

RIGHT REPRESENTATION, REAL RESULTS  
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# LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANIFESTO 2010



RIGHT REPRESENTATION.  
REAL RESULTS.



# LOCAL GOVERNMENT

THE FLAGSHIP OF  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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A Partnership with the People to Build Unity and Prosperity for All

we  
will  
rise!



## POLITICAL LEADER'S OVERVIEW



### *The People's Victory is Not Yet Complete*

**W**e are almost at the finish line. The baton has been passed on from the general election to the local government election and the finish line is just ahead. We are just a breath away from completing the victory. We will have only ourselves to blame if we lose it at this stage.

The prospect of losing the local government election is too frightening to even consider. The PNM will stymie our every attempt to improve the conditions in communities across Trinidad and Tobago. They will thwart our every effort. And voters need to be told that.

All of our supporters need to understand what is at stake here now. If we don't control local government how will we deliver results? If we don't control local government, who will be responsible for ensuring that your communities are kept clean? Who will be responsible for ensuring that your neighbourhoods are safe? Who will be responsible for ensuring that your roads are well maintained? Who will be responsible for ensuring that there is a well functioning health centre in your community? Who will be responsible for education, water distribution, pavements, street

lighting, and a whole host of other issues affecting your community?

As it stands today, the PNM is in control of most of the local government bodies. Have they done a good job? And if the PNM has been unable to deliver results when in government why should anyone believe they can do anything for the people now that they are in opposition? But what they will certainly do if they retain control of local government is to hold back the progress of the country.

So let the voters beware. If citizens want to see the kind of change they voted for on May 24th become a reality then they must appreciate how important it is to go out and vote on July 26th for the UNC and COP.

Complete the victory of the people. Give the People's Partnership government the responsibility for bringing about the change promised. We pledge a transformation of local government, one that delivers **Real Representation, Right Results.**

  
**Kamla Persad-Bissessar**



## 1. VISION

### INTRODUCTION

**M**ay 24th 2010 will always be remembered as momentous in the history of Trinidad and Tobago. On this day, citizens voted for change and propelled the People's Partnership into government. This was not achieved by a slim margin, but by an overwhelming majority of 29 seats to 12. As in 1986, the electorate once again showed their lack of faith in the People's National Movement (PNM).

From day one, the People's Partnership has delivered on commitments made to the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago.

- Our Prime Minister, Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, cut short her inauguration to consult with the Office of Disaster Planning and Management (ODPM) about the flooding which had occurred due to the neglect of drains and waterways by the previous administration.

- Elected representatives were out in their numbers delivering supplies and rendering assistance to flood-affected residents.
- The Ministry of the People and Social Development was established to effectively deal with those issues which require urgent attention and coordination across ministries.
- Instructions were given to cut the salaries of Ministers by 5% and the Prime Minister by 10% as a contribution to the LIFE Fund, which commits \$100 million to provide critical surgery for children. The Government has already begun to support surgery for children from existing resources even before the LIFE Fund has been formalised.
- Minister of Works and Transport, the Honourable Jack Warner consulted with the Maxi Taxi Association and the Priority Bus Route has been opened up to car-pooling private citizens. This is aimed at alleviating the traffic situation and preserving our environment.

- Instructions were given to raise pensioners' entitlements to TT\$3,000.
- A Ministry of Tobago Development was created to ensure that the needs of the people of Tobago are represented and addressed.
- The Ministry of Arts and Multiculturalism was so named to proudly reflect the diversity of our people.
- The Clean & Beautify T&T campaign has been launched and through the collective efforts of our people, Trinidad and Tobago has already begun to chart a new path for a more beautiful environment.
- The divisive decision to establish economic and political union between some states in the Eastern Caribbean was reversed, with a view to refocusing on CARICOM as a whole.

These are a few examples of commitments that have been met, culminating in the calling of local government elections, which are long overdue.

The PNM denied local government elections on numerous occasions, during the administration of the late Dr. Williams (1962-1968; 1974-1977) and during the administration of Mr. Manning (2006-2010). This demonstrates the PNM trend of undermining the significance of Local Government elections.

One person was not responsible for the decision to withhold the local government elections; this decision was made and agreed upon by all representatives in the PNM party. The removal of Mr. Manning, the former political leader, cannot absolve the PNM of their sins.

**Your right to vote was taken away by the People's National Movement. Having marginalised Local Government on several occasions, the PNM regime has therefore forfeited the right to seek your vote in the 2010 Local Government Election.**

In our 2010 Manifesto for General Elections, we, the People's Partnership, declared our commitment to genuine participatory democracy in order to improve the lives of people in our Communities and enhance the relationship with government. Citizens will determine which priorities, projects and services will be delivered to their respective communities, to ensure that Regional Corporations and Municipalities effectively discharge their responsibilities for basic infrastructure, maintenance, services and other facilities and support systems. Indeed, the Minister of Finance has indicated that he will involve Youth, the Private Sector, Civil Society, Labour and Households in the decision-making processes of the upcoming budget. Local government will be given the financial support to carry out its comprehensive mandate.

We remain committed to *sustainable development* and emphasise the importance of People-Centered Development and Good Governance. We recognise that national strategies must be enacted at the local level in partnership with local government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), communities and individuals.

Having achieved a Parliamentary majority, we require the political structure at the local government level to ensure that policy decisions are efficiently translated into improving your standard of living. In this respect, local government elections are just as important as national elections. We look forward to your support in the 2010 local government elections so as to give the People's Partnership an overwhelming mandate to serve your interests at all levels of government.

## HISTORY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local Government in Trinidad dates back to the establishment of the Cabildo under Spanish rule. When Trinidad was ceded to the British in 1797, the strong Cabildo system was gradually reduced and local government was continued in the municipalities of Port of Spain, San Fernando and Arima.

The social movements of the 1930s forced the colonial power to broaden the base of local government by involving more citizens in the rural areas, but only in an advisory capacity. It was not until 1952 that actual executive power was given to the County Councils (which were restructured and named as Regional Corporations). In spite of the promise by the PNM in the People's Charter of 1956 to increase the authority of local government, its defeat in the Federal Elections of 1958 and the Local Government Elections of 1959 caused the party to renege on its promises.

A major feature of the successive PNM administrations has been the neglect of, and continuous decline in, local government. As such, the PNM routinely postponed local government elections. This initially occurred between 1962 to 1968, between 1974 to 1977, and the most recent glaring instance was between 2006 to 2010 when the PNM allowed four postponements of the process.

