POLITICAL LEADER’S OVERVIEW

While Richard “Nappy” Mayers might have longed for the old time days to be brought back, time is such that we can’t exactly do that. However, we might be able to reinvent them, and with the right interventions, improve upon them.

Too often have our political and governmental structures been characterised by the sacrifice of national development at the altar of self-aggrandizement. This marked deviation from the primary purpose of government - which is to improve the lives and welfare of citizens - has deprived all but a select few of the benefits that should naturally be derived from a nation as well-endowed as ours.

At the heart of our thrust to turn this around, is an honest evaluation of self and circumstance. It requires an understanding and appreciation of the reality that life goes beyond the dollar. It requires an acceptance of the failure of the two traditional parties in forging a legacy of proper representation. And above all, it requires a recommitment to our nation’s founding principles. Indeed, the failure to so do will doubtless have grave consequences.

It is said that the only requirement for evil to persist is for good men to do nothing. However, for good people to do something, they need to be represented. It is against that backdrop that we invite you to partner with the New National Vision in our quest to restore Trinidad and Tobago, through collaboration and consultation, to its fullest potential. Alone it will be an arduous journey, but with your assistance, encouragement and endorsement, we might just be able to think the unthinkable.

FUAD ABU BAKR
Political Leader of the New National Vision
HIGHLIGHTS

- Increased minimum wage to $20 an hour
- Incremental shift toward a living wage.
- Respectable wage and decent standard of living for all workers;
- Increased production and service standards in the public sector; Encouragement through education, fair remuneration and appraisals;
- Punishment for corruption;
- Punishment for police abuse;
- Decreased crime;
- Poverty alleviation;
- Revamping of social services to target the poor, mentally challenged, homeless and other marginalised citizens;
- Revamped consumer affairs division to ensure reduction in the cost of living;
- No new tax and no reintroduction of Property Tax;
- Traffic fines will be made proportionate to average income;
- Introduction of a ticket amnesty, allowing citizens to pay minimal fines on traffic violations. The backlogs will be cleared and the courts freed up;
- A concerted education campaign against the use and abuse of drugs
- Decriminalisation, not legalisation of marijuana. No one will be imprisoned for a joint and put through the process of the courts for that offense. At the same time, we will decrease usage and abuse through other interventions;
- A feasibility study for an underground train system will be conducted, with a view to improving our transportation system;

"No wild promises! No idle boasts! We will try our absolute best to improve the lives of all Trinidadians and Tobagonians.

- Introduction of parenting grants, with certain related conditions. As a society, the potential of every child to improve society must be recognised and harnessed;
- Incremental increase in pensions;
- Land regularisation. Individuals will be given assistance to build and own homes;
YOUTH AND SPORT

While many have highlighted, over and over, the importance of youth to the continued advancement of society, causing these cries to be reduced to mere platitude, the New National Vision believes that there is still merit to these concepts.

In that regard, it proposes to make a series of targeted interventions with respect to youth and sport development. These are based on the basic principle of no child being left behind, and will include, among other things, the following:

- Specifically targeting “at risk” youth, with a view to engaging them in productive activity, whether through work, skills training or sport;
- A renewed commitment to sport, characterised by unprecedented support for athletes, community leagues and national sporting bodies in general;
- The introduction of talent identification programmes in primary and secondary schools, thereby ensuring a continuous flow of top class performers; and
- The maximal utilisation of stadia and other sporting facilities already built, but wantonly underused.

INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT/ URBAN RENEWAL

Infrastructural development is linked to the realisation of our vision across several spheres of endeavour, not the least of which is our thrust toward urban renewal. This thrust will not, however, be punctuated by the construction of edifices which are seldom used. Instead, the New National Vision (NNV) will pursue this through consideration of the following:

- More planning in the development of communities, and a reduction in the pervasion of ad hoc settlements;
- The refurbishment of parks and the building and maintenance of iconic spaces. These will have the effect of improving the living standards of citizens, as well as improving the overall aesthetic appeal of the country, especially as it relates to tourism;
- The construction of a multi-purpose carnival centre;
- The decommissioning of the Beetham Landfill;
- The interment of telecommunications and electricity lines, as obtains in developed countries;
- The relocation to a more central point of amusement and waterparks earmarked for Chaguaramas, keeping in
mind the constraints with respect to road access and the astronomical investment required to remedy same;

- Ensuring the coordination of various agencies and ministries, to ensure that their respective works are not counterintuitive;
- The performance of significant road rehabilitation works; and
- The redevelopment of Ariapita Avenue in particular and Port of Spain in general.

