

imagine

the possibilities...



UDP 2008

We, the United Democratic Party, do hereby pledge to...

- ✓ Ease the cost of living by lowering electricity rates and telephone rates
- ✓ Provide greater spending power by reducing GST: extending zero rating to more foods, more medications and medical services; reducing fuel costs by replacing RRD with a lower flat tax
- ✓ Continue the UDP established policy of income tax reduction by eliminating income tax for those making under \$650 per week
- ✓ Create a minimum of 5,000 new jobs in the tourism industry
- ✓ Secure financing from World Bank for another Belize City and a countrywide district infrastructure project to provide thousands of new jobs and spur economic development
- ✓ Ensure private sector prosperity by achieving an economic growth of at least 6% per annum through direct investments and the creation of a positive, enabling environment
- ✓ Endow a new government housing programme and build 1,000 quality, affordable houses annually countrywide
- ✓ Give immediate title to house lots and small agricultural plots to first time applicants
- ✓ Expand on our free tuition policy introduced by the UDP in 1993 by providing a \$300 direct subsidy annually to needy first and second form students towards additional fees charged by the schools
- ✓ Introduce a National School Feeding program at the primary school level in partnership with the private and social sectors
- ✓ Bring back the Conscious Youth Development Programme to eliminate gang violence and provide jobs, counseling, sporting opportunities and social integration for youth at risk
- ✓ Expand the size of the police department and increase greatly crime detection, successful solving and prosecution of offenders by installing a fully-equipped DNA testing facility
- ✓ Charter a new programme of skills training, access to capital and social assistance for single mothers
- ✓ Establish a new Development Finance Institution to provide financing to small businesses, students, farmers and homeowners
- ✓ Offer shares in a National Oil Company to ordinary Belizeans so that the masses of the people can collect dividends and have a personal stake in the national petroleum wealth
- ✓ Refurbish all sugar roads and give duty free fuel to cane farmers
- ✓ Lower mortgage rates to recreate a home ownership society
- ✓ Legislate to extend the human rights protection now given to members of registered trade unions to ALL workers in Belize
- ✓ Upgrade KMHM to a full-service, first-rate health care facility, and upgrade facilities at all regional hospitals to provide all basic testing and care services
- ✓ Establish a National Heroes Day
- ✓ Implement immediately the Reform Agenda in order to provide for recall mechanisms for elected officials, prosecution under an unjust enrichment law, an empowered Senate controlled by the social partners, and air-tight accountability to the Auditor General, Contractor General and Ombudsman

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From

**The Party Leader
Hon. Dean O. Barrow**



This manifesto 2008-2013, expands on the vision created by the UDP in the last manifesto. Now, as then, anti-corruption and reform is the core of that vision. But the bedrock principles of the vision have been fertilized by the national debate that has taken place on these issues over the last few years, and especially since 2005. As a result, I feel confident in commending to the nation our restated and expanded vision as the right platform for the good governance project that must take place over the next five years.

National reconstruction, then, must stand on foundation stones of openness, honesty and transparency. But it must clearly have thereafter as the brick and mortar of its building blocks, economic rescue and social and moral renewal. That is why this manifesto also contains a clear, doable program of action for lowering taxes; reducing the cost of living; increasing employment and disposable income; widening the social safety net; improving the quality and accessibility of education and health; and forging a new national partnership based on consultation, dialogue and consensus.

In this foreword I have spent no time chronicling the multitudinous ills of the outgoing government. Their sorry record is too well known for that. Indeed, it serves only to make the point that the wait to end the madness is finally over. I end, then, by paraphrasing one of the UDP mottoes to the Belizean voter: For years you have wished for change. Now you can make it happen.

GOOD GOVERNANCE, LAW & ORDER

The Guiding Principles of the United Democratic Party

The United Democratic Party was founded on the principles of freedom and democracy with a healthy respect for enterprise and entrepreneurship and a commitment to fiscal prudence and accountability. The United Democratic Party has shown itself historically to be the Party of honesty and integrity. The Party remains committed to the principles of good governance, transparency and accountability which continue to be the hallmark of the UDP.

Good Governance

Belize is a country blessed with rich natural resources and a strong, vibrant people. These abundant blessings should be enough to ensure a safe and prosperous life for all our citizens. Our current economic and social crises are not due to any lack of human or natural resources but instead to deplorably corrupt and incompetent governance. With good governance, a UDP government will lift Belize out of these crises and ensure an improved quality of life for all Belizeans. A vital first step to restoring responsible governance is to hold our own elected representatives accountable for how they govern and manage the people's resources.

To restore and maintain good governance, the UDP will:

- Give people the power to recall elected representatives and to impeach the Prime Minister.
- Pass an Unjust Enrichment Act under which Ministers and elected officials can be prosecuted where they are seen to be enjoying visible wealth which their salaries and declared assets cannot justify.
- Reform the Senate to ensure that those senators nominated by the Opposition and non-government organizations together constitute the majority.
- Eliminate government control of statutory bodies such as the Social Security Board and the DFC and place these bodies under the control of social partners.
- Revamp the Freedom of Information Act to provide for full disclosure of, and easy public access to government contracts, operations and projects.
- Establish a three-term limit for holders of the Office of Prime Minister.
- Make it illegal for government to sign any contract that contains terms requiring that contract to be kept secret.
- Appoint independent and qualified persons to the positions of Ombudsman, Contractor General, Auditor General and Director of Public Prosecutions.
- Amend the Referendum Act to allow the public to call for referendums.
- Pass a law to regulate campaign financing.
- Pass a law governing all elected officials to prevent conflict of interest, nepotism and cronyism.
- Allocate funds fairly to all elected representatives to enable them to serve their constituencies.
- Empower the Senate to initiate and conduct public inquiries into mismanagement or corruption by officials in central government or statutory bodies.

Law and Order

The United Democratic Party vows to implement, in its next term of office, a multi-sectoral and multi-ministerial 360 degree strategy for restoring law and order to Belize. This 360 degree vision will enable us to attack the issues from all angles. We recognize that the drug trade, pervasive corruption, social injustice, and the breakdown of social systems are the root causes of crime. Any successful plan must therefore simultaneously address all these factors.

Strengthening the Police Department

The UDP government will transform the Belize Police Department into a highly trained, adequately equipped, creative and professional security team that will exude high morale, and be trained to achieve an efficient, highly competent, well organized and fair system of crime prevention, interdiction, evidence gathering, prosecution and justice. The following are the key components of the UDP strategy:

- Foster a democratic policing style in which the officers are subject to the rule of law, responsible to protect human rights, and respectful of the citizenry.
- Upgrade the terms and conditions of service for the police force to attract and retain competent officers.
- Recruit more police officers and administrative support staff for the Police Department.
- Institute a fair and competitive merit-based promotion system based on performance, education and experience.



- Improve the physical working conditions and provide the necessary equipment to enable officers to respond quickly to emergencies.
- Ensure that the salaries of our security forces reflect the importance of their work.
- Enhance policing operations with state-of-the-art technology, including forensic science, and databases of criminal records and crime statistics, as well as training in the use of these technologies.