This neglect of local government under the PNM was sharply reflected in the quality of persons who sought office as Councilors; due to the general disregard of the Councils, a significant percentage of the population did not know the Councilor or the Chairman in their Regional Corporation. This approach also resulted in a low turnout of voters at local government elections, if these were held.

In 1980, the PNM won the control of every local

government body in Trinidad. This was the darkest period for local government, and 1983 may be deemed the watershed year when the reversal of the process began. This was the year in which the then PNM administration published its White Paper on local government reform and the National Alliance of Trinidad and Tobago took the majority of seats in the local government elections. This was the first defeat of the PNM since independence and heralded others in the General Elections of 1986 and the Local Government Elections of 1987.

This laid the basis for meaningful reform which led to the enactment of the Municipal Corporations Act, No. 21 of 1990. This Act introduced sweeping changes to local government, some of which were once again compromised when the PNM wrested control of Central Government in 1991. In spite of several proposals for reform by the PNM contained in its Green Paper of 2004, a White Paper in 2006 and another Green Paper in 2008, the Municipal Corporations Act of 1990 remains in force to this day. The last local government elections took place in 2003 and should have been held in 2006, but was postponed four times on the basis of proposed PNM reforms— reforms which would have severely weakened local government, and relegate it to being mere overseers of the Central Government.

The stance of the People's Partnership is that the Municipal Corporations Act of 1990 must be fully implemented. This will offer a solid platform on which substantial and meaningful reform can be instituted.



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

### FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS

Municipal Corporations are responsible for various functions either automatically or on assignment by or through agreement with Central Government.

Municipal Corporations provide essential services to citizens at the domestic and community level. They promote and protect regional identity and regional interests within Trinidad and Tobago, and also carry out certain functions on behalf of Central Government in accordance with the Municipal Corporations Act (1990). These functions include:

#### ROADS, ROAD SAFETY AND DRAINAGE

Regional Corporations are responsible for the development and maintenance of all public roads and

watercourses, except *main* roads and watercourses, as established by Order of the Minister with responsibility for such physical infrastructure.

This includes all associated bridges, pedestrian paths, road signs, street lighting, road "rights of way" and watercourse reserves. [Section 232 (e)]

#### COMMUNITY SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE, RECREATION AND AMENITIES

This includes development and maintenance of community services infrastructure, such as markets, abattoirs, burial grounds, cremation facilities, beach facilities, recreational and public sanitary facilities. [Section 232 (f), (n), (o) and Part VIII of the Act]

#### HEALTH & WELFARE

This extends to enhancement of community health, including cleaning of public spaces, disposal of garbage from private and public property, maintenance of private sanitary facilities, chemical

treatment for insect and bacterial control, abatement of public nuisance and public education from primary health care, in accordance with national standards set by the Minister of Health. The Minister may intervene where invited by the local authority concerned or on his own initiative where this is considered necessary to protect the public interest. [Section 232(j)]

#### COMMUNITY SERVICES

This centers on the provision of community services such as truck-borne water [section 232(a)]; rural electrification [utilising the services of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission]; operation of public libraries and assistance to self-help projects; and the establishment, maintenance and regulation of homes for the aged and child care centres in accordance with appropriate standards and guidelines set by the minister responsible for Local Government. [Section 232 (c) and 232 (d)]

It includes the provision of selected services on behalf of Central Government, for example, the collection of fees, fines, and taxes, the distribution and collection of application forms and the provision of outlets for customer services on behalf of utility agents. [Section 232 (m)]

This further extends to the promotion and coordination of local and regional economics and cultural interests in support of domestic and visitor tourism, the fostering of regional pride among citizens as a means of enhancing community identity and cohesion and developing regional economies. To this end, Local Government Authorities may organise and coordinate regional cultural or athletic events and trade fairs, for stimulating and putting on display talents and skills available at the regional level, and promoting dominant regional themes. [Section 232 (1)]

Local Government Authorities continue to be responsible for granting final approval for all significant land development activity in accordance with standards and policies approved by Central Government. [Section 323 (g)] Generally, this responsibility is discharged in accordance with procedures and standards outlined in the Public Health Ordinance. This is now outdated. It should be noted that a modern small Building Code and a new Code of Physical Planning Standards are now being finalised after both documents were subject to extensive technical scrutiny and public consultation. If these codes are formally adopted with appropriate technical and managerial support, our communities will reap significant benefits from the more efficient use of materials and resources, improved human safety and welfare in building construction, and improved environmental protection and preservation.

The Act also provides for regulating and monitoring the erection or alteration of any building within the Municipality [Sections 158 -186], as well as the improvement, regulation and monitoring of development of streets and footpaths within the Municipality, including fencing of land, controlling advertisements, signboards and general obstruction to streets and public footpaths [Sections 124 to 157]

It also regulates the erection of fountains, statues and monuments in public places. [Section 131]

The Act also allows for the control and management of a Municipal Police service to assist in the implementation of its provisions. [Part III] This provides for power of arrest [Section 541] and the power to lay information and complaint. [Section 56] At a time of heightened concern about crime and security, it might be appropriate to apply Part III of the Act to all Municipalities.



The Act promotes collaboration between central Government and its agencies in matters of central planning, regional planning and project planning for all areas of activity, and particularly in establishing regional priorities for development, training and education.

Municipal Corporations are subject to policy directions issued by the minister responsible for Local Government. Where a Municipal Council refuses to carry out its functions according to law, the President may by the order transfer responsibility for that function from the Council to the Minister responsible for Local Government. [Section 269]

## PILLARS FOR THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF MEANINGFUL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Pillar 1: People-Centred Development**  
*A chain is as strong as its weakest link.*

National development must be cultivated on the principle that no one is left behind. The Local Government structure can provide a strong nexus between the national development plan and the specific developmental needs of each community. This development goes beyond infrastructure – it is geared toward human development and a better quality of life for all.

We reaffirm our commitment to human development through the education system and through the creation and improvement of the requisite infrastructure at the community level, to support lifelong learning, skills building, institutional strengthening and the building of a competitive economy.

