



# BUDGET 2021

Response to the National Budget Statement

## Abstract

How unlawful privatization of the people's money to foreign friends of the finance minister, condoned by an unjust parliamentary majority, is destroying the economy of Dominica and creating unnecessary poverty, suffering and pain for the people.

**Hon. Lennox Linton**  
Leader of the Opposition

## **INTRODUCTION**

Citizens of Dominica,

The 2021 National Budget is Government`s income and expense statement for the financial year July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It entails how the government will raise its funds and where and how the funds will be used.

Through the approval of Parliament, the budget provides Government with the money it needs to deliver its policies and run vital services in areas such as Health, Education, Economic Development, Housing, Livelihood Sustainability, Environment Protection and Public Infrastructure. The budget impacts the economy at large and the everyday lives of all Dominicans. In our Parliamentary Democracy it is a critical instrument of social justice.

## **BUDGET DEBATE IN AN UNJUST PARLIAMENT**

As I reflected carefully on what I believe is our shared commitment across the parliamentary divide to build a prosperous, peaceful, secure and just society, a Magistrate`s concern in court on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 kept coming back to me:

*“The Prosecution has brought the administration of justice in Dominica into disrepute”.*

In other words, those involved in regulating access to the criminal justice system and prosecuting criminal conduct in the public interest, in the

opinion of a sitting Magistrate, have brought the administration of justice into disrepute.

We want prosperity, peace, security and justice. But justice comes first. Because without justice there can be no peace, no security... and without justice prosperity will be perpetually endangered.

We have a huge problem with justice in our isle of beauty, our isle of splendor... and fixing it starts right here, with us in this parliament.

Refusing to obey the rule of law requiring compensation from the funds of the state for citizens who suffered loss as a result of the orders made under the Emergency Powers act in defense against Covid 19, is not justice.

Blaming citizens for the recent surge in Covid19 cases that is a direct result of leadership indiscipline, incompetence, recklessness and disrespect is not justice.

Shutting down the fresh food markets on the excuse of preventing the spread Covid 19, leaving citizens without the foods they need for immune system defense against Covid and farmers without income in this Covid battered economy is not justice.

In clear violation of the Standing Orders of the House, the Speaker has ruled that there will be no answers to questions standing in the names of the Honorable Danny Lugay and myself at the meeting of parliament on April 26th, 2021. The questions address revenue and expenditure issues relevant to the annual budget debate. They were submitted in accordance with the rules more than 5 months ago.

The decision to block the answers is not justice.

A characteristically combative, vexatious, cantankerous and contemptuous attitude to Members of the Opposition is not justice.

Obstructionist interference with questions and motions posed by Members of the Opposition is not justice.

Persistent interruptions of Members of the Opposition during debates in the House without any Standing Order objection from the floor is not justice

Selective application of the Standing Orders in favour of Members of Government is not justice

Biased rulings in favour of Members of Government allowing them to say what they want about Members of the Opposition and do as they please with the character and integrity of Members of the Opposition, is not justice

The benchmarks of democratic legislatures in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association remind us that Parliament is protected by the freedom of speech immunity:

“The immunity shall protect persons from legal liability for words spoken and acts done while participating in or directly facilitating Parliament’s proceedings...

“The freedom of speech immunity shall operate to enable Parliament to carry out its constitutional functions effectively, free from interference or impediment...”

The constant frustration of the right of the members of the parliamentary opposition to the freedom of speech immunity is not justice.

We learn as well from the benchmarks of democratic legislatures in the CPA that Parliament shall have a reasonable period of time in which to adequately scrutinize and debate the proposed national budget.

The utterly depraved antics of a Speaker, arrogantly using his ignorance of parliamentary privilege as an abominable instrument of oppression against the parliamentary opposition is not justice

Deciding to begin the national budget debate immediately after the presentation of a two-and-a-half-hour budget statement tells us that the presenter was so disappointed with his performance he needed it to be propped up with two-decade old stories of hate and prejudice to denigrate the parliamentary opposition.

That is not justice.

And when the member from the government side rose to begin the debate shattering a tradition of adjournment after the presentation of the budget statement that spans more than 4 decades, I remembered the immortal words of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar:

"O Judgment thou art fled to brutish beasts and men have lost their reason".

Good judgment and justice fled from the 2021 budget debate in Parliament... balance, harmony and reciprocity eluded us to the ends of justice even as we remembered our first Prime Minister Patrick Roland John:

"One flag, one blood, one people, one nation!"

## **FLASHBACK 1999 – A NATION ON THE MOVE**

Citizens of Dominica,

This is the silly season of self-praise, boasts and tall stories about prudent management of financial resources. It's a time of expected claims from the other side about building on past they mercilessly trampled, about solidifying a present imprisoned behind the jail bars of victimization and securing a future trapped in elusive dreams

It is easy to forget, in these times of despair, where agriculture has been brought to its knees; where tourism is virtually non-existent; where agro-processing has been bludgeoned to death; where small businesses are being strangled, where the hopes and aspirations of Dominicans, particularly those who stand up to defend their country are being sacrificed on an altar of greed, to forget that the Dominica which existed in 1999, on the eve of the Millennium and the 2000 general election, was a shining city, filled with opportunities, filled with projects and filled with confidence in our future as an independent nation.

Indeed, Citizens of Dominica, at no other time in our history, save and except November 3, 1978, have Dominicans looked with more joy, more happiness, more longing and more expectations than in the year 1999. Even today, looking back at that tremendous year, I am shocked at the stupendous success of the UWP administration in handling the economy and providing hope, help and happiness to the Dominican people.

Allow me to present the evidence of the initiatives taken by the UWP administration in that year. Allow me to list this bouquet or banquet of projects that collectively placed Dominica on a pedestal of success, one

which would be snatched and stolen by a selfish and self-serving administration whose crowning achievement is trampling on the rights of Dominicans and on the future of Dominica.