Creative Crime Prevention Programmes

- The UDP recognizes that resolving our existing crisis will require a creative approach to fighting crime that strengthens existing institutional structures through inter-agency cooperation and enables swift action against crime. To this end, the UDP will:
- Create a Joint Intelligence Unit made up of the Police, BDE, Customs, Immigration, the Coast Guard, Income Tax and the Financial Intelligence Unit to concentrate on illegal activities nationwide in order to strengthen criminal intelligence gathering.
- Establish a special "Gun Court" to deal with crimes involving the use or possession of guns and ammunition, or explosives. This would fast track gun cases for quick determination and action.
- Strengthen the Anti-Drug Unit with mobility, training, criminal intelligence and equipment to interdict drug smugglers and traders, and also enable the unit to more effectively interdict the gun barons and the gun trade.

Combating Root Causes of Crime

Combating crime in the longer term will mean that fundamental social problems must be addressed head-on through a range of social and educational programmes which equip our citizens to become productive, law-abiding individuals. The UDP will:

- Create a robust and efficient National Employment Agency and Small Business Development Programme to assist job-seekers as well as employers seeking workers.
- Partner with the business community to design an ongoing adult education programme which will equip primary and high-school dropouts with life skills and job training that make them employable.
- Promote parenting education to improve child-rearing skills and provide an understanding of the current risks and threats facing youths.
- Include a counseling programme within the formal education system whereby each school would offer a support programme for children at risk.

It is essential that citizens regain their confidence in the justice system

Controlling and Defusing Gang Violence

The UDP will invest the necessary human and capital resources to confront the problem of gang violence. The UDP strategy includes the following actions:

- Establish a Gang and Violence Prevention Unit within the police department comprised of specially trained police and public officers.
- Establish a secretariat dedicated to youth development. This secretariat will incorporate the key elements of the former Conscious Youth Development Programme, as well as other existing youth development initiatives to offer youths a positive alternative to gang-life and violence.

Restoring Faith in our Justice System

The corruption that has invaded all levels of our government and society has corroded the citizens' confidence in our most fundamental systems of justice and governance. It is essential, therefore, that citizens regain their confidence in the justice system. To restore this faith, the UDP government will:

- Recruit competent and trained professionals who will serve with the highest level of integrity and ethical conduct.
- Empower the Ombudsman to investigate any wrongdoing or negligence on the part of the Department of Public Prosecution and the Magistracy and implement the legal framework to ensure that justice is served.
- Strengthen the Internal Affairs section of the Police Department to improve their investigative abilities, and make them accountable to a mixed Police/Civilian Complaints Board.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Rewarding excellence while building efficiency

Our Public Officers represent the backbone of good governance. Their contribution must be recognized, their authority renewed, their advice heard and their direction followed. The UDP will reward excellence in service, deal with institutional corruption, and will reverse the last 10-year trend of excessive Ministerial dictatorship, which has compelled our public officers to follow directives against their moral and logical judgment.

Strengthen the Institutions of Government

- Confirm, promote and encourage appointments at all levels of the service that embody integrity, experience, dedication, and ability.
- Develop a modernized department of Human Resources that will upgrade and renew benefit packages, training and service manuals, health safety and comfort standards, staffing procedures, and performance evaluation processes, while balancing the needs of public officers against government resources and worker rights as represented by the PSU.
- Appoint an assertive and independent Public Services Commission in consultation with the PSU.
- Institute regular training programmes as a benefit to Public Officers and as a requirement for career development.
- Establish the role of a National Quality Assurance Coordinator with the main goal of implementing a nationwide quality process, including national and municipal government institutions, aimed at streamlining, and where applicable, automating all government processes and reporting.

A strong partnership between the Public Service and elected Government

- Increase joint accountability of Ministers, Ministerial Appointees, and Public Officers and lessen the influence of party politics in the execution of the work of government.
- Limit the employment of contract officers to short-term projects thereby allowing career public officers to control the delivery of service, and reduce political manipulation.
- Conduct a remuneration study to remove the inequities in the current salary structure and to make public sector salaries and benefits more competitive with the private sector.
- Establish a revamped Pension Scheme for Public Officers that will be more in tune with the cost of living and with inflation, beginning with those in high risk services such as crime control, the fire service, prisons, medical and the military.
- Include Public Officers at all levels in preparation, execution and monitoring of a transparent national budgeting process to ensure that budgets are rational, realistic, and properly managed.

Our Public Officers represent the backbone of good governance. Their contribution must be recognized, their authority renewed, their advice heard and their direction followed.



EDUCATION

Better Schools, Better Citizens, Better Belize

More than half of the children of school age in Belize will not complete primary and secondary schooling in the allotted time. More than 70% of those surviving to Standard VI achieve below the satisfactory level on the PSE (2006) and roughly 50% of students surviving to Fourth Form achieve below the satisfactory level on CXC English and Math (2004). Many cannot afford to sit the CXC's and are actively discouraged from doing so and thereby denied the opportunity of obtaining an important qualification. These children, unable to succeed, exact heavy tolls on the society that has failed them and turn to violence, prostitution and crime to make a living.



The UDP is committed to education reform and our vision is grounded on these three integrated principles:

Education for Self: to create confidence, self sufficiency and excellence in an ever changing environment.

Education for Strength: in preparation to enter, participate and contribute ethically to an economically strong, socially rich, culturally proud and politically just society.

Education for Life: Never too old to learn or too old to start. Belizeans of all ages will enjoy educational opportunities as we create a country founded and fostered on the intelligence and education of its greatest assets, the people.

When elected as the next government, the United Democratic Party is committed to immediately and aggressively address the state of the education system.

