

Agenda FOR Change



**UNITED
PROGRESSIVE
PARTY**
2004 MANIFESTO



*Government in
the Sunshine*





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2004 MANIFESTO

UNITED PROGRESSIVE PARTY

A UPP Government will take Integrity Legislation to the first working session of Parliament.

This Legislation will provide for Whistle Blower Protection

Integrity will be the bedrock of the UPP.

Transparency and Accountability will be our watchwords.

The Government will be the servants of the people, that is our commitment.

The people's purpose always will come first.

Ours will be a fully participatory democracy in which the people's voices will be heard.

We will respect the law.

We will defend and strengthen our institutions of democracy.

These values will be constants when we have Government in the Sunshine.

*Government in
the Sunshine*

People First

BRIGHTENING THE LIVES OF ALL

The core philosophy of the United Progressive Party is that the principal purpose of government is to improve the lives of its citizens, to put people first in all planning and policies and to prudently and equitably use the resources available to the government to do the greatest good for the greatest number of our citizens.

To this end, in its first year in office, a UPP Government will implement a number of measures that will brighten the lives of all of our citizens.

100% TAX EXEMPTION ON BABY ITEMS

The UPP will remove the Duty and Consumption Tax on:

- Baby Food
- Disposable Diapers
- Baby Powder
- Baby Oil
- Baby Medicines
- Baby Toiletries
- Feeding Bottles and Nipples

SCHOOL UNIFORM GRANTS TO STUDENTS



The UPP will provide a **\$350.00 school uniform grant** every year to every child in the **primary school system**, starting in July, this year.

The UPP will provide a **\$500.00 school uniform grant** every year to every child in the **secondary school system**, starting in July, this year.

NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM



The UPP will introduce a **National School Meals Programme** that will provide nutritious lunch meals to children attending Primary School.

The **National School Meals Programme** will be expanded on a phased basis to include Secondary School students.

UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF



To ease the squeeze on laid-off workers, the UPP will introduce an Unemployment Relief Programme in which laid-off workers who are citizens will be paid 60% of their last wage or salary for up to a period of three months.

A DOLLAR-A-BARREL EVERY CHRISTMAS

Recognising that many families depend on **Food and Clothes Barrels** from relatives abroad for their Christmas cheer, the UPP will remove the duties, fees and consumption tax on these items during November and December, and recipients of these Christmas Barrels will pay only \$1.00 to clear each Christmas Barrel.



\$1,000 PENSIONS FOR ALL SENIOR CITIZENS

With a UPP Government, all citizens over 60 years of age will receive a \$1,000 monthly pension.

This pension payment will be introduced in three tranches, with every citizen receiving a pension on reaching the age of 60 years.

All persons 60 years and over will receive a minimum pension of \$750.00 per month from January 1, 2004.

All persons 60 years and over will receive a minimum pension of \$900.00 a month from January 1, 2005.

All persons 60 years and over will receive a minimum pension of \$1,000.00 a month from January 1, 2006.

NO PROPERTY TAX ON \$100,000 HOMES



The UPP will exempt all dwelling homes valued under \$100,000 from paying any property tax.



SMALL BUSINESS TO SHARE IN ALL GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

FOOD VOUCHERS FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES



To ease the squeeze on poor people, the UPP will provide **food vouchers** to poor families that may be used to purchase a monthly basket of food staples that will include rice, sugar, flour, corn meal, condensed milk, evaporated milk, cheddar cheese, cooking oil, margarine, sardines, corned beef, pickled meat, dried peas and beans, bread, and macaroni.



EXEMPTION FROM DEPARTURE TAX FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

The UPP will exempt all citizens and residents over 60 years of age from the airport Departure Tax.



REMOVAL OF CONSUMPTION TAX ON ELECTRICITY BILLS

To enable families to keep more of the money they earn, and to reduce the cost of doing business, the UPP will **remove the Consumption Tax** from Electricity Bills.



\$2,500 ANNUAL HOME IMPROVEMENT GRANT FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

To assist our senior citizens to carry out necessary repairs to their homes, and to preserve their dignity, the UPP will provide an annual \$2,500 Home Improvement Grant to citizens over 60 years whose incomes do not permit them to maintain their properties, provided that the unit value of such properties is less than \$100,000.

REMOVAL OF CUSTOM DUTIES FOR TAXI, BUS AND TOUR OPERATORS



We will remove the Custom Duties and Consumption Tax on Tires, Batteries and Shock Absorbers for Vehicles used by Taxi, Bus and Tour Operators.

Agenda for Change

The policies of the outgoing government and the conduct of its leadership have brought immeasurable shame and pain to the Antigua and Barbudan people.

With the economy in shambles, the government has been living from day to day.

Failing to pay public service salaries.

Failing to pay local suppliers and contractors.

Failing to pay employees deductions to the Medical Benefits Scheme.

Failing to pay its dues to CARICOM.

Failing to pay its dues to the Eastern Caribbean Court System.

Failing to keep all but three percent of the pledges of its 1999 Manifesto.

This is Antigua and Barbuda today.

Yet, the Prime Minister has the gall to ask the Antiguan and Barbudan people to keep him in office.

Five more years of hard labour is a sentence of death on a society that can take very little more.

The government has not been honest with the people.

They simplistically call the collapse of the economy a fiscal imbalance.

Antigua and Barbuda is a nation in serious crisis.

Political bluster has no place in the crisis we face.

If we are to navigate this crisis, the involvement of all stakeholders is imperative.

The condition of the nation and the impact of globalisation and trade liberalisation calls for all sectors of the Antigua and Barbudan society to embrace change and to consider all options for flexibility, adaptability, sustainability and social justice.

Antigua and Barbuda is singularly unprepared for any of this.

The enduring ethos of the Bird dynasty seemed to have been to manage the nation's affairs as though there would be no tomorrow.

The United Progressive Party recognises that there is crucial need at this time to develop an economy that is highly diversified, efficient and internationally competitive.

We consider it the collective responsibility of all of the social partners to forge a united course for national development driven by local private sector investment in partnership with foreign investors that would shape a sound and resilient economy, characterised by growth and sustainability.

To these ends, a United Progressive Party will urgently convene the social partners in a social contract to maintain a stable and collaborative industrial relations climate; to foster productivity and competitiveness; and to ensure a highly efficient, effective, professional and customer oriented public service.

The UPP will also challenge the partners to the social contract with the promotion of human development through higher levels of investment in education, vocational training and affordable housing.

The UPP envisages a housing delivery programme, with the Trade Unions as developers of housing projects that can be facilitated by the government and by the financial sector partners in the social contract.

Before the end of April, a UPP administration will convene a consultation involving all stakeholders with the aim of formulating and giving formal effect to a social contract.

The agenda for recovery and reconstruction is an agenda for change.

This is a people centred agenda that moves immediately to bring relief to the most vulnerable in our society.

Simply by cutting out extravagance and theft, and with a modicum of compliance, we will be

in a position to deliver on our pledges, and do more.

Antigua and Barbuda deserves much better than the past has dealt us.

Your vote will ensure that it will be better for all with the change of government that is necessary and inevitable.

I urge you to make it happen

BALDWIN SPENCER



The national debt continues to rise at alarming proportions to an unprecedented level of 2.6 Billion Dollars as of June 2003, making Antigua and Barbuda by far the most heavily indebted country in the OECS sub-region.

An Economy Brought to the Precipice

The mismanagement, extravagance and avarice of the outgoing government has driven Antigua and Barbuda's economy to the brink of a precipice.

For the last ten years, the ALP has taken the Antigua and Barbuda economy on a path of persistent decline.

Economic growth as measured by the rate of growth of real GDP has been in unchecked decline from 6% in 1994 to an estimated 1% - 2% in 2003.

The national debt continues to rise at alarming proportions to an unprecedented level of 2.6 Billion Dollars as of June 2003, making Antigua and Barbuda by far the most heavily indebted country in the OECS sub-region.

The unbridled, reckless and irresponsible spending of the outgoing regime increased our national debt by 300 Million Dollars over the twelve-month period, ending June 2003.

The resulting individual debt burden placed on every man, woman and child in this country is some \$40,000.

The chronic fiscal haemorrhaging under the ALP continues unabated and is being fuelled by the Government's unchecked propensity for spending taxpayers' hard earned monies on goods and services that are wholly unnecessary, unwarranted and unproductive.

Against this background of unchecked spending is the fact that Government revenues have increased on average by 11% per annum since 1999.

These increased Government revenues have been frittered away through extravagant public sector spending.

That the country's economic problems extend far beyond the boundaries of a fiscal imbalance is patently clear.

Tourism, our main engine of economic growth, has been contracting since 1994. In particular, the contribution of the "hotel and restaurant" sector as a percentage of GDP has fallen in every year from 18% in 1994 to a current figure of approximately 12%.

In like vein, a once vibrant manufacturing sector has become virtually extinct, while the Government's approach to agriculture is encapsulated in its description of agriculture as being "backwards".

Government created a false sense of economic hope through attempts to create an offshore financial services and gaming sector.

However, uncertainty in Government policy - particularly as it relates to the gaming sector - coupled with inadequate marketing and the absence of an acceptable array of offshore products, have left the re-birth of this sector still-born.

Other macro economic variables such as the rate of inflation and the level of unemployment, paint a picture of a stagnant economy with a Government on life support through the tolerance of the commercial banking sector.

When the economic realities of the state of the

Tourism, our main engine of economic growth, has been contracting since 1994. In particular, the contribution of the "hotel and restaurant" sector as a percentage of GDP has fallen in every year from 18% in 1994 to a current figure of approximately 12%.

economy are juxtaposed against the realities of globalisation and trade liberalization in the context of the World Trade Organisation, the Free Trade of the Americas and the Caribbean Single Market & Economy, and when one adds to this the Government's dismal failure to prepare domestic economic agents and others to meet the challenges resulting from globalisation and trade liberalization, the inescapable conclusion must be that continued economic decline is a certainty under an ALP regime.

It is clear that in the absence of an immediate programme of economic reform and restructuring, the economy of Antigua and Barbuda will completely collapse, as the life support mechanism extended to the Government by the commercial banking sector is only temporary.

Further, no number of new projects or Government promises of hundreds of millions of dollars of investments at the eve of an election will effectively address the country's economic problems, which are a direct consequence of the gross and reckless mismanagement of the economy by the outgoing administration.

The solution to the problem of economic mismanagement is not achieved by placing more scarce resources at the ready disposal of reckless and corrupt managers.

It is only achieved through comprehensive change in the management structure, that is to say, a full and complete change in the administration of Government.

A United Progressive Party Government will govern the affairs of this country in an open, transparent and accountable manner.

Integrity in Public Life and Anti-corruption legislation shall form part of the main pillars of political and economic reform under a UPP administration.

Public consultations and the full involvement of the citizens and residents of this country in the economic management and decision-making process shall be a hallmark of a UPP Government.

A United Progressive Party Government will implement a Short Term Economic Recovery Programme, which will address the chronic fiscal imbalance by rationalizing Government expenditures and by cutting wanton waste, all within a framework of prudent fiscal management.

We will energise the private sector through a detailed package of incentives that we will announce once we establish the true picture of the economic shambles the ALP will leave behind them.

The private sector, including small and micro businesses, will propel this economy, while the Government will be only a facilitator of economic growth.

We have already formulated viable policies to increase productivity and competitiveness over the medium term in order to adequately prepare our productive sectors for globalisation and trade liberalisation.