- By 1999, there were notable improvements in the economic contributions of non-banana agriculture, manufacturing, services and tourism. Things were looking up.
- By 1999, the UWP had arranged for revenues from the citizenship by investment (CBI) program to come directly into the treasury for the benefit of all the people of Dominica instead of going exclusively into escrow accounts as free development capital for select developers in the tourism sector.
- By 1999, the UWP introduced legislation to open up the financial services sector for greater economic benefits to the people of Dominica.
- In July, then Mahaut MP Julien Prevost laid the first block for the construction of the new Pioneer Academy building.
- In September 1999, 350 students, smartly attired in their gleaming uniforms, entered the gates of the brand-new Castle Bruce Secondary School, where Principal, Windith Riviere-Henderson, promised top academic results in three years' time;

- In September, SAT Telecommunications Limited, buoyed by the economic progress in Dominica, announced its plans to establish SAT TV the next year;
- In the same month, Health and Social Security Minister Doreen Paul announced the intention to purchase three ambulances, including one for Grand Bay in the coming year.
- The people of Cochrane thanked the government for construction of a new road in the heights of Cochrane to Middleham Falls;
- The government allocated \$92,000 for the re-introduction of the Dominica Cadet Corps;
- The government allocated \$1,046,419 for the implementation of the rural water project in St. Joseph, Belfast, Campbell, Trafalgar, Pichelin, La Plaine and Delices and other villages;
- The government completed the refurbishment of the Atkinson School, the Salybia School. a new school for Concord, and the St. Andrews High School;
- Government announced its intention to pay 20 Bagatelle farmers whose crops had been destroyed during the construction of the Fab Road, \$97,000 in compensation;
- Agricultural production increased from 14,362 metric tons in 1998 to 14,529 metric tons in 1999. Today, the industry is painfully sipping

life water.

- Government ministers Norris Charles and Earl Williams broke ground for construction of the aerial tram near the Titou Gorge.
- The UWP completed all plans for the construction of an International Airport including funding. Government paid a cheque for \$16.15 million for the 663 acre Londonderry Estate for the building of the airport.; Tony Astaphan, the lawyer for the trustees of the estate of Froebel Laville, praised the government for settling payment promptly, rather than waiting 10 – 15 years which was the norm;
- In July 1999, a \$552 million budget presented by Finance Minister Hon. Julius Timothy announced housing projects for Yam Piece, Layou, Marigot, St. Joseph, Pointe Michel, Charlotte Valley and Portsmouth. He also announced upcoming projects including the Roseau Sports Stadium and Canefield Sports Stadium. Mr. Timothy committed to the removal of import duty and consumption tax on all four-wheel drive vehicles and others above 3 tons imported for agricultural purposes for a period for one year in the first instance;
- Minister Timothy also committed to the removal of consumption tax on lumber, cement, steel, roofing material, doors and windows and paint for one year in the first instance,
- The UWP left a national debt of \$573.4 million (79.7% of GDP) in 2000 compared to \$1.4 billion (113.5% of GDP) where it now stands;

- The WORLD CREOLE FESTIVAL had already become a great source of pride and indeed revenue in Dominica.
  
- The UWP government invested in the development of prawn farming in Dominica.
  
- Local businesses and institutions such as the Dominica Coconut Products, Refresh Company, Dominica Brewery and Beverages, Bello, Coco Cola Bottling Plant, Paul's Plastics, Paul's Pasta, Winera, Candle Industries, Callalou Restaurant, La Robe Creole, Guiyave Restaurant, Anchorage Hotel, Evergreen Hotel, Sisserou Hotel, Reigate Hotel, Layou Hotel, Lauro Club, Castaways Hotel, Brisin Agencies, Antilles, O.D. Brisbane, Mussons, Hara Agencies, Cimpex, Ross University were all thriving and contributing handsomely to Dominica's economy.

Now Dominica's business landscape resembles a wasteland gutted by a kakistocracy;

Who would have thought that this island of promise and possibility; this oasis of opportunity would be reduced to an island which is being stalked and shadowed by hungry hyenas; by avaricious persons and by those who don't give a hoot about Dominican's welfare, wellness and wellbeing?

But fear not. Dominica will rise again. I pledge to thee, citizens of Dominica, that my life's work will be the resurrection of the Dominica we all love and cherish.

SO HELP ME GOD!!!!

## **UNLAWFUL PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC MONEY**

The United Workers party brings a fresh commitment to the processes, systems, parameters and design responsibilities of national development.

We will innovate, create and deliver solutions around a whole range of national development issues. For two decades, this administration has focused on designing and upgrading tools that build dependency, deepen poverty and dumb down the native population to secure longevity in political office.

Even in this budget cycle, the DLP administration is busy reinventing handouts, mind control propaganda, intimidation, police brutality, suppression of freedom and denial of fundamental rights.

Citizens of Dominica, the urgent priority of now is to diligently question the sources of our national development problems and design policies and programs for human development results.

Let us dig up our history especially our history of the past 20 years and face up to the painful legacies of those two decades that loom large as the big stone in the road, the gwo woshe a chimen la.

In this budget cycle the Cabinet of Ministers is seeking to give legitimacy to a Budget Plan which excludes a large amount of state revenues, derived from the sale of passports.

They are once again trying to normalize the unconstitutional existence of two treasuries... two sources of national income spending, one of which -

the one with a significantly larger share of national income - is entirely outside of the state machinery for the management of public finances

With all the authority vested in this Parliament as the highest decision making body in this parliamentary democracy, it has no say in the collection and spending of passport money privatized into the control of a foreign friend of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

This clear and present danger confronts us with a serious existentialist threat to our system of democratic governance and the sustainability of our economy. We cannot run this country successfully with more national income under private control than we have in the consolidated fund under the watch of the state machinery for the management of public finances.

Let us obey the constitutional rule of law and have all of Dominica's income in a single consolidated fund where it is collected and from where it is spent for the peoples' business through the formal budget cycle subject to parliamentary oversight.

The parliamentary opposition fully embraces the principle of Fiscal responsibility but it must be structured from a position in which full employment and equitable distribution of country's wealth and national output, are the primary goals of fiscal policy.

As a direct result of funding national affairs from the consolidated fund - the poorer of the two treasuries – with select contributions from the richer of the two treasuries, we have seen a deterioration in Dominica's fiscal health. Households/consumers and businesses have been cutting back on spending and investments, resulting in persistent shortfall in aggregate demand.

This shortfall, generated by households and businesses, is the primary reason why unemployment has remained so high over the last decade, with the attendant damage inflicted on young families.

This mockery of parliamentary oversight that we indulge ourselves in at budget time once a year, is theatre at best but it falls to us in the parliamentary opposition to pierce the veil and bring light into this dark economic time.

## **CHALLENGE & OPPORTUNITY**

Responsible, caring government in Dominica at this time, must of necessity mean moving citizens from welfare to work through a large increase in employment opportunities. Revenues from passport sales must be channeled toward small and medium scale businesses and farm-households, that have not shared proportionately in the sovereign wealth, that has been diverted from mainstream national income.

The people of Dominica, the Private Sector in Dominica have been reeling in this guava season, largely abandoned from stimulus and support. Here again, the private sector has been relegated to the side in this anemic budget. There are no fiscal incentives laid out for the real productive centers of this country.

The budget is an International Airport Budget where the government attempts to dangle in front our eyes a project that we have been asking for 20 years, for which they dismissed us is not needed. And currently, in this budget, this is the strategic distraction from the real challenges facing this country.

