

Good Governance – A Shared Responsibility

“Infrastructure is not just a matter of roads, schools and power grids. It is equally a question of strengthening democratic governance and the rule of law. Without accountability, not only of the government to its people but of the people to each other, there is no hope for a viable democratic state.”

Ban Ki-moon UN Secretary General

If we are to improve governance in Belize it must be done not only in what we say, but also in what we do. It cannot be done overnight but by a long-term strategy that builds upon cooperation between our government and citizens working together to build our institutions. We will have good governance if we respect and believe fervently in the Rule of Law, Accountability, and Transparency and are committed to a government that is legitimate, effective, and widely supported by Belizeans, while building a strong, open and respectful partnership with civil society.

To this end A PUP Government will spearhead:

1. **An EMPOWERED LEGISLATURE:** The PUP will improve legislative governance by providing greater oversight by the National Assembly with respect to the work of the House Committees; increase number of meetings of the House and Senate per year; make House Committee Meetings truly public and participatory; review and *promulgate the Standing Orders so the wider public can know and understand the workings of the National*

The PUP will empower the Senate/House of Representatives to act as an oversight body to the government:

- More authority and autonomy for the senate so that it can carry out its functions
- **Immediate appointment of the 13th Senator**
- Establish Standing Senate Committees that will have the authority to conduct inquiries into any and all matters with a view to advancing the cause of nation-building. So the Inquiries won't necessarily all be probes into central government corruption or For example, a Senate Standing Committee on Education and Housing may choose to examine why there are so many high school dropouts, with a view to making suggestions as to how to eradicate that problem, or how can we ensure that education is truly free for the masses from pre-school to junior college, or what is the present housing stock in the country and whether there is a more pressing need for home repairs or actual new housing.
- We will establish an independent and robust agency to give technical support and otherwise to the Senate This agency will assist the Senate Committees to follow up and act on reports of the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, the Contractor General and any other report tabled in the National Assembly. It will also assist in receiving and investigating allegations and disclosures from whistleblowers on behalf of the Senate Committees.

- Ensure that all elected representatives have input and direct budgetary expenditure in his/her constituency so that backbenchers can become more autonomous and begin to operate first and foremost as representatives of the people in their constituencies rather than as Cabinet Ministers in waiting.

2. Putting Politics and Ministerial power in their proper places

- We will immediately appoint and strengthen the Integrity Commission, providing the necessary funds for its Secretariat to fulfill its important legal, auditing and investigative roles free from any undue political
- Monitor the conduct and performance of Government Ministers and all elected officials in public life to ensure their “honorable” exercise of duties and responsibilities, and to prevent any behavior that can bring disrepute and shame to our nation, to our government and/or to our Such embarrassing behavior will lead to their immediate expulsion from the Cabinet.
- If a Minister is found breaking the law he/she will be subjected to the legal process and will face the consequences like any other person, including jail The rule of law means nothing if the laws do not apply equally to all.
- To limit the subjective authority of Ministers by removing the discretionary powers and reduce the need for letters from Ministers for everything under the Presently, letters from Ministers are needed for recruitment to the Police and the Belize Defense Force, a hitherto unheard of thing. Public officers will be made to do their job, without fear or favor, and punishment will be swift for incompetence and/or corruption.

3. **GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT:** In order to give greater transparency, accountability and efficiency to the government’s procurement and contractual processes a People’s United Party government will:

- Implement a government procurement process that is transparent: an E-marketplace for the Government of Belize and state owned organizations based on models used by several countries in the **All information will be placed on the Internet and made accessible to the public for their participation in the bidding and supply process of the Government.** It is also a fast track system for the public procurement of goods and services making all information available to the public and in particular to the media. At all times the public will know what was purchased from whom (not only the company but also ultimate beneficiary owner/s of the company), and at what price.
- Implement a National Budget Monitoring System to guarantee transparency of the budget and to ensure efficient use of the national The Cabinet will coordinate the budget process, the quarterly publication of budget expenditure and the monitoring and evaluation of budget expenditure of all government departments.
- The Government (through the Ministry of Health) will purchase as many pharmaceuticals for the National Formulary as possible through programs available at the Multilateral Agencies like PAHO who assist in obtaining medication at more competitive prices and of better quality.

4. **ELECTION REFORM:** Within the first year of office we will present legislation to regulate campaign We will also propose and enact legislation to limit campaigning up to the day

before elections. On Election Day all campaigning, paraphernalia, advertising etc. will not be allowed as it is done in other Caribbean countries.

- **We will insist, by any means necessary, that the UDP Government comply with the rule of law and conduct nationwide re-registration in 2017.** The recent findings of 700 pages of unadulterated corruption in the Immigration Department lay bare for all to see the untold numbers of foreigners who received Belizean nationality by fraudulent means with the consequence being that these new fraudsters can and do vote in municipal and general elections, deciding for Belizeans who should be their government.
- Implement a fixed date for general elections similar to that of municipal elections.
- Implement a transparent redistricting exercise, free from any appearance of political manipulation, with the goal being a fair representation of the public.
- Introduce campaign financing legislation.
- Introduce an independent Elections & Boundaries Commission that shall be free from political interference with a Chairman who is appointed in a similar fashion as the DPP and Auditor-General, so he or she can be autonomous and free from the perception of governmental control.