Economic diversification will be a key goal of a UPP administration.

Most importantly, we will make substantial investments in equipping the Antiguan and Barbudan people with the skills and competence necessary for them to successfully meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The first task of the UPP is to unravel the murky mysteries of the country's assets and it's liabilities and to decipher what has become of government revenues over the many years that went without audit of the public finances.

Fair and Balanced Development

The ALP has run this country without planning and without policy. Adhocracy was the only discernible discipline of the now dying regime.

Lester Bird ran a government that lived dangerously, without compass and without conscience.

The existing tax regime is without logic and without equity.

The first task of the UPP is to unravel the murky mysteries of the country's assets and it's liabilities and to decipher what has become of government revenues over the many years that went without audit of the public finances.

The first step will be forensic audits of all major projects in which the Bird administration has been involved.

The findings of those will inform a comprehensive review of the entire tax structure and regimes, with a view to rationalising all taxes. We will remove those taxes that place a disproportionate burden on the lower income earners; we will repeal those that are of nuisance value only; and we will consolidate the various ad hoc taxes that the ALP imposed.

We will operate a simplified and rational integrated tax structure that will be easier to administer, easier to grasp by taxpayers, and will facilitate compliance and not force avoidance.

We will:

- ☉ **Reduce the corporate tax rate to 20% beginning January, 2005.**
- ☉ Change the basis of property taxes to fair market value.
- ☉ Exempt all properties valued under \$100,000 from the payment of property taxes.

- ☉ Waive the property tax payable on the first \$100,000 on properties valued at under \$200,000 and where such properties are owned and occupied by citizens over 60 years of age, waive the property tax payable on the second \$100,000 by 50%.

- ☉ **Reduce the consumption tax on a basket of food staples** that will include flour, rice, corned beef, corn meal, sardines, pickled meat, cooking oil, sugar, margarine, macaroni, condensed milk, evaporated milk and cheddar cheese.

- ☉ **Remove duty and consumption tax on Baby** food, disposable diapers, wipes, medicines, toiletries, feeding bottles, nipples and bibs.

- ☉ Abolish the 2% Business Turnover Tax and the Dog License.

- ☉ Will establish the **Antigua and Barbuda Investment Authority** as a one-stop shop to provide world class, fast, efficient and reliable services to local and foreign investors.

FAIR TAX ADMINISTRATION

The UPP Government will transform the Inland Revenue Department into a professional and efficient tax revenue agency, equipped with modern electronic systems and highly qualified technical staff. The new department will be charged with the collection of all taxes with the exception of customs duties, and will ensure compliance with the laws in a fair and expeditious manner.

We will operate a simplified and rational integrated tax structure that will be easier to administer, easier to grasp by taxpayers, and will facilitate compliance and not encourage avoidance.

Energising Small Business

The ALP government has failed dismally to develop policies to assist small business, and has presided over the increasing alienation of nationals from private sector business ownership and control.

The UPP's **Business Development Programme** will promote Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises to become a major generator of jobs and a significant contributor to the economy.

We will:

- Reserve specific areas of business activity exclusively for the national Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector.
- Reserve 25% of the Government's contracts procurement of goods and services for the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector.
- Set up a statutory **Enterprise Development Agency** as the vehicle for providing enabling services to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector. This agency will provide a "one-stop-shop" for this sector to access fiscal and other incentives, training and marketing opportunities, technical assistance and information to assist them in business planning and general operations.
- Establish a Credit Guarantee System to secure Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises venture capital at preferential rates.
- Provide incentives for export enterprises.
- Establish business incubators in designated **Small Enterprise Zones**. These incubators

will provide facilities where Micro and Small Enterprises that will be able to share resources, energy, information systems and business services thereby creating economies of scale and an environment for sharing business experience.

- Provide special incentives for all Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises that function in the tourism industry to promote their growth, profitability and potential for creating wealth and creating jobs.

SPECIAL PROJECTS INITIATIVE

A UPP Government will also institute a number of special projects as a means of empowering key economic sectors. These projects include:

- **The Transition to Business** for Civil Servants and Non-Established Public Sector Workers will provide specific training, counseling, funding and mentoring for persons who wish to make the transition from the public to the private sector.
- **The Youth Business Development Project** which will give encouragement and special assistance to our youth who wish to develop their own enterprises.
- **The Export Trading House** will provide group export marketing for designated enterprises such as garment manufacturers, agro processors, and producers of handicraft and souvenir items.

We will mandate that 25% of all government expenditure on contracts and other purchases shall be reserved for qualified micro and small business enterprises.

Buildup Business Act

25% of Government Purchases to go to Micro and Small Business Enterprises

THE BUILDUP BUSINESS ACT

The United Progressive Party wants to broaden the base of business entrepreneurs and open new opportunities to young persons, as well as to public service employees wishing to change careers and go into business on their own.

Should the UPP form the new government, Micro and Small Business enterprises will have a special place in the sun.

We will mandate that 25% of all government expenditure on contracts and other purchases shall be reserved for qualified micro and small business enterprises.

To broaden the base of business ownership in Antigua and Barbuda, we will introduce legislation that will make it easier for small and business enterprises to do business with the government.

The UPP will introduce a **Buildup Business Act**, which will simplify and relax the tender procedures for micro and small business enterprises supplying goods and services to the government.

The **Buildup Business Act** will make on-time payments to micro and small business enterprises mandatory, with government having to pay interest on bills not settled by due date.

Through these measures, micro and small businesses can become significant contributors to the national economy, and a major generator of wealth and jobs.

Exporting Services

Viable and competitive export services industries are critical to small island states, with a small home market, if we are to realize the consistent and dynamic **economic growth** rates that are necessary to provide job opportunities for our youth who graduate from our **secondary schools and universities**. Accordingly, a UPP government will give special emphasis to **the export of services industries**. In addition to

tourism the other principal export of services sectors targeted for further development are **financial services** and **information technology services**. These sectors, led by **tourism**, will be the growth engines to provide good quality jobs, at good wages and salaries, at all levels from clerical to managerial to professional.



Rescue Mission for Agriculture, Marine Resources and Food Production

We pledge to build a vibrant and dynamic agricultural sector, comprising mainly of small and medium sized, market-driven agro-business enterprises, with a focus on import substitution and ensuring an adequate level of national food security. This programme will involve implementing an effective land use policy, the use of appropriate technology, supported by an effective marketing system.

VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

It is well known that our unique combination of fertile soil and favourable weather conditions combine to enable Antigua and Barbuda to produce vegetables and fruits that have a particularly delicious and nutritious quality. This uniqueness of our food products provide us with a competitive advantage in securing niche export markets of high value, while satisfying the needs of our local and tourist markets for quality food year round.

A UPP Government will:

- Develop an effective **Land Use Policy** to facilitate a rapid development of our potential agricultural land.
- Zone land into clearly demarcated agricultural, industrial and residential areas.
- Implement programmes and support private

initiatives to expand and strengthen the linkages between food production and tourism.

- **Actively promote the development of small farms of 3-5 acres and medium sized farms of 25-50 acres, on the basis of secure leases that farmers may use to collateralize their production loans.**
- Promote **Co-operative Farming Enterprises** by encouraging individual farmers to secure inputs and pursue marketing ventures co-operatively, and by facilitating young people to band together to develop medium and large scale co-operative farms.
- Upgrade extension services to provide modern technical support and training for all farms that require such services.
- Develop and promote a Brand identity for Antigua and Barbuda produce targeted to the export market.

The Antigua Black Pineapple

One of our most desirable agricultural products is the **Antigua Black Pineapple**, a fruit of unique and inimitable character.

A UPP government will move speedily to make the production of this unique fruit the basis of a comprehensive agroindustry that will provide

Actively promote the development of small farms of 3-5 acres and medium sized farms of 25-50 acres, on the basis of secure leases that farmers may use to collateralize their production loans.

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gainful employment for 500 persons by 2007.

A UPP government will:

- ☉ Make 1,500 acres available for **Antigua Black Pineapple** production.
- ☉ Develop modern nurseries to supply the **Antigua Black Pineapple** suckers for farmers to start their operations.
- ☉ Enhance rural development in the southern villages that provide the best locations for pineapple production by developing the farm sites at Cades bay, Claremont, Christian Valley, Old Road, Sweets and John Hughes.
- ☉ Establish a central marketing facility for our farmers' produce.
- ☉ Fund an international campaign to establish the Antigua Black Pineapple as a premium brand.

SEA ISLAND COTTON

The UPP believes that the development of an integrated Sea Island Cotton industry will be of significant benefit in promoting agricultural diversification and the basis for a textiles industry based on locally produced fabric. **Antiguan Sea Island Cotton** produces the finest cotton fabric in the world, bar none. A vertically integrated industry based on cotton produced by our own farmers will add considerable value to our annual cotton crop.

We will:

- ☉ Make 2,000 acres available for Sea Island Cotton production.
- ☉ Promote the development of small, medium and co-operative farms producing Sea Island Cotton in season and appropriate vegetables and fruit in the closed season.
- ☉ Establish a private sector led, vertically integrated cotton industry, producing 100% **Antiguan Sea Island Cotton** products to be marketed in outlets globally.
- ☉ By means of this industry, enhance development in the Cotton Belt villages on the eastern range of the island stretching from Cedar Grove in the northeast to Falmouth in the southeast.

HOME GROWN CHICKEN

Antigua and Barbuda provides one of the most lucrative markets for poultry per head worldwide. A considerable portion of our food import bill goes to importing poultry products, mainly from Florida, USA. Latest figures indicate that the annual value of imported poultry products is EC\$20 million.

Much of these imports can be replaced by local poultry, when our own poultry farmers are enabled by policies that provide meaningful incentives and opportunities in investment in poultry production.



A UPP government will take the measures necessary to neutralize the effects of trade liberalisation on the local poultry industry and will provide a package of incentives to ensure that the industry develops on the basis of the best available technology and in high levels of productivity, so that Antigua and Barbuda becomes self-sufficient in poultry.

LIVESTOCK

Antigua and Barbuda are ideally endowed for an extensive livestock industry. Our flat fertile grasslands provide excellent pasturage for cattle, sheep and goats. Livestock is one of the main areas where agricultural production can be increased by establishing a sustainable linkage with our tourism industry.

A UPP government will:

- ☉ Mobilise livestock farmers to improve the quality of their livestock by adopting modern scientific methods of animal husbandry.
- ☉ Ensure bona fide livestock farmers have proper leasehold title to lands that they can use to collateralize their loan requirements.
- ☉ Develop fenced communal grazing pastures in every parish as a means of tackling the problem of stray animals.
- ☉ Provide an incentive for developing the dairy industry by providing a market for locally produced milk in the proposed school-feeding programme.
- ☉ Ensure that the Ministry of Agriculture develops an effective outreach programme to bring extension and veterinary services close to every livestock farmer.

MANAGING OUR MARINE RESOURCES

The UPP sees the need to stop the decline in the fishing industry and upgrade it to play its role in the nation's food security programme and as an important provider of employment. It must be realized that as an archipelago, Antigua and Barbuda has vast areas of sea under its legal control. We have never effectively managed and exploited this rich resource which is entirely our own.

