THE BEST IS YET TO COME

UDP

UNVEILS ITS THIRD TERM AGENDA | 2015 - 2020

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The Ball is in our Court!
When you turned to the United Democratic Party in 2008 and gave us your confidence, it was for us to fix all that had gone so horribly wrong in the 1998 to 2008 decade of misrule.

Our country was burdened by the super bond; strait-jacketed by fiscal austerity; unable to operate a bankrupt DFC and a near insolvent social security; suffering from surging levels of poverty and neglect; dilapidated roads and bridges; and shunned by international concessionary lenders disgusted with the last Administration’s thievery of public monies. The UDP’s overwhelming priority was thus to replenish the state’s coffers; restore local and international confidence; rescue citizens desperately in need of relief; and bring back integrity to the Office of the Prime Minister whose outgoing PUP occupant had, in 2005, been presented with a certificate of corruption by Union and Civil Society leaders.

And so for almost 8 years now, my team and I have striven to clean up the mess we inherited, while simultaneously transforming the lives of the Belizean people.

And our record is such that even our fiercest critics must concede the tremendous advances we have recorded: the super bond was restructured, saving the country $500m; public finances are robust; reserves are at historic highs; public officers are better paid than ever; the BOOST and Food Pantry programs are renowned poverty-fighting models for this entire region; tuition and scholarship grants have expanded educational opportunities for thousands of families; the economy has added more than 4500 jobs each year since 2007; the DFC is strong again; social security is safe and looking to increase benefits; and the new National Bank of Belize has delivered thousands of small and midsize loans to the poor and the middle class.

Besides all this, investments in healthcare, education and citizen security have reversed the PUP decline, and affordable development financing is once again flowing freely from Belize’s IFI sponsors.

Most dramatically, of course, hundreds of millions in low cost funds are being invested in national infrastructure and community development. And this has resulted in an unprecedented proliferation of new highways, bridges, roads, streets, drains and sporting facilities in our cities, towns and villages.

In recent weeks, in what can be viewed as the latest chapter in national resurgence, we have
settled claims for both the BEL and BTL acquisitions. These vital public utilities are now and forevermore part of the national patrimony and benefits redound to Belizeans by way of the lowest light and telecom rates ever.

Having secured this period of restoration, I believe the time has come to ask you for a fresh mandate. The cleanup having been completed, the UDP must focus now exclusively on the positive, on forwarding opportunity and change. A New Belize must burst forth, where progress, prosperity and stability can reign untrammeled.

This New Belize is to be one where learning and job opportunities vitalize the abundant skills of our young people; where families feel safe in their neighborhoods and homes; where rural dwellers have ready access to classrooms, clinics and industry; where our entrepreneurs and employers pay fewer, fairer taxes and where the innovations of governance serve all our citizens and the national interest.

Top on our agenda will be to concentrate on structural changes in every facet of government to ensure excellence in service delivery. This will channel our country into an age of efficiency and results, and set the stage for the next generation. Overall our continued work and vision will encompass every facet of society, and positively impact the lives of all Belizeans from cradle to grave. The new action plan will modernize both tools and tactics. And the full press deployment of innovation and technology will completely transform Government’s interface with the public. Thus, the experience of all citizens interacting with Government, whether at the personal or business level, will be reworked for ease of communication, opening up of opportunity and achievement of objectives.

In order to establish this improved, effective governance as the basis for a new level of prosperity, we will carefully construct the foundations thereof. The pillars of these foundations are described in this manifesto, and you will see that they are all designed from the experience and knowledge that we have gained over the past eight years.

Foremost among these pillars are the following:

- The strengthening of our legal system through legal review and reform, as well as upgrading of the administration and enforcement of our laws.
- A continuing public works program that will drive job creation and economic growth.
- An expansion in education opportunities to ensure full and equal countrywide access.
- Maintenance and preservation of citizen safety, security and territorial integrity.
- Increased focus and spending on quality improvement and efficiencies within both our healthcare system and our overall social protection net.
- The chartering of a comprehensive national housing campaign.
- An aggressive approach to sustainable exploitation and development practices that will guarantee the fundamental sanctity of our rich natural resources.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME, AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS BELIZE.
A STRONG ECONOMY BY DESIGN

In the past eight years, Belize has seen an unprecedented level of economic stimulation through targeted capital investment by government in infrastructure, health, education, safety and security, and in programs to stimulate job creation. This investment has paid off handsomely as resources were injected into the most needed areas to reduce poverty while stimulating economic growth. Over the last eight years, we have seen steady growth in our economy, a flattening of inflation to almost zero, a massive increase in our foreign reserves, a strong increase in foreign direct investment, a strong and stable financial sector, a dramatic reduction in interest rates, and a significant recovery in private sector credit growth.

In a new term in office, the economic stimulation will continue unabated. In the pipeline already, there is over $600 Million in capital spending in all the priority areas, but most importantly in areas that will result in additional economic growth, and improvement in the quality of life for Belizeans.

The next term will see increased investments in roads, bridges and drainage systems throughout the country. The funding of a transportation master plan to include ports and airports will set the stage for a major improvement in connectivity for the efficient and comfortable movement of people and goods. We will see investments in health systems, rural water and electrification, and a massive investment in education and housing, while the productive sector can expect strategic investments to support growth in agriculture, tourism and services. Likewise, investments in citizens’ security will go hand in hand with social programs aimed at alleviating poverty.

These activities have, and will continue to bring great benefits to our workforce. The UDP government, in agreement with the unions, has programmed increases for public officers and teachers for three years, as well as increases for medical professionals at KHMH. Rising incomes and reduced inflation promises a bright future and a better standard of living for Belizean workers.

In order to ensure good financial management, the next UDP Government is committed to the reform of the Public Financial Management System through the implementation of rules-based legislation designed to strengthen the basic principles of governance, accountability and transparency in public financial administration.

As a first step towards strengthening the administration and collection of revenue, GOB is introducing administrative changes with the long-term view of fully integrating the existing Income Tax Department and the Department of General Sales Tax. The objective, among other things, is to establish a single point of contact common to both departments with the same requirements for the registration of all taxpayers.
GOB’s Action Plan to reform the Public Financial Management System includes the enactment of important bills that have already been drafted.

**The Public Procurement Bill** will promote basic principles that preside over how Government performs the procurement of goods, works and services while providing guidance to public officials responsible for the acquisition and disposal of assets. This bill will facilitate the standardization of procurement practice across all Procuring Entities. It will ensure an efficient and transparent framework; utilize standard bidding documents and bid evaluation processes; and provide guidelines to the private sector. It will be the blueprint for better public procurement practice in accordance with international best practices.

**The Public Sector Investment Bill** will institute a system of public sector investment that promotes efficient allocation of resources with the aim of achieving benefits in a most cost-effective way by observing principles of good governance.

**The Public Finance Management Bill** will ensure responsible, sustainable, transparent, accountable, effective, efficient and economical management of the public finances and public resources covering the revenues, expenditures, assets and liabilities.

**The Public Debt Management, State Guarantees and Lending Bill** will regulate certain conditions under which the State, local government authorities and public corporations may borrow, and the conditions under which the State may issue debt securities to regularize arrears, issue guarantees, lend funds and enter into supplier’s credit agreements and finance lease agreements. It will further provide for the establishment of a Debt Management Office to be located within the Ministry of Finance.
The incidence of crime and violence in our society is a plague that affects national development. It transcends all socioeconomic levels and, if addressed in a collaborative manner, can set the tone for a better quality of life.

In 2008, the UDP inherited a demoralized security force. Our brave forces - police, military, coast guard - tried to make do with antiquated equipment, inadequate supplies, and dwindling numbers of personnel.

Upon taking office, great strides were taken to reverse this trend and to create a larger, more vibrant, motivated and well-trained force of officers patrolling our streets, waters and borders.

As economic and political conditions change in neighboring Guatemala, the threat of incursions into our national forests, waterways and high seas continues to worsen. More than ever, coordination between our diplomatic professionals and our security forces needed to be strengthened to keep our territory secure and intact for generations to come. As incursions by poachers, illegal fishermen, and criminals increase, our forces had to adapt to deal with this threat in a strategic and deliberate manner. In order to face these realities, the UDP government embarked on a systematic restructure of all our security forces and allocated the largest ever budget for our National Security.

MODERNIZING OUR POLICING STRATEGY

Since 2008, the Belize Police Department (BPD) has grown not only in numbers, but also in expertise. The numbers of police officers have grown from over 1000 in 2008 to a whopping 1,917 officers as of September 2015, with another 170 under training. Between 2012-2015, the Police has been trained in areas of Intelligence, Investigation, Prosecution, Community Policing and Human Rights. To date, the Police has participated in at least 2,688 local training sessions, and 669 oversees training in the following areas: Organized Crimes, Drug Enforcement, Basic & Advanced Community Policing, Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT), Cyber Crimes and Anti-Terrorism.

The National Forensic Science Service has also seen significant capacity building via certifications and trainings. and the department also saw certification of 27 persons from the Scenes of Crime Unit. These persons are now certified Crime Scene Investigators who are also trained in the collection of prints from firearm ammunition and other surfaces. The Integrated Ballistics Identification System was introduced and is being fully utilized. To date this has positively identified 76 ballistics matches from both present and cold cases involving firearms and ammunition - a great assistance to crime solving efforts.
One of the greatest achievements of this administration has been the mainstreaming of the Community Policing Concept as a philosophy throughout the entire Police Department. A Department that has been viewed as overly aggressive is now being transformed to become a partner with the communities they serve. This concept is part of the holistic, multisectoral and strategic approach of RESTORE Belize to address citizen security in our young nation.

SECURING OUR BORDERS, WATERWAYS AND SEAS
The Belize Defence Force has similarly seen improvement in its strength moving from 998 in 2012 to 1,156 in September 2015. That is an increase of 158 new soldiers, with an additional 100 recruits scheduled for intake in October. The Coast Guard has actually experienced the greatest percentage increase, from 180 in 2012 to some 270 officers, a 50% increase!