The budget must address current practical challenges being faced by this country.

- We have a decimated tourism industry because of the Global Pandemic,
- Prices of goods are increasing at an alarming rate as a result of global value chain challenges and
- the cost of fuel has been steadily increasing every month this year.

These are added pressures on a sector which is already wounded from having their revenues depressed due to Covid restrictions and the absence of meaningful support or stimulus to maintain delivery of goods and services.

### **The Covid 19 response**

As is the case throughout the global community the COVID-19 pandemic has put significant pressure on the Dominican authorities to respond to an unfolding health care crisis that will worsen pre-existing social and economic inequalities. We warned, that Dominica has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world, and any disruptions on the scale expected in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic will threaten our fragile society and weak economy, and wreak havoc with our lives and livelihoods; in the absence of immediate and substantial government spending.

We recommended that the response to COVID-19 should not be limited to simply increasing the capacity and effectiveness of public health systems and social services, and providing support to businesses. We said the response should also be about emergency public support to maintain

people's immediate livelihoods - maintain employment income, delay mortgage and rent payments, and provide for groceries, medical and other necessary expenses. Health and economy are intertwined, they are on the same side of the coin. This reality was vividly manifested in the actions of bus owners/drivers, committed to daily sanitization on their public service vehicles and reducing the number of passengers. These actions invariably resulted in significant losses of income to the buses, and similarly reduced the bus owners' capacity to service their loans with banks.

Key sectors of the economy, especially retail, tourism, financial services, transportation and entertainment, continue to be impacted. Hotels and restaurants suspended their business operations, as part of the bigger national agenda to alleviate the impact of Corona Virus on health care costs and loss of life. Invariably, this suspension of business generated increased revenue losses. We advocated that Government spending on income support, business continuity and value chain stabilization would be crucial in securing the longer-term wellbeing of the people and even their survival.

We warned that recovery from the global economic impact of COVID-19 will be slow and painful. While regional and international organizations showed solidarity, we should depend on such solidarity to take us successfully through the crisis.

The Parliamentary Opposition called for front-loaded spending to help the economic stabilization effort by putting as much money as possible into the economy as quickly as possible. In light of the global scale of the crisis the unfavorable impact projected for our economy, it would be imprudent, bordering on reckless for Government to approach a solution by way of

disjointed, haphazard program of expenditures targeting the health sector. The sustainability of the economy, and the continued operations as a viable country is contingent on what is done for the other sectors.

We expressed our belief that in this Parliamentary Democracy of the Commonwealth of Dominica, Parliamentarians are duty bound to oversee the nation's COVID-19 response as a matter of urgent priority. We are required by the constitution and the operation of law to pass emergency legislation for the approval of adequate public funds to meet the needs of all the people, businesses, the institutions of government, and civil society organizations. We also have a sacred duty to promote transparency in the execution of the national responsibilities to deal with COVID-19. Only through this transparency will we secure and maintain the public's trust in the government's response to the pandemic.

Section 4 of the Emergency Powers Act (Chapter 15:02) provides:

“No person is liable to any suit or action in respect of any act done under lawful direction and authority pursuant to the provisions of this Act but **the President shall order that compensation shall be paid out of the public funds of the State to any person upon being satisfied that such person has suffered loss or damage by reason of the exercise of any powers conferred by section 3.**

We are now in the grip of another national lockdown under the emergency powers act in defense against a government-led surge in Covid 19 cases. Still no adherence to the rule of law provision that entitles those who suffer loss to compensation from the funds of the state.

Last year, we proposed a comprehensive 300-million-dollar relief, recovery and economic stimulation plan covering all economic and social sectors. Dominica had enough funds from the CBI in our second treasury to do it. But our proposal was ignored in favor of a halfhearted, weak, underfunded and ineffective response. One year later a surge in Covid 19 cases has overwhelmed Dominica's much vaunted defense system forcing the DLP administration into the irrational, punitive, panic driven, decision making normally associated with a guilty conscience. And while things are great in Dynamic Dominica, people are catching hell in the real Dominica

### **People Centered, Private Sector Led Growth**

Citizens of Dominica, businesses are folding up every day in this country to deafening silence of the government. A government that views this country through a set of lens that does little to correct its myopia.

Workers in this country are been laid off and salaries have been adjusted downward to compensate in small part for the shortfalls caused by the necessary Covid restrictions.

However, while we see our food security threatened with consolidations and price increases in these sectors, the government marches steadfastly into the unknown as the largest employer and soon the largest homeowner in the country. While we applaud the efforts to house citizens to facilitate the governments ambitious agendas, albeit 20 years late, we recognize that people cannot eat concrete, nor can they herd in breadlines outside the one or two surviving businesses.

There must also be a bold and current agenda for the survival and funding of the small and medium size business in this country. Everyone cannot

work for the government, and the government cannot survive on taxing its own payroll. There must be a thriving private sector with prospects of growth in the coming years to drive employment. Currently, what we are seeing is a massive consolidation within the private sector as businesses fight for a bigger share of a shrinking pie. This has real implications on our food security, prices and availability of substitutes.

The estimates presented to support this budget are once again an exercise in political theatre, as the DLP administration runs this country like a shop with its CBI check book in its proverbial back pocket. They estimate what they say they want to do, then do what they want to do, then try and tell us this is what they had to do. No real plan, no real programs that are sustainable to drive any of the productive sectors.

The Aid Bank has lost its way in trying to finance Domestic development and the National Bank is under capital pressures to hold the strain. The international banks have vacated the region and we are left with only an un-auditable CBI funding resource that is at the whim and fancy of one man and his private employees around the world.

The Budget Address states that the PSIP remains the main fiscal tool used to stimulate economic activity. All of the multilateral organizations affiliated with Dominica, including the CDB have been advising on a medium-term strategy to stimulate investment and growth, through the development of an efficient private sector. The massive increase in the PSIP from \$156.4 Million in 2019/20 to \$431.7 Million in 2020/21 is not reflected in increased private sector activity, or in increased tax revenues, or increased employment opportunities for citizens of this country.

In its most recent publication, June 2021 of Dominica Country Economic Review 2020, CDB estimated growth of 0.3%, which also takes into account significant uncertainties, particularly in respect of tourism flows, due to the COVID pandemic.

## **Public Debt**

The Overview of Public Debt puts the aggregate of disbursed and outstanding debt in 2020 at \$1.468 Billion. By any realistic assessment, that amount of debt does not reflect the value of directly productive activities in current day Dominica, from which debt service could be derived. This level of debt is equivalent to 113.5% of GDP, and almost double the acceptable benchmark set by ECCB of debt equivalent to 60% of GDP. For the foreseeable future, the Budget Address makes reference to new borrowings through the World Bank and others. Invariably before long, the country will be faced with debt servicing requirements for treasury number one, without the attendant debt servicing capacity.

