

BLUEPRINT

manifesto of the Peoples' United Party
2008 - 2013



believe in
BELIZE

After traveling and engaging with people all over Belize through villages and towns from the Hondo to the Sarstoon, we have seen tremendous sustained development taking place across the country from North to South and East to West.

We know that agricultural production is on the increase. Investment in tourism is dramatic and the unemployment rate has fallen from 14% in 1998 to an average of 8-9%.

The tremendous advances in education, housing construction, reform of the health services are significant. Better land distribution and improved infrastructure with the expansion of good drinking water and electricity are clearly to be seen. Most inspiring was the explosion of cultural awareness and expression. Belize is today far better positioned to face global challenges and to move forward in pursuit of poverty elimination and the creation of a more just society.

This direct engagement with citizens all over Belize - meeting them in their communities, listening to their concerns, their dreams and aspirations, filled us with optimism for a better tomorrow. It brought to the fore the sublime realization that each and every Belizean has a dignity that warrants his or her voice being heard in shaping the destiny of our society.



Many have been our challenges in this world of rapid change and dynamic ferment. But as a people we have always been able to rise to the occasion when we turned to our collective wisdom; when we believed in ourselves, when we believed in Belize.

What we propose is continued hardwork with vision and commitment; above all, a purpose-driven life, free from the negative forces of violence and political victimization, a striving always to build a Belize living in peace, freedom and fairness.

We, the Peoples' United Party, present you today this **BLUEPRINT – Believe in Belize: A Plan of Action**. We

invite you to read this plan in making your decision.

With our abiding faith in the Almighty, our strong belief in the goodness and great potential of Belize, with hard work and determination we will achieve human progress for all.

Said Musa

Leader of the Peoples' United Party

January 2008



GOVERNANCE

advancing reform • strengthening governance • building trust

we will

- Introduce an Elected Senate in 2009 if approved by the people
- Seek National Assembly approval for all major investment agreements with Government
- Abolish appeals to the Privy Council and replace it with a right of appeal to the Caribbean Court of Justice
- Further strengthen the Finance and Audit Reform Act to increase accountability and impose sanctions for violations
- Appoint a Constitutional Reform Commission to review the Constitution to make it more people-friendly, more relevant and recognize the new local and international developments in constitutional law and human rights
- Create an Indigenous People's Rights Commission – to study and make recommendations arising from the landmark Supreme Court judgment
- Continue to strengthen the National Association of Village Councils
- Establish a Gender Institute to implement the Women's Agenda to promote gender equality in governance, health sector, education and economic opportunities

ECONOMY

a strong economy • creating jobs • stimulating investment • spreading the benefits

we will

- Establish an agency for effective consumer protection to address the cost of living especially food and utility rates
- Reduce import duties
- Provide a tax relief for mortgage, rent and student loan payments
- Abolish Land Tax on small farms of 25 acres or less
- Additionally provide mortgage, rent and student loan deduction from income tax

- Establish a well funded Belize Development Bank to provide affordable finance and export credits to the productive sector with a special facility for micro-credit to Belizeans
- Promote investments in new growth areas: Fresh flowers for export, Biotechnology and health food industries, marine farming, organic fruits and vegetables and ICT
- Facilitate the creation of 5000 new jobs in the Tourism industry, 5000 new jobs in ICT industries, 5,000 jobs in agriculture and mariculture, 5000 new jobs in the petroleum and energy related industries
- Complement the job-creation strategy with a strong skills training and apprenticeship programs in handicraft, ICT, and other relevant skills
- Formulate a National Youth Employment Policy that will provide incentives for businesses that employ and respect to the rights of young people
- Provide salary increases for teachers, nurses, police officers, BDF soldiers, Coast Guard members and other public officers
- Establish Economic Empowerment and Enterprise Zones – in urban areas, Greater Ladyville, Independence/Big Creek Toledo, Western Border Benque Viejo del Carmen and Santa Elena Corozal
- Significantly increase Air Cargo services
- Complete the implementation of the ASYCUDA system in the Customs to improve efficiency and equity and to vigorously fight against organized large-scale contraband
- Use technology to enable the making of payments and applications to government
- Establish within first 30 days of re-election COST OF DOING BUSINESS IN BELIZE COMMISSION mandated to study the costs of doing business in Belize with special emphasis on the productive sector and be required to report with recommendations within 6 months.