Under the UDP, the BDF has constructed three (3) new monitoring posts along the Western Border at Valentin, Consejo and Caracol. Additionally, in coordination with the Police Department, the BDF has renovated facilities at D’Silva Forest Station for transformation into the Military Reform School.

These investments yielded solid results. In 2013 sixty-three illegal farms of various sizes and contents in the national reserves along the border were discovered and destroyed. The BDF detained and handed over to civil police a total of 99 persons engaged in illicit activities in the national reserves. Additionally, in 2014 a total of 69 illegal immigrants involved in criminal activities ranging from illegal entry, possession of drugs, possession of fire arm and ammunition, illegal logging, gold panning in Belizean territory were apprehended.

KEEPING THE MOMENTUM
While we have made great strides, the work will continue. In our next term, under the Belize Integral Security Program, the UDP will allocate $70 Million dollars to:

- Improve significantly the infrastructure and the provision of equipment for the Belize Defence Force, Belize Police Department and Belize Coast Guard;
- Upgrade medical facilities to serve members of the services and also those communities directly surrounding the facility;
- Expand the National Forensic Sciences Service (NFSS), and construct a state-of-art Forensic Lab;
- Construct a Forward Operating Base on the North Bank of the Sarstoon to secure Belize’s southern border, and prevent illegal activities in our territory.

- Develop programs for rehabilitation of youth at risk and first time offenders with an emphasis on education, skills training and job preparedness as a means to break the cycle of crime;
- Develop a strategy to create an economic corridor along the Western Border including the construction of a road along the border, thereby opening opportunities for investment, employment and economic activity for Belizeans, while creating a natural deterrent against incursions;
- Acquire 2 new helicopters for the BDF air wing.

SECURING OUR TERRITORY AND EXPANDING DIPLOMACY
Firstly and fundamentally, under the UDP Government there have been significant strides in promoting Belize’s territorial sovereignty and the peaceful resolution of the long-standing territorial dispute with Guatemala. The UDP continues to utilize all diplomatic means to bring a resolution to this protracted matter. The government continues to assert Belize’s national sovereignty, and pledges to the Belizean public that it will use every means available; first with diplomacy and with a determined strategy that our security forces will remain alert and vigilant in ensuring that our national territorial land and sea are free of incursions.

In its next term, the UDP pledges to continue to expand our diplomatic ties with non-traditional partners in Asia and Africa and expand our regional and international cooperation programs to identify and implement programs and mechanisms to complement Belize’s national development priorities. Further, the UDP will continue our active participation in the work of international organizations to ensure that Belize’s positions are included in the negotiations at the forefront of the international community, such as climate change, international trade, post 2015 development agenda, and official development assistance. Through our embassies and consulates, we will increase the services available to our Diaspora. Also we will engage them so that we can tap into the vast pool of professional Belizeans, invite them to invest their time and resources thereby contributing to the development of their homeland.
Since 2008, Belize’s economic performance has stabilized to pre-recession levels even in the face of decreased oil prices, high cost compliance mechanisms for the financial sector, agricultural pests and other natural perils. The UDP has put Belize on a sustainable growth path to inclusive prosperity, in full partnership with the private sector.

The UDP has undertaken bold measures to promote trade, investment and private sector development. In an effort to include the private sector as a full partner in development, the Prime Minister appointed a permanent Economic Development Council (EDC) to promote public-private dialogue. Many reforms undertaken and being contemplated are being driven by the EDC, and through recommendations made at the annual Prime Minister’s forum. These include the establishment of a high-level public-private steering committee to lead a comprehensive tax reform program for Belize, as well as the commissioning of a high level National Transportation Master Plan led by the EDC partnership.

In driving the economy forward over the next 5 years, the UDP’s economic strategy will be built on the following pillars:

- Job creation through targeted investment
- Creating and maintaining a high-level business climate through institutional reform
- Improved market access for exporters
- Building domestic capacity for industry growth
- Promoting consumer protection in commerce

**JOB CREATION THROUGH TARGETED INVESTMENT**

Under UDP stewardship, through the work of BELTRAIDE, in excess of BZD 707.13 million in committed investments were gained, resulting in thousands of new jobs in strategically targeted sectors.

Some highlights include:

- **BELIZE ISLAND HOLDINGS LTD - NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE** - Over $140 Million BZD in investment and over 1,000 associated jobs for Belizens in the South.

- **THE BPO SECTOR** - Increasing high-end employment opportunities for Belizens through ITO and KPO offerings. The sector will continue its growth and will increase total employment to 8,047 Belizens (up from the current 2,284) by 2017, establishing centers in all districts by the same year.

- **THE SANTANDER GROUP** - The establishment of a sugar cane milling and co-generation facility, with supporting plantation with associated investment of over $200 Million BZD and over 1,000 direct jobs.
SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - Expansion of support to small businesses continue to add to our employment numbers while incubating new enterprises to become tomorrow’s employers.

In building on this success, the UDP will ensure greater emphasis on the attraction of high value technology-based, and labor intensive private sector investment to secure meaningful development for the country. Already, policies are being revised to ensure that local enterprises receive incentives equal to foreign investors, and that the process for accessing incentives is simplified for broad access by Belizean companies of all sizes, in particular small enterprises.

BUSINESS CLIMATE REFORM
As testimony to the relentless endeavors to communicate timely development updates, government action has led to the elevation of Standard and Poor’s sovereign rating for Belize to “B-/Positive B”. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has also ranked Belize as fifth in the Caribbean in terms of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows in relation to GDP in 2014. FDI Intelligence’s “Caribbean and Central American Countries of the Future 2015/2016” ranks Belize in the top 10 in the “Best FDI Strategies” and “Cost Effectiveness” categories, attesting to Belize’s innovative FDI attraction efforts and increasing competitiveness.

Through the implementation of a comprehensive government-wide institutional reform focusing on the improvement of processes and of service quality to the public and to enterprises, Belize will see significant improvement in the next World Bank “Doing Business” report, further developing investor confidence.

To achieve inclusive economic development, the next UDP administration will invest in the growth of small businesses. This will be achieved through the expansion of the Small Business Administration Unit that will encompass and expand the work of the Small Business Development Center, and through the provision of hassle free financing for small businesses and individuals through the DFC and the National Bank, and with the help of a new Collateral Registry, and a National Credit Bureau.

IMPROVED MARKET ACCESS
To guide the expansion of trade as a means to access new markets, the UDP has developed the most innovative and comprehensive National Trade Policy Framework. This policy clearly lays out the agenda for trade development and its implementation will signal access to massive new markets in Mexico, Central America and Asia. With the
ratification of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, gains in efficiency will further assist our productive sector to access new markets.

Throughout government, those institutions that interact with the private sector are being reformed. Automation efforts at Customs, Supplies Control and BAHA have reduced the cost and effort in moving goods across borders, while ongoing improvements in quality infrastructure will ensure that Belizean products qualify for global markets. Export Belize, in coordination with Foreign Trade, has established its mandate to develop a cadre of export-ready companies, thereby ensuring that we have qualified products to trade.

Trade focus for the next term of office will include the completion of Partial Scope Agreements with Mexico and El Salvador, and a conclusion of trade arrangements with three Central American States by 2017. Technical experts will complete a thorough cost-benefit analysis of fully integrating Belize in the Central American Integration System (SICA), while strengthening our benefits under the CSME regime in CARICOM and under the Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU.

BUILDING DOMESTIC CAPACITY FOR INDUSTRY GROWTH

For a country to maximize its economic growth, the public sector, private sector and labor force must be functioning at peak efficiency. Throughout the previous term in office, the UDP has supported all stages of industry development, including:

- Formation of professional associations such as Medical Tourism, Spa and Wellness, Information and Communications Technology, among others, as part of the Coalition of Service Providers
- Commencement of construction of the Belize Enterprise and Innovation Institute in partnership with UB
- Partnership with BTB and BTIA to prepare the Stann Creek region for employment and business opportunities emanating from the NCL development
- 4,234 persons trained by BELTRAIDE
- 253 training workshops held
- 50 new start-ups taken through incubation period by BELTRAIDE
- Belize’s National Export Strategy for 2012-2017 developed by BELTRAIDE
- Establishment of the Belize Training for Employment Center as a training academy for job preparedness, which offers training in many disciplines resulting in real job placements.
- Establishment of the Small Business Development Center

As these supporting agencies continue to grow, over the next 5 years, the UDP will implement the following activities to build domestic capacity:

- Creation of a National Small Business Administration
- Expansion of BTEC to serve as a national coordinator for demand-driven employment facilitation and training
- Expansion of HACCP certification for exporting companies
- Regional certification of ITVET instructors in hospitality disciplines
- Opening of Small Business Development Center regional offices in Corozal and Dangriga
- Establishment of the Belize Angel Investor Network
- Creation of “Toledo Maya Cacao” as Belize’s first geographic indicator
- Establishment of the Belize Competition Authority

PROMOTING CONSUMER PROTECTION IN COMMERCE

In keeping with our overall mantra of being people focused, the UDP has actively sought to expand the Belize Bureau of Standards. In empowering the Bureau of Standards to carry out its full mandate, the government is sending a clear signal that our buying public and foreign markets demand quality goods and services. Some of the accomplishments over the previous term in office include the following:

- Started construction of a state-of-the-art, fully equipped National Metrology Laboratory valued at BZD $3.4 million
- Introduced the Supplies Control Online Import/Export Application System
- Liberalized some 58 items from the supplies control regime
- Rationalized regulatory and pricing regimes for staple foods thereby assisting with the maintenance of a nearly zero inflation rate over the last term in office

In the next term of office, the UDP will pass a new Consumer Protection Bill, will expand the Bureau of Standards to enable the enforcement of standards countrywide, and will launch a major campaign to raise awareness for standards and consumer protection in Belize.
WHO SEH BELIZE NO HAVE NO KULCHA! We are Kriol, Maya, Mestizo, Garifuna, East Indian, Mennonite, Arab and Chinese — we are Belize. We are children of the Baymen, the drums of our fathers, descendants of Maya Kings and beautiful senoritas. We are the men and women that under the tree flourish. We are the crystal waters of the Sarstoon and the Rio Hondo Rivers and the fierce, rushing waters of the 1,000 Foot Falls. We roar like the jaguar that regally paces through our jungle, but also gentle and strong as the tapir. We are unique and splendorous as our reef, majestic like our Mountain Pine Ridge and like the butterflies that adorn and suckle from the exotic black orchid, we transform each day. Our transformation occurs from the blending and surge of all that surrounds us; all that is Belizean; it makes us one beautiful culture – ONE BELIZE. From this transformation we are blessed with a myriad of musical colors, many different languages and our palates savor the unique taste of Belizean cuisine and our culture. WE ARE BELIZE. . . . . AND WE GAT KULCHA!