A UPP government will:

- ☉ Provide the Fisheries Division with the necessary boats and equipment to monitor and protect our marine resources.
- ☉ Develop an incentive programme to support investment in larger and more modern fishing vessels and modern fish harvesting techniques targeting pelagic species.
- ☉ Create No-Fish Zones to provide areas for reef fish stocks to replenish themselves.
- ☉ Recruit marine park rangers to patrol No Fish Zones.
- ☉ Encourage the formation of fishing co-operatives as a means of accelerating the development of the industry.
- ☉ Promote the development of a modern fish processing and packaging plant that would provide a central market for the fish harvest while developing export markets and linkages to tourism.
- ☉ Establish international seafood processing and packaging standards to maximize revenue generation on seafood exports.

The UPP will provide a \$350.00 school uniform grant every year to every child in the primary school system, starting in July, this year. The UPP will provide a \$500.00 school uniform grant every year to every child in the secondary school system, starting in July, this year.

- ☉ Develop tourist fishing license programmes.
- ☉ Provide scientific training in fishing methods and fish ecosystems for fishermen and young people who want to work in the fishing industry.

WATER FOR AGRICULTURE

The greatest constraint to the viability of agriculture in Antigua and Barbuda is a reliable and affordable supply of water.

We will:

- ☉ Fully develop and implement an extensive irrigation project during the first 2 years of our first term that will see adequate supplies of water provided at affordable rates to farmers.
- ☉ Provide incentives for investments in water storage and distribution systems for farms. It is anticipated that drip irrigation technology will become the order of the day.
- ☉ Develop an extensive programme to build mini-dams throughout the agricultural areas. Every watercourse is expected to be dammed with potential to address livestock care, fish farming and agricultural irrigation needs.

PRODUCTION INCENTIVES

A UPP Government will:

- ☉ Create an **Agricultural Growth Fund** to be administered through the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank to facilitate investment in capital equipment.
- ☉ Provide duty-free concessions for all equipment, machinery and supplies used in agriculture.
- ☉ Enact an Agricultural Development Act to provide incentives on a scale similar to those given to Tourism.
- ☉ Develop a **National Agricultural Training Institute** to provide agricultural education and training at all levels, particularly to our youth. This institute will also have a mandate to conduct agricultural research of interest and importance to our agricultural industries.
- ☉ Provide concessions to hotels that enter into sustainable linkages with local agricultural producers.



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UPP 

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Land Rationalization

Antigua and Barbuda is the only CARICOM country that has taken into public ownership the vast proportion of its land. With good management and honest government, this should have provided a golden opportunity to empower Antiguan and Barbudans to develop and control our economy, and to ensure that the level of home ownership was second to none in the Caribbean.

Instead, the corrosive hand of the ALP corrupted this golden opportunity as they went about using the people's land to extend patronage and secure votes at elections. Now, with vast tracts of our land sold off in dubious deals, government ministers and family and friends of the ALP elite, it is imperative that the sell off of our precious patrimony be halted.

Increasingly, land is beyond the reach of the average Antiguan and Barbudan. Another consequence is that prime agricultural land is now hoarded with the wealth of private land-bankers. A third is that our vital agricultural industry has been marginalized.

The goal of the UPP **Land Rationalisation Programme** is to ensure that our land is used to create wealth for our people and to establish well-ordered living communities where housing is affordable and accessible for every section of the population.

A UPP Government will:

- ☉ Commission forensic investigations of the **land transactions** the ALP carried out.
- ☉ **Zone the country** into residential, agricultural, industrial and forest lands.
- ☉ Set up an **Independent Land Commission** to take charge of the distribution and sale of all public lands.
- ☉ Guarantee every citizen the **right to purchase** a residential plot of public land.
- ☉ Carefully plan the development and expansion of villages and residential communities to ensure our agricultural potential does not suffer as a result.
- ☉ Develop a structured programme to make land available to farmers on the basis of **long term leases** that can be used to secure agricultural credit.
- ☉ Allocate land for the development of parks for **Light Industry** by private sector interests.

Removal of Consumption Tax on Electricity Bills: To enable families to keep more of the money they earn, and to reduce the cost of doing business, the UPP will remove the Consumption Tax from Electricity Bills.

An Intelligent Nation

ALP policies during the past 28 years have marginalized the Antiguan and Barbudan people in their own nation, denying us the opportunities that are rightfully ours to own and control our economy and develop our country in our own image and likeness. While perpetrating this crime against us, members of the ALP leadership have feathered their own nests by seizing control of the most lucrative sections of the economy for themselves and their accomplices, by under-developing our education system, failing to create an enabling environment for our small businesses, and through victimisation, forcing almost a quarter of our population to emigrate from their own country to seek opportunities in foreign lands. Such a situation cries out to be rectified!

The UPP Government will promote a set of policies designed to upgrade the intellectual capital of the Nation of Antigua and Barbuda. With our "People First" philosophy, our commitment is to ensure every citizen and resident has access to opportunities to better him/her self educationally and economically. The modern world calls for nations to be competitive. A nation becomes competitive when its people become competitive.

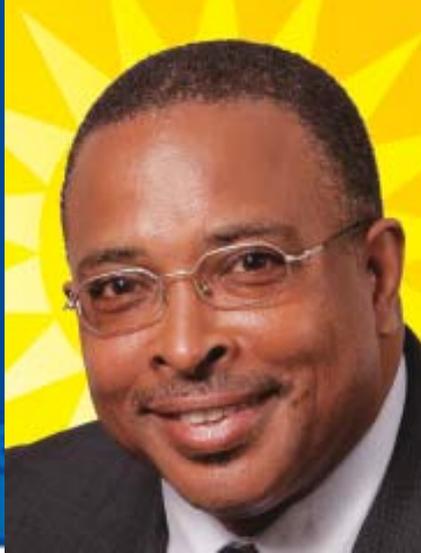
A UPP Government will:

- ☉ **Reform the educational system thoroughly so that the concept of "lifelong learning" can have meaningful application to the different stages of one's life.**

- ☉ Use the media to bring serious educational content into the homes of everyone.
- ☉ **Require local TV stations to devote a minimum of 30% of their programming to local content.**
- ☉ Establish strategic bilateral relations with a number of select nations as a means of fostering opportunities for our students and entrepreneurs in particular to learn and acquire nation-building skills not available at home.
- ☉ **Promote multilingualism as a goal for the entire nation.** Accordingly, language instruction will be made available, in well-equipped language laboratories, to all interested persons.
- ☉ Ensure information technology skills are widely disseminated.
- ☉ **Develop cultural institutions and facilities at the community level,** making them available to all.

REMOVAL OF CUSTOM DUTIES FOR TAXI, BUS AND TOUR OPERATORS

We will remove the Custom Duties and Consumption Tax on Tires, Batteries and Shock Absorbers for Vehicles used by Taxi, Bus and Tour Operators.



Colin
DERRICK
CITY WEST
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Building the Knowledge Society

Integrating information and communications technology into the fabric of our daily life is not an option.

It is a necessity if Antigua and Barbuda is to rise to First World standards and status.

While the people of this country are making admirable efforts to acquire the skills and aptitudes to function effectively in this information age, the ALP pays only lip service to government's critical role in enabling our nation to move rapidly towards the Knowledge Society.

The programme to deliver information and communication technology skills throughout the educational system is woefully inadequate, with very few schools equipped with modern and properly maintained computer laboratories. Furthermore, the ALP government has done nothing to ensure inexpensive access for all to the internet.

CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The world is driven by revolutionary changes in information and communications technologies. Antigua cannot continue to exist on the disadvantaged side of the digital divide.

A UPP Government will:

☉ Ensure the integration and adaptation of state-of-the-art information and communications technologies in all spheres of our daily life, in education, health, production, commerce, services, governance systems, law enforcement, entertainment and social interactions.

- ☉ Establish computer labs throughout the educational system and promote the integration of technology into instruction and learning at all formal levels of the education system.
- ☉ **Abolish all taxes on computers and computer supplies.**
- ☉ **Remove the government tax on internet access.**
- ☉ **Provide \$3,000 interest free loans to public servants for purchasing personal computers and laptops.**
- ☉ Build our national technological capability by promoting Antigua as a **Regional Centre of Information Technology Excellence** to support the development of:
 - E-commerce
 - Internet marketing
 - Internet gaming
 - Software development
 - E-education
- ☉ Provide scholarships for information technology training.
- ☉ Provide a package of incentives, including tax benefits, to entrepreneurs and technology developers investing in information technology services and training.

Work toward the establishment of a Hospitality and Tourism Management Faculty of the University of the West Indies at Dutchman's Bay that will meet local needs and those of the Eastern Caribbean region.

Revolution in Education

The Bird administration has not built a single secondary school in over a generation. There could not be a more telling indictment on any government or a more cruel betrayal of a nation's children. Not surprisingly, the number of Antiguan and Barbudans proceeding to tertiary-level schools is the lowest in the entire OECS.

The outgoing regime has failed to provide sufficient school places and the standard of the nation's schools is deplorable. These deficiencies have been particularly burdensome to the immigrants among us who are forced to send their children to expensive private schools.

We need a revolution in education to transform this country into a knowledge-based society. Only in this way will we be equipped for the challenges of FTAA, CSME, globalisation and 21st century technology and opportunities.

Education will receive greatest priority from the UPP Government. We will raise the literacy level and promote civil pride and social awareness among our people.

We will:

- Reform the Ministry of Education with a new mandate to **more effectively manage the primary and secondary schools** in all the communities.
- **Upgrade and maintain the ailing education infrastructure and facilities.**

- Provide **more pre-school centres** for children from lower income households within various communities.
- Work toward the establishment of a **Hospitality and Tourism Management Faculty of the University of the West Indies** at Dutchman's Bay that will meet local needs and those of the Eastern Caribbean region.
- **Provide all successful "A" Level State College students with opportunities to pursue tertiary-level education.**
- Create an **independent Teachers Services Commission** to set and manage the terms and conditions under which teachers are recruited and employed.
- Provide for **continuous training throughout a teacher's working career.**
- **Provide improved security around the school premises** with regular patrols and response mechanisms to deal with incidences of crime and vandalism.



Errol
CORT
RURAL EAST
UPP 

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Pursuing Excellence

A culture of excellence uplifts a nation and positions it at such a level in the global community that it attracts investment beyond its requirements. Two examples that serve as benchmarks for such a goal are Bermuda, the small island with a per capital income among the world's highest, and Singapore, another small island that serves as the premier example of excellence in national development worldwide.

The mediocrity that defines individual and institutional life in Antigua and Barbuda comes hand in hand with the style and content of ALP rule over the past three decades. The culture of corruption that became the norm, degraded our national status, compromised our institutions and made our nation vulnerable to economic and other predators. The upshot of three decades of mediocrity and neglect is a nation ashamed of itself, demotivated in every sense, a people alienated from their country, who see emigration to other lands as opportunities not to be resisted.

Excellence is driven by culture, the way we perceive and do things. A culture of excellence must be cultivated and experienced to make it real. In a small nation like ours, with limited human and natural resources, Government has the obligation to be the key catalyst in propelling our national culture from mediocrity to excellence.

A culture of excellence translates directly to high productivity, country competitiveness and individual fulfillment.

Accordingly, a UPP Government will:

-  Create national awareness of the imperative to transform the culture of the nation to achieve excellence in every sphere of activity.
-  Introduce measures to promote a work ethic geared to increased productivity of every enterprise and institution to improve continuously.
-  Through community projects, motivate households and organizations to upgrade and care for the physical environment so that cleanliness and good order become the hallmarks of every community and the nation as a whole.
-  Develop programmes in the schools to make young people conscious of the need to base their life and endeavours on a platform of excellence.
-  Transform the country into a knowledge-based society.

