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NOTICE

No. 11

The following **BILLS** which are to be introduced into the Parliament of Antigua and Barbuda are circulated with this *Gazette* and forms part thereof:

BILLS

- Money Laundering (Prevention) (Amendment) Bill, 2018
- The Mount St. John's Medical Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2018
- Church of God of Prophecy (Incorporation) Bill, 2018
- Crown Lands (Regulation) (Amendment) Bill, 2018
- Litter (Amendment) Bill, 2018
- Barbuda (Amendment) Bill, 2018



His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams, KCMG

Governor-General of Antigua and Barbuda

Delivers the Speech from the Throne

EXPANDING OUR WEALTH:

REBUILDING OUR NATION TOGETHER

Friday, April 13th, 2018
Parliament Building
Queen Elizabeth Highway
St. John's, ANTIGUA and BARBUDA

MADAME PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, MR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, MEMBERS OF THE LOWER HOUSE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I begin by congratulating each and every legislator, here assembled, on their recent election and latest appointment to the Houses of Parliament. I further congratulate the Antigua and Barbuda people for the maturity expressed on Wednesday, March 21, 2018. Twenty-two days ago, nearly 40,000 eligible citizens and residents successfully participated in the greatest exercise of democracy – the election of a new government, without incident. Congratulations to you all!

When last I addressed a Joint Session of Parliament, I reminded that a new future was beginning to appear on the horizon, and I entreated the citizens and residents to consider wisely, to think deeply, and to learn from their parents, grandparents and ancestors. The year 2018, I cautioned, is the year of decision-making. The people have now decided. *Vox populi, vox deus.* The voice of the people is the voice of God.

Since 1937, when the very first general election was conducted for the five seats that were then available, within the Legislative Council, generations of eligible Antiguan and Barbudans have demonstrated wisdom by carrying-out 19 peaceful and orderly general elections over 81 years. It is a record that wins the applause of the generations now alive, all around the region and the world.

There are two former prime ministers who graced the parliament of Antigua and Barbuda for 29 and 46 years each. The Honourable Dr. Baldwin Spencer and the Honourable Sir Lester Bird are institutions in their own right whom this parliament will miss. We wish them all the very best in their retirement from elective politics. I am certain that I express the sentiment of the Antigua and Barbuda people when I assert that they are likely to continue to have a presence in our national life.

There are four new members in the House of Representatives that grace this parliament. On behalf of the Antigua and Barbuda electorate, I welcome you. There are also seven new members appointed to the Upper House; on behalf of the Constitutional leadership, I welcome you. It has been noted that there is now gender equity in the Upper House. Antigua and Barbuda is very progressive.

MADAME PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, MR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, MEMBERS OF THE LOWER HOUSE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The continued economic well-being of our island-state is to be more greatly assured when my Government succeeds in bringing Barbuda into the 21st century. That giant leap will be achieved by making that significant portion of the unitary state a net-contributor to the nation's economy.

A new runway, 6,100 feet long and 150 feet wide, capable of handling private jets and other large aircraft, will be completed just before Carnival 2018. It will have cost the taxpayers US\$14,000,000 (fourteen million United States dollars). A new terminal building, several hangars and connecting roads will also be constructed, in order to handle the traffic that will be generated. These supporting systems will cost millions of dollars. A newly-built highway to River has already cost more than EC\$10,000,000 (ten million Eastern Caribbean dollars).

Two very luxurious hotels will also be built on the south shore of Barbuda, each costing more than US\$250,000,000 (two hundred and fifty million dollars) to construct and to outfit. Several smaller properties, including the Dulcina Hotel, will also sprout on Barbuda, enlarging the investment count. A new finger pier, costing more than US\$25,000,000 (twenty-five million United States dollars), one thousand feet long with a draught of 35 feet, will be built to allow both cargo and cruise vessels to dock in Barbuda.

My Government's objective is to make Barbuda a net contributor to the national economy by generating new jobs, new opportunities, new housing and a newly built-up infrastructure.

