socio economic developmental history of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It was the day when almost thirty four thousand Vincentians went to the polls and cast their vote for the Unity Labour Party, a signal that they wanted a new direction for their country, and an end to the backward anti-socialist programmes of the opposition New Democratic Party.

Some fifty six percent of the persons who voted in that election, supported the ULP. It was a clear mandate that the voters supported the programmes of the ULP, as outlined in the election manifesto. It was a clear mandate that the people of SVG were in love with the people-centred development approach as outlined in the 2001 manifesto.

Since then, the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines have returned the ULP to office, after elections in 2005, 2010 and 2015. Continuously, it's the longest for any government in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and with one leader, throughout the seventeen years. The NDP has tried its utmost to wrest power away from the ULP, and they have failed badly, because they could not present plans and programmes to match those outlined by the ULP. The NDP became so desperate, that they resorted to all sorts of unconventional election tactics, at one point utilizing the services of SCL the "mind benders" out of the United Kingdom, to run a nasty dirty campaign against Comrade Ralph. All this came to naught, and the result is that the NDP is now the longest serving party in opposition, in the history of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

17 years of remarkable progress

The ULP can boast an impressive list of achievements over the 17 years in office, all of which have impacted positively, the lives of Vincentians. But above all, the education revolution has been the shining star in the list of achievements. The education revolution has touched the lives of every Vincentian, from the universal access to secondary school, to the expansion of preschools, to the provision of scholarships and bursaries and other soft loans, for tertiary level studies.

The ULP government has transformed the delivery of education in terms of access, spread, and quality. In the process it has altered immeasurably for the better, the

lives of children, young persons, adults, entire families and the nation as a whole. Never in the history of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has any government emphasized the education of its people, as the ULP has done since 2001. The Education revolution has so far been a spectacular success, but, as always, more still needs to be done.

Going forward, the ULP will deepen the education revolution to establish a well-managed, effective and efficient education system, which focuses on quality, relevance, living and production. The ULP also wants to promote further, standards of excellence and professionalism, and to promote more community involvement in education.

Then there is the Argyle International Airport, the largest capital project ever attempted and completed by any government in the history of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This project is the catalyst for the future development of the country, and is critical for the tourism and agriculture sectors. Already we are seeing activity which is an indication of the usefulness of the international airport.

What of the other achievements? They too have touched the lives of all Vincentians. The ULP has constructed more houses for the poor and the middle class, than any government in the history of the country. The ULP has designed a programme called “turning dead capital into live capital” which allowed Vincentians to obtain titles to the lands they were squatting on. With this title deed, many Vincentians were able to obtain funding to better their lives, and those of their children.

There has been an intensive programme to improve the infrastructure of many of the buildings owned by the State, but used for the delivery of services. So for example, primary and secondary schools, police stations, clinics and hospitals have been repaired and rebuilt. The ULP administration will go down in history as having constructed the most schools in the State.

Every sector of the Vincentian society has been positively affected by the ULP administration during the last 17 years in office. These include the administration of justice, repairs to the country’s road network, the care of the elderly and disadvantaged, repairs to the country’s sea ports, the work to diversify the agricultural sector, and the unprecedented approach in the diplomatic sector, that has resulted in so many benefits for the country.

Conclusion

Never before has the country seen such a leadership, with a vision and a philosophy as set out by the ULP administration. The ULP has been congratulated for the way it has kept the country together, in the face of tremendous difficulties, such as the several natural disasters which have affected the country, and the

global economic meltdown of 2008. Through all this, the ULP has kept a tight control of the economic wheel to navigate successfully through all the difficult times.

By comparison, the opposition New Democratic Party has shown no leadership, no love for Vincentians, and continues to bad mouth the country and pull down Vincentians at every opportunity. They have shown themselves to be a backward element, exhibiting learned helplessness, and a lack of faith in our people.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines today is a far better place to live as compared to 2001. We have made remarkable progress in all developmental indices, thanks to the quality of the leadership of the ULP government.