Before the end of April, a UPP administration will convene a consultation involving all stakeholders with the aim of formulating and giving formal effect to a social contract.

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A National Library At Last!

In this modern age where knowledge is the principal driver of national development, Antigua and Barbuda does not have a proper Public Library!

This shameful situation has been allowed to exist since 1974 when an earthquake destroyed the Public Library on High Street. Three decades later, the ALP continues to pay lip service to the need to build a new Public Library, but has failed to make any firm efforts to accomplish this. This is as serious a self-indictment of which any administration could be guilty.

A UPP Government will:

☉ **Designate the building of a modern Public Library as an urgent priority.** All plans related to this project will be finalized within the first 100 days of the UPP Administration.

☉ Work closely with the National Library Committee with a view to integrating their efforts with the Government's commitment to complete the project in the shortest possible time.

☉ **Ensure that the new library offers a fully equipped Computer Centre** where the public will have the opportunity to access the Internet and have the use of various application programmes of interest to them.

☉ Equip the new library with a Children's Section that offers, in addition to a book lending service, a number of projects that assist children in developing their talents and aptitudes in both the intellectual and cultural fields.

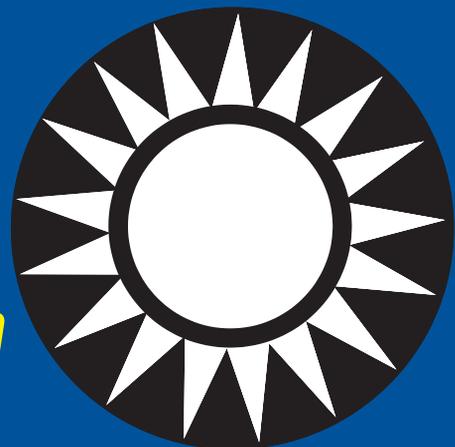
☉ Organize an extension service where a **mobile unit of the library** will pay regular scheduled visits to rural areas.

MARCH 23

**Day of
CHANGE!**

UPP to the Rescue!

Government in the Sunshine





Francis
NUNES
ST. PHILIP NORTH
UPP 

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Igniting a Cultural Explosion

As a people, we are conscious of the loss of our country's reputation as a result of the character of the Government that has ruled Antigua and Barbuda in all its years as a sovereign nation.

Worse than this, the outgoing regime has robbed the people of this nation of their identity; that is to say, our very soul has been taken away from us. There is no greater poverty than this.

The UPP considers it an imperative that there must be awakened in our nation a consciousness of who we are.

We must begin a search for self-identity. Without self-identity, we cannot possibly experience the sense of nationalism that Caribbean neighbours like Jamaica and Barbados possess.

We can take comfort in the hope that our process of self-identification has begun and will explode on March 23rd.

That will be the beginning of a true renaissance that will inform all spheres of our lives.

The UPP will facilitate the aspirations of all who will assist us to define ourselves to the world. We will propel the development of art and culture by:

- ☉ **Establish a National Cultural Commission** charged with the responsibility of energizing the country's creative resources of our diverse community through funding, promotion and business opportunities. This Commission can be the prime catalyst in transforming cultural and intellectual product into a significant contributor to the national revenue.
- ☉ The assembly of a **National Art Collection** to be initially housed at Government House until an Art Gallery can be established.

- ☉ The **construction of community centers** as the hub of decentralized cultural expression in communities around the country
- ☉ The introduction of dance, calypso and drama into the school curriculum.
- ☉ The patronage of cultural effort by providing a **\$250,000.00 per annum tax credit** to businesses sponsoring cultural development.
- ☉ An **Annual Caribbean Art Exposition**
- ☉ Removal of the **duty and consumption tax on professional film and video production and sound recording equipment.**
- ☉ Support an annual **international Jazz Festival and Moods of Pan Festival.**
- ☉ The award of scholarships for cultural studies.
- ☉ **Tax benefits for hotels and restaurants employing performers as full-time staff.**
- ☉ The construction of a **centre for the Performance Arts** in a revitalized capital city.

The UPP will mobilize the country's abundant talent in developing a creative sector that can contribute significantly to the national economy.

In support of this, a UPP government will mandate that local artistes be commissioned to perform at all occasions hosted by government ministries and agencies. We will also mobilize the country's creative talent in all tourism-marketing efforts and use our artists and artistes as ambassadors to define the spirit of our nation around the world.

A UPP Government will: Provide tax credits of up \$250,000 to businesses that sponsor sporting organizations and events.

Sports for Pleasure and for Profit

The absence of a sports policy has seriously hindered the development of a thriving sports culture in Antigua and Barbuda. Sporting facilities throughout the country have been woefully neglected. Many of them lack proper lighting, bathroom and change facilities and they have been left to deteriorate to a deplorable level.

The UPP recognizes that sports can build character, generate meaningful income and be a catalyst to positive lifestyles. It is a powerful adjunct to development.

We will develop Antigua and Barbuda into a sport-tourism destination, and we will provide top rate sporting infrastructure in communities throughout the nation.

A UPP Government will:

- ☉ Redefine the role of the Community Sports and Games Department and the National Sports Council.

- ☉ Establish a functional **Sports-Tourism Commission** that will form strategic alliances with the private sector to develop and market Sports-tourism events.
- ☉ Establish a **National Sports Academy** that will provide a flexible tutoring system for professional athletes so that academic and career opportunities are not in conflict.
- ☉ Lend full support to the Antigua Cricket Association to ensure that Antigua is a venue for the **2007 Cricket World Cup games**.
- ☉ **Provide tax credits of up \$250,000 to businesses that sponsor sporting organizations and events.**
- ☉ **Reduce the import duty and consumption tax on all sporting equipment.**
- ☉ **Improve playing fields and other infrastructure** in all community sporting facilities.



Harold
LOVELL
CITY EAST
UPP 

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\$1,000.00 Pensions For All Senior Citizens

The United Progressive Party will reduce the burdens placed on our citizens in their golden years. The UPP gives the clear commitment that pensioners will share fairly in the prosperity of the nation.

The UPP will:

- ☉ **With a UPP Government, all citizens over 60 years of age will receive a \$1,000 monthly pension.**

This pension payment will be introduced in three stages; with every citizen receiving their pensions on reaching the age of 60 years.

- ☉ **All persons 60 years and over will receive a minimum pension of \$750.00 per month, with effect from January 1, 2004.**
- ☉ **All persons 60 years and over will receive a minimum pension of \$900.00 a month, to take effect on January 1, 2005.**
- ☉ **All persons 60 years and over will receive a minimum pension of \$1,000.00 a month, to take effect on January 1, 2006.**
- ☉ **Exempt all properties valued under \$100,000 from the payment of property taxes.**
- ☉ **Waive the property tax payable on the first \$100,000 on properties valued at under \$200,000, and where such properties are owned and occupied by citizens over 60 years of age, reduce the property tax payable on the second \$100,000 by 50%.**
- ☉ To assist our senior citizens to carry out necessary repairs to their homes, and to

preserve their dignity, the UPP will provide an annual **\$2,500 Home Improvement Grant to citizens over 60 years** whose incomes do not permit them to maintain their properties in good condition; provided that in each case, the unit value of the property concerned is less than \$100,000.

- ☉ Ensure the prompt payment of pensions and gratuity entitlements by Act of Parliament
- ☉ Reduce the costs of electricity and water payable by senior citizens; this will be based on a needs assessment and will be provided under a new **Social Transformation**.
- ☉ **Abolish the Airport Departure Tax for citizens over the age of 60 years.**
- ☉ Expand the coverage under the new **National Health Insurance Plan** to include **arthritis** and other diseases prevalent among the aged.
- ☉ Establish a modern **Home Help Programme**, to include care on the weekends.
- ☉ Give priority to providing pipe borne water to the homes of pensioners.
- ☉ Grant special tax concessions to persons constructing or repairing homes to specifically house the elderly or disabled.
- ☉ Provide institutional support to the Antigua & Barbuda Pensioners' Association and affiliated groups.
- ☉ Develop Retirement Communities that will attract retirees, nationals and foreigners.
- ☉ Provide concessions for the construction or purchase of retirement homes of a value to be determined.

The UPP will introduce a National School Meals Programme that will provide nutritious lunch meals to children attending Primary School. The National School Meals Programme will be expanded on a phased basis to include Secondary School students.

Single Mothers

SUPPORTING YOUNG PARENTS

Callous ALP policy makers have ignored the plight of young, single mothers, many of whom are imprisoned in poverty. A UPP Government will take urgent action to help these young persons to help themselves and to take care of their infant children.

We will:

- Remove the taxes on all baby foods and baby supplies.
- Refurbish existing baby crèches at Potters, All Saints and Willikies.
Provide incentives to operators of day care centers.
- Establish Early Child Care Education Centres in the Nutgrove, Old Road and Newfield communities.

- Introduce a special Single Mothers' Employment Programme and place focus on training and on enabling women to operate small-scale businesses.
- Provide such businesses with access to financial services, marketing assistance and relevant training in entrepreneurship and enterprise management.
- Develop a continuing education programme in support of young women forced to abandon their education because of teenage pregnancy.

The UPP is committed to introducing Programmes for Life and Parenting Skills to prepare our single parents for healthy living, productive lives and strong families.

More Young Leaders

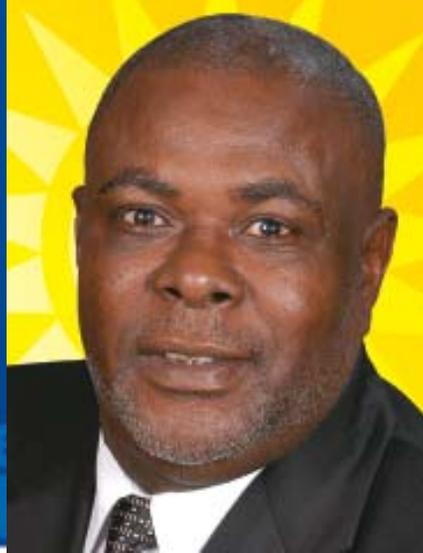
Antigua and Barbuda's most valuable asset is our young people, and a secure future for our nation is dependent on the quality of our youth.

The UPP will open up leadership roles for our young people in all spheres of national life.

We will:

- Listen to our young people and we will respect their views
- Develop a **National Youth Council** through which key youth empowerment programmes will be executed.
- Establish a **National Environmental Youth Corps** which will work with NGO's for the beautification and protection of the environment.

- Mobilise culture and sports as empowerment tools for our youth.
- Establish a **National Skills Development Programme**.
- **Restructure the Boys Training School** so that its programmes are less punitive and more rehabilitative.
- Establish **Young Entrepreneurs Services (YES)** as a dedicated business incubator unit that will spark and fund micro and small business ventures for young persons between 18 and 30 years of age.



Hilson
BAPTISTE
ST. MARY'S SOUTH
UPP 

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Social Transformation Eradicating Poverty, uplifting the Poor and Needy

The UPP will implement a broad programme of social transformation designed to eradicate poverty in Antigua and Barbuda, create a level field for persons of all social origins to have equal opportunities to achieve their goals and aspirations, and upgrade urban and rural communities to a point where all residents can be proud of their physical surroundings.