**Pillar 2: Good Governance**  
*Strengthening Local Government shall be a cornerstone of our democracy.*

We will enhance democracy by embracing the philosophy of meaningful Local Government. We maintain that the people are sovereign and that government is the servant of the people. This requires that the people be engaged in discussions on issues that affect their needs as far as possible within the democratic representative system. To this end, we must strive towards a system that is free of any encumbrances that can limit, undermine or marginalise the spirit of total participation.

This will be achieved by strengthening existing institutions and by establishing new ones or appropriate infrastructure to advance **accountability, transparency, consultation, participation, consensus-building and more meaningful representation**. We will emphasise the restructuring of Local Government delivery systems to make the Regional Corporations more responsive to the needs of the people, in a timely manner.

We will initiate a process of consultation to have Local Government included in the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago so that never again can the people's right to effective local government be denied or marginalised. This process will engender the participatory culture that is critical to strengthening our democracy. The objective of the reform will be to reinforce the commitment of the People's Partnership to the decentralisation of authority in order to facilitate more effective and responsive governance. This will also mean the qualitative broadening of Local Government as an institution to bring it closer to the people.

**Pillar 3: Accountability**  
*We are accountable not only for what we do, but also for what we fail to do.*

Local Government must be organised to such an

extent that its legislative agenda does not deviate from the needs and expectations of the people for whom its services are intended. The reduced importance of Local Government is due, in large part, to the displacement of its responsibilities which have been transferred to agencies of Central Government. This is of serious concern as some of these responsibilities have been poorly executed, while some have even been neglected entirely. This practice has posed severe limitations upon the Councillor, the Regional Corporation and Local Government as a whole. No one has yet been held accountable for this grave injustice.

The People's Partnership does not see the empowerment of Local Government as a threat but rather as an essential requirement to fulfil our mission of accountability, transparency, consultation, participation, consensus-building and more meaningful representation. Critical to this mission is the role that the people in all districts must play.

There is a misconception that the fight against corruption must be limited to the jurisdiction of the legislative and law enforcement arms of the state. However, the People's Partnership firmly believes that developing partnerships between the public and private sectors, alongside the mobilization of civil society actors, provides a core mechanism for the successful implementation of reform aimed at transparency and accountability. The thrust of the People's Partnership Government to transform the existing political system is deeply rooted in a shared goal of democracy and the rule of law, which cannot be separated from the basic philosophy of anti-corruption.

**Pillar 4: National and Personal Security**

This is critical for Trinidad and Tobago. We will not be able to design a desirable future unless law and order, and security of the person and of property can be



addressed in a context in which all citizens are certain that justice can and will be advanced.

We will seek to transform the society to create a fair and just environment. We recognise that lawlessness and disorder both contribute to the atmosphere in which criminal activity thrives, and we will address this challenge head on. However we will also focus on addressing the social issues that engender a culture of lawlessness. We will rethink the prison system, reorganise the justice system and make interventions that are both proactive and preventative in nature. At the centre of our focus will be human security and the establishment of a regime of peace, security and prosperity on a sustainable basis for our nation.

#### **Pillar 5: A More Diversified Economy**

*Economic Diversification –  
Our Communities Have A Role to Play.*

Diversifying our economy is crucial to our continued prosperity. We must maximise output and

contributions from each sector of our economy. Economic development will only take place when all sectors are contributing significantly to our nation's revenue, instead of a situation in which the economy hinges upon one or a few key sectors. And this will only be sustainable when we ensure that such development protects and preserves the environment for future generations. The People's Partnership recognises that agriculture, information technology and tourism are sectors that can be developed to become major economic players in our country's development. In this process of economic diversification, each community has an important role to play. Agriculture will be encouraged where possible and viable. information technology must be implemented throughout the nation. Each community's resources must be maximised to attract possible tourist activity – international and domestic tourism alike. Each community will be encouraged to make its contribution to diversifying our economy as we move towards sustainable human development.

#### **THE NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

There is an urgent need for a paradigm shift in the system of Local Government, which must take into account the new issues and challenges that face our society in the 21st century. This means that Local Government representatives must forge new alliances and partnerships with religious, sporting, cultural, business and women's groups local and international, trade unions, service organisations, self help commissions, corporate entities, foreign mission and civil society organisations.

Our system of Local Government must create a new leadership and endow leaders in different spheres such as politics, economics, industry, science, the arts and culture. There must be a complete overhaul and restoration of both the spirit and manifestation of participatory politics.

Our People continue to demand amenities such as proper access roads, *main* roads, potable water, sporting facilities, flood prevention, health care, bridges and transport services. The people, their problems and their triumphs must be our focus. Our approach will be pragmatic as well as humane at all times. People will be given the opportunity to intervene in their own development and by effecting this model, we will be ushering in meaningful consultative and participatory governance.

As a matter of urgency, each corporation must establish a professionally organised information unit, which will offer relevant guidance and advice to all those who seek our assistance. In order to educate and inform the electorate of our operations, we must make such information accessible. In an effort to bring our system closer to the populace, we will take our meetings to every area of this jurisdiction. Definitive

action must be taken to alleviate suffering at all social and economic levels on the pathway to improve the human living conditions faced by those in our charge. This must be another challenge for Local Government in 2010 and beyond.

Constitutional reform must therefore insert Local Government as an integral part of the governing process and it must be inscribed as a major functionary of governance. Failure to enact it in our Constitution will be an act of irresponsibility.

#### **THE NEW COUNCIL**

As it currently exists, the people are almost entirely left out of the Local Government process. This is clearly seen in the absence of members of the public at statutory meetings of the Corporations where the reports of all the committees are approved, and important debates take place, although those present are at the only forum open to the public. The paradox of this situation is that the Councils unabashedly carry on with business as usual.

The People's Partnership will begin work on a new concept of the Council. Every Councillor will be required to prepare a development plan for his electoral district after full consultation with the residents of his area. This plan will be laid in the Council and debated in the presence of constituents who will be invited to these debates.

The New Council of the People's Partnership will implement all the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act (1990) and will seek to establish a reporting linkage between all social services and the local government body. We believe that this process will introduce a resurgence of local government and re-



situate it to where it properly belongs, as a main player in ensuring the standard of living of our people.

**CONCEPT OF THE NEW COUNCILLOR**

Reform of Local Government does not mean only legislative changes. The reform process must begin at within the Regional Corporation with the relationship of the Councillor and his constituents and the way the Councillor views himself in relation to his responsibilities.

