

STEPPING INTO THE FUTURE

BPM MANIFESTO 2009

BETTER THAN THE BEST HARDER THAN THE REST

The past four years has witnessed a fundamental transformation in the relationship between Central Government and the instrument of government on the island, the Barbuda Council.

This change has come about as a result of the alliance between the United Progressive Party Government and the Barbuda Peoples Movement.

The relationship between these two parties has eradicated at least a quarter of a century of mistrust, confrontation and confusion fostered by the former ALP administration that included the ruthless exploitation of the Natural Resources of the island (sand & land); and the relegation of Barbudans to second class status in the national consciousness

The out working of this new dispensation led by Prime Minister the Hon. Baldwin Spencer saw the elevation of the victorious BPM candidate the Hon. Trevor Walker to the position of Minister of Barbuda Affairs and Public Utilities in the office of the Prime Minister. A Cabinet Position was also granted to the triumphant BPM candidate.

This change in circumstances has brought many benefits to the People of Barbuda. These include, major improvement in the infrastructural aspects of islands economy; new and expanded roads, network, improved electrical supply, the installation of a reverse osmosis water supply system, greater educational opportunities for young Barbudans overseas and radical improvements in the Health and Social Welfare provisions of the Council.

The People of Barbuda have also enjoyed the passage into law of a Land Act that fully recognizes communed ownership of all Lands on the island; and their rights to determine how land is to be used, developed and tenured in the future.

A Pensions Act introduced into the legislative structure of the two islands has improved the level of security for workers on the island once they have reached the age of retirement.

For the past 30 years (since its founding in 1978) the Barbuda Peoples Movement has fought and struggled to bring a bright tomorrow for all Barbudans. We will continue to do so as we step into the future.

1. LAND

The first commitment made in the BPM Manifesto of 2004 was that the Party would fight to ensure that the, “rights and interest” of Barbudans over Lands in Barbuda be clearly recognized in the Law. This was achieved on 16th November 2007 when the Barbuda Land Act was passed in the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament. The Act clearly states that the Lands in Barbuda are owned in common by all Barbudans; that they are vested in the crown on behalf of the people; and further that no development of these Lands can take place without the consent of the People.

The BPM through its work in the Council will ensure that Regulations governing how the Land Act is implemented are passed after consultation with the shareholders in the Land. (That is the People entitled under the Act to hold Land as a matter of right).

The party is committed in providing that the Land Act is entrenched in the constitution of Antigua & Barbuda in the same way that the Barbuda Local Government Act was entrenched after agreement reached at the Lancaster House Independence Conference of 1980.

to maximize the benefits of the Land Act to the people the party will seek expert Financial and Legal advice to ascertain the best method of utilizing Land to bring individual and collective development.

2. PUBLIC WORKS

Prior to 2004 a report submitted to the Commonwealth Secretariat Review Team described the infrastructure of Barbuda in this way; “years of under-funding have led to a steady deterioration of social infrastructure most notably the roads, harbors and public buildings”. (Hill - Pg7, 8.1)

In the same report Hill stated that; “there is no potable water supply, the electricity supply is inefficient and costly, and the road network is rapidly collapsing”. (Hill Pg8, 7)

2.1 ROADS

Since the 2004 victory of the BPM, the Council, the Barbuda Parliamentary Representative and the UPP Administration have worked tirelessly to improve the Road situation in Barbuda.

6.5 miles of Asphalt/Tarmac roads have been constructed in the village of Codrington and the major connecting road to River Dock and the Hotels on the south side of the island. The approximate ½ mile of the road to River Dock that is not tarmac will be completed in the New Year (2009).

11 miles of foundation roads have been completed on the outskirts of Codrington utilizing the locally mined limestone. Importantly the roads from the River area to Coco Point, K-Club and Beach House Hotels have greatly improved the quality of transportation between Codrington and these critical sources of economic development.

The Budget Statement of 2009 promises further improvement and upgrading of the Roads in Codrington in collaboration with the Barbuda Council, the Ministry of Public Works proposes to construct five (5) miles of concrete roads in Codrington and continue to assist in the construction and improvement of the country roads.

- Cuban Technicians will assist in construction of Drainage & Culverts
- The Stone Crusher is in full operation and is used in village road upgrading.

2.2 WATER & ELECTRICITY

These two areas of Barbuda infrastructure have been major challenges over the past four (4) years. After decades of inept management by the ALP administration the Barbuda Council, the Minister of Barbuda Affairs and the UPP Administration were left with very serious problems.