We express our culture in the way we talk, dance, dress and certainly in the way we cook, it is what defines us.

Belizeans are proud of this distinct, unique and diverse culture that is a central feature of Belize’s tourism product. There is great, untapped economic value in the expression and preservation of this rich culture. For this reason, the Government of Belize has undertaken a full revision of the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) Act; has enacted a Film Industry Incentive Act; and provided for the designation and development of Historic Properties and Assets under a National Historic Preservation Act. Furthermore, the Government developed the first ever National Culture Policy that will be implemented in the next term.

LOOKING AHEAD, THE GOVERNMENT IS:

• Improving infrastructure at all Archaeological Reserves
• Developing a new Underwater Archaeology Program
• Declaring new Archaeological Reserves in Belize
• Establishing Houses of Culture in every district
• Renovating the Bliss Center for the Performing Arts Building
• Establishing a $15 Million Belize City House of Culture and Downtown Rejuvenation Project.
• Developing a National Anthropological and Archaeology Museum in Belmopan
Over the past three years our Government, through the Belize Tourism Board (BTB), has invested over $20 million in aggressive marketing, capacity building, and product development to ensure that Belize maintains a strong competitive advantage and is even more attractive to visitors, locals and investors. Government invested a further $100M in tourism destination infrastructure projects. These include the Welcome Center in Cayo, the complete makeover of the Placencia Pier and sidewalks, the San Pedro Terminal and the new Fort George Tourism Project in Belize City. In addition to all these initiatives, Belize underwent its first major rebranding in twenty years and at the core of this new marketing campaign is the connection to nature, culture and the simplicity of Belize, all under the slogan “Discover How to Be.”

As a result of all those initiatives, in 2014, overnight tourism grew 9.2% and cruise tourism increased 42.9% compared to 2013. This allowed us to surpass the 1 million visitors mark earlier than projected and has ranked Belize as the fastest growing tourism destination in the region in 2014. Since 2012, Belize has seen an increase of 85 new registered hotels, totaling 803 hotels in the country today.

2015 marks a significant milestone for tourism in Belize after the successful courting of two major airlines, Southwest and COPA, that will begin flying to Belize in October and November, respectably, opening up new routes. We continue to aggressively target airlines and flights from new markets such as Europe and South America.

But the focus has not been solely about the numbers. The people of Belize are at the center of it all. We have witnessed investments of over $4 Million in community based tourism projects which were specifically focused on Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites. This project trained over 200 rural community residents in artisanal product development, site tour guiding, cave rescue training, and subsequently invested over BZ$600,000 in a Matching Grant Program under the Sustainable Tourism Program. These funds assisted 21 local micro-businesses and tourism-based entrepreneurs throughout the country to further develop their product and service quality.

To capitalize on the tourism market and grow the product in a socially sustainable manner, the process is guided according to the parameters of the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan. This strategic roadmap identifies culture as the first of the six priority tourism products of Belize which has significant impact on the sustainability profile of Belize as a tourism destination. The master plan identifies Cultural Tourism as fundamental to the growth of tourism based on its consumption at a global level, the opportunity for significant business investment, and also the potential to diversify Belize’s tourism offerings while addressing the seasonality of our industry.
AND WE CONTINUE TO WORK ON . . .

- Completing the Norwegian Cruise Line cruise port in southern Belize
- Developing tourism trails and surrounding villages in the Toledo District
- Reclaiming beach in San Pedro and Caye Caulker
- Adding 1500 new hotel rooms
- Sustaining annual overnight tourist arrivals growth of 8%
- Sustaining annual cruise tourist arrivals of 10%
- Adding $2500 direct tourism jobs
- Investing $130 Million in the tourism industry
- Constructing a new road to Lamanai via Bermudan Landing and Lemanal
- Paving the road to Caracol, with two points of origin from Georgeville and Santa Elena
- Continuing the paving of the North San Pedro Road to the Basil Jones Airstrip
- Establishing a new Sustainable Tourism Program, which is to focus on the development of new and emerging tourism destinations in Corozal, Toledo, Caye Caulker and the Mountain Pine Ridge-Caracol-Chiquibul Complex.
- Establishing Local Tourism Planning Committees countrywide in order to support development of destination specific development plans for all key tourism areas in Belize.
Agriculture is the second largest contributor to the GDP. The sugar, citrus and banana industries, for example, provide thousands of farmers, farmhands and their families with their main source of income. Present-day agriculture could be referred to as the production, processing, promotion and distribution of food and other products and it therefore plays a critical role in the entire life of our economy. The UDP government has long recognized the opportunities that exist for agriculture in modern times, and also accepted that the traditional approach will not take us to the next level; that there had to be a shift in policies to enhance agricultural growth and competitiveness in the new global context. Growth and prosperity require a comprehensive policy approach that calls for improvement in producer incentives, provision of a better climate for private investment, building effective institutions and ensuring sustainable use of our natural resources. In its first two terms, the UDP government has made great strides towards this new thrust.

The UDP government took seriously the challenge of creating a better investment climate, and these efforts were successful in attracting two major investors, American Sugar Refinery and Santander Group, to invest in the sugar industry. Combined, these investments total over $400M and growing. As a further demonstration of this government’s commitment to moving this sector forward, the Prime Minister, himself, led the charge to resolve major issues plaguing the citrus and sugar industries to a rather successful outcome. So committed is the UDP to the agriculture sector, that the government literally “put its money where its mouth is” by making available bridging financing so that the necessary reform in the citrus industry could proceed. The new approach to agricultural development includes a focus across the whole spectrum, ranging from the small farmer to the large corporate investor in agro-processing. After years of negotiations and discussions, the long sought-after exportation of cattle to Mexico and Guatemala is now a reality. In addition, our invaluable small farmers were provided with new drought-tolerant varieties of beans and corn, while new root stock and grafting techniques for citrus, to address the declining production in the industry, are now available to citrus farmers.

Looking ahead, the UDP government will continue to invest in science, infrastructure and human capital, along with better policies and stronger institutions, to facilitate new market access and take agriculture to the next level during the third term of office. The foundation is laid, the table is set and the best is yet to come.
We shall concentrate on improving the stability, profitability and food security provided by the agriculture sector by making it more resilient to Climate Change through the following initiatives:

- Establish a low-interest fund to promote investment in irrigation and drainage as a means to mitigate risks to farmers;
- Introduce new non-GMO climate-resilient genetic plant and animal varieties;
- Expand the number of covered structures (tropical greenhouses) by 100 units countrywide, mainly to boost the production of quality high value vegetables;
- Expand small-scale irrigation and fertigation by 150 units countrywide;
- Develop and commence implementation of a National Water Management plan for the agriculture sector. A first phase implementation will include the development of a drainage and irrigation plan for Northern Belize from the Belize River Valley to the Rio Hondo;

In addition to the existing programs, we will focus on the following products:

- Expand the livestock improvement program to now include sheep and commence exportation from a certified herd (similar to that undertaken for cattle);
- Facilitate the expansion of the coconut industry by 1500 acres and provide technical expertise to expand value-added in the sector;
- Expand the bee/honey improvement program to promote honey production in the Cayo, Stann Creek and Toledo Districts;
- Improve and expand the delivery of agro-processing and food technology training to small-scale entrepreneurs, especially those already in production and introduce a new sustainable school garden to school-feeding programs;
- Develop a “free range” poultry industry under proper bio-secure condition, but aimed at small-scale farmers.

We shall improve the business environment for investors, including small farmers, to become more productive & competitive by:

- Implementing new regulations to promote contract farming to underpin the core requirements of quality produce, consistent supply and reliable payment mechanism;
- Transforming the Belize Marketing and Development Corporation to a trading and marketing platform where, in partnership with producers, domestic and external commercial markets can be better identified and supplied;
- Implementing a new, innovative Agriculture Information System to provide data on planting, harvesting and market prices;
- Establishing a “Virtual Farmer Field School” to deliver better and more cost-effective extension services and training programs to farmers, especially in remote rural areas;
- Introducing new Food Safety Regulations to define minimum standards for food production, processing facilities and distribution chains;
- Establishing an Agriculture Station in the Corozal District.
- Modernizing the Cooperatives Act to ensure it better promotes cluster formation and recognition, while improving accountability and fiduciary responsibility of leadership within existing entities.

Maintaining a profitable and stable agriculture sector requires that keen attention be paid to the sanitary and phyto-sanitary threats. To this end, we will increase collaboration with regional agencies to mitigate cross-border disease transmission; improve BAHAA’s technical capacity to detect, diagnose and respond to threats to the sector; and establish a proper system for monitoring of maritime areas, especially trading routes at the north and south of the country.