The Councillor must be the first point of contact with the residents whom he serves. No longer will he see himself as being confined to the narrow

requirements of the written law, but he must see himself as the principal person to assist the residents with respect to satisfying their needs. For example, in addition to his existing responsibilities, the Councillor must advise in filling out government forms, police protection, problems in education in schools, preparing recommendations and all other aspects of community services. Meaningful linkages must be established with the agricultural communities to ensure that they have proper access roads and other services.

The People's Partnership sees this concept of the new Councillor as the foundation of local government and will ensure that its Councillors will receive the guidance and training to meet these standards.

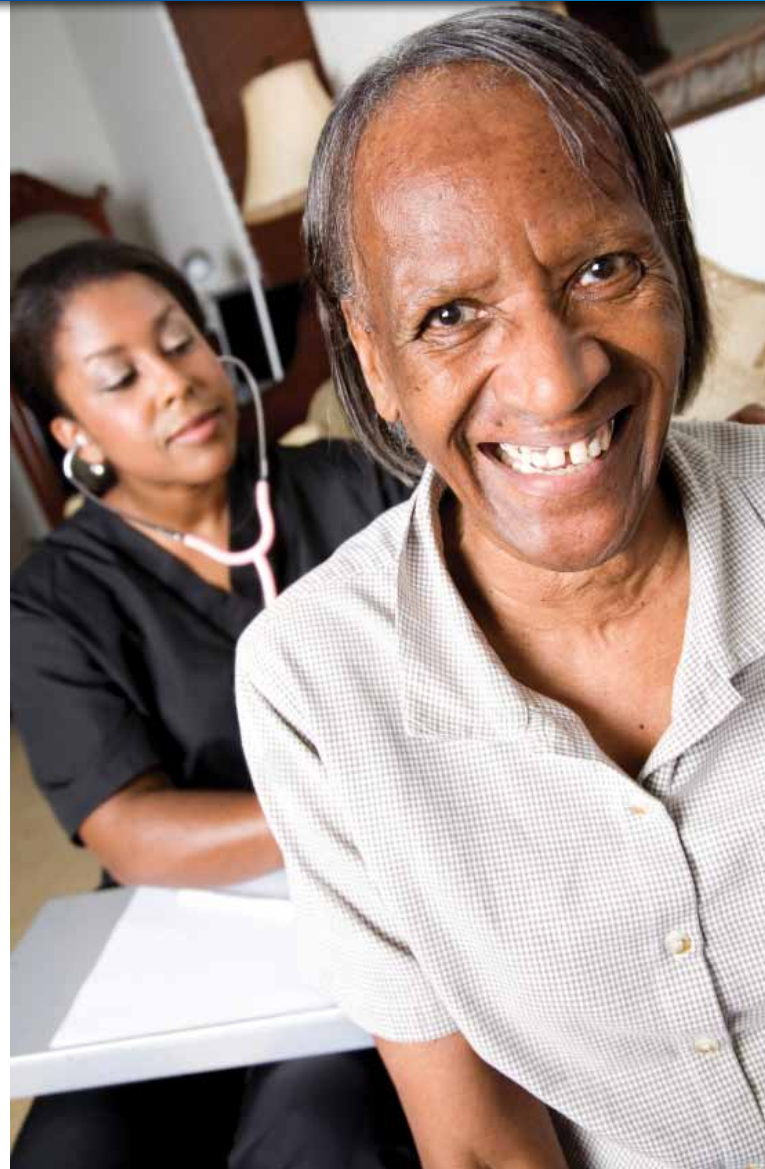


**2. PARTICIPATION**

For the needs and demands of the people to be met, the principle of people's participation must be promoted in every area of the political process. For example if a community development programme is to be drafted, this must be done with the involvement of all sectors of the community along with planners.

People's participation must incorporate the mass education of the local constituency. Meaningful participation cannot take place in an atmosphere of ignorance. Participation in the political process must be established as the fundamental human right of every citizen.





## 3. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

### HEALTH

In the pursuit of maintaining a healthy nation, the serious input of Local Government officials is mandatory. Local Government will have the responsibility to visit kindergarten, primary and secondary schools and senior citizens' homes to provide medical and dental service on a regular basis and to refer critical cases for further analysis. The

purview of the the Health Department will include but not be limited to the following:

- The Insect Vector Control Unit (IVC) must be brought under the control of the respective Regional Corporations and the allotted requisite equipment and manpower.
- Local Government bodies must pursue more aggressively health care and wellness with the provision of fitness centres.
- There must be a Canine Unit in all Corporations to humanely remove stray dogs from the streets.

- Litter wardens must be integrated in the system to assist in the maintenance of a clean environment and they must be given the authority to charge delinquent persons who are in contravention of the Litter Warden Act. There should be the establishment of Environment Courts to deal with such issues.

### EDUCATION

Education is one of the major pillars of our economic development given that knowledge, information and human capital are the main assets of advanced nations.

In close association with the Central Government, Local Government, under the People's Partnership, will work to ensure that our young people are literate, numerate and possess critical thinking skills.

We will actively encourage curriculum reform to address the needs of 21st century development.

Education should be seen as an ongoing creative process in which various faculties skills and abilities of our people are harnessed to maximise potential.

We will pay special attention to early childhood care and education and the primary school, and will prepare the ground for seamless transition between the two. The focus will be on building self-confidence, the development of social skills, strengthening attention span and the ability to focus, and on promoting creativity, literacy and critical thinking.

In addition the People's Partnership has noted that an initiative has been taken recently to link Local Government and the schools. It will be geared to develop a democratic culture as part of Local Government reform. This is commendable and with reinforced and expanded.

Local Government under the People's Partnership in association with the Central Government will:

- Redefine the role of teacher. The teacher is not necessarily the trained individual in the classroom but anyone who is responsible for contributing to the achievements of educational policy. Farmers, technical workers and artists are all teachers and should be so regarded by the local government.
- Strengthen community participation on a school-by-school basis to improve quality, relevance and responsiveness and to support educational achievement for all at the school level.
- Support learning diversity, lifelong learning, as well as general knowledge about our people and our history.
- Assist in promoting character-based education, ethics and strengthening the work ethic through value-based programmes.
- Partner with NGOs working on remedial literacy programmes.
- Encourage reading as a pastime and enhance the image of reading in the eyes of young people by creating an infrastructure of support such as community-based libraries in association with the National Library and Information System Authority.
- Deploy lifelong skills within the community through existing delivery programmes within the teaching and learning curriculum to strengthen the skills base of the country through adult learning opportunities.