And what is the purpose of all this debt when we have enough money in treasury number two to allow us to operate debt free?

## **REVENUE/EXPENDITURE PERFORMANCE**

What are the revenue/expenditure proposals in this 2021/2022 budget?

Recurrent Revenue	853,099,571	
Capital Revenue	194,772,981	
		1,047,872,552
Recurrent Expenditure	650,014,307	
Capital Expenditure	438,856,565	
		1,088,870,872
Financing Gap		(40,998,320)
Rec. Rev includes CBI\$		
1201 citizens @ 385,705.51	463,354,283	
corrected @ 227,572.78	273,314,909	
Rev Shortfall	190,039,374	
Revised Rec Rev	663,060,197	
Capital Revenue	194,772,981	
		857,833,178
Recurrent Expenditure	650,014,307	
Capital Expenditure	438,856,565	
		1,088,870,872
Revised Financing Gap		(231,037,694)

	Pre	Since				
	Pandemic	Pandemic			ESTIMATE	VS
	2018/2019	2020/2021	Diff	%	2021/22	2018/19
Tax	460.8	335.2	-125.6	-27%	360.8	-22%
Non Tax	256.4	323.9	67.5	26%	492.3	92%
	<b>717.2</b>	<b>659.1</b>	<b>-58.1</b>	<b>-8%</b>	<b>853.1</b>	<b>19%</b>
tax						
IT- individuals	28.3	28.8	0.5	2%	30.9	9%
IT- corporations	52.1	31.3	-20.8	-40%	33.7	-35%
Property	8.7	9.5	0.8	9%	10.2	17%
VAT	264.8	194.7	-70.1	-26%	209.6	-21%
Import Duties	106.9	70.9	-36	-34%	76.3	-29%
	<b>460.8</b>	<b>335.2</b>	<b>-125.6</b>	<b>-27%</b>	<b>360.7</b>	<b>-22%</b>
non tax						
Rents & Interest	1.3	1.5	0.2	15%	1.6	23%
Fines, fees	21.1	12.3	-8.8	-42%	13.2	-37%
CBI	224.3	296.6	72.3	32%	463.4	107%
Other	9.7	13.5	3.8	39%	14.1	45%
	<b>256.4</b>	<b>323.9</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>492.3</b>	<b>92%</b>

While the main assumptions behind the revenue estimates in particular are unknown, the mathematical impossibilities presented by some projections provoke distrust.

	CoN Rev	Citizens	CBI Rev	Per Citizen
2021/22 E	815,964	1,201	463,354,283	385,705.51
2020/21 P	521,587	768	296,573,154	386,205.75
2019/20 A	5,790,270	8,525	182,355,035	21,391.07
2018/19 A	2,299,679	3,386	224,333,596	66,258.37
2017/18 A	5,369,730	7,906	315,404,263	39,895.95
2016/17 A	2,701,480	3,977	491,155,897	123,489.85
	16,161,159	23,794	1,213,248,791	50,990.71
2016-2020	4,040,290	5,948	303,312,198	62,759
2020/2021	521,587	768	296,573,154	386,206
	3,518,703	5,180	6,739,044	(323,447)
19/20 @ 20/21	5,790,270	8,525	3,292,334,010	386,205.75
19/20	5,790,270	8,525	182,355,035	21,391.07
			<b>3,109,978,975</b>	
PM - Oct 26, 2020		5,814	1,323,108,135	227,572.78
<b>19/20 revised</b>	<b>5,790,270</b>	<b>8,525</b>	<b>1,940,016,697</b>	<b>227,572.78</b>
			182,355,035	
			<b>1,757,661,662</b>	

So, based on the 8,525 persons who paid \$679.23 each for Certificates of Naturalization (CoN) and therefore paid the average of \$227,572.78 per passport (as communicated to Parliament by the Prime Minister in October 2020), we have 2019/2020 revised CBI revenues of \$1.940 billion. \$182.4 million came into the consolidated fund, treasury number 1 under our control and we presume, \$1.76 billion went into treasury number 2 beyond our control.

I congratulate the Financial Secretary, the Cabinet Secretary, the Accountant General, the Director of Audit, the Budget Director, the Permanent Secretaries, and heads of department for their service to country. But I have to ask them, is this OK?

In the Dominica Official Gazette of Thursday March 14th, 2019, pages 87 to 121, there was report from the Financial Secretary listing “Successful applicants under the citizenship by investment program” for the period August 2018 to December 2018 – five of the first six months in the financial year 2018/2019.

That disclosure raised red flags about the apparent shortfalls CBI revenues reported for 2018/2019. There has been no such disclosure in the Gazette since. Why?

The finance minister promised answers to the 1.2-billion-dollar discrepancy in the 2018/2019 CBI revenue numbers. Those answers from dynamic public officers in the Ministry of Finance would put the leader of the opposition to shame. The leader of the opposition is still waiting.

	<b>CoN\$</b>	<b>CITIZENS</b>	<b>227.6K per</b>
2019/20 A	5,790,270	8,525	1,940,016,697
2018/19 A	2,299,679	3,386	770,502,180
2017/18 A	5,369,730	7,906	1,799,115,733
2016/17 A	2,701,480	3,977	905,124,684
	<b>16,161,159</b>	<b>23,794</b>	<b>5,414,759,294</b>
Received			1,213,248,791
<b>Balance</b>			<b>4,201,510,503</b>

23,794 passports of Dominica sold during the four-year period commencing July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 and ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at an average price of \$227,572.78 means total revenue of \$5,414,759,294. Five billion, four hundred and fourteen million, seven hundred and fifty-nine thousand, two hundred and ninety-four dollars. In short, \$5.4 billion. From this amount only \$1.2 billion came into Dominica's consolidated fund. The balance of \$4.2 billion (approximately \$60,000 for each of 70,000 Dominicans) is under the private custody and control of the finance minister and his foreign friends.

## **THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

The long awaited, ancient promise of an international airport by the same government that voted 18 years ago in this parliament against a bipartisan approach to developing this critical piece of the economic infrastructure is the hot ticket item in the 2021/2022 budget.

The international airport, the international airport, the international airport... rises from the graveyard of empty promises and vote catching deception to become "a major game changer for Dominica" that Dominica was cruelly denied of for 21 years.

The total cost of the scheme in development up to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 is 524.5 million. 3.3 million is already spent; 75 million will be spent in this budget year; 233.5 million in 2022/2023 and 212.8 million in 2023/2024.