The corruption and mismanagement of the ALP has worsened the social situation of masses of people in both urban and rural areas, has increased unemployment and underemployment, marginalised pensioners and the disabled, and has generated pockets of poverty throughout the land, a privileged elite of ALP supporters feathered their nests and have amassed wealth at the expense of the masses of this nation.

The eradication of poverty is a key priority on the UPP's agenda.

We will ensure that all Antiguan and Barbudans are equipped to face the challenge of self-development rather than depend on social services.

The main pillars of our programme will be empowering our people through providing life long opportunities for learning and skills development and implementing a policy of urban renewal and rural development.

A UPP Government will:

-  **Repair and replace the homes of the poorest of the poor.**
-  Make house plots available at reduced cost to persons unable to afford market value for land.
-  **Work with existing land owners to convert derelict properties into new housing.**
-  **Implement a Community Upgrade Project** repairing houses and roads, improving
-  community infrastructure and facilities and building small business kiosks in depressed areas.
-  Provide an annual **\$2,500 Home Improvement Grant to citizens over 60 years** whose incomes do not permit them to maintain their properties in good condition; provided that in each case, the unit value of the property concerned is less than \$100,000.
-  Designate Parham, All Saints, English Harbour, and the Bolans-Urlings area as **Special Development Zones** for the creation of employment and training opportunities for the surrounding rural areas.

We will ensure that all Antiguan and Barbudans are equipped to face the challenge of self-development rather than depend on social services.

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BUILDING SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

We will:

- ☉ Give assistance and encouragement to Faith Based Organizations, other Non-governmental Organizations, and Community Based Organizations build their capacity to provide services to their membership and to the community.
- ☉ Provide subventions where desirable to the above organizations to improve their viability and strengthen their networks.

A UPP Government will:

- ☉ Increase the number of training opportunities to a wide cross section of the public.
- ☉ Implement a retraining programme aimed at that segment of the labour market that is at risk of being marginalized by technological advancements and at public servants who wish to move into the private sector or towards self-employment.
- ☉ Promote an effective **Apprenticeship Programme** aimed at youths to enable them to acquire on-the-job training.

CARING FOR OUR ELDERLY

The UPP recognises that our senior citizens who helped to build our twin island nation deserve to be treated with dignity. In creating a society for all ages, the UPP will pursue a programme that allows our senior citizens to participate in productive and stimulating activities and to live out their lives in conditions of dignity.

We will:

- ☉ Revolutionize the concept of **Care of the Elderly** by promoting the construction of nursing home facilities and assisted living communities.
- ☉ **Begin the construction of a public nursing home as an upgrade to the Fiennes Institute.**
- ☉ Offer incentives to the private sector to build senior citizen centers.
- ☉ Provide annual government subsidies to assist in the operation of private Senior Citizen Centers.
- ☉ Expand the coverage offered by the new **National Health Insurance Plan** to include diseases and conditions prevalent among the aged.
- ☉ Support the efforts of NGO's in the Meals on Wheels Programmes to ensure that indigent persons, shut-ins, as well as the elderly, who live alone, have access to nutritious meals.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

We will:

- ☉ Encourage self-reliance among persons with disabilities through skills training, enterprise development and by expanding employment opportunities.
- ☉ Introduce a **Disability Assistance Grant Programme** which will provide financial assistance to persons with permanent physical disabilities.



Jacqui
QUINN-LEANDRO
ST. GEORGE
UPP 

- ☉ **Improve and expand transportation services for the disabled.**
- ☉ Give persons with disabilities expanded political and social opportunities.
- ☉ **Reduce the cost of health care equipment needed by persons with disabilities by removing customs duties and taxes.**
- ☉ Introduce legislation for mandatory standards for building codes, in compliance with international requirements.
- ☉ Mandate wheelchair ramps at all newly constructed public places and on all sidewalks.

- ☉ Introduce Equal Opportunity legislation to eliminate discrimination in the work place.

HOMELESSNESS

ALP corruption and mis-management have resulted in increasing levels of poverty and homelessness. The increase in substance abuse has also increased homelessness.

A UPP Government will:

- ☉ Institute a national programme of care and treatment for the homeless.
- ☉ Work in partnership with civil society to create rehabilitative programmes at shelters.

Quality Health Care for All

The UPP considers access to health care a fundamental right of every Antiguan and Barbudan, foreign born as well as native. We are committed to developing a healthier and more productive society by embarking on a program of preventative medicine and healthy lifestyle choices. We pledge to upgrade our neglected medical facilities and provide the best quality health services for our residents, while granting the health care professionals the courtesy and respect they deserve.

The UPP will:

- ☉ Introduce a **National Health Insurance Plan**, which will provide universal health care coverage to all.
- ☉ Investigate the transfer of Holberton Hospital to a foreign entity for \$1.00 as was announced by the government last year.

- ☉ Investigate who owns the Mount St. John's Medical Centre, which was financed by Stanford's funds.
- ☉ **Add arthritis and epilepsy to the list of diseases covered by the Medical Benefits Scheme.**
- ☉ **Significantly reduce the taxes on a wide range of over-the-counter pharmaceutical products, antibiotics, vitamins, baby products, and medicines, including medicines for arthritis, cancer, circulatory disorders, HIV/AIDS, and disorders of the ears, nose and throat.**
- ☉ **Extend the hours of operation of the main MBS Pharmacy to include Sundays and public holidays.**

The UPP will: Significantly reduce the taxes on a wide range of over-the-counter pharmaceutical products, antibiotics, vitamins, baby products, and medicines, including medicines for arthritis, cancer, circulatory disorders, HIV/AIDS, and disorders of the ears, nose and throat.

- Decentralize the ambulance service and position a new fleet of ambulances at clinics to be constructed in the Grays-Green, St. Phillips, Johnson's Point and Yorks Communities.
- Provide regular maintenance for ambulances to ensure maximum fleet availability.**
- Create a national educational and awareness programme to place HIV/AIDS at the top of the national agenda.
- Improve the delivery of health care services to persons living with HIV/AIDS.
- Expand HIV/ AIDS education in our schools to include teachers, students and parents.
- Expand the voluntary HIV/ AIDS counseling and testing programmes.
- Implement a comprehensive dental programme for all primary schools and new clinics.
- Fully equip and staff all clinics** and ensure that equipment is maintained.
- Institute and promote at district clinics, mandatory physical check ups, including hearing and vision screening, prior to enrollment in primary school.**
- Expand the range and quality of services at the Johnson's Point Clinic.
- Construct modern clinics with **pharmacies in the Grays-Green, St. Phillips and Yorks Communities;**
- Introduce **prostate screening in the new clinics.**
- Develop programmes to **reform mental health and to destigmatize mental illness.**
- Provide assistance to families for the in-home care of relatives with a mental illness.
- Refurbish the physical plant at the Mental Hospital over the next two years.
- Compensate nurses at levels necessary to retain and attract them to the profession.**
- Increase the equipment, services and personnel dedicated to the prevention of diseases such as dengue, gastroenteritis and tuberculosis.
- Introduce a comprehensive, continuing school program for dental hygiene via regular visits by dental hygienists.
- Introduce a **mandatory physical education program into all school curricula** with linkages to the family life curriculum.
- Strengthen the school's vaccination program** to standards recommended by the World Health Organisation.
- Increase the frequency of garbage collection to 3 days per week across Antigua.
- Upgrade the garbage collection fleet at the CBH and introduce a preventative maintenance programme.
- Provide CBH employees with protective clothing and training in the handling of hazardous materials.
- Actively encourage the use of environmentally friendly products and recycling in all sectors.



Joanne
MASSIAH
ST. PETER
UPP 

Delivering Improved Public Services

Twenty-seven years of Labour Party Government has consigned our public sector workers to poor working conditions, low emoluments, irregular salaries, low morale and public derision by the Prime Minister.

A sense of non-appreciation prevails over the public service. Workers in the public service toil daily to provide services to this country knowing that at the end of the month they may very well not be paid.

Public service workers watch the politicization of their sector as the ALP put its handpicked people in plum positions in the public service where they perform little meaningful work but collect a fat paycheck on time every month.

The UPP is deeply committed to respecting the rights of all workers, including public servants.

The UPP's focus on the public service is to ensure the rapid delivery of improved public services to the national community.

We will:

- ☉ Review the status of non-established workers with a view towards offering

greater job security, improved benefits and better working conditions.

- ☉ **Provide interest free \$3,000 loans to public servants for the purchase of personal computers.**
- ☉ Provide **low interest motor vehicle loans to public servants**, extending over a wide range of scales.
- ☉ Subsidize fees paid by public servants for work-related seminars and training and study programmes.
- ☉ Establish **dedicated Early Child Care Education Centres** for infant children of public servants.
- ☉ Review all contracts for non-establishment public service workers, with a view to **removing impediments to upward mobility for establishment** officers, most of whom though experienced and /or qualified, receive a mere fraction of the hefty compensation packages political appointees enjoy.

A UPP Government will: Make it mandatory for all foreign contractors to work with Antiguan and Barbudan sub-contractors.

A Regional Transportation Hub

The ALP'S ad hoc approach to aviation is a depressing tale of incompetence and mismanagement. Aviation has dismally failed to realize its full economic potential. The ALP has failed to improve standards at our single international airport, permitting this all-important facility to fall into a state of disrepair and inadequacy. The much-touted parallel taxiway stands incomplete and abandoned after millions of dollars of loan funds were spent on that project.

A UPP Government will:

- Expand the facilities and capacity at the V.C. Bird International Airport and the Codrington Airport to provide world-class operations and services.

- Improve facilities and working conditions for the air traffic control and meteorological operations staff, airport security and management.
- Work closely with airline management and the trade unions to provide incentives to ensure the viability of airlines headquartered in Antigua and Barbuda.
- Partner with regional governments to ensure cost-efficient, reliable and frequent air services between our Caribbean states, particularly to maximize trade opportunities the Caribbean Single Market and Economy will bring.
- Forge strategic partnerships with the private sector and international airlines to secure adequate airlift for our North American and European visitors.

A Blueprint for Improved Infrastructure

Infrastructure development in Antigua and Barbuda has proceeded on a piecemeal and ad hoc basis without proper planning or due attention to cost and efficiency.

The UPP pledges to reverse the years of neglect inflicted on the people of Barbuda by the ALP and ensure that infrastructure development in Barbuda proceeds hand in hand with developments in Antigua.

The UPP will establish a **National Development Task Force** to oversee the preparation of a comprehensive Physical Development Plan to

provide a blueprint for the development and management of infrastructure in Antigua and Barbuda. The plan will draw on the technical expertise of physical planners, engineers and architects and will be prepared through a consultative process with civil society, including the business sector, the hotel association, farmers, local communities, NGOs and professional associations.

The UPP will:

- Implement an island-wide road improvement programme based on a



John
MAGINLEY
RURAL NORTH
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study of the island's transportation needs and a comprehensive inventory of the road network, with rural roads in villages and areas identified for new housing development given high priority.

- ☉ Implement a transportation plan for St. John's to **ameliorate the city's chronic problems of traffic congestion, limited parking space, and inadequate sidewalks.**
- ☉ Improve the management efficiency of public works projects to ensure that projects are completed on time and within the approved budget.
- ☉ Implement a management and technical training programme for all levels of staff in the Public Works Department.
- ☉ Conduct regular condition assessments and preventative maintenance on public buildings, roads, bridges, drains and gutters, etc.
- ☉ **Provide Barbuda with a network of paved roads and a dependable piped water supply system.**

SUPPORTING LOCAL ENTERPRISES AND CREATING JOBS

Under the ALP, foreign companies have been the principal beneficiaries in all major projects in Antigua and Barbuda while local construction companies and professionals have been marginalised. Consequently, job opportunities for citizens and residents in the vital construction

and professional services sector have been restricted.