## LABOUR

The organisation of labour as a positive force for economic development must start with the community. This coordination of localised temporary employment must take place at the level of the Regional Corporation. This will facilitate the realignment of duties that are similar in nature but are currently being carried out by separate bodies to be of better service to the people.

Historically, all temporary employment was the responsibility of Local Government. From the 1970s this responsibility was gradually eroded by the PNM with the creation of DEWD, URP and later, CEPEP to act as tools of political mobilisation.

The allocation of jobs should be done transparently through the creation of workforce centres at the Regional Corporation. This will represent a skills bank for the community that will be drawn upon to facilitate the developmental and maintenance work of the Regional Corporation. These Workforce centres will also facilitate skills training and personal career guidance and development.

## SPORT

Sport draws people together and create harmony of life and is an instrument for the physical, social and



mental development of our citizens. A sporting nation is a healthy nation.

Trinidad and Tobago is a sport-oriented society and this must be recognised as an essential aspect to the development of our social and human capital. We believe sport can form the foundation of a thriving industry and be an important component in the diversification of the economy.

Under the People's Partnership, Local Government authorities shall pay serious attention to sporting initiatives. They shall:

- Institute community sport programmes in order to develop community spirit, as sport is a medium for promoting unity and understanding
- Assist clubs/associations within their communities to maintain and manage key sporting facilities.
- Assist and encourage independent National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) within each community to manage and administer competitive sport and sports facilities in accordance with the national sport policy
- Encourage and organise regional sporting events in areas such as football, cricket, boxing, golf, swimming, fishing and motorsport to build a tourism-sport industry.



## 4. ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

### AGRICULTURE

Food security must be seen as a fundamental right of the people. Communities must be allowed to participate in defining their agricultural, fishing, food and land policies. In these discussions, the farmer must be the central stakeholder. Our People have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and their communities.

Immediate action is required if we are to ensure an ample supply of food for future generations. The People's Partnership reaffirms its commitment to

acknowledge agriculture as a legitimate industry not just for food security but also as a substantive sector contributing to our Gross Domestic Product.

The People's Partnership commits to:

- Coordinating the maintenance of agricultural roads between the Ministry of Food Production and the Regional Corporations
- Having our Councillors work with farmers to assist in planning and development of each aspect of the agricultural industry, including markets for the retailing of products
- Building a formal relationship between the farmers and the Councillors who service their respective communities.



**DOMESTIC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries. For many developing countries, it is also one of the biggest of national income generators. There are huge infrastructural and resource demands of mass tourism upon local communities, however, there are also unique opportunities, including the promotion of domestic tourism as a primary entry point into the sector. This will establish the community as a key destination within the wider framework for tourism development. Domestic or regional tourists are particularly important clients for self-employed sellers, tour operators and owners of small establishments within the community. Studies show that domestic tourists tend to buy more from local vendors. Key to establishing these hubs for domestic tourism is the creation of nature reserves, historical sites and the promotion of indigenous celebrations. This will enable us to establish Trinidad and Tobago as a niche destination and so place us on the world tourism map as an important destination sharing in the multi-million dollar eco-tourism market.

As one aspect of this thrust for the promotion of domestic tourism all communities should have purpose-built Halls of Fame and Community Museums managed by the Regional Corporation. This country

should have 365 heritage sites—one for each day of the year. Most heritage sites should correspond to local and national heroes. The country should also have 365 monuments corresponding to 365 important heroes and/or events in the nation's history. There should be local community heroes, regional heroes, heroes related to specific fields, and national heroes. Each level of hero would have a concrete institutional space that consecrates them and establishes institutional memory, take-aways and souvenirs that make the Legacy democratic. This will generate a natural market within the community for a wide variety of micro-entrepreneurs. In this context the People's Partnership will reactivate the National Trust with a view to listing our historical sites and buildings, which will enable us to access international funding for restoration and maintenance of heritage buildings, so as to enhance the attractiveness of Trinidad and Tobago as a tourist destination.



**5. COMMUNITY-BASED SECURITY**

The escalation of crime today is largely because the State has failed the society in very basic areas that are crucial to providing a sense of security and prosperity. We have lived under a regime that conceives of national security in terms of the number of armed forces the State has at its disposal. The emphasis or policy is consequently placed on the punishment of offenders rather than the prevention of crime.

There has been a notable absence of communities in the search for solutions to fight crime. In this regard, the People's Partnership will put in place the necessary mechanisms to promote a proper working relationship between Local Government, the police and the communities to ensure the further involvement of the people in the protection of their communities. The Municipal Police Department will play a key role in this linkage with the communities.

The People's Partnership will:

- Inject and popularise a different and holistic concept of national security that lays more emphasis on economic, financial, social, emotional, physiological and spiritual security. This perspective focuses mainly on the sense of security and prosperity, which the State and the other institutions of the society are supposed to promote.
- Work assiduously at the community level to create those conditions which will facilitate the realisation of national security i.e. the creation of a society based on the view that the full development of man is the main purpose of life.



## 6. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

### THE ENVIRONMENT

Under the People's Partnership, Local Government authorities will pursue and enhance the further development of our local environment. Local Government will discourage the development of any industry that threatens the environment or is detrimental to human health and development. Additionally, we will heed the concerns of our citizens as these relate to environmental issues.

We will pursue the restoration of areas that have been damaged by poor and dangerous practices of development and strengthen community-based environmental projects with funding from the Green Fund.

Under the People's Partnership, Local Government will add its considerations to the proposed Planning and Development of Land Bill (PDLB) for governing land use planning and development so that development

can take place in a coherent and sustainable manner and housing development will be located within the context of the land use plan. The planning and development of land will be pursued in a proactive manner and we will not wait until after ad hoc development has already taken place to superimpose proper planning.

This will also mean that land suitable for agriculture and food production will be identified and that areas requiring protection for environmental or ecological reasons will be clearly designated.

Rapid urbanisation, expanding industrialisation and ever-growing consumerism, along with global warming and rising sea levels have brought serious environmental challenges. Much of this has impacted negatively on our communities and villages. Efforts to reverse this condition can be effective at the local level. To this end:

- Appropriate garbage collection units or dumpsters will be established at strategic points in our communities so that the indiscriminate dumping of household appliances and garbage will no longer despoil our public spaces and

destroy and pollute our rivers, waterways and coastal areas.