Agriculture sustains vibrant rural communities and remains the main source of livelihood for a significant portion of Belize’s population.
Belize is a nation rich in natural resources that have and continue to provide bountifully for its citizens. For this reason, it is taken for granted that there will always be seafood, vegetable, fruits and meat on the table. But, with our current practices, will there be enough resources to provide for the next and subsequent generations? And whose responsibility is it anyway, to ensure that the same legacy of abundance is left for generations to come?

Already, Belize has been experiencing a concerning decline in fish stock; river banks are eroding from land clearing in harmony with nature

In the words of Pope Francis "we can only survive and develop if the ecological environment is favorable – any harm done to the environment therefore is harm done to humanity."

SO, WHAT IS BEING DONE ABOUT IT?

The UDP government has always been a good steward of Belize’s natural resources. The challenge to any administration is to find the right balance between the economic development of the country, while conserving the very same natural resources upon which economic growth and development depend. The solution lies in the development and execution of sound policies and legislation that are cross-cutting, to apply not only to natural resource industries such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries, but also to other human development and economic areas such as health, education, urban planning, trade and investment.

Towards this end, The Government is proposing a series of legislation such as Mangrove Regulations, to protect the coastline from erosion; create a buffer to mitigate the impact of natural disasters; and protect critical habitats for fisheries reproduction and development. Also, to ensure more sustainable yields for local fishers, the Government is finalizing the updated Fisheries Act, that will effectively modernize fisheries management. All this is aligned with the new National Protected Areas System Act that addresses the needs of people, their communities and the natural environment.

THE NEXT LEVEL:

- Pass a Marine Pollution Bill to protect the marine environment which acts as the gateway for trade and commerce and is a major source of livelihood protection and food security for coastal communities;
- Update the Forests Act to align it with the National Forest Policy and implement modern practices in sustainable forest management;
- Implement the Mangrove Regulations;
- Implement the new Fisheries Act;
- Implement the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan;
- Finalize updating of the Oil Spill Response Plan to ensure rapid response and public safety and to minimize environmental damage;
- Update the EIA process to improve service delivery to development partners;
- Develop chemical management legislation to move towards a “green” Belize;
- Implement a biodiversity financing program to generate revenue from protected areas to address financial sustainability;
- Roll out nationally the Fisheries Managed Access Program;
- Continue the implementation of alternative livelihood programs in communities near protected areas;
- Continue the establishment and operationalization of conservation posts in the Chiquibul National Park;
- Implement the National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan.
THE UDP WILL ACHIEVE ENERGY SECURITY BY expanding the electrification to rural communities using renewable energy sources. This will also ensure an improved quality of life and economic opportunities for the residents of these communities. In partnership with the private sector we will update legislation to govern renewable energy and energy efficiency with the specific objective of providing incentives for investment in green energy.

Electricity consumption in all public buildings will be reduced by 20 percent by using energy efficient lighting and cooling equipment thereby resulting in significant cost savings to GOB and by extension the people of Belize.

REVERSE THE DECLINE IN OIL REVENUES BY finalizing the Petroleum Exploration Zones and Exploration Guidelines. This will enable the Geology and Petroleum Department to attract bona-fide companies through a competitive bidding round. The objective is to increase petroleum production to at least 10,000 barrels per day, while adhering to strict environmental standards.

WHERE INNOVATION HAPPENS

In the third term of office, Science, Technology and Innovation will be expanded to ensure that it plays a leading role in the economic development of Belize. This will include two major projects that will be undertaken by the Government of Belize — the establishment of a Belize Science, Technology and Innovation Institute, and the Belize Enterprise and Innovation Institute. Both projects will ensure that opportunities for Belizeans will abound, and that meaningful outlets for creative ideas will be available.

BELIZE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION INSTITUTE

Our education system will be diversified into a center for innovation and entrepreneurship. In Belmopan, on the UB campus, GOB will establish the Belize Science, Technology and Innovation Institute to provide demand-driven technical training to serve the tourism and agricultural sectors. Initially it will focus on the improvement of quality, product diversification and increasing productivity and exports to improve Belize’s competitiveness.

This Academy will concentrate on Information Technology and science-based disciplines, and will provide curricula resulting in advanced degrees. This will provide the basis for our young people to qualify for high-level jobs and allow us to attract investments that require this level of employee. It will also empower those students wishing to use innovation to create new businesses.

BELIZE ENTERPRISE AND INNOVATION INSTITUTE

At the college of Business Administration in Belize City, the Belize Enterprise and Innovation Institute will be established as a center to facilitate the establishment, incubation and growth of exciting new technology-based enterprises, while promoting a strong partnership between academia and the business community.
The Ministry of Health, under the direction of the UDP, has been busy over the past term making quality of life for the Belizean people its top priority. The journey to improving the quality of life continues from 2012, and the Ministry of Health has revitalized its strategic plans of action for the next UDP term of office in order to steer the Quality of Life train straight to its next stop – better living!!

The UDP can boast of several accomplishments over the past term which have greatly improved the healthcare system country-wide:

- All hospitals and polyclinics have extended outpatient services to a full 12 hours, including weekends
- More psychiatrists have been employed and a mental health resource centre was opened in Belize City
- Nine new ambulances, new sterilizers and new anesthetic machines were procured
- All babies born in 2014 to HIV mothers were born HIV free
- Neonatal mortality was reduced by 30% in 2014
- A new national drug inspectorate was created and staffed to better monitor and control all medical supplies
- Health centers and clinics around the country saw infrastructural improvements, including polyclinics in Independence, Mopan, San Narciso, Patchakan, Corozal, and San Pedro.
Non-communicable diseases (NCD) have become the biggest challenge to growth and productivity in Belize. NCDs are defined as non-infectious and non-transmissible diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer. NCDs are linked to more than 7 out of 10 deaths in the English speaking Caribbean. In Belize, over 13% of the adult population is diabetic and over 33% is hypertensive (diabetes would normally be considered a contributor to mortality not a primary cause of death).

The greatest risk factors spurring on NCDs in Belize are obesity, physical inactivity, smoking and excessive use of alcohol. The economic burden on individuals and the healthcare system is quite high and there is a growing impact on productivity, as NCDs limit employees’ abilities to perform duties in the workplace and ultimately lead to lower labor supply and less hours worked. Addressing this urgent situation is a priority for the UDP government in its third term.

The next stop, therefore, for the Ministry of Health will see a robust, all inclusive and all encompassing preventative campaign against NCDs; a more socially aware and people-orientated system; a more efficient and technologically advanced framework.

This forward strategy will include the following:

- Launch of a nationwide preventative campaign to promote healthier eating, more physical activity, less alcohol consumption;
- Implementation of programs and policies geared towards healthy lifestyle choices, such as the provision of healthy and nutritious snacks in school feeding programs across Belize;
- The construction of new hospitals in San Pedro and Punta Gorda;
- A more people-centred approach to health care where mothers, fathers and children will be the epicenter of the health system and its policies;
- The adoption of new technologies – the Belize Health Information System will continue to evolve;
- The construction of a new hospital wing in Belmopan to provide additional beds and tertiary care, using $25M worth of funding obtained from an EU grant;
- A new building in Independence for X-ray, laboratory and pharmacy;
- More than 20 scholarships to Belizean doctors for specialization studies in El Salvador or Cuba;
- New polyclinics in San Narciso and Chunux with $1M approved by the Social Investment Fund for each project.

“The quality, not the longevity, of one’s life is what is important”
~ Martin Luther King Jr.

In this beautiful land by the Carib Sea, everyone wants to live healthier; everyone ought to live better. So…don’t miss the Quality of Life train when it passes. Jump on board with the UDP and head straight for ‘Better Living’
The Best is yet to come.

UDP

Manuel Heredia
Belize Rural South

Darrell Bradley
Caribbean Shores

Dr. Carla Barnett
Freetown

John August
Cayo Northeast

Gaspar Vega
Orange Walk North

Denny Grijalva
Orange Walk Central

Eden Martinez
Toledo East

Elodio Aragon
Orange Walk East

Evan Cowo
Corozal Southeast

Guadalupe Magaña Dyck
Orange Walk South

Frank “Papa” Mena
Dangriga

Dr. Omar Figueroa
Cayo North

Tracy Taegar Panton
Albert

Juan Coy
Toledo West

Edmond Castro
Belize Rural North

Dr. Angel Campos
Corozal Southwest

Walter Garbutt
Stann Creek West

Ralph Huang
Cayo South

Roger Espejo
Fort George
Cementing of 7th Avenue
New street construction on Consejo subdivision
Rehabilitation of Libertad and San Roman-San Narciso roads
Upgrading streets in Corozal North and Corozal South East constituencies

Construction of Crique Sarco Bridge
Resurfacing of streets in Bella Vista, San Isidro, Bladen, San Pablo and Trio villages
Rehabilitation of Barranco Pier
Upgrading of West Street to paved standard
Upgrading of Olivia Sentino and Cayo Streets

Rehabilitation of Belize-Corozal Road and the San Antonio Road with hot mix asphalt and concrete
Rehabilitation of San Lorenzo and New Subdivision in San Pablo
Resurfacing streets in August Pine Ridge, Guinea Grass, San Felipe, Yo Creek, San Lorenzo, Fireburn, Indian Church, San Carlos, and Millers Bight.
In 2012 your UDP government pledged to continue to build and upgrade the country’s network of roads, streets, bridges and canals.

We kept our promise!