Start Strong

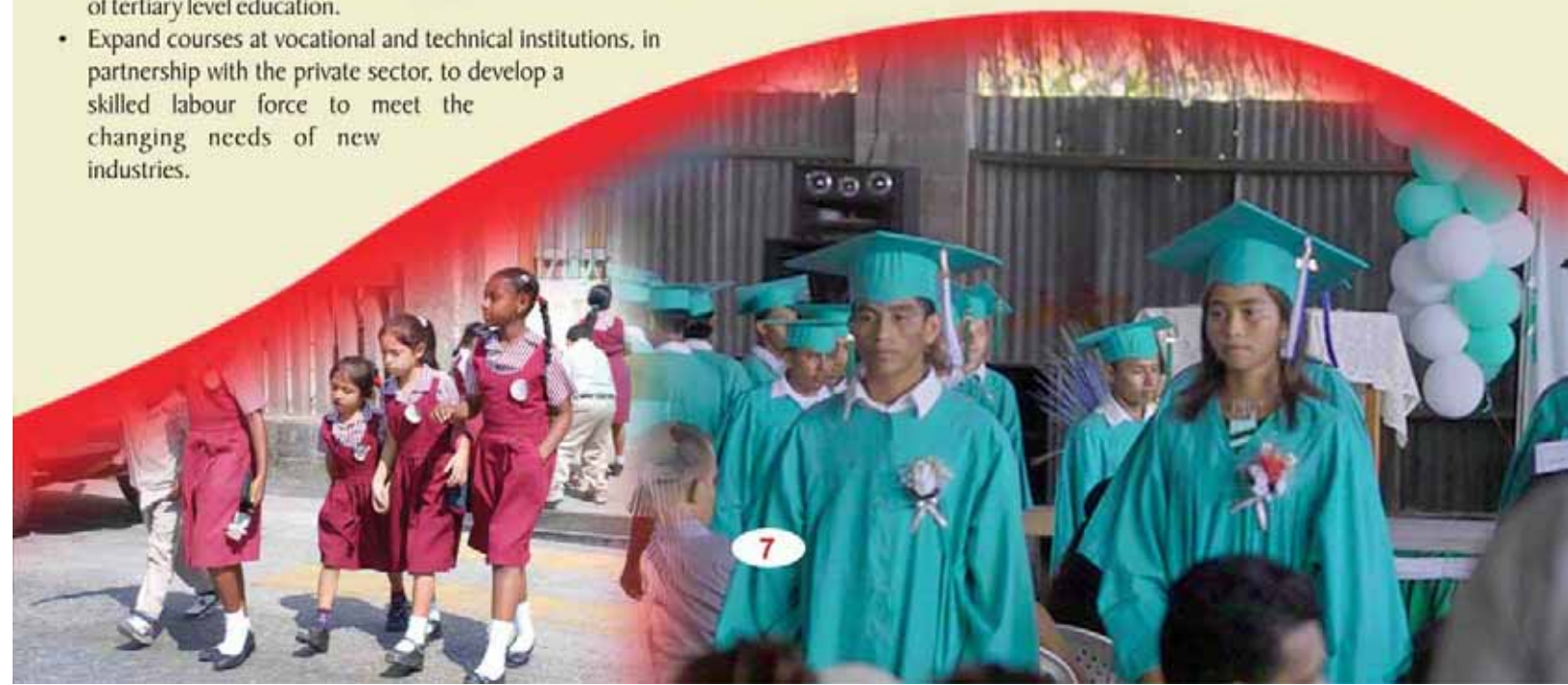
- Create and provide access to high-quality preschool programs designed to prepare children for primary school. The first target in achieving this goal will be to expand access by attaching preschools to primary schools, especially in disadvantaged areas.
- Ensure that the preventative health care needs of every child is addressed through school immunization programmes.
- Introduce a National School Feeding program at the primary school level in partnership with the private and social sectors.

Build Stamina

- Expand mandatory education to include secondary as well as primary levels with the introduction of 10 years of compulsory education for all.
- Provide a direct annual subsidy of \$300 per student to qualifying first and second form students at enrollment to offset the high cost of school fees, in addition to the free tuition policy instituted by the UDP in 1993.
- Establish First and Second Forms as extensions of rural primary schools to give the rural population more education with less travel.
- Standardize a core high school curriculum with vocational and technical options.
- Standardize high school textbooks and cycle usage for a minimum of 3 years.
- Allocate public funding to schools equitably by funding schools on a per-student basis.
- Provide basic literacy, numeracy and continuing education opportunities for both adults and youths who have left the formal system.

Raise the Bar

- Foster full competence in English, Mathematics, Spanish, and the Physical and Social Sciences to all students.
- Subsidize the cost of CXC Examinations (CCSLC and CSEC) to ensure that all students are able to take the exams.
- Create National Education Performance Standards and direct resources to under-resourced, underperforming schools to enable them to meet standards.
- Position remedial teachers throughout the school system to assist students in danger of failing.
- Support the development of after-school programmes to assist with homework, learning difficulties and provide healthy forms of recreation in arts, culture and sports.
- Activate the National Accreditation Council.
- Encourage the private and public sectors to support on-the-job training programs and foster private sector grants, scholarships or other funding of tertiary level education.
- Expand courses at vocational and technical institutions, in partnership with the private sector, to develop a skilled labour force to meet the changing needs of new industries.



Teach the Teacher

- Provide financial incentives for teachers to acquire professional qualifications.
- Encourage the provision of targeted Professional Development/In-Service Training for teachers by tertiary level institutions and other private providers.
- Establish a Continued Professional Development Fund for teachers to access loans for continued professional development.
- of tertiary level education.
- Expand courses at vocational and technical institutions, in partnership with the private sector, to develop a skilled labour force to meet the changing needs of new industries.

An education system that reproduces social disadvantage is opposed to self development and the common good of a nation and its people.

HEALTH

Keeping Belizeans Productive and Healthy

Health is the foundation of a productive and successful society. Recognizing the fundamental role of health in our society's prosperity and our citizens' quality of life, the UDP is committed to ensuring that all Belizeans have access to efficient and affordable health care, rooted in prevention and public education and ensuring that public investments in health care are streamlined to yield an efficient and equitable service.

Prevention

The UDP will:

- Implement an on-going health education programmes focusing on good nutrition, exercise, and healthy lifestyle choices to prevent common illnesses like diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and cancer.
- Offer affordable regular checkups for early detection of diabetes, cancer, hypertension, and other non-communicable diseases.
- Incorporate a physical education programmes into the primary school curriculum.
- Provide health maintenance programmes in schools to meet the basic healthcare needs of children such as school immunization programmes, visiting clinics, and school feeding programmes.
- Monitor and regulate environmental health including water quality, pesticide use and solid waste management.
- Create occupational health and safety standards and ensure that adequate legislation and systems exist to ensure their enforcement.
- Implement vigilant surveillance and widespread public education to prevent and control the spread of epidemics.

Primary Healthcare

The UDP will:

- Strengthen the existing system of primary health care to allow for greater access to quality health care services to ALL Belizeans by removing the financial, physical and geographic barriers that prevent our people from accessing the services they need.
- Build additional clinics nationwide to increase access to primary health care in remote communities.
- Improve and strengthen the NHI to ensure that Belizeans receive quality care through the efficient use of public funds.
- Identify additional funding sources for the NHI to ensure its sustainability.
- Offer quality medication at a reasonable price by eliminating corruption and waste from the pharmaceuticals procurement and supply processes.
- Upgrade KMH to a full-service, first-rate health care facility.
- Upgrade facilities at all regional hospitals to provide all basic testing and care services.

KARL HEUSNER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

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Secondary and Tertiary Care

The UDP will:

- Maintain KMH as a full-service, first-rate health care facility, well equipped with technology and highly trained personnel
- Establish oncology and dialysis treatment facilities for the prevention, treatment, and control of cancer and kidney diseases.
- Upgrade facilities at the regional hospitals to provide all basic testing and treatment services.
- Create formal partnerships between the Ministry of Health and hospitals in the United States, Guatemala and Mexico to make arrangements for Belizeans to access secondary and tertiary care which are unavailable in Belize.
- Establish a special board to administer financial assistance to Belizeans needing to travel abroad for tertiary or emergency health care. This board will also negotiate to get the most affordable rates for Belizeans.

HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment

The UDP recognizes the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the threat it poses to individuals and to society. The UDP will:

- Ensure that the recently introduced National AIDS Policy, which was developed by a broad cross section of the public, is implemented under a strong, well-funded and non-political directorate.
- Support NGOs and other community groups serving infected or affected persons.
- Adopt a multi-faceted approach to managing the AIDS crisis which includes halting the spread of the disease through aggressive education on prevention, treating those already infected, and providing counseling to those affected by the disease.
- Identify an affordable source of treatment for those already infected.

Investing in Healthcare Professionals

The UDP will:

- Encourage an increase in the number of trained Belizeans working in the health sector.
- Ensure that all medical workers, including those from abroad, are adequately qualified and can communicate with their patients.
- Identify critical human resource needs in the healthcare industry.
- Expand the health education curriculum at the University of Belize and other tertiary education institutions and offer scholarships and other incentives to encourage Belizeans to enter the healthcare professions.
- Invest in nursing education to attract, train and retain qualified nurses.
- Implement a system of performance-based promotions, while offering competitive salaries and benefits to attract and retain highly motivated and qualified professionals.