- A programme of environmental awareness will be promoted and our corporate citizens will be invited to participate in meaningful ways in transforming and beautifying our environment and ensuring the recycling of waste.
- A programme for the treatment of waste/dirty water will be established, which will produce water for use in industrial plants and for agricultural irrigation
- Recycling centres will be established within each Regional Corporation. Such centres will serve to facilitate the emergence of controlled/ coordinated disposal systems, which can in turn stimulate employment through micro-industry in materials collection, processing and renewability. One such area is that of compost, which can become an integrated industry when combined with the manufacture of fertiliser.

Coordinated land fills will be an invaluable programme aimed at land reclamation where there are challenges



wrought by coastline erosion. We live on an island on which coastal land is premium and this must not be overlooked. Reclaimed land can serve to restore mangroves over time lost to indiscriminate industrial and urban development planning and regenerate eco systems at risk.

### TRANSPORTATION

#### ROAD AND TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT

Local Government plays an important part in the transportation needs of our country. At present each Corporation has the responsibility for all roads other than the main thoroughfares.

The current situation with transportation demands the involvement of every corporation, not only because of horrendous traffic that affects all our roads but also because the nation is affected by inadequate and poorly maintained access roads to the areas wherein our food is grown.

Furthermore, each of our Municipalities is a hub and from which large amounts of traffic proceed on a





daily basis. As a result, the traffic jams and inadequate parking facilities within the municipalities are creating problems with transportation elsewhere. There are currently no provisions made for easy entrance to and exit from the municipalities.

In the regional corporations which service the agricultural communities, the People's Partnership will enhance the maintenance of the secondary road system with special emphasis on the access roads. Emphasis will also be given to all the issues involved in the maintenance of all orphan roads.

The People's Partnership will join with the Central Government in seeking viable solutions to transportation woes and traffic management in the Municipalities.

## PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Part 15 of the Municipal Corporations Act (No. 21 of 1990) provides for the establishment of Regional Coordinating Committees, which incorporate representatives of the Water and Sewage Authority,

Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission, Highways and Drainage Divisions of the Ministry of Works, and the County Medical Officers of Health. This committee is chaired by the Mayor or the Chairman of the Local Government body.

The intent of this group is to coordinate the activities of all the implementing arms of the government at the central and local level so that all public works can be properly planned and placed in sequence so that we do not have the situation of, for instance, of a road being paved today and dug up by another authority.

Despite the intent of the law, these committees have not worked well. One major reason is the representatives often do not have sufficient rank or expertise to make decisions on behalf of the agencies.

The People's Partnership intends to strengthen these coordinating committees and widen their portfolio by including representatives of all the executive arms of the State, including tourism, social services, education, the police service and other relevant ministries.



## 7. SERVICE DELIVERY

### SOCIAL SERVICES

The People's Partnership affirms that the inherent responsibility of Local Government is to assist the residents of all municipalities, in all aspects of their welfare. We see an inseparable linkage between Local Government and all social services.

In addition to the basic responsibilities of roads, drains, garbage removal, and health initiatives, the Municipal Corporations Act (1990), also provides in Section 232 for some social services, such as the maintenance and control of homes for the aged and child care centres established by the Corporation; and the collection and distribution of forms issued by Departments of Government. During the 20 years duration of the current law, no Local Government body has undertaken any of these responsibilities.

The People's Partnership proposes that meaningful linkages be established between all social services departments and Local Government bodies by firstly expanding the ambit of the role of the coordinating committees as outlined in Part 15 of the Act and subsequently, by amending the law where this is considered necessary.

### THE NEW ROLE FOR COMMUNITY CENTRES

The centre of this Local Government initiative and the seat of the reconstruction of communities will be a renewed conception and role for community centres in Trinidad and Tobago. This will mean a massive drive of retrofitting, refurbishing and reconstructing many old centres and the construction of new ones based upon this new model. Properly constructed and conceptualised community centres can turn around the collapse in many communities. Even in healthy communities, properly built and programmed community centres can be primary sites of creativity, enterprise and leisure. These can be the lead institution



that facilitates the best impulses of communities. Community centres must be understood to be just that—the centre of the community. Community centres must facilitate the best energy of the community.

The People's Partnership envisions a redefined Local Government role in the programming of the community centres. We will work with the community to develop the community centres develop to be equipped with:

- Purpose-built rooms for counseling, day care and other social services
- A secretariat hub for legitimate local community groups
- Nursery facilities and homework centres
- Computer facilities with internet access

- A community hall of fame
- A community museum and multi-purpose art gallery
- A library

### POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Poverty alleviation is a major goal of the People's Partnership. Through Local Government, citizens in communities can be identified and social services targeted to those who are most vulnerable in conjunction with non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and faith-based organisations. Their role is to provide a helping hand to guide individuals to ward economic prosperity and fulfilling lives.



Beyond material indigence, Local Government needs to address poverty which can exist on mental and social levels. This prevents people from participating positively in society and makes them recalcitrant to actions which may improve their own existence. The People's Partnership will ensure that persons are able to recognise their self worth and their value to their communities and society at large. Building relationships with communities can provide the emotional support necessary for progression out of poverty.

### EMPOWERING YOUTH WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

As Trinidad and Tobago continues to be driven by fast-paced technology and quick gratification, convincing our youth to participate in long-term projects, such as

community development, becomes more challenging than ever. The People's Partnership is committed to meeting this challenge.

What does it take to keep young people invested in their communities, and what can be done to assist them in continuing the legacies that have transformed communities nationwide?

Throughout the nation, many community development organisations and initiatives will undoubtedly reap the benefits of youth involvement in their work. Youth must be afforded the opportunity for deeper engagement within their communities they often have unique insights, which make their contribution both significant and relevant.



The People's Partnership will ensure that:

- Youth are encouraged to and assisted in organising themselves into community youth groups.
- These groups will be integrated into every level of planning and development at the community level.
- These groups will be given equitable responsibility to make decisions concerning resource allocation within the community.
- Youth will be recognised on community boards that manage recreation, rehabilitation and educational facilities.
- Youth outreach programmes will be an integral part of the localised developmental plan.

