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UNITED
PROGRESSIVE
PARTY

GOVERNANCE MANIFESTO

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Part 1: New Economy

Part 2: Governance

GOVERNANCE MANIFESTO

1. Good governance is required for any entity to function at its optimum in order to meet the agreed objectives for its existence.
2. Individuals come together in the form of a State since this has evolved as the best way to share resources for the benefit of all. Those individuals who come together expect that those who govern them would do so in a manner which would reflect fairness - that is fairness in the allocation of resources and fairness in the presentation of opportunities.
3. Governance is the process of leading and running a country. Good governance therefore is concerned with making and implementing the best possible process for making decisions about the affairs of a country.
4. Countries which do not practice fairness increasingly devolve into a sense of apathy among the people, a draining of resources through a lack of investment and a loss of human resources to other states, a sense of hopelessness and a cycle of poverty. The United Progressive Party believes that the evolution of a Good Governance model for Barbados is one of the most important issues to be addressed in seeking to restore Barbados to hope and prosperity.
5. When examining the principles of Good Governance it is important to reflect on the Constitution of Barbados which is the Supreme Law of Barbados. In its preamble the people then resolved that *"the operation of the economic system shall promote the general welfare by the equitable distribution of the material resources of the community, by the human conditions under which all men shall labour and by the undeviating recognition of ability, integrity and merit"*.
6. It is clear that the corruption which threatens to engulf Barbados also threatens these fundamental principles set out in the Constitution of Barbados.

Managing Public Finances

7. Public finances concern the collective assets and liabilities of the taxpayers and they ultimately bear the consequences of poor management. Government through civil servants, the Cabinet and members of Parliament are entrusted with their oversight.

Auditor General's Report

8. The Auditor General is given the responsibility to carry out an audit of the activities of Government in managing these resources. Section 113 of the

Constitution establishes the office of the Auditor-General and at subsection (2A) provides:

The Auditor-General may on his own initiative carry out examinations into the financial management of Ministries, departments, statutory authorities and government-controlled entities, including the manner in which those Ministries, departments, statutory authorities and government-controlled entities use their resources in discharging their functions as regards the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of those resources.

9. Section 113(6) also provides that “Nothing in this section shall prevent the performance by the Auditor-General of– (a) such other functions in relation to the accounts of the Government and the accounts of other public authorities and other bodies administering public funds in Barbados as may be prescribed by or under any law for the time being in force in Barbados;”
10. This gives the Auditor General the power to act outside the narrow confines of laying his Report before the Parliament.

The Progressive Party will:

- Review the sections in the Constitution under which the Office of the Auditor-General.
- Enact or amend existing legislation so that the Auditor General may offer his findings for consideration to the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to determine whether any charges should be brought against any public official or member of the private sector.
- Strengthen the audit capacity of the Office of the Auditor-General by providing more human and technology resources to that office.

The Public Accounts Committee

11. The Committee of Public Accounts (PAC) is a critical mechanism to ensure accountability. This parliamentary committee is entrusted with the vital function of safeguarding public money.
12. The relationship between the formal powers of the PAC, and their successful performance is conditional upon the behaviour of committee members, the availability of independent sources, and the media and civic society's interest in scrutinizing those government accounts.
13. The Progressive Party will:
 - Amend the PAC Act and enhance the power of the Committee so that it can effectively (i) scrutinise value for money; (ii) hold the government, and

- civil service to account for the delivery of public services; (iii) hold to account private companies that spend government money.
- Require ministers to report to parliament quarterly the progress their ministries and statutory boards are making in responding to the problems that the Auditor General reported.

Award of Contracts and Grants

14. The Award of Contracts is perhaps the area in which there is considerable room for abuse and where the most pressure is put on public officials to break the law. While it is the case that Tenders Committees make recommendations to Government, the Government need not accept the specific recommendation. Sometimes there might very good policy reason not to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mechanisms need to be implemented to ensure that this discretion is not abused.
15. The Progressive Party will:
- Review the laws for the award of all Government contracts and within that context, consider the appointment of a Contractor-General.
 - As far as it is practicable make the application and award of contracts for the provision of goods and services to the Government of Barbados transparent through the use of information technology.
 - Make the process for the application and award of grants transparent through the use of information technology.

Abuse of Office

16. Assuming public office is at the same time assuming a position of trust as far as managing the assets of taxpayers is concerned. It is an expectation that public office will not be abused to benefit the holder, or those who have connections with them.
17. The United Progressive Party will:
- Review the anti-corruption legislation to ensure that the best piece of legislation will be enacted within the first quarter of the term of this government.
 - Make it mandatory that persons with access to government revenue declare their assets before they assume public office, file their assets every year, and declare their assets when they are leaving public office.
 - Implement whistle-blower legislation to avoid discrimination and repercussions against persons who disclose malfeasance.