CRIME & JUSTICE

reducing crime • safer communities • punishing offenders

we will

- Increase the use of security cameras in hot spots and sensitive areas
- Recruit 800 new police officers and staff and equip police substations in major villages around the country
- Significantly strengthen the Community Policing Initiatives including Neighbourhood Watches and 'Get A Life' programmes
- Allow witnesses to legally testify without disclosing their identity in special circumstances whilst strengthening the Witness Protection Programme
- Enact legislation to establish an independent Citizens Complaint Bureau to address allegations of abuse by security forces
- Continue to collaborate with friendly governments and agencies in the fight against human and narco-trafficking
- Fully implement the alternative sentencing laws and increase the use of community service orders where appropriate including for minor drug offences
- Double the number of trained crime scene experts and place at least one in each district
- Complete the equipping of the Forensics Lab to enable full DNA analysis and bring online the ballistics registry
- Regionalize the Supreme Court and Family Court with permanent courts in Dangriga, Belmopan City and Orange Walk Town



- Increase the digitization of births, deaths and marriage registries and decentralize access to the records
- Reform the judicial system – new rules in the magistrates' courts, more use of information technology in courts and introduce by law accountability in the judiciary
- Significantly strengthen the office of the DPP and police prosecution department to increase the rate of convictions

EDUCATION & CULTURE

educating and empowering our people • equipping Belizeans • celebrating Belize

we will

- Build a new library in Belmopan
- Build a modern new Archives facility in Belmopan
- Significantly expand the free textbooks programme to include high school
- Immediately guarantee free universal access to high school education
- Provide one free laptop computer for each student in upper-primary and secondary school
- Achieve 75% trained teachers by 2010
- Ensure average class size of 25 students by 2010
- Provide free public pre-school for all needy children
- Deepen the integration of special needs students into mainstream classes
- Expand nutritional feeding programs in primary schools where needed
- Provide a CXC exam credit of 50% per subject
- Increase teachers' salaries and ensure that Government assumes responsibility for 100% of teachers' salaries
- Establish new history and anthropology departments at University of Belize
- Immediately provide free tuition for all Junior College students (1st and 2nd year)
- Excellence in education – Expand the UB scholarship program
- Establish the Belize Education TV channel
- Introduce interest free education loans for priority areas of higher study
- Provide free bus passes for students commuting to school
- Increase support to vocational/technical institutions so that we can increase our human capital in the technical and applied sciences areas in line with our new industries
- Expand the teaching of African and Mayan history program to tertiary level institutions
- Establish a Museum of Belizean Music and support the History of Belize Music Project
- Restore Liberty Hall, in collaboration with stakeholders, converting it to a museum, and culture centre
- Build the National Museum of Natural Science, Anthropology and Archaeology in Belmopan
- Create an annual Belize Arts Fair focusing on music, dance, drama, arts, crafts, books, and writing
- Develop more Archaeology parks including Uxbenca Toledo, Baking Pot Cayo, Aventura Corozal and La Milpa and Noh Mul Orange Walk
- Establish a Culture Heritage Pension Fund to support artists who have contributed significantly to Belizean History and Culture
- Establish an Art Fund to give micro credit to innovative and creative culture projects

we will

- Abolish GST on more medicines including all generic drugs
- Promote a Healthy Lifestyle Campaign which has a holistic focus on mental and physical well being
- Expand and strengthen NHI to ensure free primary health care for all Belizeans at point of delivery
- Continue to provide FREE anti-retroviral medication and enhance the fight against HIV/AIDS by introducing a SAVE campaign (Safer practices, Accessibility and availability of anti-retroviral medication, Voluntary services and Empowerment)
- Continue Health Sector reform – upgrade regional hospitals with a view to having surgeries in all district hospitals
- Provide scholarships and train 500 more nurses and take measures to encourage nurses to remain in Belize
- Provide scholarships for students to study psychology, psychiatry and counseling
- Strengthen Public Health to ensure we maintain and improve our health statistics and reduce our STI's
- Open the Mental Health Facility in Belmopan
- Further strengthen KMHM and increase its level of care as it continues to be the leading health care facility in the country
- Ensure that all health facilities are well resourced and staffed 24/7
- Provide free prescription drugs and eyeglasses for seniors in need
- Plug the gaps in healthcare coverage for seniors and those approaching retirement by aggressively pursuing insurance reform