Public works projects are "reserved" for party supporters, regardless of skill or expertise, and this has resulted in costly inefficiencies. Bidding procedures for public works contracts are non-existent and contracts have been awarded through brokered deals at very high cost to the taxpayers.

Public Works and Infrastructure projects are critical in stimulating the local construction industry, encouraging Antiguan and Barbudan professional firms and providing jobs for citizens and residents.

A UPP Government will:

- ☉ Make it **mandatory for all foreign contractors to work with Antiguan and Barbudan sub-contractors.**
- ☉ Institute **transparent systems of competitive bidding for public works contracts**, including contracts for the supply of materials and equipment, the construction and maintenance of public works and the provision of architectural, engineering services and other professional services.
- ☉ Publish all Requests for Proposals on the Internet.
- ☉ Establish a procurement system that will reserve certain categories of construction, design and management contracts for local companies.
- ☉ Implement special public works projects to **upgrade the basic infrastructure in run-down areas around St. John's** while stimulating employment.

Introduce a Hotel Concessions Act to stimulate investment in the refurbishment, upgrade and expansion of existing properties.

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A Cleaner, Greener, Healthier Country

The ALP's shortsighted tendency for development entirely at the expense of the environment, has never been concerned at whether we are leaving a better Antigua and Barbuda for our children. The outgoing ALP regime has conspired with favoured investors to go directly to "The Minister" to broker a deal without any input from the public agencies that should be consulted. This practice has resulted in inefficient short-sighted developments that destabilize and degrade valuable natural resources and confrontations with the neighbouring communities that saw their living conditions deteriorate before their eyes.

A UPP Government is convinced that development should go hand in hand with sound environmental planning and that this kind of development is far more cost effective in the long term.

We pledge to restore the integrity of our environment.

To this end we will:

- ☉ Within the first 100 days, **ensure the independence and integrity of the Development Control Authority's Town and Country Planning Division.**

- ☉ **Raise penalties and introduce imprisonment for breaking environmental laws.**
- ☉ **Make environmental impact studies mandatory in all construction projects.**
- ☉ **Protect all wetland areas** and commence wetland restoration.
- ☉ **Reforest Fig Tree Drive and plant trees to beautify the main arteries** around the country.
- ☉ **Develop an Eco-tourism Strategy** for Antigua and Barbuda.
- ☉ Implement the **management plan for North Sound Islands Marine Park Area** and include **Guiana Island** in this plan.
- ☉ Develop **moorings and protection for all major coral reefs** around Antigua.
- ☉ **Strengthen environmental education** within the school system to inculcate lasting values.
- ☉ Protect our beaches by **sourcing viable cost-effective alternatives to beach sand** for construction.



The Best Brand in Caribbean Tourism

Tourism is the world's largest industry and offers virtually unlimited potential for sustainable jobs and economic growth for Antigua and Barbuda.

As with everything else placed in its care, the Bird dynasty comes up woefully short in its management of Antigua and Barbuda's bountiful natural assets. The regime that has ruled this country for half a century can take little credit for whatever contribution tourism has made to the country.

- ☉ The ALP's management of our tourism options has been singularly lacking in vision, initiative and long-term planning.
- ☉ The outgoing regime has never given adequate attention or imagination to product improvement and development.
- ☉ The ALP has never demonstrated any flair or aggression in marketing this destination.
- ☉ The ALP has presided over a ten-year decline in tourism revenue while global tourism was on a 36% growth path.
- ☉ The UPP is convinced that properly managed, Antigua and Barbuda can readily become one of the premium destinations of the world, and the best brand in Caribbean tourism.

If elected to government, the United Progressive Party will swiftly mount an all-embracing rescue mission that will propel rapid transformation of the quality of our tourism product and produce significant levels of innovative destination marketing.

A UPP Government will mobilize all stakeholders in a national mission to so improve our tourism

product that we will exceed the expectations of our visitors.

To this end, we will:

- ☉ Establish a **National Tourism Task Force** comprising all stakeholders, with a mandate to present a comprehensive **Tourism Transformation Plan** by June 30, 2004.
- ☉ Immediately revamp the Ministry of Tourism to ensure that marketing programmes geared to generating business in this year's soft period are developed and implemented.
- ☉ Initiate a "**Shine Antigua and Barbuda**" programme, which will start with a nationwide clean up project on Sunday, March 26, 2004.
- ☉ Introduce a comprehensive **Environmental Policy** across the country to preserve and optimise the rich potential of our natural assets.
- ☉ Introduce a **Cruise Tourism Policy** designed to maximise the cruise sector's contribution to the national economy.
- ☉ Initiate a programme of **infrastructural development** across the country.
- ☉ Introduce a **Hotel Concessions Act** to stimulate investment in the refurbishment, upgrade and expansion of **existing properties**.
- ☉ Introduce **public education programmes** to engage the entire national community in a drive to exceed the expectations of our visitors.

Organise a special programme to make tourism the career of first choice for Antiguans and Barbudans possessing the qualifications and the competence that will enable them to fast-track their way to the top positions in the major hotels here, in the region, and in the world.

- ☉ Provide incentives for the presentation of local culture and entertainment in all hospitality facilities, including hotels and restaurants.
- ☉ Introduce **Travel and Tourism** in the schools' curriculum from primary level.
- ☉ Work toward the establishment of a **Hospitality and Tourism Management Faculty of the University of the West Indies** at Dutchman's Bay that will meet local needs and those of the Eastern Caribbean region.
- ☉ Increase the number of scholarships offered by the Board of Education for tourism studies.
- ☉ Organise a special programme to make tourism the career of first choice for Antiguans and Barbudans possessing the qualifications and the competence that will enable them to fast-track their way to the top positions in the major hotels here, in the region, and in the world.
- ☉ Construct attractive, functional **Vendors' Kiosks** at **Jolly Beach, Long Bay, Deep Bay, Fort James, Dickenson Bay and Shirley Heights**.
- ☉ Organise an annual **Urlings Fish Festival** as a major event in the calendar for Antiguans and Barbudans and for our visitors. Fishing-boat races and contests for **Best Decorated Fishing-Boat Floats** will be marketable features of the **Urlings Fish Festival**.
- ☉ of the Caribbean community will be involved in the development with a unique mix of music, song, dance, culinary arts, and art and craft. This **Theme Park** will be sited and will integrate the fishing fleet operations at Keeling Point area as a special attraction for locals as well as visitors.
- ☉ Organise an annual **Best Village Festival** that will involve our various communities in theatre, dance, song, arts and crafts and culinary presentations, while attracting visitors and creating new income opportunities to residents within their communities.
- ☉ Recruit a cadre of **Tourism Wardens** to patrol tourist areas in order to eradicate visitor harassment and ensure security and safety at such locations.
- ☉ Exempt taxi, bus, and tour operators from Duty and Consumption Tax on tires, batteries and shock absorbers.

Organise an annual Urlings Fish Festival as a major event in the calendar for Antiguans and Barbudans and for our visitors. Fishing- boat races and contests for Best Decorated Fishing-Boat Floats will be marketable features of the Urlings Fish Festival.



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For a better Barbuda

The adversarial relationship between the Labour Party Government in Antigua and the Barbuda Council is well documented and deplorable. The under-development of infrastructure in Barbuda is readily apparent to anyone who visits the sister island.

The United Progressive Party, committed to the development of our twin-island state, and recognizing the many decades of neglect, is convinced that Barbuda requires particular attention.

Any policy for the development of Barbuda and the expansion of its economy must have the Barbuda Council at its centre. Confident that this is the only and just way to approach development in Barbuda, a UPP Government will recognize the Barbuda Council as the body responsible for the development of Barbuda in partnership with the central government. This requires a new beginning.

In Barbuda, a UPP Government, working with the Barbuda Council, will:

- ☉ Upgrade ports of entry at the River and at Codrington and equip both ports with adequate infrastructure and immigration and customs facilities.
- ☉ Establish a **Barbuda Consolidated Fund**.
- ☉ Permit the Barbuda Council to manage the revenues collected from the provision of public utilities.
- ☉ Authorise the Barbuda Council to manage the revenues collected from custom duties.
- ☉ Provide a dedicated **coast guard vessel** for patrol around Barbuda's coast.

- ☉ Assist in building a **new airport terminal** at Codrington and in extending the airstrip.
- ☉ Provide **duty free concessions** to individuals and companies investing in the fishing industry.

The UPP is strongly convinced that education must be at the centre of the development of Antigua and Barbuda. The UPP is also convinced that educating the population is one of the greatest challenges of this century. The UPP is committed to providing Barbudans with scholarships to enter professions across the spectrum, with the aim of having these professionals return to Barbuda to contribute to its development.

A UPP Government will:

- ☉ Establish a **computer laboratory** at the new Secondary School in Barbuda.
- ☉ Establish a **Public Library** equipped with internet access.
- ☉ Increase the number of allocated spaces for Barbudan students at the Antigua State College.
- ☉ Modernize and upgrade the Fisheries Cooperative.
- ☉ Ensure that taxi drivers benefit from the tourist trade.
- ☉ Respect the principle that lands in Barbuda belong to Barbudans.
- ☉ Support the establishment of a National Park and the **preservation of historic sites** in Barbuda.
- ☉ **Improve the infrastructure** of Barbuda with a special emphasis on road construction

The United Progressive Party, committed to the development of our twin-island state, and recognizing the many decades of neglect, is convinced that Barbuda requires particular attention.

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and the provision of safe, clean pipe-borne water.

- ☉ Source technical support to help preserve the Frigate Bird Sanctuary and train Barbudans in the area of **wild life preservation**.
- ☉ Assist the Barbuda Council in expanding the **vocational training program** that is currently in place.
- ☉ Improve and expand Public Health, Mental Health and Dental Health by adopting an aggressive preventive health policy.

- ☉ End the police practice of transporting arrested persons in Barbuda to the St. John's Police Station for the singular purpose of granting bail by assigning a magistrate to the island.
- ☉ Place the local police unit in Barbuda under the supervisory jurisdiction of the Barbuda Council.
- ☉ The UPP will also build a **Barbuda Justice Complex** comprising of a Magistrate's Court and a Police Station.

Yachting Capital of the Caribbean

Antigua and Barbuda is ideally positioned geographically to be the yachting capital of the Caribbean. No Caribbean island matches Antigua's potential for development as the region's foremost yachting centre. Antigua is ringed by an incomparable necklace of beaches and natural harbours that can provide safe haven for the yachting fleets of the world.

A UPP Government will partner with the private sector in developing and implementing strategies designed to establish this destination as one of the world's premier yachting centers, and the yachting capital of the Caribbean.

To make yacht tourism a growth sector in our economy, the UPP will:

- ☉ Upgrade facilities and streamline customs and immigration processes at Nelson's Dockyard, Jolly Harbour, Heritage and Redcliffe Quays, St. John's Deep Water Harbour, Falmouth Harbour and in Barbuda.
- ☉ Install and maintain proper navigation lights and markers in and around our coastline.