We have no idea how much more will be spent before completion. At the contract and/or agreement signing on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Prime Minister said that the international airport will cost "just over a billion dollars" and will

be completed by 2025. But according to a July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 article in the Transport & Airlines online publication SKIFT featuring interviews with Dominica's Tourism Minister and the CEO of the International Airport Company, "there is no price tag yet for the project as the bidding is ongoing but some press reports pegged it at north of US\$220 million (EC\$598 million)".

There was no purpose and needs assessment as would be expected upfront in an economic feasibility study including cost benefit analysis, risk assessment and travel demand forecasts; no site selection survey; no environment impact analysis and assessment; no geotechnical analysis; no airport design and master plan. These are basic best practice requirements of international airport development.

In the absence of a geotechnical study, the basic facts concerning the airport site are not available to inform the specific location of the runway and the other supporting infrastructure. The soil stability, method of design, construction of features and structures below the present ground level that are needed to ensure a stable and feasible runway design to support the construction activities are still unknown. We understand there are serious concerns at new site compared to the previous site where all these facts were investigated prior to arriving at a decision on location.

In the absence of Environmental Impact Assessment and analysis of the proposed site, how will the people of Wesley know for example, what impact it will have on their water system or whether the noise pollution levels will be tolerable?

## **The international airport development program of the United Workers Party – 1995 to 1999**

When the UWP took office in 1995, the growth engines of tourism, agriculture, manufacturing and agro-industries, in particular, and the importance of air access to economic development were foremost on the national leadership and management agenda

Within two years of assuming office Cabinet resolved that improved air access was indispensable to the sustainable economic development of Dominica and put in motion appropriate measures to alleviate the problem. The UWP contracted Planning and Stanley Engineering Associates of Trinidad and Tobago to advise on the options for Air Access Improvement:

The ToR of the Consultant were:

- To identify a preferred airport development site
- Present a Master plan for implementation and set the policy recommendations to optimize the cost/benefit relationships
- In addition to its in-house professionals, Planning and Stanley engaged specialist in economics, finance, tourism, agro-business, geology, environmental management, land use planning and civil aviation, among others in the course of the study
- Planning and Stanley also reviewed previous studies for new airport development for Dominica

- Consideration was given to international airport site at Crompton Point/ Woodford Hill recommended by Sir Alexander Gibb and approved by the Dame Eugenia Charles administration.
- The Consultants advised that the socio-economic and environmental impacts on the villages of Wesley would be too severe and the UWP Government agreed with that conclusion.
- Additionally, the runway length would be in the region of 7000 feet which was less than 10,000 feet length they felt was ideal at the time.
- The consultants investigated the feasibility of realigning Melville Hall. As many as seven alignments were considered, all of which were determined to be technically and/or economically not feasible.

The consultants analyzed the cost/benefit relationship between the proposed airport development's capital costs, environmental impacts and the economic benefits to be realized by the development

Planning and Stanley delivered a "Preliminary Engineering, Feasibility, and Master Plan Study", prepared in a manner consistent with the needs of the Island of Dominica and in conformity with applicable guidelines established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

- The consultants identified and recommended a site between Woodford Hill and Wesley, generally referred as the Joe Burton area.
- The UWP Government accepted the recommendations and proceeded to acquire the identified lands in the area in addition to the whole of Londonderry Estate, largely by private treaty for airport development, for relocation of farmers and the St Andrews High School (now North East

Comprehensive), village extension, tourism, manufacturing and other development.

- The Feasibility Study was conducted over a period two years. It entailed:
- Market/Economic and Financial forecasts and analyses
- Environmental studies
- Land Use Plan
- Business plan
- Consultation with key stakeholders (farmers to be displaced, residents of the area (Wesley and WoodFord Hill in particular) and the general public
- Air/Land side facility requirements

Geophysical investigations Draft Technical Specifications

Airport, Roadway, Utilities and Hydrology layout,

- It is important to note that up to that time, submission of the Final Report, no land was handed over to any developer for commencement of airport construction works.

3. The Final Report presented conclude among other specifications:

A. The New Airport was estimated to cost \$80 million US\$ comprising \$10M in private financing, \$40M in international financing and \$30M in international grants

B. The New Airport would be located approximately 1, 700 meters northwest of the existing Melville Hall Airport

C. The runway will be 3,200 meters long by 45 meters wide to serve primary critical aircraft (B767) with a non-precision 34:1 VOR/ DME approach (initial) and a differential Global Positioning System (GPS) approach (ultimate)

It is worth noting that by the time that the UWP left office in January 2000, the Edison James administration had secured the following commitments towards construction of the International Airport:

- Thirteen Million Euro (13 m) grant funding from the European Union
- Twenty-five Million Us Dollars (25 m) in grant and soft loan funding from the government of Taiwan
- In kind contribution towards earth works (a major cost component of the project) from the governments of Cuba and Venezuela.

The UWP adhered to the Best Practice approach to construction of this critical piece of the national economic infrastructure and Planning and Stanley delivered the “Airport Master Plan and Feasibility Report to Government for implementation of the New International airport.

All this was done openly, transparently and faithfully in the public interest of positioning the economy to facilitate maximum development benefits for the people of Dominica – 22 years ago

This administration took Office in 2000 on a promise that it would build an international airport. Yet, instead of improving on what it inherited, the DLP government set aside all the preparatory work for the development of an international airport done under the Edison James administration claiming that Dominica could not afford an international airport.

The British consulting firm Halcrow Group Ltd was contracted to oppose the economic feasibility of the international airport that was being developed for Dominica under the United Workers Party and justify the upgrading of Melville Hall with night lading capability. In 2003, the DLP government actually voted against a bi-partisan approach to building an international airport.

Halcrow presented its Study Briefing Report in October 2001:

Then Sen. Charles Savarin, Minister for Tourism, Industry and Enterprise Development, as recorded in the Hansard of the Meeting of Thursday 1st May, 2003.

“I have a preliminary report from Halcrow - “Review of Airport Options. Briefing Report. October 2001”.

“Citizens of Dominica, the Halcrow preliminary report of October 2001 says at paragraph 151:

“New Airport Publicly Funded. The practical and financial feasibility of a publicly funded airport for Dominica has been examined many times.

“The most feasible site identified in previous studies for such a new airport was located north of Melville Hall.

“Work on detailed design and land acquisition for this scheme was well advanced in 1999 but has since not proceeded further. This is understood to be due to reservations about its affordability...”

These DLP administration reservations about affordability were communicated to Halcrow in the client instructions for the “Review of

Airport Options” consultancy. It was financed by the EDF and presented by Halcrow for the Government of Dominica and the European Commission.