My Government further intends to make Barbuda a green-energy island. More solar-panel plants and new wind-power turbines are to be added to the generating capacity, such that the supply of green energy will be commensurate with economic growth in Barbuda.

An underwater fiber optic cable from Antigua may also be required in order to improve connectivity for the residents and visitors to Barbuda. These investments will cost additional millions.

My Government is marshaling these resources to make Barbuda economically self-sufficient, rather than have Barbuda and its residents continue to depend on subsidies from the Treasury.

Yet, my Government is fully aware that Hurricane Irma dealt a significant blow to housing and infrastructure on Barbuda; and, caused all of its 1,800 residents to be dispersed. Although several hundred Barbudans have returned, the overwhelming majority remain here in Antigua.

My Government will do all that is possible within its means, and with the assistance of the international community and friends, to return as many Barbudans to Barbuda to live in their own re-constructed homes. However, it is not possible for my Government to provide new houses to those whose homes were completely destroyed by the hurricane. It is my Government's expectation that with title to their land, access to borrowings, and some subsidy from the Government the Barbudans whose homes were completely destroyed will be able to draw on sufficient capital to enable them to rebuild. The Barbuda Land Act will be repealed and ownership in fee simple of house plots shall be lawfully permitted.

My Government is of the view that Barbuda will turn a new page in its economic history, and in its people's relations to Crown land. The private investments on leased land that are to take place there, and the public spending to improve infrastructure and capabilities including training opportunities for Barbudan youth will place Barbuda in a new position, with new possibilities. The future of Barbuda is bright.

MADAME PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, MR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, MEMBERS OF THE LOWER HOUSE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Another brand new initiative which my Government will pursue in this new term is the establishment of an exchange for trading to take place in cryptocurrencies. The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank has agreed to examine the possibilities, or to explore whatever value this new type of currency may hold. My Government has engaged lawyers, with special expertise in this area, to assist in drafting new legislation that would fit its ambitions.

After 1982, when another administration adopted the International Business Corporations Act, seeking to garner benefits from offshore financial services, hundreds of new jobs were generated, paying high incomes and requiring special skills. My Government foresees the new cryptocurrencies playing a significant role in generating new wealth-creating opportunities, for those youth who are not risk-averse. This new phenomenon is cutting-edge technology applied in new ways to old systems, with the expectation that many Antigua and Barbuda youth, unafraid of the technology, will learn to apply it in order to generate new opportunities for themselves, their families and their country.

My Government will also be required to generate additional non-tax revenue in order to meet many new demands. For example, replacing the old water-delivery pipes, planted alongside the rectangular streets of St. John's, as many as 100 years ago, is an objective my Government has set for itself. The leaky pipes result in water wastage exceeding two million gallons per day. When laying these new pipes, especially in the business district of St. John's, it will also be necessary for the APUA to plant conduits for electricity, internet and cable television.

Furthermore, since my Government has decided to capture the city's sewage and waste-water for treatment at a single plant, sewerage pipes will also be planted simultaneously within the commercial sector of St. John's in order to make our city more hurricane resilient, more attractive, and ultimately more appealing to both resident and visitor. The capital required to improve these fundamental systems will be borrowed, primarily; and, portions will be generated by our own creative efforts.

Under the guidance of the Cabinet of Ministers, my Government will work closely with very smart public officials at the Development Control Authority, the APUA and Public works who will put their creativity to work, generating the necessary designs and implementing seamlessly these capital projects. The object is to make St. John's the envy of every Caribbean capital. My Government will succeed because failure is not an option.

MADAME PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, MR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, MEMBERS OF THE LOWER HOUSE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Many residents and visitors to Antigua would have noticed the earthworks taking place along Friars Hill Road and the Sir George Walter Highway, during the past four weeks. Approximately US\$20,000,000 (twenty million United States dollars), contributed by the British Government, will be spent to complete the drains, the walkways in some places, and the new surfaces of the two highways. During 2018, my Government intends to spend upwards of EC\$250,000,000 (two hundred and fifty million Eastern Caribbean dollars) on roadworks. The automobile, truck, van, motorcycle and bus owners, and the residents in homes nearest to the roadsides, have indicated that smoother surfaces and little dust are expected of the 21st-century highways that are being built to last. My Government agrees and these are the criteria which the modern roads will reflect.