These two areas remain works in progress that are due for completion in the very near future.

WATER SUPPLY will be fully updated in the next few months when a part of the \$8 million US. ALBA fund loaned by the Venezuelans will be dedicated to doubling the potable water supply in Barbuda. This will improve the supply to 260, 000 gallons per day.

ELECTRICITY supply has created the greatest difficulties in the rehabilitation process. We thank the people for their patience and for bearance in all the ups and downs we have experience over the past four years.

Currently the APUA have two 750 KVA generators on stream. This will give some stability for the coming year. A modern system of generator control will be installed in the next few months to provide a more consistent transfer of load from one generator to the other.

The **ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION** system in Barbuda will continue to be up graded to suit the current demands on the three phrase system presently in operation.

Renewable Energy

In 2009 The BPM led Council in conjunction with the Central Government will begin a pilot project to utilize Wind Turbines as a source of electrical energy supply. The foundation studies have already been completed in this area and outside technical assistance will be sourced to bring this project into fruition.

2.3 HEAVY DUTY EQUIPMENT

Over the past few months the BPM led Council with assistance of the Minister for Barbuda Affairs, has been able to acquire three 20 Ton trucks. This was totally unheard of under the ALP Administration. The trucks will provide a reliable source of transportation of maul and other aggregates for the Road program.

The Parliamentary Representative and Barbuda Council are pleased that the Ministry of Public Works has provided additional Heavy Duty Equipment a rental basis that have substantially enable Council to undertake much needed Road construction and maintenance.

This action is a symbol of the new co operation and collaboration between the two levels of government that should be a model for the future.

3. HEALTH & SOCIAL WELFARE

The people of Barbuda continue to make steady progress in this sector. Over the period under consideration the BPM led Council has seen the return of Two Trained Doctors courtesy of the Universities of the Republic of Cuba.

3.1 Dr. Affie Charles is functioning in the National Health Service in Antigua after a period of Service at the Hanna Thomas Hospital Barbuda.

Dr. Karisha Burton after completion of her studies worked at Hanna Thomas Hospital under the guidance of Dr. Reddy and the visiting Doctors to Barbuda Programme from West Virginia in the USA. Dr. Burton pre-registration rotations are now being undertaken at the Georgetown General Hospital in Guyana.

3.2 The X-Ray building at the Hanna Thomas Hospital is now completed. An X-Ray machine has been added to the hospital along with a Cardiac Monitor that will improve the quality of care at the hospital.

Two New Ambulances have been added for the transport of patients.

3.3 DENISTRY As a result of co ordination with the Ministry of Health and the Government of Cuba the Council and the Representative have been able to acquire the services of a qualified full time Dentist at the hospital. This service will continue until a Barbudan is trained in this discipline.

3.4 MEDICAL EVACUTION The Council has experienced difficulties in maintenance of this critical aspect of the service. However the BPM is entirely committed to ensuring that this service is in no way compromised. Negotiations continue with Winair and other air transport companies to guarantee this.

3.5 The Health Committee opened the **Solid Waste Management Compound** recently. This service was opened with the full co operation of the UPP Administration in Antigua. It will greatly enhance the disposal of waste from Codrington and improve the protection and prevention of disease in the community.

3.6 SENIOR CITIZENS the BPM led Council and the Parliamentary Representative have fully co operated in the expansion of services to the senior citizens in our community. The BARBUDA COUNCIL PENSIONS ACT has provided a sure and secure future for those who reach retirement having worked for the Barbuda Council. Providing a person has worked eight years or more a pension will be granted.

Councilors who have served two 4 year terms on council will also become eligible for a pension when they reach the pensionable age.

UTILITY BILLS concession provided under the grants/social programme of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will enable senior citizens to benefit \$1200 per year towards their utility bills upwards of 100 Barbudan senior citizens will benefit from this scheme.

The disadvantaged PEOPLES BENEFIT SCHEME recently announced by the Government is additional support for the most vulnerable in our society. This scheme provides \$200.00 per month in support for those who qualify.

4. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

4.1 The Barbuda Council has being in existence for over thirty (30) years. The local Government Act of 1976 that brought it into being has been amended several times to recognized essential changes that would further empower the People of Barbuda and its elected Representatives.

The time for change has come again.

4.2 The BPM is proposing that the Council Membership be streamlined to reflect the need for a more efficient, effective, executive body.

These changes should include:

The downsizing of the Council membership to 5 members. The development of a more cabinet style management structure which is common throughout the world now.