Mental Health

The UDP will:

- Implement a holistic mental health programme which will cover diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and re-entry into society, and accompanying support systems for families and other affected persons.
- Establish a Department of Mental Health within the Ministry of Health.
- Incorporate an acute mental health center at KMH and at all regional hospitals.
- Staff these centers with qualified mental health professionals.



- Develop operational procedures and guidelines that can be monitored for compliance by staff to ensure patients are receiving quality care.
- Strengthen NGOs and other groups involved in community work in mental health.
- Encourage the establishment of drug and alcohol addiction treatment facilities.
- Partner with local and international agencies to provide acute and chronic services in a non-institutional setting.
- Foster an environment of tolerance and understanding to remove stigma and discrimination for mental illnesses through public education and sensitization programmes.

Regulating the Health System

The UDP will:

- Grant greater autonomy to the regional health authorities and the private sector to enable them to improve the efficiency and quality of their service provision.
- Strengthen the regulatory role of the Ministry of Health in monitoring and evaluating the performance of our health system to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency in delivering health care equitably for the benefit of ALL Belizeans.
- Maintain control over those critical public health functions that are vital to the health of the entire nation, including Health Promotion, Disease Surveillance, Planning, Human Resource Development, Quality Assurance and Monitoring.

HOUSING

Building the structure for strong families

The UDP's view is that a secure home is fundamental to the development of a strong family, and Belize needs strong families. The ultimate goal of each Belizean is to own a home. The UDP is committed to delivering that dream through positive action for the poor and low income earners, and for middle income working families. In tandem with a revitalization of crumbling infrastructure, the UDP will take positive action to ensure access to quality and affordable housing by all.

- Reduce mortgage interest rates to enable Belize to return to a Home Ownership society for all segments of society.
- Endow a new government housing project and build 1000 quality affordable homes annually countrywide.
- Establish a programme of government-subsidized building cooperatives in cooperation with benefit programmes for specific employee groups and unions in government and the private sector.
- Eliminate unsanitary sewerage disposal systems in rural areas with properly designed sewerage systems to improve safety and sanitation.
- Ensure that infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, water supply and drainage in rural and urban areas are properly designed and in place making existing and new areas ready for home construction.
- Establish and enforce building codes and zoning laws to protect property owners and maintain a respectable quality of life and improve the image of the cities and town.

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YOUTH, SPORTS AND CULTURE

The escalating crime rate is evidence of the massive risk faced by our youth. The UDP is committed to breaking this cycle, creating a positive environment for personal growth and career opportunities. The UDP will develop a well managed system of physical education and sports that builds self-esteem, promotes healthy lifestyles, enhances social and community well-being, boosts productivity and develops professional athletes while generating economic opportunity and national pride.

An enabling environment for personal growth in our youths

- Create a national service corps that will enable youths to serve the community while contributing to their overall personal development.
- Encourage the development of entrepreneurship among our young people by provide funding to existing and new youth business initiatives to
- Provide access to computers and Internet to create a technology culture among youths in Belize, especially the disadvantaged.
- Establish a secretariat dedicated to youth development incorporating the key elements of the former Conscious Youth Development Programme as well as other existing youth development initiatives to offer youths a positive alternative to gang-life and violence.

Keeping our people active for health, strength and strong minds

- Develop a national physical education and sports development programme, inclusive of out of school youths, spanning the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels and feeding into the professional sports.
- Train physical education instructors and coaches and ensure access for both primary and secondary schools to these instructors.
- Provide athletic scholarships to students at the primary, secondary and tertiary level.
- Promote sports as an international tourist and entertainment attraction in line with the National Tourism Policy.
- Introduce legislation to ensure that national team athletes and officials get time-off and are compensated by their employer when representing Belize internationally.
- Build or renovate and modernize existing indoor and outdoor facilities in various municipalities.
- Complete construction of the Marion Jones Sports Complex as a quality world class track and field and multi-use facility.
- Reintroduce the Belize Games as a national showcase event.
- Build and upkeep more parks, playgrounds and sporting fields in urban and rural communities to encourage healthy, physical recreation, community development and the development of sports.
- Facilitate our professional athletes in negotiating contracts with regional clubs.

Face of Belize – Freedom for Artistic and Cultural Expression

The United Democratic Party understands the importance of arts and culture to the overall development and enrichment of this young multi-lingual, multi-racial nation of Belize and commits to making arts and culture a national priority over the next five years.

- Develop a comprehensive and sustainable long-term Arts and Culture Plan informed by a dynamic and pluralistic cultural policy
- Establish an Endowment for the Arts Fund, EAF, (to be named after a Belizean cultural icon) to advance the national priority, i.e., to institutionalize arts and culture in the national development effort
- Establish a National Heroes Day





Hon. Dean Oliver Barrow
Party Leader
QUEEN'S SQUARE

Your

UDI



Hon. Anthony
'Boots'
Martinez
PORT LOYOLA



Carlos
Perdomo
CARIBBEAN
SHORES



Hon. Patrick
Faber
COLLET



Dr. George
Gough
FORT GEORGE



Wilfred Elrington
PICKSTOCK



Hon. Manuel
Heredia
BELIZE RURAL
SOUTH



Thomas
Morrison
ALBERT



Vandley
Jenkins
LAKE-I



Michael
Hutchinson
BELIZE RURAL
CENTRAL



Michael
Peyrefitte
FREETOWN



Hon. Michael
Finnegan
MESOPOTAMIA



Edmund
Castro
BELIZE RURAL
NORTH

P Team

(LEFT - RIGHT)

Hon. Erwin Contreras CAYO WEST

Elvin Penner CAYO NORTHEAST



(LEFT - RIGHT)

Hon. John Saldivar BELMOPAN

Rene Montero CAYO CENTRAL

Salvador Fernandez CAYO NORTH

Ramon Witz CAYO SOUTH

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Servando Samos COROZAL S.E.

Pablo Marin COROZAL BAY

Nemencio Acosta COROZAL NTH.

Hon. Gabriel Martinez CZL. S.W.



(LEFT - RIGHT)

Gaspar Vega D.W. NORTH

Mark Pech D.W. SOUTH

Rosendo Urbina D.W. CENTRAL

Marcel Cardona D.W. EAST



(LEFT - RIGHT)

Juan Coy TOLEDO WEST

Peter Eden Martinez TOLEDO EAST

Melvin Hulse STAN CREEK WEST

Arthur Roches DANGRIGA



- The EAF will among other things facilitate the development of arts and culture in needy schools and communities throughout the country with activities such as resident artists (local and international) fellowships.
- Establish equitable Creative and Expressive Arts Education Programmes across all levels of the formal and non-formal education system to provide opportunities for Belizeans to explore their creative energies while developing appreciation and respect for the arts/culture.
- Train more and expand the nationwide coverage of teachers of the Arts through a major Human Resource Development project involving short and long-term scholarship opportunities for training both at home and abroad.
- Institute a permanent National Celebration and Festival Commission (free of partisan political manipulation) with its own secretariat and mandate to enhance the content and calibre of national celebrations, festivals and cultural events.
- Provide meaningful support and archival documentation to National Arts and Cultural Organisations such as the oral history and experiences of elders of the various ethnic councils – Kriol, Maya, Garifuna - and performing arts bodies to strengthen their efforts to attain national prominence and further the mandate, making arts and culture part of the national psyche.
- Build a cultural centre/auditorium in Dangriga, Belize's Culture Capital and upgrade the existing Houses of Culture and museums across the country.
- Establish an Annual National Talent Showcase that brings together local artists in music, drama, visual arts, writing and cultural presentations.