Halcrow was crystal clear that the report was prepared “in accordance with the instructions of its client, the Government of Dominica for its sole and specific use. Any other persons who use any information contained herein do so at their own risk”.

Review of Airport Options, Draft Final Report, January 2002:

“The scheme remains, however, a technically feasible one and has been used as the basis for comparison with the option of upgrading Melville Hall...”

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021, there was a very unfortunate statement in this house suggesting that the word scheme, used in the Halcrow report meant something undesirable:

“Citizens of Dominica, when you are talking about scheme, you are talking about the Pyramid scheme and all kind of things like that”.

For those in this Honorable House who are of that persuasion, Halcrow used the word scheme to mean what it has always meant – “a large-scale systematic plan or arrangement for attaining a particular object or putting a particular idea into effect” – in this case an international airport.

## **The international airport development program of the Dominica Labour Party – 2000 to 2021**

In the election campaign of 2000 and in every election campaign since, the DLP regime has promised an international airport.

In May 2017, a plan was announced for funding of an international airport scheme using revenues from the Citizenship By Investment scheme. The fund was capitalized with US\$10 million in May 2017 and there would be contributions of US\$5 million monthly thereafter.

At September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, when there was supposed to be US\$210 million or EC\$570.5 million in the international airport development account, the balance, according to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was EC\$239.69. So, government was collecting the money to build the international airport but other priorities came into the picture and CBI funds were diverted to more important things. No problem though, because according to the Prime Minister he had a November 2019 commitment that China would build the international airport for Dominica.

We have since moved back to funding the international airport with money from the sale of our passports.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance says:

“We commissioned... a study by Canadian firm Landrum and Brown who advised us that the current site on which the international airport will be constructed by this government – the Wesley/Woodfordhill site is the most suitable in terms of operations, technical and construction feasibility.

“One of the fundamental justifications for the undertaking of the development of an international airport is the number of visitor arrivals to the country. The decision is largely influenced by the demand forecast for air passenger travel over the long term usually 20 years or more.

Interestingly, the Halcrow Report which the leader of the opposition referenced had this to say about the Planning and Stanley Report of 1998:

*“Based on review for this study the benefits advanced for the scheme are considered to have been based on flawed demand generation scenario and underestimates of construction costs and impact”.*

Where then is your 20-year demand forecast for air passenger travel that justifies the development of an international airport at this time?

What would be the opinion of Halcrow on that 20-year demand forecast from an administration that met air passenger arrivals at 74,000 in 1999 (a 30% increase from 57,000 in 1994) and was only to manage an average of 72,000 air passenger arrivals per year for 20 years?

After spending hundreds of millions of dollars on the upgrade of Melville Airport and failing miserably to improve air access, the Prime Minister now claims credit for an American Airlines direct flight service Miami-Dominica from December 2021.

“This is a major achievement, particularly during the COVID- 19 pandemic, at a time when airlines are cutting back on flights, this is a vote of confidence in our destination by American Airlines. This is a result of the hard work that your Government has been doing to market and prepare this country, and the significant investments that we have made in improving our infrastructure and our hotel offerings.

With all due respect Prime Minister, the E125 jet that AA will use to fly the Miami-Dominica route has been in commercial production and therefore available to AA since 2002. You mean no one was dynamic enough on your air access improvement team to convince AA to do what is doing now, 10 to 15 years ago? Sorry Sir, this about AA sales growth and marketing

strategy in a difficult time. Nothing to do with either your hard work or dynamism.

I don't believe it is being suggested that the air passenger arrivals of 89,000 in election year 2019 – 17,000 above the average of 72,000 between 2000 and 2020 meets the Prime Minister's fundamental justification for international airport construction

What special Dominica travel demand data would make a travel demand forecast more or less flawed than the one completed in 1998?

The tourism minister told Skift two weeks ago, it's too early to put a dollar figure to how much revenue the new airport will generate for Dominica, but she believes it will be tremendous revenue.

Where are the estimates of construction costs for the international airport?

Through advances in aviation technology over the past 20 years the modern aircraft choices of major international airlines are operating on 7,000 ft runways. Yet the 2021 plan of this administration is for a 10,000 ft runway which is significantly and unnecessarily more expensive.

20 years later, there is still no determination of construction costs and no idea how much revenue the international airport will generate. But the DLP administration knows it is an economically feasible scheme because no debt is involved since we already have enough money in treasury number 2 to pay for it.

The key figure in the funding scheme for the international airport, is Anthony Haiden of Montreal Management Company into whose control the Prime Minister has placed hundreds of millions of Dominica's passport

dollars being held unconstitutionally outside of the consolidated fund (our Treasury Number 2). He will frontload money for airport construction and then refund himself from passport sales. This arrangement is deemed necessary even though there is more than enough money in our Treasury Number 2 to build an international airport at a cost just north of EC\$1.0 billion.

Anthony Haiden rents a Mercury Property house at Morne Daniel to Government as the official residence of the Prime Minister for 32 thousand dollars monthly. The amount was not provided for in the budget of 2020/2021 and so we do not know if it was paid from treasury number 1 or treasury number 2 or at all. In respect of this budget year parliament is being asked to approve \$384,000 for rental of the Haiden property and another \$403,497 in other expenses for the Prime Minister's residence. \$787,497 per year or \$65,525 per month.

Anthony Haiden has carte blanche to build houses, apartment complexes, community centres, hospitals and health centres with Dominica's passport money on no bid contracts with Government which allow him to sub contract the construction work to foreign companies and cancel local contractors at his fancy and whim.

Haiden's Housing Dominica operates out of the Prime Minister's Office separate and apart from the Ministry of Housing with funds from Treasury number 2

How is Dominica doing with these projects? Do we even know anything apart from the fact that they are being done? Are we paying market prices? Are we getting value for money?

<b>PROJECT (cost in EC millions)</b>	<b>Market</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>Diff</b>
Modern Resilient Housing	50.0	88.1	38.1
Modern Resilient Health Centers	14.4	32.4	18.0
Modern Resilient Comm Centers	10.0	17.1	7.1
Marigot Hospital	35.2	55.2	20.0
	<b>109.6</b>	<b>192.8</b>	<b>83.2</b>

Anthony Haiden signed a contract with government for the development of the international airport. The project was not tendered and no competitive bids were considered contrary to the provisions of the Finance Administration Act and the Procurement Act against wasteful, uneconomical spending in the procurement of public services.

This means in effect, arrangements for the largest public infrastructure project in the history of Dominica that are in disobedience to the rule of law demand and the command of Parliament that spending of public funds must reflect value for money.