- ☉ Provide duty free status on fuel purchases for pleasure craft regardless of capacity.
- ☉ Provide duty free status on goods for pleasure craft.
- ☉ Install more public moorings in our ports.
- ☉ Upgrade custom and immigration procedures to expedite the processing of visiting pleasure craft.
- ☉ Remove the consumption tax and duties on engine parts, fittings for marine craft and victuals.
- ☉ Establish Tax Free centers in English Harbour, Falmouth Harbour and Jolly Harbour for the exclusive use of the yachting industry.
- ☉ Establish a strategic alliance with private sector partners to market Antigua's attributes and new attitude to the international yachting fraternity.

Caribbean Festival Park

Our uniquely rich cultural mélange of ethnicities, cultures, cuisines, music, song, dance, art, and craft makes the Caribbean a world of its own.

The cultural traditions that immigrants from other Caribbean lands have brought to Antigua and Barbuda over the years have transformed Antigua and Barbuda into a microcosm of the Caribbean, and our society now boasts as wide a diversity as is to be found in any other location in this region.

Such diversity would greatly enhance the appeal of any tourism destination and Antigua and Barbuda should long ago have embraced the diverse cultures in our society in defining this country's character in the tourism marketplace.

The UPP will move swiftly to activate a major national project that will mobilise the entire national community in the establishment of an extensive and exciting Caribbean theme park in the Perry Bay/Donovans area.

The **CARIBBEAN FESTIVAL PARK**, which will be in operation in time for **WORLD CUP CRICKET** and **CARIFESTA** in 2007, will feature the music, cuisines, cultural traditions, song and dance, art and craft of all the countries of the Caribbean.

The **CARIBBEAN FESTIVAL PARK** will integrate the fishing fleet operations at Keeling Point in its attractions, and will be a convenient source for the Park's seafood eateries.

Persons from other Caribbean islands who have made Antigua and Barbuda their home will have an important role in the **CARIBBEAN FESTIVAL PARK** from foundation to finish, and in all the activities that will make this a total, authentic, unique and memorable Caribbean experience for visitors from all over the region and from around the world.



UPP

*Government in
the Sunshine*

Our first order of business will be to immediately execute a short term City Renewal Action Plan during our first 100 days in office. This will be a major step to healing the festering sores that the ALP failed to tackle and will bring a new shine to St. John's City.

A Garden City For Our Capital

A proud, progressive Nation must have a Capital that stirs pride in the citizenry, a city that is well laid out, with attractive shopping and commercial areas and clean, well-ordered suburbs that offer a high standard of residential facilities. Because of our tropical setting and because St. John's sits on a flat, fertile plain, we have the added opportunity to make of our Capital a luxuriant Garden City, with green areas well maintained and lush with flora, punctuating the urban spread.

The ALP government has paid lip service to urban renewal for a long time, but has done nothing of significance to bring lasting solutions to the profound problems of St. John's City.

On any given day, the visitor to St. John's is assaulted by:

- ☉ The unbearable stench that permeates the City centre.
- ☉ The problems of uncollected garbage, open gutters, poor lighting.
- ☉ Inadequate road signage.
- ☉ Limited police presence.
- ☉ The environment of decay projected by the many derelict buildings.
- ☉ The problem of vagrancy.
- ☉ The absence of public restroom facilities.

These are just some of the festering sores that make St. John's a poor example of what the Capital City of a modern, young, progressive nation should be.

The UPP is committed to an ambitious agenda for the renewal of St. John's City, with an emphasis on an aesthetically pleasing development that endows our Capital with a

uniquely attractive character.

Our first order of business will be to **immediately** execute a short term **City Renewal Action Plan** during our first 100 days in office. This will be a major step to healing the festering sores that the ALP failed to tackle and will bring a new shine to St. John's City.

This programme will require a well organized institution to carry it through. While the St. John's Development Corporation seems the best placed existing institution to carry this role, the track record of that organization leaves much to be desired, and the St. John's Development Corporation will have to be significantly upgraded, and its enabling legislation amended, to give it the muscle and the teeth it will need in order to fulfill its mandate.

A UPP Government will:

- ☉ Give a reconstructed and reformed St. John's Development Corporation the mandate for the development and renewal of our Capital City.
- ☉ Implement a planned development of **Public Spaces** and **Cultural Facilities** in the City to cater to the leisure time pursuits of our residents and visitors.
- ☉ Build a **Multi-purpose Concert Hall** for the performing arts.
- ☉ Ensure the infrastructure of the City (roads, drains and gutters, traffic lights, etc.), is upgraded and maintained to the highest possible standard.
- ☉ Finalize plans within the first year of office for the development of a **City Sewerage System** for the City and its environs.



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- ☉ Ensure that the police presence in the City is adequate around the clock, especially in the shopping and commercial areas.
- ☉ Provide incentives to property owners in the City to maintain their structures in an attractive state of repair.
- ☉ Tackle the problem of traffic congestion by constructing a **multi-story parking facility**.
- ☉ Ensure the Transport Board maintains **proper road signage** and street markings throughout the City.
- ☉ Install **Visitor Information Centres** and **Public Restrooms** at strategic areas in the city, e.g. at **the Public Market, the East Bus Station, Heritage Quay, and the St. John's Cathedral**.
- ☉ Employ **City Tour Guides** who will operate from the **Visitor Information Centres**, to facilitate tourists and other visitors as they explore the City.
- ☉ Regulate vending in such a way that this traditional small business activity is afforded the level of dignity and support it deserves.
- ☉ Build **Vendors' Kiosks** at designated areas around the City.
- ☉ Designate green areas and parks for development and maintenance by professional landscapists and horticulturists.
- ☉ Initiate a programme to make the **Botanical Gardens** the center piece of a renewed Capital City.
- ☉ Restore the traditional architectural character of the City.

Strengthening Our Institutions

Strong institutions mean a strong nation. Weak institutions translate into a weak and vulnerable nation and potential oppression of the people.

That is the Antigua and Barbuda experience under the ALP.

The certain way to undermine the strength and integrity of a nation is to weaken its institutions. We can thus understand the rationale for the ALP's systematic undermining of the critical institutions that could have given cohesion and strength to the Antigua/Barbuda Nation.

It is no accident that the Police, the Judiciary, the Press, the Business Sector, the Statutory Bodies, the clergy, among other institutions, were systematically targeted for destabilization, while the corruption of the ruling elite reached astronomical levels and became an object of worldwide awe.

Restoring pride in our Nation, at home and abroad, must begin with restoring the integrity of our institutions, strengthening them so they can play their role in building a strong Antigua and Barbuda; and protecting them against the possibility of any future leadership undermining and weakening them the way the ALP did.

A UPP Government will:

- ☉ Within 30 days of its swearing in, a UPP Government will **constitute the National Economic and Social Council** as a bedrock mechanism in a participatory democracy. The National Economic and Social Council will comprise all sections of civil society and will shape overall social and economic policy.
- ☉ Commission performance audits for critical public institutions, including the Statutory Bodies, the Police, and the Government

A UPP Government will partner with the private sector in developing and implementing strategies designed to establish this destination as one of the world's premier yachting centers, and the yachting capital of the Caribbean.

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- Ministries, to determine the state of their organization and methods of operation, and the extent to which they were polluted by the ALP.
- ⊗ Examine carefully the suitability of personnel in the middle and upper management of the public institutions with a view to upgrading the standard of management of these organizations.
- ⊗ **Rebuild the capacity of the public institutions** to guarantee they become fully capable of delivering the best quality services.
- ⊗ Provide support to Private Sector institutions to assist them with capacity building initiatives.
- ⊗ Establish public oversight bodies to monitor and review the performance of public institutions.
- ⊗ Strengthen the Judiciary.
- ⊗ Remove the offensive barrier to ministers of religion becoming Parliamentarians.
- ⊗ Through a holistic approach, strengthen our society's most vital institution, the family.

Democratising The Media

Freedom of the press is the greatest guarantee of all the other freedoms.

In no other democracy has a government so obscenely suppressed press freedom as the Bird regime has done in Antigua and Barbuda. The government operates a television monopoly from which opposition views are banned. Vere Bird operates a cable TV monopoly from which opposition views are banned. Opposition voices and Opposition ads are banned from ABS TV and radio.

Ironically, the existence of Observer Radio, which operates only by edict of the Queen's Privy Council, validates the ALP's endemic fear of freedom of expression. Had the media been unfettered before, the Birds would long ago have been consigned to the dustbin of history.

The UPP Government will open up the media.

The monopoly of the state media will end.

We will:

- ⊗ **Democratise ABS and remove the ALP's unwritten ban on independent radio and television.**
- ⊗ **Transform ABS into a genuine public broadcast system** with the obligation to be an organ of expression for all voices in the society; a catalyst for local video, film and television production; a provider of community enrichment programming; and a conduit for the diverse cultures that make up our plural society.
- ⊗ **Introduce a Freedom of Information Act** that will allow the public to access information on virtually all aspects of government operations.
- ⊗ Remove Duty and Consumption Tax on professional film, video and recording equipment and supplies.
- ⊗ **Provide scholarships and training opportunities** to facilitate a highly qualified cadre of media professionals.



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The National Economic and Social Council

For all of 28 years, the ALP governed this nation in isolation from the people's involvement. Much like a secret society, the Prime Minister and his kitchen cabinet would make all the critical decisions, take them to the official Cabinet to be rubber stamped, then implement them as government decisions and policies. No wonder the complete alienation of the people from this ivory tower government!

The UPP will broaden and deepen our democracy by combining the efforts and energies of our people into an all embracing national movement that will generate a consensus as to the specific policies and programmes for implementation by Government. Thus the **National Economic and Social Council** will be the institutional vehicle to build and maintain popular participation in national affairs.

The UPP Government will:

- Pass legislation entrenching the partnership between Government and Civil Society in the form of the **National Economic and Social Council**. This institution will bring to the same table, representatives of all civil society

organizations and the Government to form a Social Partnership to determine social and economic policies.

- The NESC will be organized on the basis of a set of protocols that will clearly establish the framework for the **ongoing national dialogue**.
- The NESC will be a permanent entity that will effectively **influence all government policy and programmes**.
- The Social Partnership will be fully involved in the negotiations pertaining to the CSME, the FTAA, the WTO, and all other major international economic and trade talks.
- The Social Partnership will be the mechanism for the expansion of participatory democracy, enhanced standards of governance, and the resolution of industrial conflict.

This Social Partnership will be the fulcrum of the UPP's stated commitment to governance in the sunshine of public scrutiny.

Freedom Of Information Act

The UPP will give the public unprecedented access to government information and records. We will publish for public comment a Policy Paper for the introduction of a Freedom of Information Act.

The provisions of this Act will give members of the public the statutory right to access official

documents from any public authority such as Ministries, Corporations and State Enterprises.

This legislation will make government more accountable and transparent.

Computerize police records to enable rapid profile scans, motor vehicle identification, and fingerprint matching and to improve police crime fighting and efficiency.

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eGovernment

SMARTER GOVERNMENT

The outgoing government failed to mount any coherent response to the rapid development of electronic government. The ALP has kept us firmly anchored in the last century, left behind as other middle income nations have streamed past us in operating smart governments wired into today's technology.

The UPP Government will develop a comprehensive e-government platform to provide the population with easier access to government information and services, and to generally increase the efficiency of interactions between government and its citizens.

The UPP Government will:

- Computerize all government departments to ensure that technology infrastructure remains at the leading edge and can deliver reliable government services at the lowest cost.
- Provide computer training to public sector employees by providing scholarships to

attend the Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Technology.