SOCIAL SECTOR INVESTMENT

Promoting Social Equality

Belize's prosperity rests on the full development and participation of its greatest resource, its people – the women, men, girls and boys in all aspects of national life. Greater and focused attention must be paid to ensuring equity of opportunities in order that citizens play their rightful role in nation building.

UDP will:

- Accelerate national efforts to achieve equity by institutionalising a national development planning framework which centralises Gender Mainstreaming in all policies, programmes and structures of government. Special attention will be given to gender budgeting.
- Upgrade the National Women's Commission from an advisory to an effective strategic guidance and oversight mechanism for monitoring and ensuring government keeps its promise in achieving both national and international commitments.
- Give greater opportunities for women's and youth employment and job creation especially in marginalised communities in the Toledo District.
- Widely promote the Culture of Parenting and Care-Giving as the equal responsibility of women and men.
- Support the Establishment of Childcare Centres in strategic locations including the workplace to facilitate both parents' employment. Only 31% of children are enrolled in Early Childhood Education (SIB).
- Legislate to extend the human rights protection now given to members of registered trade unions to ALL workers in Belize
- Significantly reduce the level of Gender-Based Violence in our country by strengthening the national multi-sectoral response to this issue.
- Employ stiffer penalties for offenders and repeat perpetrators of violent crimes.
- Strengthen national efforts to meet the needs of communities of people – Elderly, Persons with Disabilities, Ethnic Groups - that have been largely marginalised.
- Work with existing bodies to formulate and/or revise policies and programmes that will give greater visibility and voice to these individuals.
- Foster and support initiatives to protect children's rights and eliminate physical and sexual abuse of children.



STRENGTHENING A DAMAGED ECONOMY

Commitment to economic development, enabling enterprise and entrepreneurship, and sound fiscal management are the hallmarks of UDP governance. Now, more than ever, Belize needs the fiscal responsibility, integrity, and steady economic growth that the UDP will deliver to guide Belize out of its current economic crisis and manage the runaway national debt.

Boost a Sagging Economy

- Create thousands of much needed jobs in the construction sector through a major National Infrastructure Project to rebuild roads, bridges, and drainage systems.
- Establish a new Development Finance Institution to provide micro-financing for small businesses, students, farmers and homeowners.
- Reduce fuel costs by replacing the RRD with a lower flat tax.
- Eliminate wasteful spending and bloated contracts to ensure that Belizeans reap the greatest possible benefits from government spending.
- Restore the autonomy of the Central Bank and other regulatory bodies.
- Establish a national, employee-managed pension program that will promote savings and secure the future for working Belizeans.
- Develop a capital and securities market to help provide financing for small and medium size businesses.

Ensure private sector prosperity by achieving an economic growth of at least 6% per annum through direct investments and the creation of a positive, enabling environment.

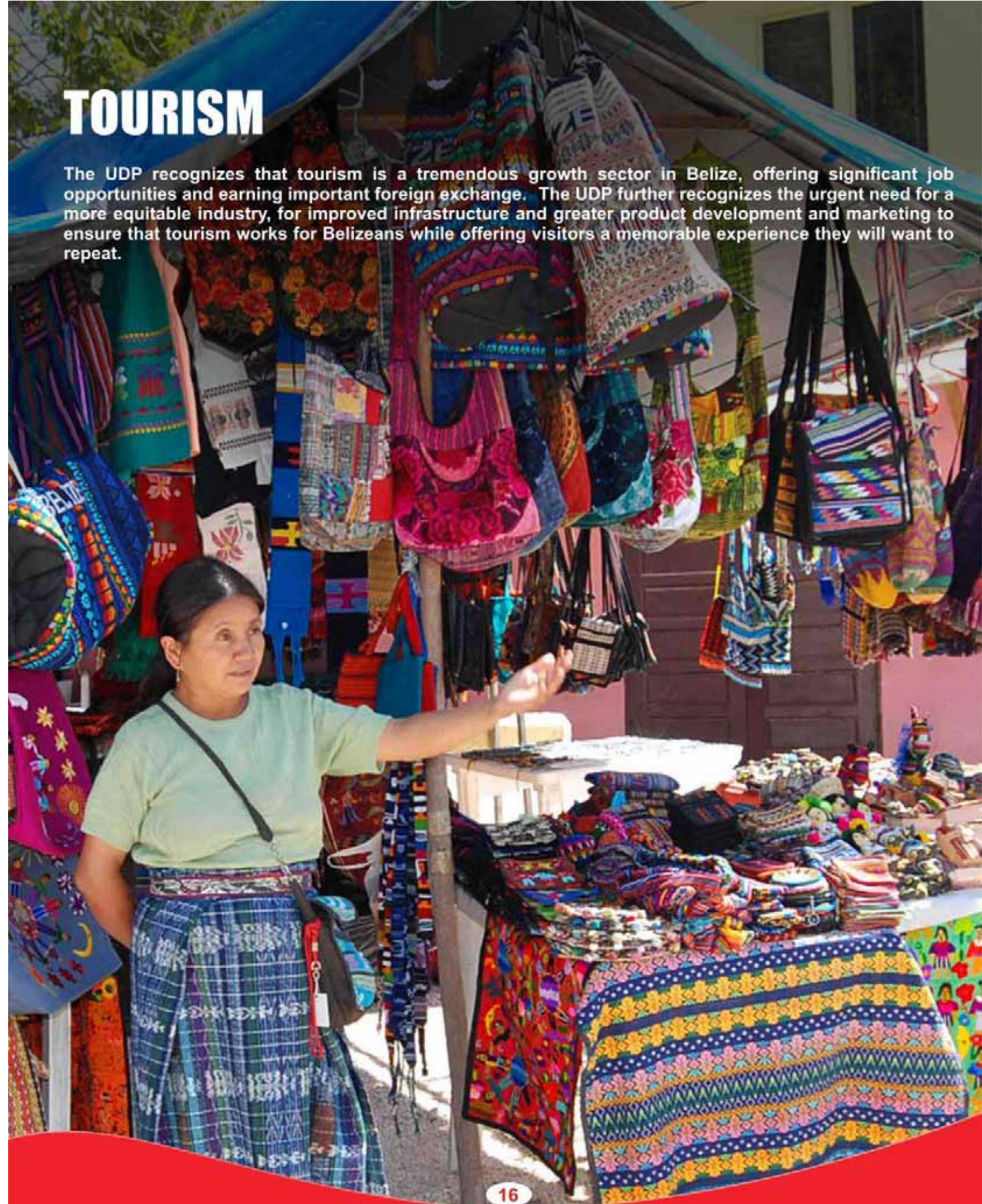
Relieve Economic Pressure, Reduce Taxation and Encourage Business Growth

- Ensure private sector prosperity by achieving an economic growth of at least 6% per annum through direct investments and the creation of a positive, enabling environment.
- Eliminate income tax for employees earning under \$650 per week, as the start of a gradual phasing-out of income tax.
- Exempt medical services from GST and zero-rate commonly used types of medications and medical supplies.
- Extend zero-rating to more food items.
- Eliminate GST from a greater number of residential telephone and electricity bills by raising the threshold for exemption.
- Use taxes from casinos for a special fund dedicated exclusively to assisting children with textbooks and school feeding programs.
- Repeal the 9% hotel tax and replace it with a 5% tourism development tax which will be placed in a special fund for tourism marketing, training and crime prevention.
- Provide incentives to lenders in the productive sector.
- Establish broad-based income taxation to keep rates low and implement a tax system that is fair and easy to administer.
- Implement a fair and just land tax.
- Allow cane farmers to purchase duty-free fuel during cane season.
- Stop the rapid increase in prices of basic food items.