The international airport for Dominica must be built in accordance with international best practice with funds already received from the sale of Dominican passports being held unlawfully under private control in overseas account. Any agreement for these or other CBI funds to be “front-loaded” for international airport construction and then refunded to the front-loader, is null, void and of no effect.

**NATIONAL SECURITY, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

There is an allocation of 31 million dollars in the PSIP for the Ministry of National Security. An adequate amount that allocation must be spent on

dealing with what the Chief of Police has described as threats to national security and others have referred to as racketeering – organized crime – in the ministry of national security

An adequate amount of the budget of the Ministry of National Security must be spent on reviewing:

- 1) The basis on which Gurjit Singh Bhandal and Gurmit Singh, residents of Britain, denied entry to Dominica on April 12th, 2021 on suspicion of involvement in human smuggling as advised by the Joint Regional Communication Centre (JRCC), were allowed to enter the country on or about May 24th, 2021;
- 2) Whether there was any national security risk assessment involved in allowing British residents Barbara Jarabik, Gurdip Bath and Leslie Farrow-Guy, associates of Gurjit Singh Bhandal and Gurmit Singh, to enter Dominica on or about April 9th, 2021 and on or about May 23rd, 2021.

One of these British residents, Gurdip Bath, is the owner of CS Global, the exclusive marketer of Dominica's CBI program, that receives a commission on every Dominican passport sold regardless of who sells it

In 2019, Barbara Jarabik wrote propaganda articles criticizing the United Workers Party in fake news on-line publications funded by foreign operatives of Dominica's CBI program.

These individuals along with fellow British residents Richard Lloyd Henry and Joseph Frederick Boll who were funded by foreign operatives of Dominica's CBI program to criminally trespass on my property in 2019, are of significant interest in Dominica's responsibility for honesty and integrity in international relations.

We want to know as well how much of the 31 million dollars will be spent on returning Mehul Choksi to Dominica to face charges of illegal entry.

Here is why:

On May 23rd, 2021, the Indian born citizen by investment of Antigua and Barbuda, claims he was kidnapped in Antigua and Barbuda, tortured and ferried against his will to Dominica where, on May 24th, 2021, his kidnappers handed him over at sea to officers aboard a Dominica Coast Guard vessel. The Coast Guard officers escorted him to a landing facility in Portsmouth where he was met by senior police officers. Mehul Choksi, accused of criminal misconduct by Indian authorities, claims he was advised by the senior Dominica police officers that he was wanted in India and he would therefore be repatriated to India.

At the time of his forced rendition to Dominica, by the British residents of Indian descent involved in his abduction in Antigua and Barbuda, Mr. Choksi was the subject of an Interpol Red Corner Notice. According to Interpol, “a Red Corner Notice (RCN) is not an international arrest warrant. It is a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action”. There was no need for any such provisional arrest and legal action in Dominica because Mr. Choksi was already at the mercy of the justice system in Antigua and Barbuda where he resides as a citizen and is responding, in the High Court, to an extradition request from India.

The justice systems of Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica are under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC) – an institution of the OECS. His alleged misdemeanors in India

notwithstanding, it is a crime against humanity to violently remove Mr. Choksi from his constitutional rights and rule of law protection as a citizen in one OECS member state and place him against his will in another OECS member state to facilitate short-circuiting the extradition proceedings.

While no questions of illegal entry were raised with the captain, two crew members and two passengers aboard the boat 'Calliope of Arne' that brought Mr. Choksi undeclared to Dominica, the accused Indian diamond trader was detained by the Dominica Police on May 24th, 2021. He was declared a prohibited immigrant on May 25th, 2021 by the National Security Minister, who advised that he was not permitted to enter Dominica and the Chief of Police had been instructed to make arrangements for his repatriation. On May 27th, lawyers for Mr. Choksi filed a writ of Habeas Corpus in the High Court seeking relief from unlawful detention.

Section 3 (3) of the Constitution of the Dominica provides that any person who is arrested or detained – (a) For the purpose of bringing him before a court in execution of the order of a court; or (b) upon reasonable suspicion of his having committed, or being about to commit, a criminal offence under the law of Dominica, and who is not released, shall be brought before a court without undue delay and in any case not later than seventy-two hours after such arrest or detention.

Mehul Choksi was held by the Dominica Police for over 190 hours before the High Court Judge presiding over the Habeas Corpus matter, ordered on June 2nd, 2021, that he be brought before the Magistrate's Court immediately on the charge of illegal entry.

What illegal entry?

The Revised Treaty of Basseterre establishing the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union, signed by Dominica on June 18th, 2010, secures free movement for all citizens of member states in the economic union area. This allows citizens to live and work in these member states without restrictions, and laws have been passed in all member states to give effect to this. Citizens from protocol member states must be treated in the same manner as the nationals of the country to which they move.

Article 12 of the Protocol of Eastern Caribbean Economic Union on Movement of Persons provides:

12.3. Citizens of Protocol Member states shall enjoy in the Economic Union Area the rights contingent to the right of freedom of movement that are agreed by Protocol Member States.

As a citizen of Antigua and Barbuda, Mehul Choksi is therefore guaranteed freedom of movement in and between member states of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica are member states of the OECS. How can he be declared a prohibited immigrant in Dominica on arrival from Antigua and Barbuda? How can he be charged in Dominica with illegal entry without violating the Revised Treaty of Basseterre Establishing the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union?

Article 4.2 of the Revised Treaty mandates Member States to co-ordinate, harmonize and undertake joint actions and pursue joint policies in the judiciary and the administration of justice. A judicial officer of the ECSC in the High Court of Dominica is therefore duty bound to take judicial notice of the extradition proceedings commenced against Mehul Choksi in the High

Court of Antigua and avoid facilitating any abuse of the ECSC court process by parties interested in by-passing the Antigua and Barbuda High Court deliberations.

Mr. Choksi is in obedience to the rule of law in the jurisdiction of the ECSC. He has done no wrong in Dominica.

Contrary to the letter and spirit of the United Nations Declaration of Human rights, Mehul Choksi's right to life, liberty and the security of his person has been violated by those who subjected him to torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. He was a victim of arbitrary, unlawful arrest and detention; restricted access to family members and lawyers; denial of access to independent medical advice; and denial of the presumption of innocence until proven guilty by the Dominica Police Authority.

The National Security budget allocation must address "the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family" as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, which is being undermined with impunity by a government acting in flagrant disobedience to the rule of law.

The 31 million dollars allocation must provide an investigation or commission of inquiry into the involvement of Dominica law enforcement officers in this most unfortunate international relations matter.