## REHABILITATION

We will develop a strategy within the community for the rehabilitation, ensuring equal opportunity,

and social reintegration of all people who are displaced through physical and mental disability, substance abuse or delinquency. This strategy will be implemented through the combined efforts of the Local Government structures, the communities, and special joint committees involving the appropriate health, education, vocational and social services. It must be recognised that, because all communities differ in socio-economic conditions, geography and even sub-cultures, there cannot be a single model and that the implementation of the strategy must be based on local collaboration and specificity.

## DISASTER RELIEF

The closure of CARONI (1975) Ltd created an enormous real estate management and infrastructure maintenance vacuum. Significant problems have arisen with extremely serious implications for farmers and property owners who are negatively impacted through damage to and loss of property. These include perennial crop losses stemming from maintenance procedures, which are no longer carried out on primary and secondary water courses formerly undertaken by CARONI (1975) Ltd. As a result the People's Partnership will implement the following :

- Local Government will be given the responsibility to clear all watercourses at regular intervals so as to minimise flooding.
- There must be urgent aerial spraying of all flood-affected communities and cleaning of cesspits whenever floods strike, with the assistance of disaster management units.
- There must be continuous educational support in communities, to highlight the impact of disposal of waste in watercourses and also on the dangers of flood waters to general health and safety.

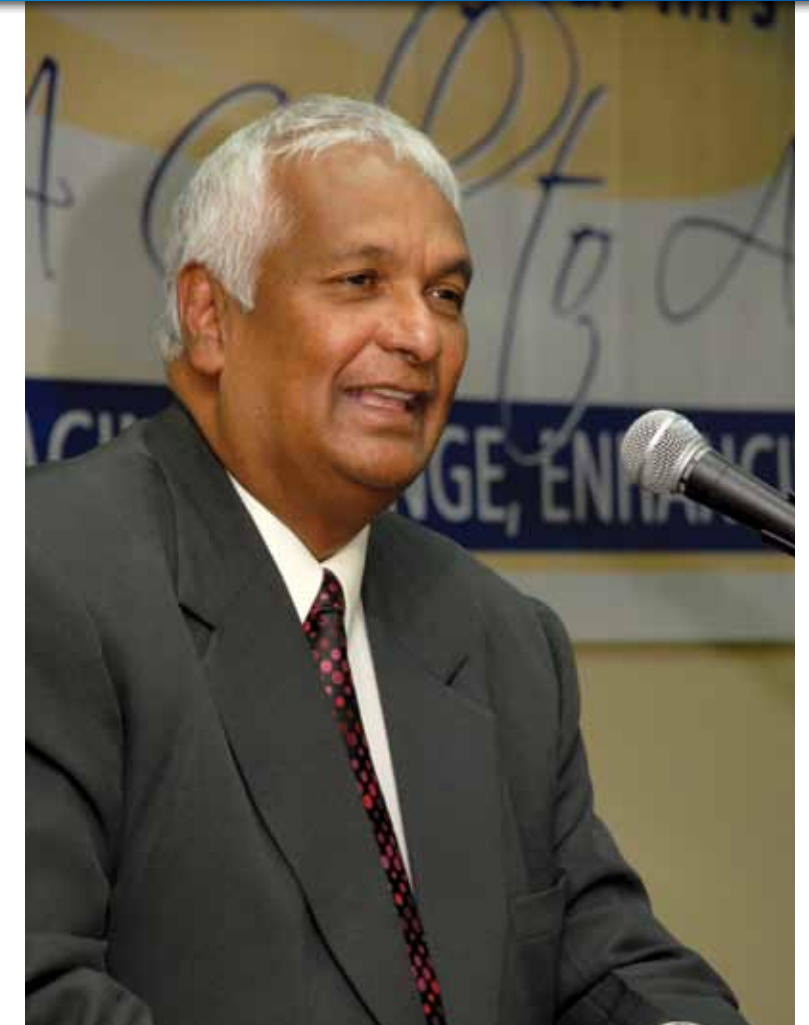
## 8. REFORM

### ADOPTION OF A TRULY DECENTRALISED APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE

We maintain our commitment to promoting a process of People-Centred Development. Genuine democracy requires effective representation, transparency, participation and accountability to change the lives of the people in our communities and to alter their relationships with the government. We will provide citizens and communities with the opportunity to determine the priorities, projects and services which will be delivered to their respective communities to ensure that regional Corporations and Municipalities discharge their responsibilities for basic infrastructure, maintenance, services and other facilities and support systems.

### Local Government Involvement of the People

- We will promote a system of Local Government that empowers the people in their respective communities
- Communities will define community problems and propose solutions.
- Local Government bodies will consult with and take into account the facilities and services that each community considers to be matters of priority.
- We will establish an internet portal- "E View" - for the people to express their views on development.
- We will ensure that broadband service is available nationwide.



- The People's Partnership will establish government-funded, free internet cafes in communities across the country.
- A section will be dedicated to each Local Government region to enable community members to voice their opinions and make recommendations.
- The Local Government bodies will present reports to the Central Government outlining the needs of the communities for incorporation into the National Development Plan and will be held accountable for execution of matters under their jurisdiction.
- Every Local Government authority will collaborate with stakeholders to prepare a strategic plan for



execution within the communities, based on the National Development Plan.

## Boundaries Revision

1. The Corporations under Act No. 21 of 1990 and the Amendment of 1992, were to be the new jurisdictions of Local Government, therefore these were assigned redefined boundaries. The newly established boundaries displaced many communities by shifting them away from easier access to services to which they had grown accustomed. Essential functions such as garbage collection and enforcement of law and order were affected to the disadvantage of residents.
2. As constituted within their defined boundaries, the regional corporations were destined to remain dependent upon Central Government since the legislative provisions required to invest

them with authority to become self-reliant was not enacted. The Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Act of 1992 conveyed an intent of conferring comparable levels of authority upon corporations as existed in the case of the cities and boroughs. In practice, this has not been the case. Municipal Corporations have remained under the control of Central Government and indeed highly dependent on the latter for financial and other types of resources.

3. The boundaries established to create the new municipalities struck at the very core of community structure and network of relations necessary to give effect to local governance. In many instances, they were divided rather than strengthened. Furthermore the changes made broke communal bonds and remove identities that had been established over many years that were a foundation for scaling up the level of

Local Government being practiced by the former County Councils.

It is noteworthy that the efforts of community development stood to be affected by the boundary changes that resulted. Consequently, the community development agents have retained the old administrative divisions of counties and wards in order to preserve the micro level relationships and activities pursued at the village level.