Additionally, the NNV will ensure that local contractors, as far as practically possible, oversee this developmental thrust. Assistance will be granted to smaller contractors who so desire and require. Moreover, a strategic development plan will be established, which will comprehensively address all matters so related.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Paramount to the achievement of all the envisioned changes, is a change in the way governance is administered. Accordingly, the New National Vision will realise this, through a strict and unshifting adherence to the principles of effective representation, accountability and the employment of good sense and pragmatism. These will be cemented by the pursuit of the following:

- The intolerance of bleeding the Treasury;
- The reduction of corruption, through policy and prosecution of wrongdoers;
- The correction of the apparent imbalance between the standards to which public officials and regular citizens are expected to subscribe;
- The completion of all viable projects initiated under previous administrations;
- The development of stronger mechanisms to ensure accountability in the administration of public funds;
- The separation of the duties of Members of Parliament and Ministers. The former will be charged with working hand in hand with Local Government representatives to ensure effective and timely addressing of community concerns;
- The collaboration of government and labour interests in an environment that is cordial, respectful and which could redound to the mutual benefit of all involved;
- The assurance that meritocracy will be the guiding principle in establishing a culture that affords every citizen equality of opportunity;
- The establishment of a regulated fund which will be available to all entities (political and non-governmental) who wish to further the political education of Trinidad and Tobago's citizens;
The partnership between government and civil society in the furtherance of all pursuits which necessitate such collaboration;

The commitment of our leaders to upholding their moral responsibility to country;

The development of key performance indicators across the entire range of government institutions and projects, ensuring maximum value for money;

The promise of a government that is sensitive to the needs of its citizens; and

The protection of government from the influence of big business, avoiding preferential treatment and policies reflective of a government beholden to external influencers.

All of the aforementioned will, without doubt, ensure that all who make contributions to national development will have equal opportunities to reap the rewards of those contributions. After all, it is only through the establishment of a fairer society that peace, tranquillity and stability will be realised in Trinidad and Tobago.

CULTURE

Trinidad and Tobago’s culture is comprised of two main aspects. On the one hand, there is the spectacular and the sublime, characterised by our vibrant festivals, music, dance, art and cosmopolitan nature. On the other, there is the scourge of a laidback mentality, which has translated into lower than acceptable levels of productivity, as well as an erosion of core values and good example.

The NNV proposes to ensure that these two aspects are merged into a harmonious whole, wherein all aspects of culture serve to uplift the country’s psyche, image and productivity. This will require a wide ranging set of interventions, arrived at in consultation with the society at large.

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Trinidad and Tobago’s continued development relies on the quality of human capital available to drive same. The New National Vision will explore all areas of human resource shortages in the country, including health, trade and industry.

We will ensure that innovation receives the attention and investment required to drive development and our thrust to diversify the economy away from the dominant oil and gas sectors.
AGRICULTURE

The agricultural sector continues to contribute minimally to the GDP of Trinidad and Tobago, even in spite of the obvious importance it holds with respect to ensuring food security, as well as providing employment and acting as a catalyst for development in rural communities. The New National Vision will therefore focus on the agricultural sector, making substantive investments aimed at increasing production, decreasing wastage, adding value to locally produced goods and reducing our food import bill.

WHITE COLLAR CRIME AND CORRUPTION

White collar crime and corruption, caused by dishonest business practices, is a major concern affecting Trinidad and Tobago. Against that backdrop, the New National Vision proposes to establish a Business Crime Unit, which will be charged with mitigating against and ultimately eliminating white collar crime. We will increase the penalties for corruption and unlike many administrations who have been unwilling to prosecute their criminal colleagues, the New National Vision will!