TOURISM

The UDP recognizes that tourism is a tremendous growth sector in Belize, offering significant job opportunities and earning important foreign exchange. The UDP further recognizes the urgent need for a more equitable industry, for improved infrastructure and greater product development and marketing to ensure that tourism works for Belizeans while offering visitors a memorable experience they will want to repeat.



An Industry That Benefits All

To foster a more inclusive and equitable industry, the UDP will:

- Enable the participation of all stakeholders from the large investor to the small business person, from the urban centers to the rural communities, to spread the benefits of tourism more widely, by fostering projects and negotiating contracts that allow greater participation of all stakeholders.
- Strengthen the linkages with other sectors, such as transportation, agriculture, manufacturing, and education, thereby widening the scope of opportunities for participation.
- Promote overnight stays and longer visitation to ensure that a greater number of service providers and communities benefit.
- Deliver direct benefits from tourism tax revenues to the area where it is earned, including communities and protected areas.
- Include communities in developing the tourism product offerings in their areas.
- Promote greater participation of communities in owning and managing tourism businesses.
- Include communities and small operators in marketing, training and product development to assist them in providing a high-quality visitor experience.
- Develop and promote cultural attractions that are indigenous to specific local areas.
- Sponsor market distribution channels to benefit smaller and grass roots tourism operators and afford international market access and exposure to all stakeholders.

Create a minimum of 5,000 new jobs in the tourism industry

Growth with an Eye to the Future

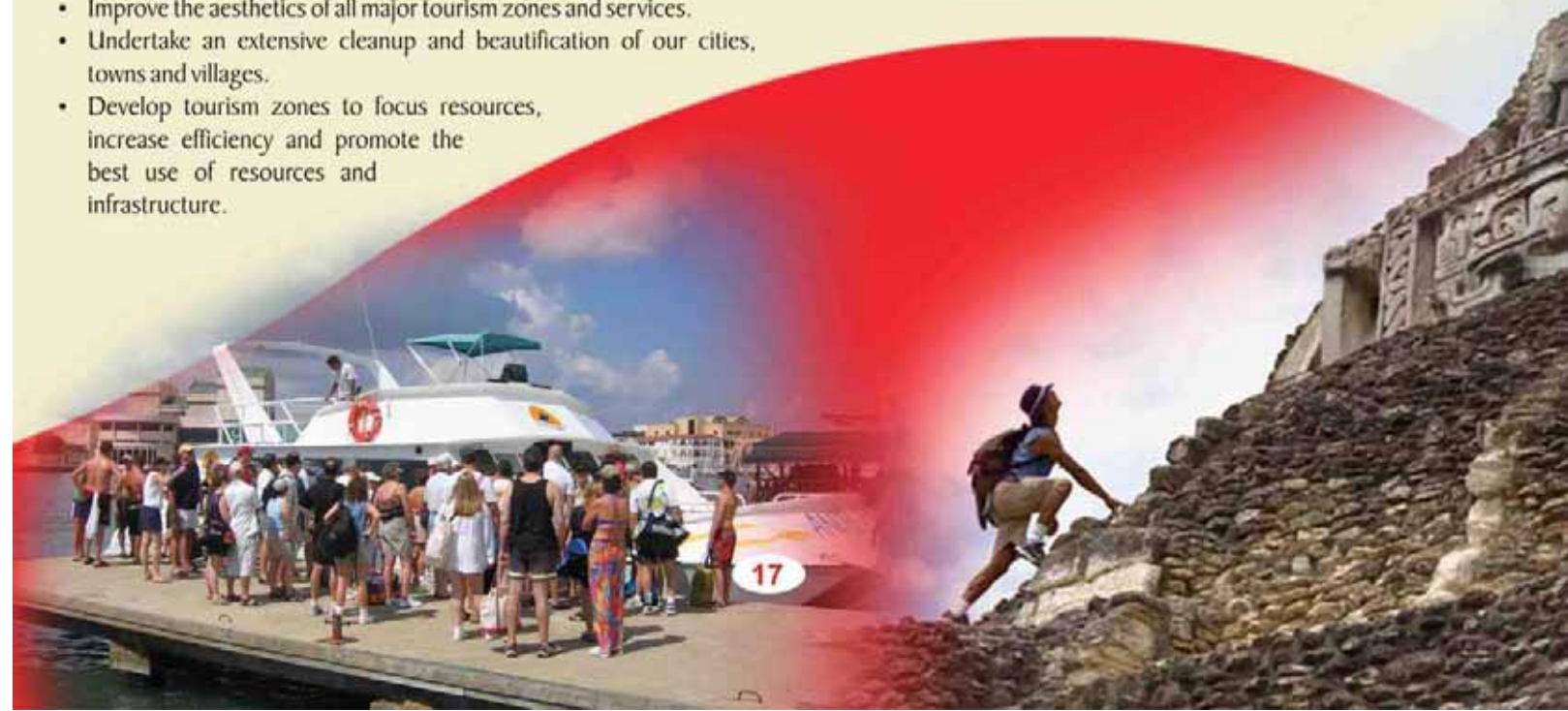
To stimulate and maintain industry growth, the UDP will:

- Create and implement a Tourism Master Plan as the framework for guiding governments' role in developing the industry, focusing on improving the tourism product locally while aggressively marketing Belize internationally.
- Develop and enhance the "Belize Brand" based on our unique Belizean heritage, focusing especially on our abundant natural beauty, adventure destinations, rich and diverse culture and history, and warm hospitality.
- Implement International Quality Standards for all product areas, focusing particularly on accommodations, entertainment, dining, and attractions, to ensure that Belize gains and maintains a competitive space in the international market.

Enhancing the Visitor Experience

To deliver a world-class tourism experience to our visitors, enhance our reputation and encourage repeat visitation, the UDP will:

- Embark on major infrastructure improvements for those destinations already attracting tourists as well as those areas identified as having the greatest potential for tourism development.
- Transform Belize City into a memorable destination, focusing specifically on cleanliness, entertainment, safety, aesthetics, zoning, transportation, retail shopping and heritage development.
- Improve the aesthetics of all major tourism zones and services.
- Undertake an extensive cleanup and beautification of our cities, towns and villages.
- Develop tourism zones to focus resources, increase efficiency and promote the best use of resources and infrastructure.