The delivery of health services is another area in which the new boundary designations, proved disadvantageous to communities.

Strong and viable communities are therefore essential for the success of the reform process. Unfortunately these have been weakened by changes that fragment and displace them from established domains.

4. The failure to recognise the role of these potentially viable urban centers in support of strong Local Government and the removal of some of them from their former domains, served to weaken the prospects of having Local Government areas that can become self reliant.
5. The reality of the situation in which many government agencies continue to use the old administrative divisions of counties and wards suggest that it would have been a more progressive step to have upgraded these existing entities, effecting necessary changes to make them strong and viable vehicles of local governance.
6. Certain legal entities associated with the previous administrative divisions continue to function to

preserve their identities. This dualism of legal authority has resulted in the duplication of services and a certain measure of inefficiency in servicing the needs of communities.

## COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE PROCEDURES

While everyone cannot serve in the government, every individual must be facilitated by good governance. Local Government can rebuild that sense of community within a wider context of Government policy by facilitating good governance structures, which will enable the Regional Corporation to pursue its vision effectively. Equally important is underpinning that vision with mechanisms for control and management of risk. Giving effect to this relies on public confidence in the elected councillors and appointed officers, and the extent to which the vision is shared by the people. The government must trust the capacity of the people to engage in governance and afford them every opportunity to participate. If this is genuinely facilitated, then the people will choose those who can best represent their interest at the Local Government level. Collaborative governance procedures are a central mechanism to achieving these objectives.

Through an enhanced process of localised engagement of non-state actors, including private sector and civil society, the developmental objectives for the community can be met in a way that exceeds the capacity and benefits gained by one sector attempting the task on its own. This collaboration is required for three reasons:

- No State can adequately meet the needs of every national from a centralised location
- Partisan politics with its winner-take-all impact alienates large sections of the society





- No government can develop a country beyond the cumulative capacity of its individual citizens.

This collaboration must focus on the collectively-shared vision for the community. These diverse elements must work together based on a broadly framed set of roles and functions. It is important to establish the relationship between the state and state actors outside of patronage. The key is for persons to be involved at every stage of governance from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation so that they see the proposed advancements of the government as being favourable to their own individual advancement.

To create the framework for this collaboration to be effective, the People's Partnership proposes the following:

- Local government must be included in the constitution of the Republic to reinforce its significance to the community.
- Fixed dates for local government elections must be established.
- There must be formal institutionalisation of the collaborative process through the creation of the Civil Society Board and the localised establishment of community councils.
- Efforts must be made to legitimise the arrangements by making the necessary legislative amendments to mandate reporting structures that facilitate public scrutiny.
- The stability of this arrangement is an ongoing



exercise and requires continuous dialogue to ensure that the shared vision is maintained even when alterations and deviations occur.

## EXPANDED RESPONSIBILITIES AND INCREASED COMPENSATION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

The existing Municipal Act (No. 21 of 1990) is an adequate platform to build Local Government, provided that the necessary financial support and human resources are made available. The present Act has been in existence for 20 years and in light of the rapidly changing social, economic and cultural environment of the 21st century, the Act should be reexamined to ensure that it addresses the needs of our evolving society.

Local Government should be given protection in our Constitution to guard against interference and to

ensure that elections are held when they are due.

Consideration should be given to have the Mayor or the Chairman of the local government body elected by popular vote. In this way, there would be a stronger nexus among the mayor and the burgesses he or she is supposed to serve.

The life of the Local Government body should be extended from three to four years as this would allow the council sufficient time to plan and execute its plans.

The existing qualifications for Aldermen who, according to Section 12(1) of the Municipal Corporations Act (No. 21 of 1990), "must be persons who possess demonstrated knowledge, expertise or experiences in professional or vocational occupations suitable to the development focus of the Municipality" must be adhered to and respected.

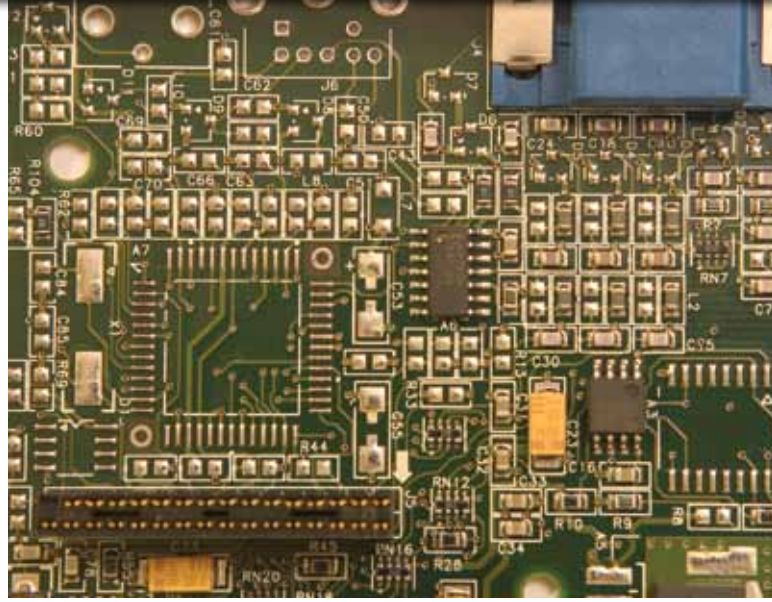
There is a need for wider consultation with the burgesses on matters of national significance that impinge directly on Local Government and the communities they serve.

The issues of poverty, human rights, national security, youth empowerment, social welfare, disaster management, health, waste disposal, education, transportation and roads are among those that must be the focal point for the Local Government legislator.

#### Devolution of authority and resources

Community development, with the full support of Local Government bodies, must take into consideration general concerns for equality of opportunity, security and happiness, the restoration of a sense of morality and ethics, as well as specific concerns for adult education, remedial programmes for literacy and numeracy and family life education.

The Local Government bodies must also develop new programmes or enhance already existing ones with respect to the provision of proper services from our public utilities. Local Government must be fully involved in the provision of such services so that true community development may take place.



THERE ARE THREE  
THINGS WE MUST DO—  
SERVE THE PEOPLE,  
SERVE THE PEOPLE  
AND SERVE THE PEOPLE

RIGHT REPRESENTATION.  
REAL RESULTS.