During the past three years, my Government invested more than \$25,000,000 (twenty-five million Eastern Caribbean dollars) in new desalting plants for the purpose of ensuring a sufficiency of supply of potable water to all consumers. As the March winds blew and the waters churned, sand and debris threatened to harm these expensive machinery. The APUA experts had to shut down temporarily most of the capacity of these reverse osmosis plants. The APUA has now invested in longer intake pipes and more pumps in strategic places that will ensure the production and delivery of 8,000,000 (eight million) gallons of potable water daily to households, businesses, schools, hotels and other consumers.

If the provision of potable water is a requirement for our Caribbean civilization to thrive, then making certain that diagnostic tools and other equipment are available at our lone public hospital is essential. My Government will conduct an efficiency

assessment of the Mount St. John Medical Center and the several clinics that serve communities across our country. The object is to ensure that there are always a sufficient number of trauma and emergency doctors and nurses available to patients, and that the medicines and other supplies are also on hand. The hospital and the clinics were built to serve ill people but that purpose does not exclude ensuring that their operations are cost-effective. The administration of the hospital and clinics will be subject to superior management.

The circumstances of this Medical Center's presence and the high standards achieved by the Mount St. John Medical Center justify attaching to it a name befitting of excellence and foresight. My Government will rename the Mount St. John Medical Center: *The Sir Lester Bird Medical Center*. The exact date and time are to be announced. Congratulations!

Forty years ago, in 1977, another administration introduced the Medical Benefits Scheme for the purpose of funding healthcare by purchasing medicines for distribution to contributors, at no cost. The object then was to extend the life and wellness of those who fell ill by providing cost-free treatment for a listed number of diseases. My Government is of the view that the time has now arrived for this ambition to move forward. My Government will introduce a *National Health Insurance Plan*. It will be more ambitious than its predecessor legislation because it will extend coverage of the number of diseases from the current eleven, and it will also provide more coverage for those who fall ill from diabetes, heart ailments, and kidney failure requiring transplants. During the 2nd quarter of 2019, the legislation required to effect this plan will come before the Parliament.

My Government accepts the definition of health offered by the World Health Organization as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity." Focusing upon the curative aspects of healthcare is not the only objective of my Government. A more strategic approach to wellness will guide my Government's policies. My Government has been working with the Caribbean Council for the Blind in order to ensure the preservation of the precious gift of sight among those most at risk, but who are without the resources required to afford the examinations and the eyeglasses. My Government expresses its thanks to the Caribbean Council for the Blind, a friend, for its invaluable contribution towards this aspect of wellness that embraces those with limited means and resources.

MADAME PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, MR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, MEMBERS OF THE LOWER HOUSE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The tragedy of Hurricane Irma allowed my Government to better identify its friends and developmental partners. Although Antigua and Barbuda has no enemies and is a friend of all, there are several states with embassies present on our soil that express their friendship in tangible ways.

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela sent planeloads of supplies, and loaned us a C-130 military aircraft and crew to airlift hundreds from Barbuda when a second hurricane threatened. Venezuela has recently signaled its intention to reduce the debt owed through the PDV-Caribe arrangement by forgiving one-half. Venezuela is truly a friend.

The Republic of Cuba sent us a crew of 25 electricians and builders who spent more than one-month on Barbuda helping to rebuild infrastructure, government buildings and homes. Cuba is truly a friend.

The People's Republic of China donated cash totaling US\$150,000 (one hundred and fifty thousand dollars) and pledged more than US\$2,000,000 (two million dollars) for roof repairs. More has since been pledged and delivered. China is truly a friend.

The great Commonwealth country of India has contributed US\$1,000,000 (one million dollars) which have gone to repairing the Hannah Thomas Hospital and equipping it with many necessities. A portion has been put towards renovating houses. India has demonstrated its friendship.