A clear definition of the executive authority of the Elected Members.

Fuller determination of the Function of the Council Administrative staff.

Complete Revision of the Financial Provisions and Powers of the Council in relation the changing Economic and legislative environment in which it functions.

Creation of a more business orientation to certain areas of the Council's operations vis-à-vis Fisheries, Agriculture and Tourism

The upgrading of the Councils status to reflect the home rule proposals espoused by the PLM Delegation at the Lancaster House Independence conference in 1980.

A recognition in the Act that the Council should play an important role in creating an enabling environment for enterprise and the development of the islands economy

5.TRANSPORTATION

5.1 The BPM is calling for an urgent review of the transportation arrangements between Barbuda and Antigua.

An urgent study needs to be undertaken to ascertain what is the best and most affordable systems of transport.

5.2 The Party has fulfilled into election promise of a Ferry System between the two islands, however a review needs to be undertaken to determine how improvements can be made to the Service, its extension to other islands the quality of Service provide and levels of Government Subsidy that may required.

5.3 The Air Transport issues were critical early in 2008. However through careful and diligent negotiations the BPM led Council and the Parliamentary Representative in liaison with Central Government was able to seamlessly replace Carib with Winair.

The ticket prices have remained reasonable considering the prevailing economic conditions in relation to oil prices and the global economic meltdown.

5.4 For 2009 the BPM Council is preparing for the complete upgrade of the Codrington runway and the passenger facilities. Budgetary allocations have been made by the Ministry of Aviation for this purpose.

5.5 The party is also lobbying for the start of a monthly service to St. Marteen that will expand the range of consumer shopping choices.

6. EDUCATION & TRAINING

6.1 The “Roads to Freedom” manifesto of 2001 clearly stated;

“The Barbuda Peoples Movement has placed education as its number one primarily.”

This continues to be our total commitment. Over the past four years the BPM led Council has spent or committed to spend over \$1.2 million dollars on the Education and Training of the islands population.

6.2 Of these members up to 40 young persons are training at the levels of Doctor, Degree, Diploma and Certificate.

The Subject and Discipline areas include,

Tourism and Hospitality Management, Electrical Engineering, Business Administration, Special Education, Information Communication Technology, Business & Marketing, Culinary Arts, Primary Education, Law, Masonry, Carpentry, Early Childhood Education, Computer Science and Agriculture Science.

6.3 Students have been sent to College and Universities in the USA, Republic of Cuba, Mexico, Greece, Guyana, Barbados, Bahamas and Canada.

6.4 Locally in conjunction with ABICE and the Ministry of Education the Barbuda Council Board of Education (BCBE) has engaged in the provision of Technical and Vocational Education for its own workforce and members of the community.

The programme in its first year registered 103 students, 66% of whom were members of the Council workforce.

The Courses offer included;

Information Communication Technology
(Computers levels 1 & 2)

Early Childhood Education

Business Administration & Office Skills

Masonry

Carpentry

Communication & Numeric Skills

Students and Trainees will be offered certificates called The Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) once they reach the standards required by the National Training Agency (NTA). This training programme is recognized throughout the Caribbean and will enable holders of the Certificates to be regarded as skilled in a particular trade and discipline.

6.5 The BPM will continue to work towards the development of a full-time Training academy that will provide mandates Training to all members of the Council workforce and grant access to members of the community in general.

6.6 The Schools Uniform Programme has greatly benefited the people of Barbuda. Annually this programme has brought savings of up to \$80,000 yearly and \$320,000 for the period under review. This is money back into the pockets of ordinary people.

6.7 Prime Ministers Scholarship Programme

Students from Barbuda are currently at Universities in Mexico, Greece and the Bahamas.

Barbudans will benefit from the recently developed. Student Loans Scheme operated by the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank.

7. PORT OF ENTRY

7.1 The negotiations for the funding of the Port of Entry at River are now complete. The Project will be capitalized with a low interest loan from the Chinese EXIM.

Bank

7.2 In preparation for the establishment of a full Part of entry in Barbuda Minister Walker and the Barbuda Council has trained six (6) Barbudans in Immigration and four (4) in Customs.

7.3 The construction of the Port Facilities will commence in 2009. All Revenue from the Port will remain in the Barbuda Treasury.

8. AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES

8.1 Fisheries

The agreement with the Japanese to fund the New Fisheries Complex at the Lagoon Wharf in Codrington has been signed by the Central Government, Council and the Japanese Minister responsible for the fulfillment of the project. Work will be completed by mid 2009.