- 1 One **LAPTOP** for each student in upper-primary and secondary school
- 2 **CONTINUE** roll out of NHI - equal health for all
- 3 **INCREASE** salary to nurses, teachers, police, BDF, coast guard and other public officers
- 4 **INTRODUCE** an Elected Senate in 2009 if approved by the people
- 5 **ABOLISH** income tax for persons earning less than \$50,000
- 6 **INVEST** heavily on sugar roads
- 7 20,000 **NEW JOBS**
- 8 **INVEST** \$50 million to improve infrastructure of municipalities
- 9 **RECRUIT** 800 new police officers
- 10 **ABOLISH** land tax on farms of 25 acres or less
- 11 **BRING DOWN** the cost of living, no matter what!
- 12 **REDUCE** import duties

	1998	2008	2013
UNEMPLOYMENT rate	14%	8.5%	6%
EXPORTS	194m	426m	700m
Access to potable WATER	60%	87.2%	100%
Access to ELECTRICITY	55%	85%	100%
New LOTS distributed	n/a	67,000	100,000
New HOMES built	n/a	15,000	25,000
Minimum WAGE	\$2.25	\$3.00	\$4.00
Number of POLICE officers	772	1,088	1,900
Investment in EDUCATION	63m	150m	250m
Investment in HEALTH	24m	66m	120m
TOURIST arrivals	185,000	875,000	1,400,000

TOURISM

cherishing and celebrating mother nature's best • jobs, jobs, and more jobs

we will

- Encourage and facilitate investment in an additional 2,500 hotel rooms
- Establish Tourism and Hospitality departments at ITVET
- Continue to strongly promote Heritage, Cultural and Retirement Tourism
- Promote North Ambergris Caye as a premier tourism destination
- Promote Caracol as a major destination and integrate it into the Cayo tourism product
- Ensure the building of a cruise ship docking facility by 2009
- Continue to ensure that cruise tourism benefits reach Belizean small and micro-enterprises
- Open a special facility at the Belize Development Bank to provide financing for tourism
- Build on the PGIA runway extension to open new markets for tourism in Europe and beyond
- Promote Belize to Mexican and Central American tourists by relaxing our entry requirements
- Upgrade airstrips countrywide to facilitate larger aircrafts and jets and new international airports where feasible at other locations not yet open to tourism development
- Upgrade infrastructure and promote better town planning and landscaping

LAND & HOUSING

we will continue to provide not take away • lands for our people • houses for our families • lower mortgage rates

we will

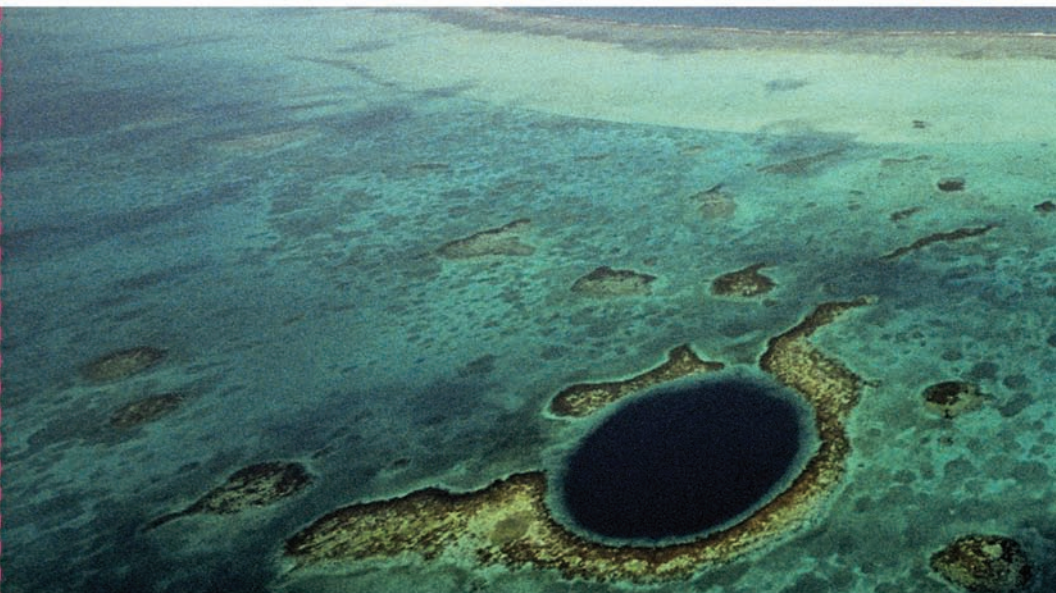
- Guarantee mortgage payments do not exceed \$200 for low-income Government houses
- Convert all leases of government houses to title to the tenant after paying 15 years rent
- Use the PETROCARIBE housing fund to provide loans at 2% for housing and home improvement
- Create a Survey Bureau to make surveys quicker and more affordable
- Facilitate private sector led housing estates
- Strengthen the Lands Registry and Land Titles Unit to increase efficiency and reliability
- Accelerate the completion of the Lease to Title Initiative by issuing thousands of titles in public ceremonies
- Establish a facility to grant a lot to each Belizean UB graduate who does not yet own land
- Continue to modernize the Lands department to re-engineer its processes in order that the issuing of land titles is easier
- Make access to owning a house lot for all Belizeans straightforward and de-politicized
- Assist single parents and newly-weds to obtain a house with very low mortgage payments
- Home Improvement assistance to be made available to the needy
- Work with financial institutions and developers to create innovative financing packages, including rent-to-buy schemes and reverse mortgages for responsible seniors
- Support the use of new modular and other construction technology to lower costs of new housing
- Develop requirements for housing developers to include affordable housing components as part of larger housing projects