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The non-commitment to local government reform has been one of our greatest setbacks in achieving community empowerment and development. In that regard, the New National Vision, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, will pursue local government reform, thereby overseeing an improvement in the levels of development experienced in communities nationwide.
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Constitutional reform is required, having regard to several areas, including but not necessarily limited to the following:

- Campaign finance reform;
- Fixed allocations to local government bodies;
- Fixed election dates;
- Greater participation through referenda; and
- Creation of a consolidated fund to facilitate for political parties to present their ideas to the people. Tax payers’ dollars will fund reasonable political campaigns instead of big businessmen. All measures to manage this process will be put in place.

SOCIAL WELFARE AND EMERGING SOCIAL ISSUES

An NNV government will do nothing to infringe upon the substantive rights already guaranteed to citizens under the constitution. All alterations to the way in which governance is administered will have the effect of improving the citizens’ welfare. These will include the following:

- A commitment to focusing on family development, including offering incentives to mothers who partake in parenting training;
- A continuation of the baby grant;
- The cleaning up the country's streets, and removing street dwellers;
- The pursuit of reform to social assistance mechanisms to ensure that assistance to those in need is uninhibited and readily accessible;
- The empowerment of the ordinary citizen by ensuring that every citizen is able to live decent, sustainable lives; and
- A commitment to focusing on community development as the basis for overall welfare improvements.

However, the legalisation of homosexuality and same sex marriages will not be a reality under an NNV government.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION

The attainment of sustainable economic development is directly related to diversification. Notwithstanding, the energy sector remains the driver of the economy and must be accorded the necessary attention to allow it to become the driver of diversification as well.

The New National Vision’s interventions with respect to economic development and diversification will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- Ensuring that wages correlate to the cost of living;
- The review of pensions to the end of increasing allowances as can be afforded by the treasury;
- Increasing the minimum wage while actively pursuing the reduction on the cost of living;
- The maximisation of the benefit that the wider economy derives from the energy sector, through partnering with industry leaders in the sector. We will review downstream production and look at viable ways to increase revenue;
- The recommitment to small and medium enterprise development; and
- The focusing of our efforts toward the areas into which we plan to diversify, including but not limited to agriculture and tourism.

TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER UTILITIES

In an effort to alleviate the nationwide gridlock being experienced, an underground mass transit train system will be explored, with the Port of Spain to Arima, Chaguanas and San Fernando routes receiving primary consideration.

With respect to other public utilities, streamlining the provision of these services will be pursued, with a focus on improving the levels of professionalism and efficiency with which they are delivered.
LAND AND HOME OWNERSHIP

Land and home ownership are important considerations and serious concerns for almost all members of society. In that regard, the NNV will complete all housing projects previously embarked upon and deliver these and new homes to our citizens.

Moreover, we will proceed with land for the landless initiative and ensure that the allocation process is fair and transparent.

IMPROVING INTERNATIONAL IMAGE

The New National Vision intends to enhance Trinidad and Tobago’s international image, through aggressive marketing of all that is positive about our twin islands, including exportable skills and services, local products and our culture.

NATIONAL SECURITY/JUDICIAL REFORM

The link between judicial reform and national security is almost axiomatic, while the importance of both does not necessitate an explanation. In the furtherance of the strengthening of national security, the New National Vision will embark upon the following:
• The improvement of immigration and the processes and mechanisms currently in place control and monitor same. We will ensure that the regulation – and if necessary, regularisation – of undocumented immigrants is given priority.

• The reduction of crime through more effective, proactive training of law enforcement;

• The revamping of the Police Complaints Authority and the adoption of a stricter stance in respect of officers who violate established rules;

• The rehabilitation of prisoners and the reduction of repeat offender rates;

• The introduction of electronic tagging for prisoners;

• The reduction of the inmate population;

• The closure of the Royal Gaol;

• The reduction of unemployment and poverty;

• The improvement of remuneration packages for the protective services;

• The provision of a traffic ticket amnesty, allowing for related backlogs to be cleared;

• The decriminalisation of marijuana;

• The improvement in the enforcement of existing laws;

• The outfitting of new housing estates and communities with video surveillance and community policing; and

• The removal of draconian, anti-gang legislation.

THESE ARE OUR COMMITMENTS TO YOU!
2015 MANIFESTO

✓ VOTE

NEW NATIONAL VISION

A NEW WAY OF GOVERNING

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