8.2 The Council will be seeking further expert advice on the expansion and development of the Fisheries Industry in Barbuda.

Particularly in the sector associated with Mechanization of Fishing boats and greater diversification in the type product offered in the regional market.

8.3 Greater levels of funding will be pursued so that those in the Industry can move up from long boats to crafts able to spend longer times out at sea.

8.4 Training will continue to be a primarily in this area for local fishers to increase their usage of modern technology in the Fishing industry in the Fishing industry.

8.5 Agriculture – Training of the workforce continues in this sector of Council business.

Just recently four (4) Agriculture Cadets have been sent to Antigua for Training.

One trainee has returned from Guyana with certificate/diploma in Agriculture Science.

The vision of the Department is to upgrade Agriculture in Barbuda through education.

8.6 The Department has assisted local farmers with machinery, seeds and advice on methods of production and plant protection.

8.7 In this area the Council will be sending technical expert advice on ways of increasing production of certain cash crops such as corn, peanuts, sweet potatoes, pumpkins and watermelons.

In tandem with the Ministry of Agriculture it is expected that a ready market will be available locally and regionally.

8.8 Currently the Coco Nut Plantation is being clean and fenced. This is to provide an opportunity for greater production and possible local business involvement in maximizing the year round crop from the plantation.

8.9 Advice will be sought an expanding the levels of Loan funding available to Small business in this sector.

9. TOURISM SPORTS CULTURE & YOUTH AFFAIRS

9.1 The Tourism industry in Barbuda has suffered some shocks in recent time. Several leases have not line up to they project proposals and two functioning businesses have being temporarily closed.

9.2 One of those affected by closure has now set a scheduled re-opening date for January 2009.

Leases issued to such organizations as Pink Sand, Martello Development Ltd and Hylandale Ltd have not materialized in the manner outlined in proposals made to the Council and Central Government.

9.3 On the bright side, the recent opening of the Lighthouse Hotel at Low Bay should provide some relief to workers who have being lay off from The Beach House and K-Club.

9.4 The Council has at least 3 major proposals on the table that may bring development in the year ahead. However the recent economic down turn in the USA, Europe and the West generally may slow progress in Transfer development.

9.5 The Policy of the BPM in the Tourism Sector is to:

- The development of locally owed hotels and guest houses
- Provide greater opportunity for Barbudans to access financial support in this vital area of economic activity
- Commission expert advice on how Barbuda can best maximize its tanristic potential
- Review the current leases arrangements to ensure that proposed projects came into being

Take the required steps to bring K-Club/Dream Company Ltd into a fully functioning Hotel

Establish a new system of operations in which the Council takes a more proactive approach to investment in this sector

Encourage the development of Barbuda as a Green Destination that thrives as the perseveration of natural eco systems on land and sea

9.6 YOUTH AFFAIRS & CULTURE

A major development in the culture area has been the establishment of a permanent site for the hosting of the cultural festival CARIBANA. Facilities have been built on the River Road and were first used in May 2008. The results were pleasing.

9.7 SPORTS COMPLEX

In line with the National Youth Policy of the VPP Administration the completion of a Sports Complex in Codrington is due to be completed early in 2009.

The new facility will include a gymnasium, Tennis Court and Basketball, playing areas which are already functioning.

Importantly the complex will provide 7 double rooms that can be used to accommodate visiting teams.

9.8 The BPM led Council will continue to focus on Training of staff in this area so that all reach the level of professional qualification required.

9.9 Sports Scholarships will remain an important part of our guest in this area and it is hoped that Olympic Association will work closely with the Council to achieve this objective.

9.10 Community Centre & Library

The Chinese Government has committed resources to progress this project. The Center will provide a major focus for the Young People of the island. Activities will be aimed at developing the Youth in positive direction. It will include a Library that will serve the whole community. Provide space for meetings of local organizations. Social events including weddings, dances, artistic exhibitions and performances.

9.11 Community Participation will continue to be a major part of the BPM policy towards the community. The Party will promote the involvement of all sectors of the society including the Youth, Elderly, Churches, Fisheries & Farmers and Special interest groups that may have an insight into how the Government of the island should be undertaken. Regular public forums will be organized to fulfill this commitment and special interest groups will be invited to provide their vision of particular area of activity.

10. ENVIRONMENT

The BPM is committed to upholding the integrity of the environment in Barbuda. The Party will ensure that independent impact assessment studies are completed before any major projects are undertaken, that could adversely affect the island, flora fauna and eco-systems. We will abide by the world and UN conventions.