

June 8th 2018

## **The Splendid Record of the ULP and Comrade Ralph in Advancing the cause of Women in SVG – Part two**

### **RECORD OF THE COMRADE AND ULP**

In Parliament, in opposition (1994 – March 28, 2001) and in government (March 29, 2001 until May 2018, thus far), Comrade Ralph has been in the forefront on these issues relating to women. Examples abound of practical initiatives by the ULP government, including:

1. Legislation touching and concerning women and girls such as: The Domestic Violence ACT; the Status of Children Act; the Adoption Act; the Trafficking in Persons Act; and amending various pieces of legislation on criminal law and procedure which further protects the community (including women).
2. Enacting legislation which better protects all workers, including an increasing number of women in the actual workforce, such as a new Protection of Employment Act (the original one was passed by an earlier “Labour” government); and the Occupational Safety and Health Act.
3. Setting up a Major Crimes Unit in the Police force, within which there is a specialized section on Sexual Offences and Violence Against Women; the establishing, too, of a Trafficking in Persons Unit in the Police Force.
4. Strengthening the state administration to better protect women and girls.
5. The enlargement of material benefits for males and females but disproportionately in favour of women including the establishment of the Home-Help-for-the-Elderly.
6. Providing or contributing greatly to the provision of early childhood education from about 20 percent of the relevant population (3 to 5 years old) to in excess of 90 percent today, thereby freeing up more women for the labour force.

7. Creating, or overseeing the creation of, over 6,000 new jobs since 2001, half of whom are women. The labour force has had a huge increase in the participation rate of women.
8. Carrying out an Education Revolution which has seen all girls at primary schools; all girls at secondary schools (under the NDP under 40 percent went to secondary school); open access to quality education at post-secondary education at the SVG Community College (over 60 percent are females) and university education (over 70 percent are females) \_\_\_ at UWI, Vincentian students are the largest single number from non-campus countries. Nursing students at the SVG School of Nursing, over 95 percent of whom are females, receive a free education and a monthly stipend of EC \$1,000 (US \$400) \_\_\_ an initiative specifically proposed and implemented by Comrade Ralph and the ULP.
9. Implementing a Housing Revolution since 2001 from which women have disproportionately benefitted (nearly 2,000 low-income houses built; over 4,000 building lots distributed; over \$30 million of building materials distributed; 100 percent mortgages at the State-owned commercial bank for central government employees, since October 2001 from which hundreds of women and families have benefitted).
10. Increasing the number of women in the Police Force from roughly 20 to in excess of 130 since 2001, including more women in the senior ranks; the youngest Assistant Superintendent of Police, a woman, was so appointed when she was only twenty-five years old; she is now in her early 30s and is the youngest Superintendent ever, not only in SVG but also in the Caribbean.

### **WOMEN IN POSITIONS**

Let us now examine the actual advance of women in the public service and the state administration.

Over the ULP's 17 years the following have occurred:

- (i) Two of the four Cabinet Secretaries have been women; the last two have been so, including the current Cabinet Secretary; the longest service has been a woman.
- (ii) The two Accountant Generals have been women; the current one was recently appointed; the two deputies have been women;
- (iii) The Comptroller of Customs and Excise is a woman.
- (iv) The two Directors of Audit have been women; so, too; their deputies;
- (v) The two Clerks of the House of Assembly have been women.
- (vi) The longest serving Attorney-General ever in SVG has been a woman (2001-2017).
- (vii) The President of the Family Court, the Chief Magistrate, and Registrar of the High Court, are women.
- (viii) The Chief Justice of the OECS is a woman, unanimously agreed by the OECS Authority of which Comrade Ralph is the longest-serving member continuously, and at the time of the CJ's appointment the only lawyer thereon.
- (ix) Over 70 percent of the principals in the primary and secondary schools are women; one of the two Directors of the Community College has been a woman; three of the four Deans currently are women.
- (x) Approximately one-half of the Consultants (Senior Doctors) at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital are women, up from a handful. The Hospital Administrator and Deputy Hospital Administrator are women. The Chief Medical Officer is a woman. In other senior positions in health, women are very well represented.
- (xi) Currently the Permanent Secretaries in the following six Ministries are women: Education; Social Development; Housing; Economic Planning; Tourism; and Foreign Affairs. There has been one PS in Economic Planning since 2001 and she is a woman \_\_\_ she is now retiring.

- (xii) Critical Departments in government and state enterprises are headed by women: Labour Department (Labour Commissioner and her Deputy are women); the Commerce and Intellectual Property Office (CIPO); which was set up by the ULP government; the Chairperson of the Accreditation Board; the Chairperson of the Central Water and Sewerage Authority; the Chairperson of the SVG Electricity Services; Chief Fisheries Officer at Fisheries Department; the Director of the National Emergency Management Office; the Manager of the state-owned radio station is a woman; so, too, is the Director of the Agency for Public Information; the Chief Education is a woman; also the Director of Airports.
- (xiii) The immediate-past Supervisor of Elections is a woman and the current one is also a woman. The opposition NDP virtually “terrorised” the immediate-past Supervisor of Elections.
- (xiv) In terms diplomatic representation overseas, women have been most prominent since the ULP took office in 2001; its first appointment of the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of SVG to the United Nations in New York was a woman; the second was a man; and the third (the current one) is a woman. Currently at the SVG’s Mission to the United Nations the remainder of the staff save and except the driver are all women: The Deputy Permanent Representative is a woman; the first woman (31 years old) ever to be appointed to the post of Ambassador to the United States of America and the Organisation of American States (OAS) was done by the ULP government; the current Ambassador is a woman; since the ULP government established the SVG Embassy to Cuba the two Minister Counsellors (Deputy Ambassadors) have been women; the current Minister/Counsellor of the SVG Embassy in Venezuela is a woman; the current Minister Counsellor (Deputy High Commissioner of SVG to the United Kingdom is a young woman (32 years old) to a long-serving man; so, too, the Counsellor position at our Embassy in London is a woman; at the SVG New consular Office, both the Investment and Trade Promotion Office and the Consul are women.
- (xv) Seven of the sporting and cultural Ambassadors, who are accorded the privilege of carrying a diplomatic passport, are women.

- (xvi) The two holders of the office of Governor -General's Deputy have been women; the current one is. Since 2001, the ULP government has caused to be appointed one Governor -General but two Deputies.