Algeria, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Singapore, and other Non-State-parties whose diplomats and representatives attended the pledging conference at the United Nations last year, also contributed. The National Office of Disaster Services will publish the tabulated amounts and give an account of the spending. The USA, Canada and the United Kingdom, our traditional developmental partners, have also contributed to the Barbuda Recovery and Relief Fund, as friends, and my Government expresses its thankfulness to these our friends and partners.

The challenge which hurricanes pose is rooted in the global climate change phenomenon. Since 1989, a group of small islands and coastal states, from around the world, have joined hands at the United Nations to form the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) to battle this harmful phenomenon. Thirty-nine sovereign states are members of AOSIS. My Government is

pleased to announce that our country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations will chair this Alliance for a two-year period, commencing shortly. The greatest global challenge facing civilization at this time is global climate change. My Government pledges to do all in our power to confront the undesirable future that global climate change will likely inflict.

My Government will take a robust approach to creating greater synergy with our partners in the OECS, CARICOM, the ALBA and the CELAC on a range of issues. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our Missions abroad will work to enhance our nation's role in the international community. Collaboration among the small states at the OAS, the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations and other multilateral agencies will witness the increased vigour of our representation.

My Government is guided by the following principles:

- (i) Recognition of International law as the standard of conduct of all States in their reciprocal relations;
- (ii) Respect for sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity;
- (iii) Non-interference in the internal affairs of states;
- (iv) Equal rights of nations, large and small; and
- (v) Pursuit of conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law are maintained.

The success of Antigua and Barbuda's foreign policy has been largely determined by the way in which my Government addresses the challenges of a changing global environment. That policy has been tailored to respond in a manner relevant to those critical areas that matter most to the security and socio-economic prosperity of our country.

MADAME PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, MR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, MEMBERS OF THE LOWER HOUSE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

My Government will continue to turn to the Ministry of Social Transformation in order to address the diversity of challenges posed by an increasingly aging population. The citizens of Antigua and Barbuda, born before 1958, are now regarded as elderly though many are still strong and agile. The challenge which the nation faces is based on the need to keep those indigent members within this group of citizens well-housed, well-fed, active and healthy.

The Ministry's HAPI Program (Housing Assistance Program for the Indigent) is one of the most visibly successful. Elderly men and women whose homes are dilapidated, whose savings and incomes are insufficient to meet the cost of repairs, can count on my Government to help. It is agreed that those skilled men and women who are incarcerated, and who would wish to earn an income that will accumulate for distribution, at the end of the incarceration period, are being recruited to provide the manpower. The materials required to effect the repairs are provided by the state or by private donors. It is a magnificent program that succeeds in meeting several goals in one felled swoop.

My Government's Youth and Education Empowerment Program, within the Ministry of Social Transformation, has enabled scores of young men and women to earn their CXC passes, empowering them to move towards earning university degrees. This very successful program, under the leadership of a self-driven Director, will be intensified in the coming months. As the Antigua and Barbuda economy expands, it is my Government's intention to ensure that those who have potential are provided every opportunity to strengthen their chances of success, so that they may earn higher incomes and accede to leadership roles.

The Ministry of Social Transformation will be working with groups of skilled craftsmen to develop niche areas where value can be added. The object is to enhance skill-sets that would complement existing craft; fishermen, for example, who have little knowledge of outboard-motor-engine repair can be taught that additional skill which will strengthen their earnings.

My Government continues to work closely with UNICEF to develop standards for treating neglected and abused children. Without being intrusive, the state intends to protect those children that are abused by adults who are responsible for helping them grow into useful adults. The Ministry of Social Transformation has established a Referral Center within the Gender Affairs Secretariat, working with the Police and others, to end sexual assaults against the vulnerable. Sexual harassment legislation will also be brought to Parliament in a bid to ensure that the workplace is free of this menace.

My Government is fully aware that connectivity and Internet penetration are integral parts of our nation's growing success. The draft Telecommunications Bill that has had its first reading in the Parliament, but has been languishing while consensus is sought, will be brought forward by my Government in this Session of Parliament for debate and passage into law.