**CAYO**
- Concrete paving of Perez, Bishop Martin, and Orchid Streets, inclusive of concrete sidewalk and side drains
- Upgrading of Lily, San Pedro and Chechem Streets to paved standard
- Paving of Andrew Street
- Upgrading of 4.95 miles of the Cristo Rey - San Antonio Road
- Paving of road sections through Bullet Tree and Santa Familia
- Resurfacing streets in Esperanza, Duck Run 1,2 and 3, Billy White and Tambog Villages
- Upgrading to paved standard with hot mix asphalt of Melhado, Awe, Stanton, and Apollo, Carmelita, Punta Gorda, Flamboyant and Blue Bird Streets in San Ignacio Town with double chip seal
- Concrete paving of Church Street in San Ignacio.
- Concrete paving of Church, Caracol, Guerra, Hudson Lane, Victoria, Columbus, Jose Marti,
- Howard Smith, Nazarene and a section of Guerra Streets in Benque
- Concrete paving of Xunantunich Drive, section of San Jose Loop, Church, Chi-Ha, and Maya Streets in San Jose Succotz Village.
- Rehabilitated of village streets in Teakettle Village and Blackman Eddy
- Construction of concrete lined drainage channels at two vulnerable locations in Roaring Creek Village for flood alleviation
- Rehabilitate 8 km of the Frank’s Eddy Road with hot mix asphalt

**BELIZE**
- Resurfacing of Crooked Tree Causeway
- Upgrading streets in the Belize Rural North constituency
- Rehabilitation of 12 miles of the Old Northern Highway from its intersection with the Phillip Goldson Highway to Mile 12 on Old N/Hwy
- Paving of 7 miles of the Lemonal Village Road with hot mix asphalt
- Upgrading Poinsetta, Manta Ray Blvd, Ocean Jack, Perez Road and Scissors Tail Streets with hot mix asphalt
- Resurfacing of streets in West Lake, Western Pines, Mahogany Heights and Hattieville villages
- Concreting and upgrading of 3 miles on North side of San Pedro Town
- Upgrading of Chetumal Street to a paved boulevard complete with concrete lined drainage channels and sidewalks
- Construction of the Lake Independence Bridge
- Construction of roundabout at intersection of the Phillip Goldson Highway and Chetumal Street and at the intersection of the George Price Highway, Faber’s Road and Lake Independence Boulevard
- Resurfacing of streets and installation of culverts in Sarawee and Hope Creek villages
- Surfacing of 30 streets with crush material and installation of concrete and HDPE culverts
- Concrete paving of Isla Road, Church Street, Ramos Road, Ecumenical Drive and a major section of Benguche Street
- Installation of 60 units of culverts in various villages in the Stann Creek West constituency
- New concrete bridge in Maya Mopan village
- Construction of new bridge in Steadfast and Silk Grass Farm Road

**STANN CREEK**
- Concrete paving of Perez, Bishop Martin, and Orchid Streets, inclusive of concrete sidewalk and side drains
- Upgrading of Lily, San Pedro and Chechem Streets to paved standard
- Paving of Andrew Street
- Upgrading of 4.95 miles of the Cristo Rey - San Antonio Road
- Paving of road sections through Bullet Tree and Santa Familia
- Resurfacing streets in Esperanza, Duck Run 1,2 and 3, Billy White and Tambog Villages
- Upgrading to paved standard with hot mix asphalt of Melhado, Awe, Stanton, and Apollo, Carmelita, Punta Gorda, Flamboyant and Blue Bird Streets in San Ignacio Town with double chip seal
- Concrete paving of Church Street in San Ignacio.
- Concrete paving of Church, Caracol, Guerra, Hudson Lane, Victoria, Columbus, Jose Marti,
- Howard Smith, Nazarene and a section of Guerra Streets in Benque
- Concrete paving of Xunantunich Drive, section of San Jose Loop, Church, Chi-Ha, and Maya Streets in San Jose Succotz Village.
- Rehabilitated of village streets in Teakettle Village and Blackman Eddy
- Construction of concrete lined drainage channels at two vulnerable locations in Roaring Creek Village for flood alleviation
- Rehabilitate 8 km of the Frank’s Eddy Road with hot mix asphalt
**HELPING PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES**

Ensuring the dignity of every citizen must be the foundation of a nation’s development. Human dignity can be threatened by poverty, abuse, social exclusion, and social vulnerability. The UDP assumed governance at a time when poverty was at an unprecedented high. Over the last two terms the UDP has made massive strides in improving the lives of the most vulnerable Belizeans. Initiated in February 2011, the BOOST Conditional Cash Transfer Program is a flagship accomplishment of the UDP government, which aims to break the cycle of poverty by providing children access to health and education services. BOOST offers small, regular cash assistance to poor households on the condition that they keep their children in school and make required visits to public health centers.

In its continued efforts to strengthen Belize’s Social Safety Net, the UDP has expanded the BOOST program to benefit over 8000 persons countrywide, of which 250 are children affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. Additionally, the Food Pantry program provides a basic food basket twice per month at half price to 17,000 individuals in 3,400 households in the Belize, Toledo and Cayo Districts.

Striving to deliver well-rounded welfare services for persons affected or infected by HIV/AIDS; the UDP government has ensured the provision of psychosocial support to over 400 persons and counseling services to a further 700 plus persons, through the Community Counseling Centre. Since 2012, the UDP Government has provided quality protection services to an average of 5,000 persons annually, including abused and neglected children and adolescents, homeless persons, individuals and families affected/infected with HIV and AIDS, juveniles in conflict with the law, and other vulnerable groups.

To increase social equality, the UDP government has secured over 2 million dollars in grant funds, through the UN Trust Fund and SICA, to implement the approved National Gender Based Strategy and Action Plan, along with civil society partners.

**IT’S ALL ABOUT OUR CHILDREN**

Recognizing that protecting our children is a nation’s paramount responsibility, the UDP has delivered on its promise to provide greater protection to abused and neglected children, especially victims of sexual abuse, by passing the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act and Criminal Code Amendments that introduced stiffer penalties for sexual abuse of children and provides equal protection for boys and girls.

Furthermore, the strengthening of the Juvenile Justice System has commenced with a 10 million dollar loan from the IDB, to execute the Community Action for Public Safety (CAPS) Project. The hallmark of CAPS has been the completion of one new dormitory and resource center, with another dormitory and mess hall under construction for the Youth Hostel. The CAPS project is also increasing the quality of rehabilitative services being offered to the adolescents at the Youth Cadet Corp, Youth Hostel and Wagner’s Youth Facility.

**A ROOF OVER OUR HEADS**

During its tenure, the UDP government has made great strides in filling the housing needs for lower and middle income families. The Southside Poverty Alleviation Programme continues to provide government-subsidised quality housing in impoverished areas. Likewise, middle income families are benefiting from affordable housing loans and grants provided by the Development Finance Corporation and the National Bank of Belize, which together have approved 689 housing loans and issued 7,351 housing grants since 2012.

In the next 5 years, guided by a National Housing Policy, the UDP will continue to address housing gaps by securing even more homes for low-income families and by fostering a financial environment that enables middle income families to afford their own homes.
We Remain Committed

By its accomplishments in previous terms, the UDP has convincingly demonstrated its commitment to protecting the most vulnerable populations and to promoting social justice and equality. In the next 5 years, the UDP will continue the crusade to restore dignity to the lives of every Belizean and to empower citizens to be self-sufficient, responsible and productive.

Our social transformation hinges on our commitment to enable families to do right by their children and other vulnerable members of their families; and to equip our youths to achieve their full potential and ultimately to transform Belize. In the next 5 years, the UDP will:

- Implement Phase 2 of the CAPS Project described above, strengthening and expanding support services for at-risk youth and rehabilitation services for youth in conflict with the law.
- Implement the Youth and Community Transformation (YCT) Project, through which 10 million dollars will be invested in infrastructure and service delivery. This Project entails the construction of the Lake Independence Resource Center that will include an indoor sports auditorium. The Resource Center will also deliver social services to at-risk youths and their families; as well as literacy and skills training programs. The YCT project will finance the renovation of the Wilton Cumberbatch Field and upgrade the facilities at the Samuel Haynes Institute and other community centers.
- Strengthen the social safety net by increasing the number of BOOST beneficiaries, and by providing families with integrated “wrap around” services to improve their standard of living.
- Extend the Food Pantry program to additional districts and improve access to social services in rural and under-served areas.
- Strengthen the child protection system by providing comprehensive training of all stakeholders in the child protection system — police officers, social workers, prosecutors, health care providers and educators - and expanding counseling services for families and child victims of abuse.
- Enhance child development by increasing access to early childhood stimulation and quality education for children from 0 to 5 years old, especially targeting children from disadvantaged families.
- Strengthen the after-care services for youths in conflict with the law to deter re-offending and facilitate reintegration into society.
- Collaborate with the private sector and other stakeholders to create an enabling environment for job creation for women and youth.
- Implement the National Council on Ageing’s Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019 to address the needs of our elderly including legal protection, healthy life styles, financial security, social support, housing conditions and access

A third term with the UDP will secure a higher quality of life and greater social justice for our citizens as we build on the strong foundation we have set in developing our greatest national asset -- our people.

“It is important for us as a government to ensure that the poor, the marginalized, and the downtrodden are given the opportunity to live and own a decent shelter over their heads.”

— Hon. Michael Finnegan
TRANSPORTATION IS NOT JUST ABOUT ROADS, CARS, TRUCKS, BOAT OR PLANES . . .

IT’S ABOUT PEOPLE

It is about getting us there on time, whether it is getting to work, school, to the cayes, visiting family, or on vacation; it is about getting us there safely! It is the life line of people and businesses - distributing goods to stores countrywide, moving tourists to hotels, patients to the hospital . . . it is about people.

According to the Technical Cooperation Agreement for the development of a Comprehensive and National Transportation Master Plan, much of Belize’s transportation limitations are rooted in the historical development of transportation services having evolved from a system of reacting to immediate needs, and not from a comprehensive long-term planning perspective, aligned with national development goals. As a result, Belize has inherited an arbitrary and disjointed transportation system, misaligned with the country’s future developmental objective and which provides an unacceptable level of service in meeting the diverse demands for the movement of people and goods at various times and frequencies. This is manifested in structural inequalities, with under-exploited natural resources on the one hand and on the other, poverty, marginalization of some groups of the population, coupled with negative impacts on the environment, high logistics cost on the economy and discernible constraints to the country’s productivity chain and national development.