## **THE MARIGOT CONSTITUENCY**

Marigot is thankful for:

- the Hospital,
- the health centre

- the renovations to be done on the fisheries complex
- the refurbishment of the Wills Stratmore Stevens school

We waited 7 long years for the Hospital which this administration shutdown for termite infestation in 2014. I am happy that I advocated relentlessly for construction of the hospital using our own CBI funds instead of waiting indefinitely on a contribution of 5 million US dollars from Mexico. Today the design and build work of the St Lucian firm Rayneau nears completion and hopefully the new, much improved facility will be open soon to serve the needs of the North East Health District.

In September 2017, Hurricane Maria damaged 499 houses and destroyed 240 houses in Marigot and Concord. Currently, over 100 persons in the Marigot Constituency are in need of Housing assistance. Some need new houses, some need roof repairs, some need repairs to segments of their affected houses, some need to strengthen their structures to hurricane resistant standards. Some of these Maria victims have received minimal or no help during the Government Housing assistance program post Maria.

This is not because we do not have money. Dominica has enough money from the sale of Dominican citizenship to meet all the housing assistance needs of all the victims of Hurricane Maria. The Maria victims of Marigot continue to suffer denial of state assistance because they have not been voting for the Dominica Labour Party.

We need rehabilitation of Village and Feeder Roads:

1. Cregg/Valley Road/Melville hall link road
2. Sunly Road

3. Coffee Road
4. Morne George/Rosehill Road
5. Tan-Tan/North End/ Pagua link Road
6. Baron /Rosehill Road
7. Access Road to Long Bay
8. Over gutter Road drainage
9. Windy Lodge Road
10. Crapaud hall Road
11. Six acres/Melville hall link Road
12. Dam bridge reconstruction completion/River wall construction
13. Sam's Gutter/Will Valley access road
14. Fine grass/Bull Hole/ School road link road
15. North End Hamlet road and drainage construction

The constituency needs:

1. The fisheries complex operating as an official port of entry
2. Equipment and proper local staffing at the new state of the art Hospital to serve the North East
3. A health center in the hamlet of Concord
4. Development of the Concord Community Centre and Hard-court/  
Playing field

5. A proper and adequate water system to serve the present and future needs of the Concord Community
6. Upgrades of the Londonderry playing field, Lio Park and Weirs Hard court
7. Proper libraries at all school facilities
8. Completion of the North Eastern Education Complex
9. Construction and identification of resistant and functional hurricane shelters
10. Affordable housing programs to facilitate village expansion
12. A young farmers development program to facilitate continuity in our vital agriculture sector
13. Gov't assistance with the expansion and development of food reception depots for the processing of agro exports
14. Proper completion of street lighting from North End to Melville Hall to include Valley and Windy Lodge

The \$83.2 million in excess of market prices that government has been asked to pay for 4 construction projects in 2020/2021 is more than enough to fund all of these pressing needs for one of the most productive communities in the Commonwealth of Dominica.

## **CONCLUSION**

The 2021/2022 budget statement confirms Dominica deserves better. The people of this blessed nature island need a fresh start and real change. We have the money. We earned it from the huge sacrifice of selling our

citizenship in the global market. Let us put the billions of the people being held unlawfully outside of our control into our treasury where it will be used by government of the people for the benefit of all the people

## **The Best Dominica for ALL Dominicans**

Starting in this budget year:

- We must reduce the size of Cabinet by at least forty percent
- We must pursue the appropriate constitutional amendments and enact legislation to limit the time in office for any Prime Minister to 2 five-year terms and to establish a fixed date for general elections every five years
- We must bring an immediate end to the practice of using the resources of Dominica to benefit outside interests with multimillion-dollar contracts for work Dominicans are ready, willing and able to do.
- We must create a new sustainable Nature Island Economy with agriculture, tourism, renewable energy, ICT, the cultural industries and a water industry as major pillars
- We must grow the economy by 7% per year, create 12,000 new jobs by 2025,
- We must increase pensions to senior citizens from the public purse to no less than \$500 monthly
- We must reduce the cost and maximize the ease of investing and doing business in Dominica

- We must restore livelihoods and bring back regular income to families in the farming communities of Dominica. THIS MEANS:
- We must enact Legislation and Regulations to Legalize, Grow, Process and Export Cannabis, and cannabis-based health and wellness products
- We must provide agricultural inputs and farm labour financial assistance grants to farmers to boost output of a range of high value products for export
- We must purchase at least two refrigerated vessels to transport Nature Island branded primary and processed agricultural products in the Caribbean
- We must provide low interest loans, financial grants and appropriate fiscal incentives to deserving tourist service providers and manufactures for refinancing, refurbishment and expansion of their establishments
- We must expand and modernize our ports of entry
- We must open the Delice/Petite Savanne road and complete the Roseau Road Reinstatement Project... Overall, we must and upgrade our road network and bridges to the highest standards of resilience to natural disasters,
- We must fully reinstate, restructure and operationalize the Public Works Corporation
- We must eliminate Dominica's dependency on fossil fuels and reduce the cost of energy by at least 30% within five years

- We must ensure there is fairness, equity, proper accountability, and no political interference in government's housing assistance programme
- We must provide duty free importation of all building materials for an initial period of three years
- We must Introduce Development of Nature Island People education and training programs for schools and work places across Dominica
- We must Facilitate the critical role of women in creating and nurturing a balanced, harmonious, thriving nation... Maternity leave will be increased to 16 weeks
- We must Secure our children from neglect and abuse and ground them in the discipline of successful global citizenship
- We must upgrade the salaries of all public officers to make them competitive with the salaries paid to public officers in other OECS countries.
- We must ensure that it makes personal economic sense to be a nurse, a teacher and a police officer in Dominica
- We must appoint all public officers who are serving for more than one year without an appointment
- We must Build a national work ethic in which public officers are committed to serving the state instead of being forced to enslave themselves to the will of Government Ministers
- We must restore primary health care systems and upgrade tertiary care

- We must criminalize the sale of Diplomatic passports and the abuse and/or misappropriation of revenues from the sale of passports
- We must criminalize discrimination and victimization against citizens denied assistance from the public purse to which they are entitled for human development needs

We call on our nature island people to continue to put the country first, irrespective of partisan allegiance. Let us not place party before people and country. Let us unite over this common desire for the best Dominica for all of the sons and daughters of Dominica.

*Come ye forward, sons and daughters*

*Of this gem beyond compare*

*Strive for honour sons and daughters*

*do the right be firm be fair*

*toil with hearts and hands and voices*

*we must prosper, sound the call*

*in which everyone rejoices*

*all for each ad each for all*

May the ancestors be pleased.

I love you.

God Bless you.

Thank you very much.