My Government applauds the ABS National Broadcast team for its coverage of Elections 2018. Both ABS-TV and Radio served as a noticeable platform for many political hopefuls and their parties. There were, however, so many radio and television competitors, as a consequence of the liberalization of the media, that many hopefuls chose other media to air their views and to purchase commercial space. ABS will continue to play an important role in our media-mix, as its reach via the World Wide Web will no doubt continue to extend beyond the shores of our Antigua and Barbuda given its 62,000-plus Facebook followers.

MADAME PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, MR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, MEMBERS OF THE LOWER HOUSE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Although the completion of the Sir Novelle H. Richards Academy of Excellence in two months and one week might be regarded as stale news, by those who wish to denigrate the achievement, the contractual model utilized by the Ministry and Board of Education continues to resonate. My Government insists that the performance by the Antigua and Barbuda contractors demonstrated that they are capable of delivering, on-time and within budget, on projects. Congratulations!

My Government places a very high premium on achieving formal education goals by building more classroom-space, where justified. *The Board of Education Law 1994*, once bitterly opposed, remains one of the pillars of success in this model. At the Antigua State College campus, the unfinished EU-funded building will be completed shortly. Classrooms at the campus will also be upgraded and modernized. Millions of our taxpayers' dollars, contributed through the Education Levy, will be spent to prepare the youth of Antigua and Barbuda to play leadership roles at every level of governance— both in the public and private sectors.

The University of the West Indies fourth landed campus at Five Islands is a case in point. My Government has petitioned the friendly Government of the People's Republic of China to provide additional resources to construct additional library and classroom space. The response has been positive and my Government looks forward to greater collaboration on this project with the People's Republic of China.

As the UWI establishes a presence here after 70 years of existence, more Antiguan and Barbudan youth will grab hold of the opportunities to pursue higher education. My Government anticipates that there will be many more graduates available for the professional jobs being created. There are limits to how many workers any administration can employ; however, since there is consistent growth in the economy, my Government anticipates that new job opportunities will exceed the numbers of new graduates entering the labour market annually. Grab hold of those opportunities, my Government advises, and pursue leadership at every level.

The same is true of agricultural pursuits. My Government recognizes that our farmers provide too small a percentage of the foods which the population of residents and visitors consume. The Ministry is determined to expand food production utilizing modern techniques that require special tools and knowledge.

The People's Republic of China has dispatched an eight-person team, loaded with smart greenhouses and other modern implements, to teach new farming techniques to our farmer/entrepreneurs. The Chinese experts will spend three years here, at great expense to both China and Antigua and Barbuda. My Government encourages the immersion of our farmers in the lessons and techniques to be taught so that— like farmers in countries in dry regions, around the world— our farmers can apply appropriate technologies to increase food production.

My Government is aware of the depredations suffered by farmers by those who would steal their farm products and quadrupeds. Praedial theft is a challenge. My Government will install solar lights on farms in strategic places with cameras that capture images; and, my Government will give consideration to creating a special unit within the Antigua and Barbuda Royal Police Force to address this special challenge faced by farmers. My Government promises to take the bite out of this crime!

My Government will also be granting a few licenses to specially selected farmers to grow cannabis for medicinal purposes. The plants will be grown, harvested and processed for the exclusive purpose of turning the vegetation into medicines that will be sold here in Antigua and Barbuda only— for domestic use by residents and visitors. There will be no export of cannabis medicines. The medicines will be produced by laboratories that are specially licensed and controlled, and their products tested

for standards to which they must conform. The economic benefit to our trained pharmacists, chemists, plant scientists and others involved in the process can only be beneficial to our citizenry.

MADAME PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, MR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, MEMBERS OF THE LOWER HOUSE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The investment climate in Antigua and Barbuda is good and getting better. The World Bank's latest *"Ease of Doing Business"* measurement device finds us in position 107th ahead of many of our CARICOM partners but still lacking because of several incapacities. It takes far too much time to register a new business, to pay taxes, to register a property, to getting credit, and to resolving insolvency. My Government is pledged to improving our systems, through the expertise of the Ministry with responsibility for Technology, so that these deficiencies, reflected in the assigned scores, can dramatically improve.