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES & INDUSTRY

land and sea • a wealthy nation • thriving and diversified

we will

- Continue to provide support to Belize's major industries of sugar, citrus, banana and marine products industries
- Continue to promote non-traditional crops such as cacao, cashew, papaya, hot peppers
- Provide strong and targeted support for the rice, corn, beans, cattle and livestock industries which have good potential
- Promote Research and Development in the fauna of Belize for the health and wellness industry



- Promote the development of the rum, wine and spirits industry for export
- Encourage the private sector to build a cement and fertilizer factory in Belize
- Ensure that the benefits from co-generation by BELCOGEN and bio-fuel industries are enjoyed by sugar cane farmers and their families
- Strongly support the farming of vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, onions, celery, mushrooms etc. for local consumption
- Strongly promote the expansion of caged fish farming and land-based fish-farming
- Encourage and promote niche industries such as organic farming and new options such as FAIRTRADE
- Open new markets for new crops to exploit high value specialty markets in North America and Europe
- Provide next generation options for fishing coops – growing seaweed, fish-farming and caged farming
- Provide new incentives for value added in the fish, fruit and vegetable industries
- Exempt all irrigation equipment for agricultural purposes from GST

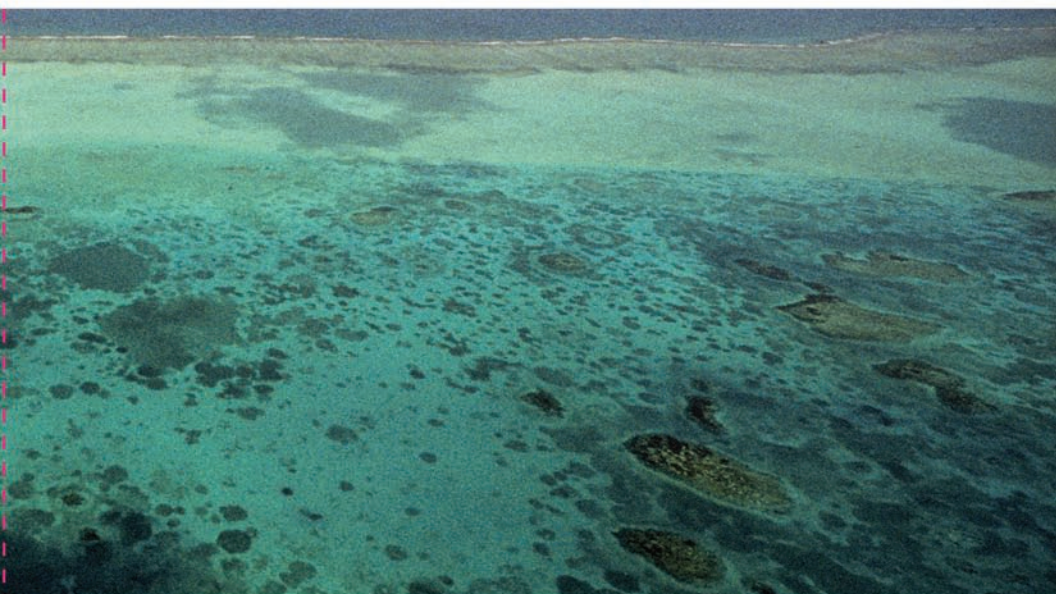
- Invest heavily in additional well rigs for water in rural areas
- Re-energize the agricultural extension services to assist farmers to use best practices to improve quality of fruit and vegetable production

