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## Good News, Bright Future

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by

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## Unity Labour Party

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### Introduction

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2001, the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines elected this Unity Labour Party for the first time to govern the affairs of this blessed country. Since then, the people continuously re-elected the ULP and Comrade Ralph in 2005, 2010 and 2015.

This period, starting from 2001 to current day, was mired with numerous challenges such as increase in global terrorism that saw new stringent travel regulations implemented, and an economic crisis which affected us negatively by slowing down economic growth between 2009-2011. This economic crisis plunged many of our neighbouring islands into IMF structural adjustment programs. SVG also experienced the adverse effects of man-made climate change that saw SVG's Gross Domestic Product slashed by 15 percent, in 2013 floods.

Despite these challenges, the ULP's quest since 2001 in building a better and brighter future for all Vincentians has been very successful, and continues to manifest itself in many ways, from the education revolution, to the completion of a modern state of the art international airport, the diversification in agriculture, new hotel development at Mt Wynne Peters Hope, and the completion of a new state-of-the-art modern medical complex. These are just a few of the good news items which are essential in securing and building a brighter and better future for all.

### The Good News

It's been two and a half years since the last general election, where you the people gave this magnificent party a further mandate to govern. Since then, we have seen the completion and operation of the Argyle International Airport. Let's not forget that the IMF stated in its 2017 Report after their consultations, that the SVG tourism sector will benefit from this marvellous project, due to increased connectivity. This was evident from the 2018 tourism statistics, which showed that stay-over visitors increasing by 7.3 percent between January and April this year compared to the same period in 2017.

Furthermore, under the agriculture diversification program, we have seen extensive development in cocoa and coffee production alongside traditional production in various root crops such as dasheen and arrowroot. It must be stated, that in cocoa alone, we have seen over 350 persons employed in the cocoa industry and that SVG is now exporting chocolate bars to the European market. Some 75 thousand chocolate bars were sold in the first year and estimates are that some 25 tonnes of cocoa will be exported this year.

Similarly, in coffee production, we will be exporting 40 tonnes of coffee this year, and the Shenton Coffee Company is looking to increase exportation next year up to 120 tonnes.

Arrowroot farmers have benefited this year to the tune of EC \$1.3 million dollars in payment for their crop. This was disbursed mainly in the North Windward area to two hundred hardworking arrowroot farmers, and will no doubt trickle down into the homes and uplifting the standard of living for these persons.

We have had the leasing of various fishing centers such as that in Bequia and Owia. These centres have employed hundreds within the fishing industry, including those involved in the process of labeling, cleaning and packaging, and those who are directly engaged in fishing, selling their produce to fishing companies such as the Bequia Seafood Company.

With all these initiatives, we have further development in the tourism sector through the construction of hotels such as Black Sand, along with construction of a government-owned hotel.

This will see over EC\$300 million dollars being invested in the Central Leeward, Mt. Wynne/Peters Hope area. The Opposition New Democratic Party criticised the government on this development that will see over 650 rooms built and thousands employed directly and indirectly, from chefs and cooks as well as jobs in the day-to-day management of these hotels, to farmers, taxi operators and craftsmen.

Additionally, this week we have seen the opening of state-of-the-art Modern Medical Diagnostic Centre, staffed with 120 persons, who will combine with a Cuban delegation to offer a wide range of primary and secondary healthcare services including chemotherapy and kidney dialysis. This project was built at the cost of \$42 million dollars, and was also opposed by the New Democratic Party. The NDP felt that the people in rural areas, should not have such a facility because it is near the La Soufriere volcano. What nonsense!

### **Bright Future**

There is a bright future ahead for all Vincentians, once the ULP administration remains in office. The foundation for this has been laid by the work of the political leader of this mass party, known as Prime Minister Ralph. E. Gonsalves. Dr. Gonsalves has demonstrated great leadership skills that has allowed the country to survive and prosper, during one of the worse economic and financial crises.

Dr Gonsalves has around him a cadre of young leaders that is the envy of any political leader in the Caribbean. The group of Camillo Gonsalves, Luke Browne, Saboto Caesar, Carlos James and Kezron Walters, are all bright young Vincentians, with proven leadership skills, and a passion for the development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. While “the Comrade” will provide the leadership and guidance, they will be in the forefront of the quest to building a modern post-colonial economy. This economy will be driven by Information Communication Technology, Agriculture and Tourism, which will create thousands of jobs, through various projects which the NDP has vehemently opposed.

Only the ULP can secure a brighter and better future for you and your family, not the backward thinking and inept NDP.

Have a fun filled and peaceful carnival!