5. SEPARATION OF POWERS:

- **All Judges and Magistrates of the Court will be employed with security of** The PUP will establish sound systems and good practices for recruitment of all officers of the Court and will hold them responsible for the efficient administration of justice and to ensure the separation of powers of the state as clearly stipulated in the Constitution:
- Cease and desist from the public badgering and coercing of the judiciary by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.
- The Director of Public Prosecution will also be given security of tenure and the Department of Public Prosecution will be given the necessary resources to ensure that it complements the work of the Police to increase the rate of successful prosecution, particularly in murder cases.

6. STRENGTHENING CHECKS AND BALANCES: We will reconstitute the Public Accounts Committee for the effective participation of the Social Partners in the Senate so as to ensure its proper role in overseeing the sound and prudent management of public revenues and expenditures approved in the Budget

- We will strengthen the capacities, allocate the appropriate resources and ensure the autonomy of the offices of the Auditor General, the Contractor General, the Ombudsman, and the Integrity Commission to better fulfill their technical mandates and provide the appropriate support to the oversight responsibilities of the Public Accounts Committee and other oversight committees

7. FULLFILLING REGIONAL AND GLOBAL COMMITMENTS

- **We will immediately sign, ratify and fully adhere to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)**, and will access the excellent guidelines, technical assistance and resources provided to signatory We have to at long last join the rest of the countries of the world in becoming compliant. If that Convention could have led to the imprisonment of the Guatemalan President and Vice-President on charges of corruption, then that's a Convention we should ratify. It is far more expensive not to sign the UN Convention on Anti-Corruption than it is to sign it. For every dollar siphoned dishonestly from the government's coffers is a dollar less that we have to support the disadvantaged and dispossessed in our country and a dollar less to create full employment.
8. **EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICE:** We will take immediate steps to restore the autonomy of the Public Service (establish clear boundaries between the political directorate and the public service) and Public Service Commission to re-establish integrity and impartiality in the recruiting, training, evaluating and disciplining processes, and
- We will introduce the necessary legislation with appropriate measures to protect whistle blowers and witnesses involved in corruption cases and to increase the penalties for acts of corruption and public authority
 - The PUP will revert to having Permanent Secretaries (Senior Career Public Officers) as the accounting officers of the specific Ministry/Ministries.
9. **KEEPING OUR FOCUS ON THE LONG TERM:** To ensure that the Social Security Board (SSB) is embraced as an institution performing in the best interest of its beneficiaries while contributing to the national development:

The PUP will reconfigure the SSB Board of Directors to reflect the expectations of the people. A Board Member representing the Churches will be added to the present Board. The Chairman remains appointed by the Government and would have a casting vote. The Chief Executive Officer is an ex-officio member without a right to vote. The Board Secretary is an employee of the Social Security Board. The Board elects one of its members to be Deputy Chairman. The initial term of office of the Chairman is for a period of five years, and three years in the case of all members. (S.I. No. 16 of 2003)

Social Security must be involved in the Health and Productivity of the nation and should be involved in the expansion of the National Health Insurance and Public Hospitals.

Encourage the social partners to clearly spell out the democratic process to appoint and/or elect members to serve on statutory bodies and other governmental boards.

10. **Citizens Security:** A PUP Government will ensure that all the necessary resources are invested in providing adequate security for all This includes improving the capacity of the Police Department and creating the necessary synergies between the Police Department and the office of the DPP.

11. EDUCATING CITIZENS ON HOW WE ARE GOVERNED

- We will promote and support programs on civic education and civic responsibility in our educational system and across our country to strengthen participation of all stakeholders and the general public in policy advocacy, development and other important issues, such as major infrastructural investments, the Guatemalan claim and Article 51 of the Constitution, with the aim of optimizing citizen competence, electoral choices and value-for-money decisions.
- In our first term the PUP will engage in a public education campaign on governance in order to inform our citizens on the various forms of If Belizeans believe that we should change our system of government in any way then a referendum will held.

After all the lessons learnt from recent and past experience, the PUP is convinced that the elimination of corruption is a precondition for the transformation of our national development processes. The elimination of corruption will free up millions of dollars which will then enable much-needed investments in real poverty reduction, salaries for teachers, youth projects, strengthening our tertiary level educational institutions, healthcare programs (ambulance service) and so on. We are talking of huge amounts of our national capital that is being wasted by a corrupt UDP Administration.

I, John Briceño, as head of the next Government along with my Cabinet and together with the National Legislature, pledge to lead this transformation, motivated by the will of the people. In this noble path, we are guided by the philosophy of our Founding Father, the Right Hon. George Price, whose dynamic concept of a Peaceful, Constructive Revolution empowers us to confidently chart this way forward to a better future for all Belizeans.