YOUTH & SPORTS

productive lives • good choices • an exciting future

we will

- Continue to involve and expose youth to the arts
- Adopt the Belize National Youth Development Policy and implement its recommended programmes and initiatives in full consultation with the young people of Belize
- Enact a Youth For the Future Act to make it a statutory body working with youth



- Provide support to organizations such as the Youth Business Trust Belize and Youth For the Future who make available financing for young entrepreneur.
- Complete the Belize Sports Centre at the Marion Jones Stadium to include a 400m track, rehabilitate the bleachers, and football field
- Build new and repair existing sporting facilities throughout Belize
- Provide sporting parks and coaches in the inner city and towns and villages
- Establish a national boxing program and encourage community sporting clubs
- Strongly support semi-pro basketball and other sports
- Appoint a commission to develop a National Agenda for Sports
- Establish a Youth Award Scheme to recognize youth who excel in volunteerism, community service, outreach programs, academic performance, and maintain a quality environment and whose leadership embody role models for other youth
- Bring back the Belize Games

FOREIGN AFFAIRS & FOREIGN TRADE

securing our sovereignty • opening new markets

we will

- Hold a Referendum on whether or not to take the Belize Guatemala Differendum to the ICJ
- Continue to serve as the bridge between the Caribbean and Central America
- Review Belize's embassies and missions abroad to assess their value in the context of a new international order
- Establish the 'Belizeans for Belize' department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to harness the resources of the Belizean Diaspora
- Continue to advocate for equity and fairness for small and vulnerable economies in the WTO and international trade arena
- Promote Trade and Investment Promotion and Protection Treaties with existing and new trading partners

INVESTMENT IN THE SOCIAL SECTOR

nurturing • enabling • supporting • a caring society

we will

- Undertake a major social sector support loan from international institutions to continue the fight against poverty
- Meet targets of our Millenium Development Goals
- Continue to implement the Belize Rural Development Project at a quicker pace
- Increase social security benefits for retirees
- Issue the 'EASE-UP CARD' \$100 per month to the needy Belizeans to be used on basic food stuff, social services, rental/mortgage payments - funded from Petroleum Fund
- Free bus passes to all persons 65 years and over
- Expand compassionate care for the homeless – remove them from the streets and into dignified shelters
- Continue the zero tolerance posture to human trafficking, child labour and other forms of child abuse

INFRASTRUCTURE

communications • conveniences • strengthening the nation

we will

- Finance a major upgrade in farm roads countrywide especially sugar roads using EU funds
- Continue implementation of the Southside Renewal Project
- Invest \$50 million on drains and roads in municipalities



- Continue to improve the national road network including Placencia and Hopkins, Progresso to Copperbank and to Sarteneja, Orange Walk Town to Blue Creek, the Manatee Road, from Remate to Louisville cut-off, from Julian Cho High School to Jalacte and Valley of Peace roads to be paved
- Achieve 100% nationwide electrification
- Complete the rural water supply project by building a water system in every village
- Pave all roads passing through villages
- Replace all ferries nationwide with bridges and a new bridge over the Haulover Creek/Belize River
- Add a managed traffic lane between Belize City and Ladyville
- Build a new road from Belize City to the PGIA
- Safer highways – introduce speed cameras, more speed bumps, pedestrian crossings, reflectors and painted lines on the highways

THE ENVIRONMENT

protecting • preserving • developing • maintaining a delicate balance

we will

- Adopt a new national policy and strategy to meet the challenges of Climate Change
- Encourage BELCOGEN and other clean fuel sources
- Eliminate duty on energy-saving products such as energy-saving bulbs, solar or photovoltaic energy-generating systems
- Provide tax incentives for homes and businesses that incorporate solar or photovoltaic energy-generating systems
- Implement the National Solid Waste Management Plan
- Embark on sustained and aggressive garbage collection and beautification programmes across the country
- Strengthen environmental protection to ensure that development is balanced with

sustainable use and management of our natural resources including our coastal communities and reef system.

PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS

a petroleum industry for all Belizeans

we will

- Complete the Reform of the Petroleum Industry including implementation of a Rent Resource Tax
- Create a Ministry of Petroleum and Energy
- Guarantee Belizean participation in the downstream operations of the Petroleum Industry
- Ensure that all oil companies make 10% of their company available to Belizeans once oil is found
- Provide new scholarships in petroleum engineering, petroleum economics, auditing and petroleum industry management
- Accelerate the conversion of Belizean crude to refined products leading to lower pump prices for all Belizeans
- Provide major funding for Human Development from the Petroleum Fund