Access to Government Information

18. The main principle behind freedom of information legislation is that people have a right to know about the activities of public authorities, unless there is a good reason for them not to have such information. The Progressive Party will implement legislation which will:
- Ensure everyone has a right to access official information encouraging government owned entities to make information available as of course.
 - Applicants would not need to give you a reason for wanting the information.
 - The onus will be on the official to justify not providing the information.
 - There would be limited exemptions for the disclosure of information such as individual medical and welfare records.

Maintenance

19. It is universally acknowledged in Barbados that Barbados has a poor track record in the maintenance of its assets. This has resulted in several crises over the years, the most recent one being the failure of the south coast sewerage system. It is also the case that buildings have been left abandoned because of accumulated environmental concerns. Examples of these include the "old NIS Building" on Fairchild Street, Bridgetown and the Carnegie Public Library.
20. The Progressive Party will:
- Make it a mandatory requirement that every government agency set aside sums in its budget for the maintenance of the government owned buildings for which it has responsibility.
 - Make it a mandatory requirement for sums to be set aside to carry out environmental audits of those buildings and to take immediate action where necessary.

Getting value for money from the public sector

21. For many years a part of Barbados' stability was rooted in a well trained civil service which understood its duty to the Citizens of Barbados and took pride in being able to stave off partisan political interference while at the same time carrying out the policies of each administration under which it worked. The Progressive Party believes in a clean government staffed by persons whose character is marked by their honesty and integrity, and who are committed to rendering impeccable service to their country. The civil service therefore needs to be restructured.

22. The Progressive Party will:

- Cut out unnecessary and duplicated posts and instead staff offices like the Audit Office and the Office of Public Counsel.
- Allow natural attrition to take care of overstaffing in specifically identified areas.
- Implement public sector reforms aimed at improving the conditions of service, developing national capacity to revitalise our economy
- Improve the processes by which performance is monitored, assessed and evaluated in the public sector.

Leveraging technology for efficiency

23. Barbados is becoming more heavily regulated as it seeks to meet the various international standards being implemented across the globe. Barbados must respond to the increased regulatory burden in the provision of Government services. Technology will be the basis upon which cutting down the time for transactions is required.

24. The Progressive Party will:

- Audit transactions so that as far as practicable Government can cut out certain steps in these transactions and eliminate the requirement for Citizens to interact with several government agencies.
- Require all Government services and public interactions including payments to be available digitally.
 - a. Renew their driver's licence, and pay road tax for their vehicle(s);
 - b. Renew a passport;
 - c. Change and update official addresses on government records; and,
 - d. View schedules for public services such as transportation, and garbage collection;
 - e. Apply to various government agencies and departments for registration certificates, permits, and licences.
 - f. Pay parking fines and traffic tickets digitally.
- Improve the transparency of public spending by having the progress of major projects available online so that citizens assess the performance.
- Develop policies and standards to reflect international best-practice in areas such as online identity verification and mobile payments that are essential to the growth and development of the digital economy.
- Introduce a ticketing system for minor road traffic offences in the Road Traffic Act.

Ensuring Justice

12. Good governance follows the rule of law, therefore the legal framework should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights. Decisions made must be consistent with relevant legislation and common law. Citizens of the country must believe that they are all treated equally and in a way that acknowledges their intelligence and dignity.
13. The United Progressive Party understands the importance of every person having access to justice and to a society that is well ordered in which the rule of law is upheld. In addition, it is of paramount importance that the legal infrastructure be reformed to ensure the expediency of matters.
14. To this end, our policy involves four main pillars. These include the following (a) Institutional Strengthening (b) Increasing Access to Justice through ADR procedures (c) Community justice Programs (d) Technological Advancement.

Institutional Strengthening

15. Within the legal system there is the general need to strengthen the institutions which administer justice. The United Progressive Party continues to highlight the importance of community organisations and will be willing to work with these organizations to assist with the dispensing of justice. This is particularly the case as it relates to law enforcement and juvenile justice. There are a number of community organizations that work with rehabilitation of juveniles, including domestic crisis intervention.
16. The Progressive Party proposes to not only train government personnel but also personnel from these organizations are trained in order that strong collaborative arrangements can be forged to prevent recidivism.
17. Intimately linked to institutional strengthening is the need for a number of organizations within government to increase their capacity. The UPP recognizes the need for resource personnel who will be key to realizing the objectives of the organization. There is a need throughout the government service to reposition persons with necessary skills and expertise in various departments.

Accessing ADR Procedures

18. Despite several attempts to introduce ADR procedures in the legal system, one of the factors that has hampered the systemic use of ADR procedures such as mediation is the lack of capacity. There has been the implementation of Practice Directions No1 of 2016 which may be subject to renewal at the end of

December 2017. These instruments have had little impact in reducing delays within the court system due to inadequate resources and personnel.

Community Justice Programs

19. The United Progressive party proposes a strategy that will involve working with juveniles, first time offenders and persons under the age of 25. These individuals will be taught life, business and technical skills to ensure that the cycle of crime and violence is broken.