My Government will re-invigorate its efforts to achieve justice for the Antigua and Barbuda people by pursuing without surcease the Arbitration Award that our nation received from the World Trade Organization against the United States of America. The loss of trade revenues from the violation of a treaty obligation ought not to take the giant violator a generation to compensate a micro-size victim.

My Government needs all the resources it can access, in order to proceed with its ambitious housing development projects. It is the expectation of the Ministry of Housing that 500 homes will be completed by December 31, 2018. Thereafter, closer attention will be paid to the construction of additional new homes at Marble Hill and Friars Hill, and on the purchased property just north-east of Royall's. The objective is to ensure that the housing stock is significantly improved all across Antigua and hundreds of workers are employed in this pursuit.

The Booby Alley Development in the Point will also be intensified as temporary homes are found for the residents who will be relocated during the construction phase.

The several community basketball courts, playing fields and other sporting venues will continue to receive my Government's attention. All sports, my Government believes, are essential for well-being and for growing healthy bodies. A new Minister of Sports will bring new energy and vision to this portfolio. However, my Government expresses its thanks to the outgoing Minister with responsibility for Sports. He showed great energy and commitment, and achieved much during his tenure.

Before Christmas 2018, there are two unfinished buildings in the Grays-Green community that will be ready for use. An indoor basketball court and a sporting complex are being constructed by the People's Republic of China at Knuckle Block. They will add to the diversity of venues where sporting competition will take place. The covered seating and the polished wooden floors of the basketball arena will become the envy of every other community. My Government expresses its thanks to the Government of the People's Republic of China for these soon-to-be-completed buildings, and anticipates challenging teams from China at this venue.

MADAME PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, MR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, MEMBERS OF THE LOWER HOUSE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Tourism continues to be the driver of our economic engine. The hotel projects at Pearn's Point, Yeptons, Deep Bay, Ffryes Bay, Kallaloo Quay, Guiana Island and Dutchman's Bay will cause hundreds of millions of dollars to be expended on our shores. During the construction and post-construction stages, it is anticipated by my Government that thousands of new jobs will be generated.

An expanded cruise port, allowing the largest cruise vessels in the world to enter our harbour, will cause more than 1,000,000 cruise visitors to grace our shores annually. The port expansion project will complement the number of stay-over visitors who will check into our hotels; their numbers will exceed 300,000 in 2018. The future of tourism is great.

The economy of Antigua and Barbuda has reached a certain trajectory that readies it for the take-off into the first stages of the economic powerhouse. My Government has succeeded in expanding the wealth as we rebuild the nation together. Economic growth is not an accident, neither is it the result of happenstance. The growing economy is the direct result of intelligent decision-making in the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda, followed by implementation^o carried out by those who wield authority, right down to the line person in the Government's service.

Economic success is also the result of an unwavering determination by my Government to create jobs in abundance. Foreign direct investment is a significant factor in this mix. Dead assets must be turned into useful capital, no matter the cold-hearted objections of those who wish to retain the status quo. Additionally, minimizing corruption is at the heart of economic success. My Government has succeeded in these past four years because it has not allowed any known corrupt practice to take root. Corruption undermines wealth-creation.

In the months ahead, my Government will pursue development at a vigorous pace that is intended to generate thousands of new jobs. This approach falls within an essential framework of a vision which will take Antigua and Barbuda beyond 2023. My Government will adhere to the principles of good governance without fail, upholding the interests of the people of Antigua and Barbuda as its primary obligation and duty. The people of Antigua and Barbuda have invested their faith in my Government and they shall not be disappointed.

**MADAME PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, MR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, MEMBERS OF THE LOWER HOUSE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN:**

I pray God's richest blessings will fall upon you, and I wish you all that is good in the months ahead. I thank you.