PUBLIC PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION

Public passenger transportation has serious shortcomings in the form of poor quality of service, reliability, and profitability for operators. One of the limiting factors of service is the quality of vehicles, which do not offer optimum safety and comfort conditions to passengers. Another major drawback is that there is no official system of bus stops and schedules, leading to disorder; a situation which is exacerbated in urban areas, leading to lower commercial speeds and a lower quality of service.

BELIZEAN PORTS

Belizean Ports have low draughts, and generally suffer from infrastructural and equipment limitations that hinder productivity. Additionally, in both major ports, there is a shortage of logistics infrastructure (especially for cold chain operations), to allow for the storage of agricultural production, which hinders the international shipping of local production. A recent study of the local agriculture sector has shown that the greatest obstacle to the profitability and growth of the sector, is the port infrastructure. Low maritime connectivity is another issue affecting competitiveness of exports.
Air Transportation and Waterways

Belize border infrastructure, air transportation, and waterways are also part of an integrated transportation system that suffers from infrastructure or organizational challenges that must be addressed. The fact is that the transportation system is not aligned to serve the development vision of the country. Successive Governments have recognized this and have done very little; but that is about to change, as the UDP Government is developing a Comprehensive and National Transportation Master Plan.

The Plan will have as its starting point an update of the quantitative and qualitative problems of transport in Belize and their impact on the quality of life. The plan will produce a comprehensive transportation policy, to facilitate the achievement of development objectives in the context of a common policy vision.

Since 2012, 6 Aerodromes have been, or are in the process of being, upgraded at a total investment of over BZ$20 Million. This includes Corozal, Placencia, Punta Gorda, Belize Municipal, Fred Martinez Airstrip in Orange Walk and John Greif Airport in San Pedro.

Air service to Belize has been enhanced by formalizing five new international, direct flights to and from Belize; they are COPA, direct from Panama, American and Delta from Los Angeles, United, from Chicago, and Southwest from Houston. Additionally, two new regional flights have also been introduced: Roatan to Belize and Merida to Belize.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Refurbished Corozal Bus terminal and completed Independence Bus Terminal;
- Acquired 2 new Patrol vehicles to enhance enforcement along the George Price Highway;
- Introduced a Rural to Urban (mini) shuttle bus system in the Belmopan, Mango Creek and Independence Areas;
- Regularized and enforced bus routes and schedules to ensure timely departure and arrival;
- Installed line markers and reflectors on major highways;
- Placed signs on major highways and junctions;
- Installed speed control devices and rails at dangerous sections of the highway;
- Established and maintained various checkpoints to ensure that drivers are in possession of valid drivers’ permits and insurance;
- Invested in boat communication equipment and Navigational Aids, (including buoys and beacons) to provide for the safety of our Mariners;
- Revised Legislation, including the Water Taxi Regulation, which will improve the safety and security of locals and visitors traveling by water taxi within Belize;
- Constructed a new HQ at mile 3 along the GP Highway, in an effort to improve the command and control capabilities.
The Public Service is the largest service provider in Belize and any improvement in delivery of services positively impacts thousands of people and businesses. The UDP is committed to work in partnership with public officers to transform the public service into a fully client-centered service provider. This means embracing integration between public sector agencies that leverage technology and, where relevant, private sector expertise, to develop new public service delivery models.

At the core of the Public Service are the public officers who deliver services directly and indirectly to the public. The UDP recognizes that its success and ability to deliver services efficiently and effectively is contingent on productive and professional public officers. The UDP has invested substantially over the past four years in initiatives designed to improve working conditions of officers, to build their capacity to meet the ever-growing demands and expectations of the public, and to provide support for their mental and emotional well-being. Some strategic initiatives have been undertaken as part of a comprehensive plan to transform the Public Service over several years. In the process of these developments, the UDP has been mindful of the importance of partnering with the relevant unions in the interest of a sound industrial relations climate. During its tenure, the UDP has implemented the following key initiatives:

- The establishment of the first ever Public Service Learning and Research Center, to centralize and expand training and development within the Public Service. The Center is scheduled to be launched in January 2016.
- The introduction of a Revised Public Service Regulations 2014 which provides for a more contemporary human resource management framework for the administration of the Service.
- Development of a Merit Award Policy and Programme for the Public Service with the objective of awarding excellence and demonstrating that the Government values the contributions of public officers to the development process.
- The introduction of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in March 2015 for public officers. This programme is a vital resource which offers confidential services and real support to public officers and their families who are experiencing a variety of personal problems and work-related challenges. Belize is the only country in the Caribbean with an EAP fully funded by the Government. Public officers have welcomed this program and have been benefiting from its services.
- In April 2015, the Government, in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat, embarked on the development of a new Job Classification and Compensation System for the Belize Public Service, the first of its kind since the mid 1980s. The long-term benefit of this initiative is a Public Service that is more highly motivated as a result of a modern pay and grading structure that is objective and more equitable, with clearer career paths.

Increasingly, public administrations are under pressure to deliver a more broad and complex range of services in a manner that is timely, efficient, economical, equitable and transparent. Therefore, delivering effective public services requires transformation at multiple levels. In addition to the Public Service modernization initiatives listed above, technology is a tool that has been proven to serve as an enabler of transformation, resulting in increased capacity, empowerment, enhanced systems processes, and cultural and organizational change.

It is also recognised, that whilst technology is not a solution in itself, it has the tremendous potential to align public service delivery with customer needs. Government has invested tremendously and will continue to invest in e-government and the automation of processes as a core part of its public sector transformation. It acknowledges, nonetheless, that technology services are no substitute for basic, desirable qualities such as courtesy, respect and friendliness. Therefore, looking ahead to another term, the UDP will place increased attention on the issue of culture change, to cultivate and nurture the qualities for a client-centred service mentality throughout the Public Service.
The process of transformation across Belize has been most obviously manifested in municipal and environmental infrastructure change and upliftment. But despite the positive impact that such change has on jobs, culture and the nation as a whole, the UDP transformation concept and intent is far more deep and pervasive than physical infrastructure. The issues of security and the web of laws form a part of governance where integrity and efficiency of our legal system are at the core. It is clear that Belize has been challenged in these areas for decades. During its tenure, the UDP has established a Magistrates’ Court in Independence Village, rebuilt the Magistrate’s Court in Punta Gorda, installed a child friendly Family Court in Punta Gorda and undertaken an initiative to establish a drug treatment court to reduce the incidence of substance abuse crimes and encourage rehabilitation.

In the next 5 years, the UDP will implement dynamic reform which nonetheless embraces the existing strengths of our system, including measures which have already been undertaken or which are ongoing. The UDP is therefore committed to enhancing the efficiency and efficacy of the Justice System.

An efficient, expeditious and fair legal system is essential for the security of the citizenry and for the determination and resolution of conflicts and dispute. The system should (as much as is practically possible) inspire respect and a deep sense of justice. Such a legal environment will not only be dynamic in the overall challenge of assuring the security of persons and homes but would be a foundation for a business, commercial and investment environment attractive for foreign investment as well as Belizean entrepreneurship. Consequently, in the next 5 years, the UDP will implement the following:

- A special project relating to the Courts, the Judiciary and the Legal System. It will include a special Judges Act to complement the constitutional structure of the Judiciary
- Provision for a more robust budget for the Judiciary and the Courts including greater participation by the Judiciary itself
- The objectives of the project will include expeditious and fair trials in the promotion of swift justice in both the criminal and civil jurisdictions, from inception to conclusion. This project will include improving the staffing of the Courts with highly competent and trained professionals with remuneration packages designed to ensure excellence. It will also include a concentration on the use of modern technology and techniques for the fair and efficient expedition of the court process.
- A Justice System Reform Task Force will be set up to formulate and implement the programs and measures to be carried out, including the improvement of case management and recording in the criminal and civil jurisdictions. There will be consultations with the public to gather recommendations on how the public interacts with the justice system focusing on issues of access and participation
- Promotion of ongoing programs to build a culture of knowledge of and respect for the law including input from relevant agencies
- A special Courts building and complex will be constructed for the Magistrates Court in the area of Chetumal Street in Belize City

**LAND TRANSACTIONS REGISTRATION**
- Provide the Lands Registries with the requisite expertise, training and technology which will ensure that they operate in an efficient and timely manner in the processing of land transactions
- Ensure that the land registration and recording systems and the processes are reliable including the information provided in the transactions
- Examine and revise the stamp duty regime in relation to land transactions to ensure that the rate is fair and practical with the objective of achieving strict compliance in the payment of duties in all cases except those that are the subject of lawful exemption
- Manage and compile records and dealings in land transactions to create a data bank by which trends and valuations can be studied and assessed

**BELIZE COMPANIES REGISTRY**
Modernize the Belize Corporate Affairs Registry through the use of technology for the efficient filings of corporate documents and searches of corporate records

**TRADEMARKS & COPYRIGHT**
Improve the infrastructure and operations relating to trademarks and copyright
The Ball is in our Court

Our nation thrills with every victory, ever goal, every medal as Belize gains traction in regional competitions. In 2015, our sporting teams enjoyed outstanding regional success. Most recently, the Belize Jaguars National Football Team reached a pinnacle by advancing to the third round of the World Cup 2018 qualifier round, making an impressive showing enroute to a draw with Canada. Our female national softball team makes us proud as they continue to medal year after year. Belize’s own Hoop Dreams won all their games to become the U16 Copa Cancun basketball champions.

The UDP recognizes that for Belize to be competitive both regionally and internationally, we must to engage our athletes at a young age and develop their talents through structured training and competition. A National Sport Policy and 3-year Strategic Plan was created in 2014, which lays out the framework for the development of sports in the near future. This summer saw the UDP Government’s signature “Summer of Sports” program, funded through the PetroCaribe initiative, supporting summer sports camps for children and youth across the entire country.