Community Mediation Training

20. Community Justice programs seek to revolutionize the criminal and civil justice system in Barbados. Hence there is a need to build capacity through enhancing the role of persons who can dispense justice. It can be proposed that justices of the peace can be trained in community mediation.

Leveraging technology for greater efficiency

21. It is clear that as within the Civil Service there would be great advantage to leveraging technology so that the Justice System can dispose of matters in a more timely and cost effective manner.

22. The United Progressive Party will:

- Amend the legislation so that individuals are not charged for marijuana in their possession for personal use.
- Carry out an audit of the justice procedures to determine which steps can be cut out and amend legislation where necessary to facilitate this.
- Leverage all information tools to ensure that the Court process is faster.
- Enhance the role of those who can dispense justice within the society such as the Justice of the Peace.
- Strengthen the Office of Public Counsel and the Consumer Claims Tribunal to address more civil claims matters.
- Introduce a Mediation Unit for the administration of court annexed mediation.

Participation of Barbadians in decision making

23. In 1966 Barbadians through its Constitution declared their intention *"to establish and maintain a society in which all persons may, to the full extent of their capacity, play a due part in the institutions of the national life"*. It is imperative that as the society develops, new mechanisms should be implemented in order to facilitate the participation of Barbadians.

24. Barbados has inherited a system of Governance based on what is referred to as the Westminster Model. Since its adoption the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries have made fundamental changes to their system based on the demands of those whom they govern and with a view to enhancing the democratic process in their own country.
25. At its core the Westminster system as practiced in Barbados should have the following elements:
- a. Choice of a representative to sit in the House of Commons or the Lower House of the parliament of Barbados.
 - b. The Representative assumes a seat in the Parliament of Barbados to speak on behalf of the people who elected that representative.
 - c. The Representative in order to carry out his function in representing the interests of the people meets with the people of his constituency whether physically or electronically in order to discuss the policy issues and represent their interests in Parliament.
26. Within Barbados the part of the system which seems not to work effectively is giving the Citizens of Barbadians that clear opportunity to participate in the democratic process.
27. It is the view that because there is no clearly defined mechanism for the participation of people in the democratic process that our communities are failing. Concerns that could have been addressed when they were in their early stages have been left to fester to the detriment of the community. These concerns range from the proliferation of guns on the streets of Barbados to a breakdown in infrastructure.
28. Within the communities of Barbados the United Progressive Party has a vision of communities which will generate Barbadian Citizens ready to take on the world:
- a. People at all stages of life are actively engaged in participating within their communities.
 - b. Community programmes are created in order to develop mental and physical health, innovation, business, wealth creation and investment.
 - c. People with the confidence and the knowledge to pursue innovation and to create their own businesses.
 - d. Neighbourhoods are clean and aesthetically pleasing, have accessible community and social spaces and have adequate sewerage and drainage.
 - e. Homeowners are involved in recycling and growing some of their own food.

29. In order to address these issues the United Progressive Party will:

The Infrastructure:

- Repeal the Constituency Councils Act and replace it with a Community Social and Economic Act.
- Identify and strengthen existing Non-Governmental Organisations and Community Based Organisations.
- Encourage the creation of new NGOs and CBOs in areas of current social importance such as the mentoring of young men and women.
- Implement Parish Development Councils made up of individuals with a track record in working with successful NGOs and CBOs to oversee the establishment and functioning of NGOs and CBOs within each parish.

Strengthening Organisations:

- Provide a template for the establishment and functioning of NGOs and CBOs.
- Assist in initial fund raising activities.
- Assist in grant proposal writing to access international funding for the objectives of the organisation.
- Facilitate easy access to taxpayer facilities such as public open spaces, schools, community centres and government conference and meeting facilities.

Power to the Communities:

- A requirement that Government Officials seek to engage with all NGOs and CBOs when making decisions which will affect their communities.
- Set and give an adequate timelines for NGOs and CBOs to give feedback on proposals in which Government plans to engage.
- The right to make proposals to Government which will be considered by it.
- The right to approach Government for the purchase, lease or use of derelict buildings, vacant lots or other assets for the benefit of the community.
- Provide a transparent tracking mechanism for interaction with public officials and the community. In order to ensure greater access to decision making Petitions to the House of Assembly will be introduced which will ensure that matters requested by the public are debated.

Petitions to the House of Assembly

30. Another mechanism that can be used by CBOs and NGOs to get their voices heard is the process of petitioning Parliament.

31. The United Progressive Party will:

- Establish a Petitions Committee to make sure that parliament is more responsive to the concerns of the citizens outside of election time.
- Add a Petitions Portal to the Parliament website to facilitate petitions. Barbadian citizens and residents will be allowed to create and sign petitions. If a petition can get 10,000 signatures you get a response from government and your petition will be considered for debate in Parliament.
- Establish clear regulations for these petitions including the process by which a person is invited to parliament to speak about their petition.

End