- **Computerize police records to enable rapid profile scans, motor vehicle identification, and fingerprint matching and to improve police crime fighting and efficiency.**
- Utilise computerized technology to provide secure, efficient and cost effective record keeping and retrieval.
- Make available on the internet government forms e.g. passport applications, income tax, customs.
- Make available on the internet copies of published government reports, laws and documents.
- Publish all Requests for Tender Proposals on the Internet.
- Introduce the registration of companies and businesses, and the payment of utility bills via the internet.

Penal Reform

The ALP's method for controlling our people has always been to instill fear. Their callous approach towards crime has always stiffened the penalties on the books either by increasing the fines or increasing the time spent in prison. Their collective conscience has never been moved by human compassion and as a result our nation has made criminals out of many youngsters whose crime has never been anything greater than smoking a spliff or pilfering a bar of chocolate from a store. While we do not condone stealing, our sense of compassion tells

us that something has to be done to save these minor offenders from the rigors and condemnation of a life of crime. We believe that the vast majority of the inmates find themselves in these institutions because of various social problems that beset our society.

We also feel that even the regular offenders deserve better treatment than that dished out in our eighteenth century prison. We must remember that offenders are humans and must be accorded basic minimum standards of human respect. Who, among our people, would accept



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the existence of open pit latrines in such a confined space and in so dense a prison population?

Such treatment is inhuman and totally unacceptable to a UPP administration. We believe that people are products of their environment and if you incarcerate someone under inhumane conditions that person will eventually acquire inhumane characteristics.

The United Progressive Party believes that our Prison and homes for delinquent children are in need of special attention.

A UPP administration will :

-  upgrade the present prison facility to attain basic standards of sanitation in a modern society.
-  Construct a new Prison.
-  Renovate the existing prison while we construct a new prison.
-  Reform the prison service and implement program of corrections reform with rehabilitation as the central goal of the prison term.

Law Reform

A nation without respect for the Rule of Law is a nation destined to chaos and mayhem. The ALP has time and time again flagrantly flouted this country's laws, treated court orders with contempt and ignored the rule of law in reaching decisions.

No other CARICOM country has had a government that has shown more disrespect for the law than the Antigua Labour Party. In addition, the ALP has deliberately handicapped the police force making it a less effective and responsive, law enforcement agency.

The UPP is committed to improving the quality of justice, especially within the criminal justice system.

We commit to the development of an inclusive national security programme that embraces disaster preparedness.

A UPP government will endeavour to arrest the decline in people's faith and confidence in our legal and political institutions and will encourage greater participation in all aspects of nation building by all sectors in the society.

A UPP government will:

-  **Increase the number of magistrates** and increase their monetary jurisdiction to facilitate speedy resolution of summary disputes.
-  **Phase in legal practitioners to lead all police prosecutions** in conjunction with the Director of Public Prosecution.
-  Establish a cache of legal officers specific to the administration of the High Court, the Industrial Court, and the Magistrate Court in order to achieve efficient and speedy delivery of justice.
-  **Increase the training of Police Officers** with particular attention to white collar crime and require a higher educational benchmark for entry into the Force; reinforce internal discipline, higher professional standards, greater personal commitment and pride, while fostering a healthy respect for the public.

A UPP administration will Reform the prison service and implement a program of corrections reform with rehabilitation as the central goal of the prison term.

- ☉ Create a specialized unit within the Police Force to provide sensitive and **necessary psychological and protective support to victims of domestic violence and sexual offences.**
- ☉ Review and implement legislation where necessary to **address sexual harassment in the work place** and to protect our youth from sexual offenders and inducements.
- ☉ Create a Civilian Complaints Board that **investigates citizens' complaints against police officers** with a mandate to investigate and effectively recommend solutions to the Police Service Commission.
- ☉ Train and equip the Defense Force to respond to natural disasters, assist in community development projects, and to take charge of essential public services in cases of major crisis economic disruption.
- ☉ Establish a Rapid Response Unit in the Police Force by upgrading equipment, skills and response times particularly to enhance our reputation as a safe place to live and visit.
- ☉ **Upgrade the coast guard unit of the Defense Force and establish a unit in Barbuda.**

Foreign Policy

Making Antigua A Confident And Respected Member Of Our Region And The World

Liberalisation and security have now become the dominant global concerns of all sovereign states. Small countries like Antigua and Barbuda have no choice but to find the most effective means of dealing with these issues in a manner that safeguards their national interests and in particular, those of their citizens and their public and private sectors. As a consequence, the UPP Government will:

- ☉ Create a professional and technically competent foreign service machinery to ensure that there is an effective capacity to address the variety of issues that are involved in relations with other metropolitan and regional governments, and international and regional organisations;
- ☉ Create and nurture strategic partnerships with traditionally friendly states and others with similar objectives, to advance our

national interests in the context of special treatment for small island states.

Strengthening Our Region

The UPP recognises that we must strengthen our regional integration arrangements as an internal development machinery as well as create a strong, united and cost-effective negotiating front to advance our collective positions. Our Government will work therefore, with our partners in the OECS and CARICOM to advance the implementation of the Single Market and Economy arrangements in a manner that ensures maximum benefit for our private sector interests and citizens at large.

At home, the Government will:

- ☉ Strengthen the public-private sector relations in an effort to find the most effective means of exploiting the economic and trade potential offered by our regional movement;

The UPP will also challenge the partners to the social contract with the promotion of human development through higher levels of investment in education, vocational training and affordable housing

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- ☉ Implement the relevant provisions to ensure that our citizens and service providers are able to take advantage of the free movement of persons and services within the regional movement and at the same time, ensure that our OECS and CARICOM sisters and brothers are accorded similar treatment and access to services as those available to all our citizens.

Safeguarding our Interests in the Hemisphere

The UPP Government in cooperation and solidarity with our regional partners and other hemispheric friends, will seek to ensure that negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas recognise the special position of small island states. At the same time, we will position ourselves to seize the opportunities for new strategic alliances especially in trade, tourism and other services and investment. This effort will entail strengthening the capacity, professionalism and technical competence of the relevant government agencies to pursue these issues effectively.

Integrating into the Global Economy

The UPP recognises that the world has changed and especially its treatment of small

underdeveloped states. In order to maintain good relations with and access assistance from the metropolitan countries and international organisations, we must now demonstrate that we have accountable government; our governance systems are effective and transparent; and our laws and regulations are clear and consistent. Establishing these are top priorities for the UPP Government. In addition, we will:

- ☉ Through our membership in international organisations and multilateral arrangements such as, the various UN organs, the OAS, the WTO, the Cotonou Agreement and the Commonwealth, vigorously present and defend the case for increased assistance for Antigua and Barbuda and other small states.
- ☉ Pursue and consolidate strategic alliances with traditionally friendly and other states based on a clear identification of our national interests and mutual respect.
- ☉ Vigorously seek out new and expanded opportunities for assistance and cooperation and new avenues for trade, tourism and investment.

The Equal Opportunity Act

With the election of a UPP Government, Antigua and Barbuda will no longer discriminate between its children who were born here and those born in other lands.

To ensure equality for all of Antigua and Barbuda's citizens, a United Progressive Party Government will introduce an **Equal**

Opportunity Act to outlaw acts of discrimination against any citizen.

The **Equal Opportunity Act** will outlaw any act of discrimination on

the basis of Race, Gender, Age, Physical Disability, Religion, Political Affinity, or Place of Origin.

The Millennium Naturalisation Act will grant full and unconditional citizenship to all non-native persons of good standing, who were living in Antigua and Barbuda on and since January 1, 2000,

The Millennium Naturalisation Act

No Citizen is Second Class

... a child is a child ... a citizen is a citizen

The United Progressive Party recognises that members of our non-native community have had to endure the worst of Lester Bird's oppression.

The ALP has treated citizens and residents of Antigua and Barbuda who were born in other Caribbean countries, as though they were all second-class citizens, poor relations and bastard children; and as though they are all transients living under threat of expulsion.

He has calculatedly labeled our Caribbean brothers and sisters who have chosen to make Antigua and Barbuda their home "Non-Nationals".

No other CARICOM country systematically uses a "Non-National" label to isolate its foreign-born citizens.

How can any citizen of this or any country be a "Non-National"?

Does Lester Bird, who migrated to this country from his native America, consider or describe himself a "Non-National"?

Even though his foreign overlord's Antiguan citizenship is merely a flag of convenience, does Lester Bird consider or describe his fellow American, Allen Stanford, as "Non-National"?

It is an act of inhumanity and a violation of all accepted international protocols to isolate foreign born citizens and calculatedly and systematically describe and treat them as citizens of a different and inferior status.

To declare that he made them and that they had

an obligation to vote for the ALP demonstrated beyond any doubt that as far as Lester Bird is concerned, naturalized citizens and residents will never be anything but indentured servants of the ALP; forever expected to do his bidding.

As far as the United Progressive Party is concerned, citizens by birth, or citizens by choice, we are all Nationals of Antigua and Barbuda.

That is why we will move swiftly for the immediate introduction of **The Millennium Naturalisation Act**.

The **Millennium Naturalisation Act** will grant full and unconditional citizenship to all non-native persons of good standing, who were living in Antigua and Barbuda on and since January 1, 2000, the first day of the new millennium.

The Millennium Naturalisation Act will release naturalised citizens from all existing work permit requirements and payments, and will entitle such citizens to start and operate any legal business venture, and to practice any legal calling and profession without any official interference.

The Millennium Naturalisation Act will recognise the government's obligation to provide to those to whom it grants citizenship, the fundamentals of a contemporary society that native born-citizens enjoy.

These fundamentals include quality health care, good standard, affordable housing, quality education in well-equipped, professionally staffed and safe schools, personal safety and security, religious freedom, and opportunities for jobs and personal growth.

To ensure equality for all of Antigua and Barbuda's citizens and residents the UPP will pass a law to outlaw acts of discrimination against any citizen and will outlaw any act of discrimination on the basis of Race, Gender, Age, Physical Disability, Religion, Political Affinity, or Place of Origin.

**No Citizen is Second Class
... a child is a child ... a citizen is a citizen**



Designate Parham, All Saints, English Harbour, and the Bolans-Urlings area as Special Development Zones for the creation of employment and training opportunities for the surrounding rural areas.

Urban Development and Housing

Urban overcrowding and substandard living conditions usually constitute the major challenge in providing shelter for the poor.

The symbiosis between housing and urban development mandates that consideration be given to an entity with responsibility for managing this symbiosis.

Housing problems cannot be solved by ad hoc allocation of undeveloped plots of land with vague promises of mortgage funding from some nebulous agency of the state.

The UPP solution to the housing needs of the nation will be to develop carefully planned, integrated living communities.

Such communities will provide common spaces and family facilities, such as day care centres for working parents.

We consider it the obligation of the state to deliver well designed, attractive, comfortable, durable, homes can withstand hurricane force winds, and which citizens of modest means can afford.

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Antigua and Barbuda has to seize the opportunity to move its lower income housing solutions to another level.

The United Progressive Party will therefore establish a Housing and Urban Development Authority that will provide real solutions to the real housing problems that beset this country.

Provide the housing and Urban Development Authority with a cadre of experienced professionals to direct urban planning and housing development.

The authority's target will be the construction of at least 350 homes a year.

A UPP government will go further and will assemble a consortium of financial institutions willing to finance low cost houses at moderate rates.

Housing will be a key priority of a UPP Government.





UPPP

*Government in
the Sunshine*