To augment our progress in sports development and increase our successes internationally, Belize needs well-equipped training facilities and venues for sporting events. In addition to investments already made in upgrading sporting facilities, the UDP is investing $60 million in an ambitious, nationwide campaign to construct and upgrade our sporting and other recreational facilities. We are ensuring that every municipality has a major functioning sporting or multipurpose recreational facility tailored to the community’s needs.

SPORTS IS NOT JUST A GAME, BUT A CORE INGREDIENT IN COMMUNITY BUILDING
These projects include:

- Major upgrades to the MCC Grounds, Belize City’s premiere football field,
- Completion of the Main Grand Stand area of the Marion Jones Complex and the installation of a state-of-the-art running track for track and field events.
- Renovations of the Victor Galvez Recreation Facilities in San Ignacio featuring a newly constructed basketball court, volleyball court, and refurbished football fields as well as new jogging tracks and a children’s playground.
- Rehabilitation of the Falcon Field Court and Recreational Park
- Refurbishments the Roger’s Stadium, The People’s Stadium in Orange Walk Town, and high school sporting facilities in Belmopan and Dangriga.
- Isidoro Beaton Football Field and Facilities – Further enhancements to Belize’s only FIFA qualified football pitch will include the installation of a FIFA qualified synthetic turf as well as CONCACAF qualified lighting system, seating for over 1200, and a VIP/Media Room.
- Santa Elena Football Facilities and Recreational Field – Renovation of this 10-acre site featuring a newly installed professional grass pitch, a covered basketball court, and a jogging path.
- Benque Viejo Marshalleck Football Field and Facilities – Installation of a fully irrigated, FIFA standard, natural grass football pitch, CONCACAF qualified lighting system, seating for over 1200, a gallery area, a VIP/Media Box, and new fencing.
- Indoor Court and Multi-purpose Recreational Buildings for Dangriga and Punta Gorda featuring fully enclosed multi-purpose facilities with center wood courts, and seating for over 1600.
- San Pedro Football Field and Facilities
- Rehabilitation of the Wilton Cumberbatch Field in the Yabra area of Belize City which will include refurbishment of the football pitch, basketball court, and children’s playground, construction of a community pavilion, and the installation of site lighting and a walking/jogging path around the perimeter.

Recognizing that sports is not just a game, but a core ingredient in building community, developing the full potential of our children and youth, promoting healthy lifestyles, and boosting national pride, the UDP will continue to transform lives through sports development.
Belize is a nation small in population and size but rich in resources. The UDP policy has always been that these resources will be responsibly managed so that they are always available to improve the lives of all Belizeans.

In order to ensure that the lives of Belizeans are as rich and diverse as our country’s bounty, the UDP continues to focus on three main principles:

- **Land ownership by Belizeans is a right, not a privilege, and access to land and land transactions should not be complicated and should be within the reach of any Belizean.**
- **Belize’s natural resources should be free from contamination, therefore adequate waste disposal and management is essential.**
- **Water is vital and one of the most valuable resources that we have, it must be responsibly managed to ensure its availability for all generations to come.**

**LAND MANAGEMENT**

Considering the fact that land ownership represents our family’s heritage, security and wealth, land transactions should be simple, fast, safe and transparent. In Belize, however, there are various forms of titles and the procedures, each with their own process, created confusion for land owners. For this reason, the UDP has implemented a new Land Administration System aimed at reducing the number of procedures for various forms of title, thus allowing us to track and simplify land transactions. This helps to speed up the processing, logging and tracking of transactions to prevent the loss of files, a problem that plagued the department in the past. Additionally, key personnel were strategically placed at office counters for the specific function of improving front line customer service.

As a result of these changes under the UDP, the Lands Department offices countrywide have:

- Recorded 25,937 visits at the National Estate Office between August of 2014 to July 2015
- Cleared over 25,000 backlogged applications for national land in queues at various offices, since August 2014
- Executed an inspection sweep countrywide, based on information coming out of the newly established customer service unit. Approximately 1,000 applicants of national land benefitted from the sweep in October of 2014
- Revisited and improved the Application Forms for national land, in order to capture all the necessary information required for processing and also for it to be customer friendly
- Increased production of, and tracking in, the delivery of documents to the public
- Placed strong emphasis on service delivery and customer relations, which has significantly reduced the incidences of disgruntled stakeholders, and legal or public challenges of fraud or neglect
- Implemented clear and measurable performance goals and objectives, leading to increased staff performance and accountability in all aspects of professionalism
• Accomplished almost 60% reduction in waiting time for services from both front desk and senior management;
• Established a Land Conflict Committee to address cases that arise from customer complaints;
• Catalogued and accounted for over 200,000 Land files.

DURING THE NEXT 5 YEARS, THE UDP WILL:
• Fully implement the National Land Use Policy and Plan, to modernize the allocation, distribution and use of land and to improve land use practices
• Increase the number of land parcels granted to first time Belizean landowners by 30% or 5,000 lots over the next five years
• Regulate the real estate industry to require certification, thereby ensuring integrity of land transfers for all land owners
• Strengthen the Survey Board and regulate the survey profession, to ensure professionalism and integrity;
• Update subdivision guidelines, improve the application process and reduce processing time
• Strengthen the Land Registry and reduce the processing time for registering property to ensure predictability, while maintaining accountability and transparency
• Strengthen the Debt Management Unit to improve revenue collections, including the implementation of an online payment option
• Reduce political interference in land administration;
• Revise the methodology for assessing stamp duty on land transfers (sale and otherwise), to create a fair and predictable system, and reduce the time for these assessments
• Institute greater due diligence on transactions, thereby preventing future costly court cases; and resolving land conflicts to protect legitimate landowners from fraudulent land dealings
• Expand the Customer Service Unit to all districts, to improve service delivery countrywide
• Establish the National Spatial Data Infrastructure, with concurrent connections to all major private and public sector databases

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT
Under the last UDP administration, Belize has made the greatest strides in solid waste management in the country’s history.

“All major, unsanitary, unsightly, and often burning dumpsites in Belize City, San Ignacio, San Pedro, Caye Caulker, Belmopan and Dangriga have been converted to sanitary transfer stations in each municipality.”

Waste in the Central Corridor of Belize is now sorted and transferred to a new and modern treatment site at mile 24 on the George Price Highway. Garbage pickers that used to scavenge in unsanitary mountains of waste, have now been trained as on-site sanitary workers at transfer stations. They are now fully engaged in the sorting of waste in preparation for recycling and transfer of waste in a safe and professional way.

As a further phase of development, in the next 5 years, the UDP will complete the national solid waste policy and develop waste management facilities in the Northern and Southern corridors of the country. The UDP will also convert the Burrell Boom dumpsite into a transfer station, thereby expanding the modern waste management system to cover the entire country.

Reducing and recycling of waste will continue to be a high priority for the UDP. In partnership with local governments, the UDP will update the laws to require and incentivize recycling by businesses and households, thereby reducing the amount of waste in landfills. These new policies will create opportunities for employment, enterprise, and the development of new industries.

The UDP will create new policies to improve the management of non-biodegradable waste currently clogging our waterways and littering our highways. Better enforcement of littering laws, incentives for production or import, and use of biodegradable packaging will be introduced; while the use of non-biodegradables will be strongly discouraged.

WATER MANAGEMENT
Recognizing that water is quickly becoming a scarce resource globally, a new UDP government will develop and execute a National Water Master Plan, to foster responsible use and sustainable management of our water resources. Already, the passing of the National Integrated Water Resources Act in 2010, has facilitated the implementation of water use guidelines by industry and the strengthening of the Hydrology Unit, to foster inclusive and responsible management of this vital resource.

Building upon this base, the UDP government will continue to ensure that clean, safe and uncontaminated water is available to all communities, and that a balance is achieved between industry and the public, as shared users of this scarce resource.

MINERALS AND MINING
Recognizing that Belize’s mineral resources represent a potential for significant economic growth, the UDP government will develop a National Mineral and Mining Policy and Plan to guide and encourage responsible use and sustainable management of our mineral resources.
Investment in adolescent and youth development is a primary pillar of the UDP’s new 5-year development plan. With 48.3% of the population under the age of 25 years, developing the full potential of our young generation is a top priority for our nation. Rapidly changing contexts at the global, national, community and family levels are having a profound impact on our youth with both positive and negative consequences. Well-coordinated policies and tailored, evidence-based services are needed to guide our young people through all the opportunities and challenges presented by this increasingly complex and technology-driven global society.

In the past 8 years, the UDP Government has invested tens of millions in establishing wide-ranging educational opportunities; apprenticeship, job training and job placement programs; social support services; and rehabilitation programs for at-risk youth. Noteworthy achievements include the following:

- The National Youth Apprenticeship Program was launched in December 2010 to provide out-of-school youth and single mothers between the ages of 16 and 29 years with a trade (including electrical, auto-mechanic, plumbing, construction, computer maintenance, hospitality, food preparation, and others), through apprenticeships in both the private sector and the security forces. By making these vulnerable groups more employable, the apprenticeship program has increased youth employment, and provided an alternative to crime and violence for at-risk youth. To date, over 500 young men and women have graduated the program, the majority of whom have secured employment or rejoined the formal education system, with over 200 of them acquiring their high school diploma.

- Over 5 million dollars have been invested in improving infrastructure, facilities, and delivering tailored rehabilitation programs at the Youth Cadet Corps, the Youth Hostel, and Wagner’s Youth Facility. These investments have consolidated a coordinated and comprehensive continuum of care for high-risk youth and youth in conflict with the law.

- The Southside Youth Success Project provided job training and taught life skills for teenaged out-of-school boys and established a drop-in center as a safe space for young men to socialize and learn. The program graduated over 85 teenagers, of which 73 re-entered the formal schooling system, and 13 landed permanent jobs. All participants faced a brighter future and recognized the need to invest in their own education and development as productive citizens.