- Actively seek investors to enhance and diversify our tourism product and cater to a wider range of business, recreational and entertainment opportunities such as sporting events, concerts, international conventions and meetings, within the guidelines and priorities identified in the Tourism Master Plan.
- Expand curricula in vocational, secondary and tertiary level institutions to provide more opportunities for training and human development in tourism-related professions.

Protecting Our Natural Heritage

The UDP recognizes that Belize's natural beauty and cultural heritage are the foundations of our attraction to visitors and therefore the continued prosperity of the industry depends on maintaining our natural advantage. To protect our heritage for future generations of Belizeans and visitors, the UDP will:

- Ensure that the environmental laws and regulations are upheld at all times, and that stricter penalties are put in place for those that violate the law.
- Manage tourism development by explicitly zoning areas for tourism and recreational use in our national land-use planning initiatives.
- Manage visitor flow, taking into consideration the size and sensitivity of each destination, to ensure a pleasant and safe tourism experience and avoid damage to fragile sites.
- Provide development incentives to tourism projects that use "green" technologies and products and implement environmentally-sensitive practices in their operations.

AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES

Putting our farmers to work

The UDP recognizes that agriculture is a critical industry in Belize because it provides food security for Belizeans, accounts for 41% of total employment and 35% of Belize's gross domestic product, and earns significant foreign exchange. Unfortunately, the agriculture sector is vulnerable to natural phenomena and threatened by global competition. Our farmers have not been provided with adequate financing and support to thrive in this challenging environment.

The UDP will:

- Provide technical assistance and financing to the livestock industry and implement initiatives to develop its great potential for export.
- Revitalize the agriculture extension services to upgrade farm productivity and enhance product quality.
- Train our people in both basic and specialized skills such as farm management, food safety, irrigation and food processing.
- Improve the feeder roads, power and water supply to enhance productivity and competitiveness.
- Make affordable credit available to producers and marketers to support local production and export development.
- Strengthen BAHA and the Bureau of Standards to ensure food safety and the protection of livestock and crops from threats such as bird flu.
- Target foreign assistance for farmers to enable them to improve productivity and quality.
- Consolidate the fragmented ministries responsible for agriculture, forestry and fisheries into a single coherent and effective organization.
- Offer tax and development incentives to farmers who produce exports and import-replacement products.
- Participate actively in international discussions and initiatives that protect the earnings and livelihood of our citrus, sugar and banana farmers.
- Promote investment in aquaculture to increase our production and exports of seafood.
- Promote the expansion of land-based and caged fish farming.

Make affordable credit available to producers and marketers to support local production and export development.



NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT and the ENVIRONMENT

Planning for Today, Tomorrow and Future Generations

Belize's economic development, our daily lives and our future all depend on our natural resources. The quality of life of Belizeans today and in the future is directly impacted by the decisions made on the use of our forests, our lands, and our sea. The UDP is committed to reversing the recent trend of resource abuse, and ensuring that every Belizean can share in the economic prosperity offered by our natural riches and enjoy a safe and healthy life in a clean environment.

Safeguarding our natural wealth

As faithful and prudent stewards of our natural resources, the UDP will:

- Revive and update a National Land Use Plan and use this along with the National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan, as the cornerstone for any decisions made in respect to use of our land and our natural resources.
- Ensure that all decisions to sell, grant, lease or use any substantial segment of our national lands or other natural resources is guided by transparent and scientifically sound procedures and governed by principles of careful stewardship and responsible management.
- Amend legislation to minimize ministerial manipulation and strengthen technical and expert participation in decisions relating to resource distribution and use.
- Reverse recent corrupt decisions for sale or grant of national lands and redistribute lands to those that need house lots, small farms, and for productive use, or reinstate as protected areas where applicable.
- Give immediate title for house lots and small agricultural plots to first time applicants, on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Activate the National Protected Areas Commission, as stipulated under the National Protected Areas and Systems Plan, and ensure that any declaration or de-reservation of protected areas be processed through this Commission and in consultation with stakeholders, and be based on sound scientific justification and an objective evaluation system.

Our Natural Treasures

- Review Oil Production Sharing Agreements that currently permit exploration across the entire country's land and sea area, and reduce permits only to areas that have a high likelihood of resource presence based on scientific evidence, and with full consideration of and respect for their conservation status and the needs of surrounding communities.
- Ensure that any logging activity or wood production is conducted in accordance with a Sustainable Forestry Planning and Management Program, and all export of wood products meet required international standards.

Our Coastal Zone and Seas

- Enforce laws and regulations governing the fisheries industry to stop illegal fishing, the sale and distribution of illegal catch, and the illegal export of fisheries products.
- Educate developers and tourism operators on best practices for marine and coastal developments and provide incentives for them to adhere to environmentally friendly practices.
- Offer greater protection to commercial fisheries species whose populations are in dangerous decline.
- Update and implement coastal zone development guidelines to ensure that all coastal developments are consistent with Belize's laws, our international commitments and that they do not jeopardize the environmental integrity of the reef and coastal zone.



Our Environmental Health

- Implement a comprehensive waste management program that will reduce the health hazards and eliminate the eyesore created by landfills and dumpsites countrywide.
- Monitor and regulate water quality and agrochemical use to ensure clean drinking water for citizens and minimal impacts on human society and the environment.
- Provide incentives to homeowners, developers and businesses for the use of alternative energy sources and other green technologies and the implementation of environmentally friendly practices and amending legislation where necessary.
- Improve the EIA process to ensure greater expert and public participation in discussions and decision-making, to enforce compliance monitoring, and to address irregularities whereby major developments have found ways to bypass or undermine the process.
- Participate in regional and international initiatives that seek to monitor and address the impacts of climate change and sea level rise, with special consideration of Belize's vulnerability as a coastal state.
- Expand the EIA process to ensure the consideration of the cumulative impacts of multiple developments that are close to each other and whose combined impacts may pose an overwhelming threat to sensitive environments.

OIL AND ENERGY: Fueling our Development

The UDP believes that legally and morally the oil resources of Belize belong to and must benefit the people of Belize. Proper management of this industry will increase our standard of living, fund our children's education, create jobs and realize our citizens' dreams of a prosperous future. To ensure that Belizeans benefit fully from the development of the oil industry, the UDP will:

- Revisit existing exploration and production agreements to guarantee an equitable return to all Belizeans.
- Offer incentives to investors who want to add value to our oil by refining it in Belize and those who invest in the local production of gasohol and ethanol. This creates investment capital and provides jobs.
- Offer shares in a national oil company to ordinary Belizeans so that the masses of the people can collect dividends and have a personal stake in the national petroleum wealth.
- Encourage local investment in all energy-related developments to ensure that Belizeans benefit financially from national oil production.
- Create national expertise in all areas related to oil production and industry management by increasing the number of scholarships offered to Belizeans to study geology, petroleum and chemical engineering, international trade and environmental management.
- Ensure prudent and transparent management of the Petroleum Revenue Fund.
- Establish an Office of Energy responsible for regulating the petroleum industry.
- Secure accurate data on our proven and potential oil reserves based on internationally accepted standards.
- Provide the public with access to all exploration and production contracts.

