

**PUP's TEN TRUSTS FOR IMPROVED GOVERNANCE  
TO ELIMINATE CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT  
(Draft: 10 August 2019)**

Belizeans deserve to live with and enjoy good governance. The recent scandals of the Immigration Department, Sanctuary Bay, and other financial fraud and embezzlement of public funds, provide ample justification to make serious changes for good governance of the nation. The PUP respects and believes fervently in the rule of law, accountability and transparency and is committed to a government that is legitimate, effective, and delivering for all Belizeans, while building a respectful, strong, and mutually beneficial partnership with the social partners. To fulfill this commitment, the PUP will implement expeditiously these 10 thrusts upon inception of the new government.

1. **No one is above the law:** Insist, by any means necessary, that Government lead in setting the example in complying with and conducting all its affairs by respecting the rule of law as defined in the Constitution, ancillary laws and government orders of our country. Loopholes in the law, if there are, will be eliminated the soonest. The Department of Public Prosecution will be strengthened by giving tenure to its Director and by allocating the needed resources to complement the work of the Police and increase the rate of conviction of law breakers
2. **Empowering the Integrity Commission:** Immediately appoint all professional personnel of the Commission (IC) and provide necessary funding for its Secretariat to fulfill the important legal, auditing and investigative roles free from any undue political influence. The IC will be capacitated to fast-track implementation of commitments under the UNCAC agreement. The IC will investigate past and present corruption in government, identify those responsible for violation of laws and regulations, and recommend prosecution to the DPP and Police Department. Also the IC shall support the work of Belizean institutions (e.g. Attorney General, Public Service Ministry, DPP and Police Dept) to investigate and prosecute acts of corruption. The IC shall coordinate with the UNCAC to provide technical assistance and capacitation for our national institutions to tighten up legislation and make them better equipped to fight corruption in Belize.
3. **Separation of powers:** Streamline Cabinet so that the three branches (i.e. the Executive, Legislative and the Judiciary) function as truly complementary but separate powers as envisaged in the Constitution. Insist on exercising functions per code of conduct as stipulated in Article 121 of our Constitution. The PUP government is to establish sound systems and good practices for recruitment of judges, magistrates and officers of the Court, to be employed with security of tenure and be held responsible for the efficient administration of justice
4. **Ministerial discretion:** Limit the subjective authority of Ministers by removing their discretionary powers and reduce the need for letters from Ministers for everything under the sun. Presently, letters from Ministers are needed for recruitment, for example to the Police and the Belize Defense Force, a practice unheard of hitherto.
5. **Budget planning and management:** Implement a national budget planning, implementing and monitoring system to guarantee transparency of the budget, by engaging civil society, local governments and electoral divisions in the budgeting process, and to ensure efficient use of the

national resources in the designated programs. Cabinet will coordinate the budgeting process, quarterly publication of budget expenditure and M&E of budget expenditure of all government departments and statutory bodies.

- 6. Public procurement system:** Implement a government procurement process through an E-marketplace for the GoB, statutory bodies and state-owned organizations based on best models used by countries in the region. Procurement of supplies, works and services must abide by strict rules in order to ensure fairness, competition and transparency. These rules ensure that suitably qualified suppliers or contractors are chosen without bias and that the best price/quality ratio and the best price is obtained, with the full transparency appropriate to the use of public funds. The Office of the Contractor General will be strengthened to ensure full compliance with established rules and procedures in each step of the process from the issuing of call for tenders and for proposals, publication, and all the procedures for establishing shortlists, evaluation, award and signing of contracts.
- 7. Oversight and audit of public accounts:** Reconstitute the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) with effective participation of social partners in the Senate so as to ensure its proper role in overseeing the sound and prudent management of public revenues and expenditures. Strengthen the capacity, allocate appropriate resources and ensure the proper functioning of the Office of the Auditor General, to conduct financial and value-for-money audits for most if not all public cost centers and accounts right after the conclusion of every financial year (Article 120, Constitution).
- 8. Fair elections and participation of electoral divisions:** For fair, effective representation and participation, ensure the independence of the Elections & Boundaries Commission to be free from political interference. Its Chairman is to be appointed in a similar fashion as the DPP and Auditor-General, so the EBC can be autonomous and free from government control. Ensure that all elected representatives and local governments participate in the budgeting process and development programs. For example, implementing the Constituency Development Fund will enable elected representatives to be pro-active in supporting grass-roots development initiatives in their own constituencies.
- 9. Modernizing public service management:** Take immediate steps to restore the autonomy of the public service (prevent micro-management by political directorate), to enhance customer orientation and quality service delivery, and to provide innovative solutions to complex challenges of the day. Assist the Public Service Commission to re-establish integrity and impartiality in recruiting, training, evaluating and disciplining processes. Revert to having Permanent Secretaries, i.e. using senior career public officers, as accounting officers of the Ministries. Public officers will be made to do their job, without fear or favor, punishment will be swift for incompetence and/or corruption, and penalties will be increased for acts of corruption and public authority abuses. Introduce necessary legislation with measures to protect whistle-blowers and witnesses involved in corruption cases.
- 10. Educating citizens for good governance:** Promote and support programs on civic education, Belizeans history and civic responsibility in our educational system, from primary school to university levels, to strengthen participation of all stakeholders in policy advocacy,

development strategies and other important issues such as the Guatemalan claim and constitutional reforms. The aim is improve citizen competence, electoral choices and value-for-money investments. If Belizeans believe that we should change our system of government, e.g. via a referendum, then we should do so by following the established procedures.

Focusing on these 10 thrusts of governance to eliminate corruption will require political will, but together these 10 thrusts will improve the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of government programs and services across the board. Greater benefits for Belizeans, especially those at the bottom of the ladder, will increase by at least 25% with the same public resources and budgets being invested at present. Based on experience on other governments on the cutting edge, the real deal is that tangible benefits will be felt in the areas of education, health, housing, utility services, employment and income generation, and crime reduction/security improvement.

Most of these thrusts can be implemented or be started in the first 100 days and they will require minimal investment in the implementation process, in total an estimated B\$ 24.5 m over the first 5 years. The most costly will be the citizen education on good governance (see Table below). These investments can be mobilized from the current budget, equivalent to a small fraction of the savings to be realized from eliminating corruption, mismanagement and waste in the present government.

Table 1. Timeline for Implementation and Estimated Cost

<b>Thrusts</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> 100 days</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Estimated Cost, B\$ m.</b>
1. No one is above the law	XX	X	X	X	X	X	1.0
2. Empowering the Integrity Commission	XXX	X	X	X	X	X	2.5
3. Separation of powers	XX	X	X	X	X	X	0.0
4. Ministerial discretion	XX	X	X	X	X	X	0.0
5. Budget management	X	X	X	X	X	X	1.0
6. Public procurement system	XXX	X	X	X	X	X	2.0
7. Oversight and audit of public accounts	XXX	X	X	X	X	X	5.0
8. Redistricting & participation of electoral divisions			XX	XXX	X	XX	3.0
9. Modernizing public service management	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	0.0
10. Educating citizens for good governance	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	10.0
<b>Total cost</b>							<b>24.5 m</b>