- The Internet in the Schools program saw an increase in bandwidth and the government partnered with BTL to offer free wifi in a main park in each municipality, in an effort to increase internet access to youths.
In moving forward, the next UDP government will realize even greater impact in adolescent and youth development programs through coordinated multi-sectorial planning that combines investments and integrates strategies from the areas of education, health, employment, sports, arts and culture, and technology. This holistic approach will increase opportunities for youth and deliver a comprehensive support system for youth development. Key initiatives in the next 5 years will include the following:

- The Youth and Community Transformation Project will invest 10 million dollars to build human capital among children and youth from economically disadvantaged communities in Belize City to promote effective workforce and community participation. The Project will create a coordinated community-based response for youth and community transformation in Belize City by expanding existing programs in literacy and numeracy, adaptive life skills, sports and culture. Additionally, it will enhance community spaces for sports, recreation and the delivery of social programs. This will include the rehabilitation of the Cumberbatch Field in Yabra, the construction of the Lake Independence Resource Centre and upgrading the facilities at several community-based centers.

- The Youth Violence Prevention Project will develop a Citizen Security Policy and Plan and will establish a formal coordination mechanism to streamline and strengthen the delivery of youth violence prevention and rehabilitation programs.

- The Ministry of Youth will increase and strengthen platforms for youth participation including the provision of countrywide Leadership and Capacity Building Training, forums for young people to participate in public dialogue, Youth Group Registration Database, and the development of a Youth Council Training Manual.

- The new government will prioritize public investment in increasing opportunities and spaces for youth to participate and develop their talents in sports and in the arts.

The UDP is committed to prioritizing investments in youth development, improving multi-sectorial coordination, and promoting inclusive youth participation, to empower the next generation to forge a prosperous and rewarding future for Belize.
HITTING THE MARK
The UDP’s achievements in improving access to education clearly manifest our commitment to securing education as a right for all Belizeans. In our tenure, we have reached the following milestones:

- We have increased access to pre-school education from 34% to 40%.
- We have attained 95% enrollment of primary school-aged children.
- We have increased gross secondary school enrollment from 53% to 66%.
- We have increased enrollment at vocational training institutes to 1000.

To sustain and surpass the gains we have made in delivering quality education and training for all, in its next term, the UDP will focus on four cross-cutting themes: improving access, quality education at school and at home, integrating technology as a tool for learning, and education for employment.

OFF TO A GOOD START
Recognizing the importance of good nutrition and nurturing in early childhood for a healthy, happy and productive life, the UDP will focus on integrated early childhood development services across the education, health and human development sectors for children 0-3 years. As part of this collaborative approach, the government will engage parents and caregivers in providing for the complete physical, mental and social well-being of children, focusing on the most vulnerable. To support this, the UDP will implement a comprehensive “Nutrition in Schools” program through which children will undergo regular physical examinations to ensure that they are both mentally and physically fit. Where a need is identified, nutrition enhancement and other health services will be provided to children.

IMPROVING ACCESS
The UDP will construct a minimum of 35 new schools: 22 preschools, 5 primary schools, and 8 high schools. The UDP will make education affordable by eliminating or reducing fees for those with financial need, especially at the high school level. The UDP will broaden access to education for those within and outside conventional school settings. This strategy will provide access to high school equivalency programs on-line, adult continuing education, evening school and a range of alternative education programs. Selected high schools will be designated centers of excellence in sports, the arts, or vocational subjects. This will provide students, who are interested or gifted in these areas, the opportunity to hone their talents to levels of excellence, and to access diverse curricula.

FOCUS ON QUALITY AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME
The foundation for success is to make teaching a profession that will attract our best and brightest. The quality of an education and training system depends on the quality of its teachers. We will strengthen teacher education programs

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”
- Nelson Mandela
including Continuous Professional Development, and ensure that graduates of teacher training programs meet standards as measured by the Belize Teacher Professional Licensing Exam. The UDP will implement student-centered performance objectives to ensure that students’ master key skills such as literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and technological competence.

Recognizing that parents are critical to children’s academic success, the UDP will provide parental support programs to engage parents actively in their child’s education and to create a nurturing home environment that stimulates learning.

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY AS A LEARNING TOOL
Information and Communications Technology (ICT) offers ever-expanding opportunities to improve the effectiveness of classroom instruction, to access online education, and to prepare students to participate in technology-based service industries. Additionally, ICT can help teachers and students in rural areas to overcome the limitations of distance.

Blended learning methods, which incorporate both face-to-face and computer-assisted learning, will be used to accommodate students’ diverse learning styles and to complement conventional classroom instruction.

To increase competitiveness in the dynamic, technology-driven global society, the UDP will expand the use of technology in education and will augment teacher training to build the education sector’s capacity to integrate technology. Specifically, to complement instruction and learning, the UDP will increase the number of computers available to students and teachers, which will facilitate the use of e-textbooks and provide access to the vast knowledge and educational resources available via the Internet.

EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT
Special emphasis will be placed on the needs of our young people to ensure that they are equipped to become productive citizens. We will continue to diversify the high school curriculum to include the arts, science, technology, vocational training, business and sports. The goal is to serve the needs and interests of students, and prepare them for entry-level employment, self-employment, and/or for further education and training.

To achieve this, we will formalize the collaboration between ITVETs and nearby high schools to maximize the use of our human and physical resources, while preparing our youth to be productive participants in our economy.

At the tertiary level, the UDP will work with post-secondary institutions and the business and industrial sectors, to develop curricula that are relevant to our economic development priorities. For example, UB and the proposed India-Belize Centre for Engineering will offer quality programs in Applied Science and Technology. These programs will be benchmarked by the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs), which, like the City and Guilds before, will certify that holders of such qualifications are competent in their subject area. Furthermore, the CVQs are a gold standard in the Caribbean region and thus will guarantee that Belizeans are competitive in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

For those early school leavers who are now gainfully employed (for example, in the construction sector), the UDP government will work with their employers for them to earn on-the-job certification by assessment and recognition of their competence in performing various on-the-job skills. Furthermore, the UDP will expand apprenticeship programs, job market driven training, job preparedness and life skills training to increase youth employment.
THE BEST IS YET TO COME
UDP 2015-2020

COMMITMENTS

- Develop the Commerce Bight Port to support productive sector growth
- Construct a new international airport in North Ambergris Caye
- Develop a special financing program through DFC and the National Bank for small businesses and small farmers
- Develop and implement a National Transportation Master Plan to address the need for efficient and cost effective movement of people and goods
- Stimulate economic development as a natural deterrent against incursions through the construction of a road along the western border
- Develop a modern mixed-use commercial zone at the Lake Independence Boulevard junction — government offices, a national bus terminal, the National Bank, DFC, Police and Fire Stations, a Community Resource Center and retail outlets
- Shorten the time for accurate and efficient land registration to be no more than 30 days
- Construct a new road to Lamanai via Bermudan Landing and Lemonal
- Pave the road to Caracol, with two points of origin from Georgeville and Santa Elena
- Continue the paving of the North San Pedro Road to the Basil Jones Airstrip
- Improve the quality of public bus transportation by giving incentives for better quality, energy efficient buses; review the bus route system to meet peak and non-peak demand nationwide; and enforce quality in public transport
- Construct a new Belize City Civic Center as a premier sports and entertainment facility to enhance the nationwide network of sport centers currently being developed
- Construct 35 new schools countrywide from pre-school to High School
- Develop an institute for Science and Technology
- Develop an institute for Enterprise and Innovation
- Expand internet penetration to 50% countrywide
- Construct three new hospitals: Western Regional, San Pedro and Punta Gorda
- Implement solid waste systems in the Northern and Southern Corridors
- Expand electricity to remote rural areas using solar energy technology
• Construct a forward operating base at the Sarstoon
• Procure two helicopters to enhance the work of our security forces and emergency personnel
• Invest $70 million in national security initiatives
• Offer free specialized clinics in all residential and non-residential centers for the elderly as a way to control chronic and non-communicable disease. These special clinics will be established in centers where the elderly can feel comfortable.
• Expand the Food Pantry program to other districts
• Restructure the overall taxation system to ensure equity and fairness in collection, and to encourage economic stimulation
• Transition to a Single Revenue Authority that coordinates all government tax collection agencies and introduces a common Tax Identification Number
• Put more people to work through job matching and training based on market demand
• Reduce the cost of high speed internet to bolster economic growth
• Strengthen National Standards and Quality Controls to protect consumers and enhance competitiveness
• Allow homeowners a chance to retain their hard earned equity by enabling banks to extend the period to write off residential mortgages to 10 years
• Review the policy that prohibits the holding of US Dollar accounts at domestic banks in order to retain capital in Belize
• Develop an investor-friendly residency program
• Improve government services through the implementation of a system-wide quality process reform
• Enact bills to enforce transparency and accountability in Public Financial Management.
• Fully implement an integrated e-Government system in all departments where practical
• Diversify the education curriculum to ensure relevance to national demand
• Launch a nationwide preventative campaign to reduce diabetes, hypertension and obesity through proper nutrition and exercise
• Develop a National Housing Policy that will stimulate housing starts and create a secondary market for mortgages
• Institute a National Lands Advisory Council to ensure adherence to progressive land use policies
• Implement a mandatory recycling program
• Restrict importation and use of non-biodegradable packaging
• Develop and implement a modern migration policy that will ensure that immigration into Belize will contribute positively to our national development
• Implement the National Council on Ageing’s Strategic Plan 2015 — 2019 to address the needs of our elderly, including legal protection, healthy life styles, financial security, social support, housing conditions and access
• Invest $60 million to upgrade and widen the Philip Goldson Highway from Mile 2 to the PGIA junction, and replace the Haulover Bridge