The UDP realizes that energy is a driving factor in economic development and that petroleum fuels are currently the most important energy source for Belize. Furthermore, as our country develops, we depend increasingly on energy in our daily lives. To ensure that the energy sector is managed to support Belizean livelihoods and fuel development for the long-term, the UDP will:

- Formulate a National Energy Policy and develop a 25-year National Energy Plan that will ensure that Belize reduces its dependence on foreign energy supplies and develops our own energy security.
- Reduce taxes on fuel to lower fuel prices.
- Establish tax regulations to encourage the use of energy-efficient vehicles and equipment.
- Strengthen the Public Utilities Commission act and remove ministerial and governmental interference from its operations.

FOREIGN POLICY and TRADE

Protecting Belize by strengthening international relationships

As Belize confronts the complex arena of foreign relations in our globalized world, the guiding principle of our Party of putting the welfare of Belize and Belizeans first will enable us to navigate our foreign relations successfully and ensure that our international relations enhance and protect our national interests, economic, social and territorial at all times.



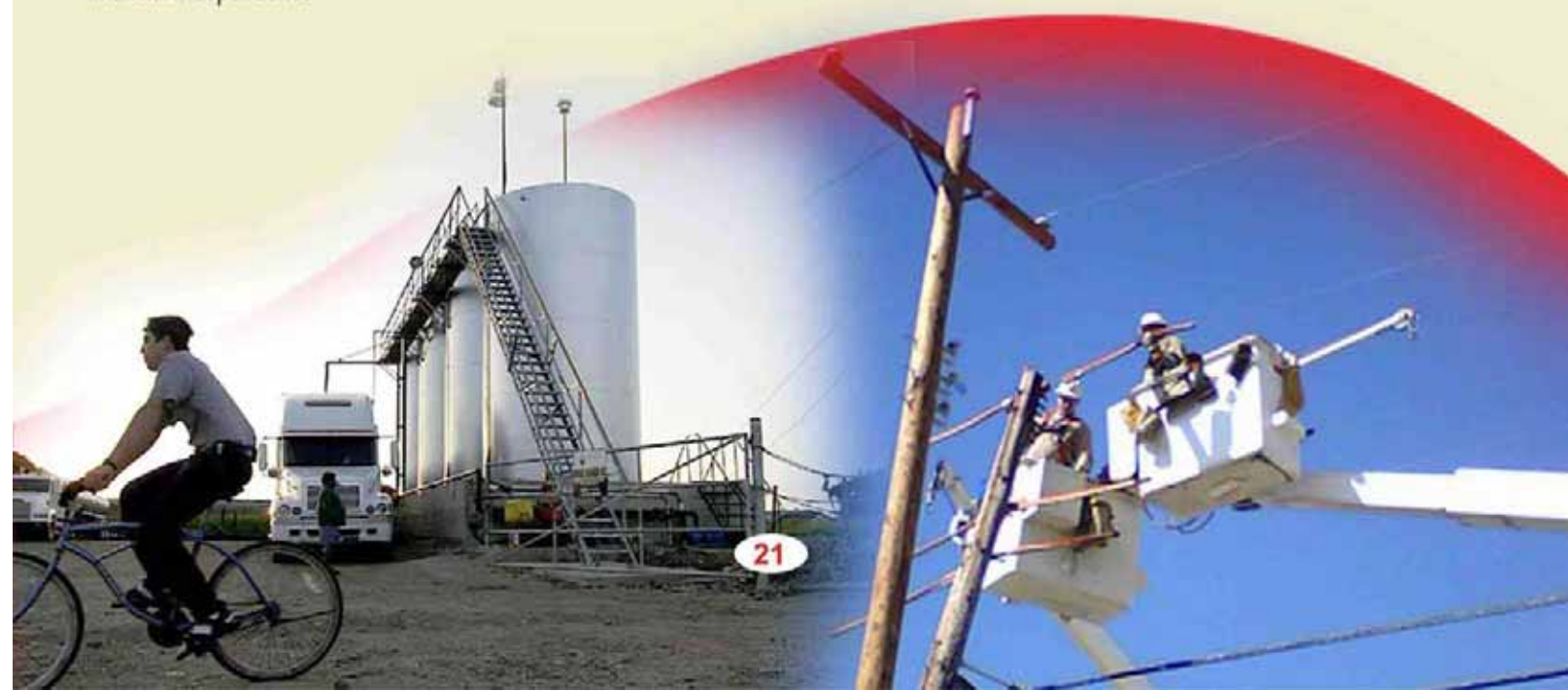
To this end, the UDP will:

- Work toward a peaceful and permanent settlement of the discredited and unjust Guatemalan claim to our Belizean territory, ensuring our territorial integrity and sovereignty over our historical borders are preserved
- Expand our cooperation agreements with our Central American neighbors to strengthen our hard-earned place as an independent State in the region.
- Strengthen our security forces by providing additional resources and training, and raise the morale of the BDF and the Police
- Strengthen regional security by closer cooperation and coordination with the countries of Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean
- Foster our economic, trade and social integration with the peoples of the Caribbean through our commitments to our CARICOM partners
- Enhance the close bonds of friendship and cooperation with our neighbor Mexico and our historical allies such as the United Kingdom
- Establish Diplomatic relations with all friendly countries important to Belize's safety and well-being
- Establish lobbying teams in USA and Europe to secure Belize's share of development funds and programmes
- Strengthen and consolidate the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to ensure the effective and efficient use of our human resources, ensuring that our foreign relations and foreign trade specialists at that Ministry and at our Diplomatic Missions abroad are properly trained and motivated to help our country navigate through the challenging times that lie ahead.

UTILITIES

Recognizing that the high cost of electricity and water is a major impediment to economic development, the UDP is committed to ensuring that all Belizean consumers receive the best possible service and rates from our major utility providers. The UDP will address the issues of utility cost, benefits and losses and encourage a truly competitive environment while constantly improving quality and efficiency and promoting an environment that will encourage the development of industry with a view to modern technology.

- Reduce the costs of electricity & telephone services and make the cost of value-added services internationally competitive.
- Restore and preserve consumer rights to correct the imbalance that currently exists in the utility industry.
- Restructure the Public Utilities Commission to restore the public trust and support, to empower the commission in support of its obligations to effectively regulate the utilities in support of the consumer and, the country of Belize.
- Empower of the Commission as a truly independent body, to carry out duties without circumvention by government or Private Entities.
- Promote alternate means of electricity generation through the improvement of existing systems and the exploration of the use of alternative fuels and renewable technologies.
- Strengthen and enforce regulations governing waste treatment and pollution control to meet international sanitation standards and maintain a healthy and clean living environment for all Belizeans.
- Adjust legislation and develop an incentive system that will encourage and reward the use of renewable technology for energy and water production and distribution.
- Provide education at all levels of society to improve awareness in energy conservation and the availability of renewable resources to encourage specific competencies in energy technologies.
- Review the current structure and management of the Belize Water Service to improve and increase distribution, maintain quality and achieve financial independence.





Information and Communications Technology

The UDP recognizes that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is an integral part of an enabling environment for business development and competitiveness in the global marketplace. Furthermore, ICT service provision is itself an economic activity that can be developed to create high-wage employment for trained Belizeans. The next UDP government will upgrade Belize's IT capacity and capability and develop the ICT services sector to offer greater economic opportunities to Belizeans by providing the necessary training, technology and environment for the citizens, the business sector and the public sector.

For the People

The UDP will:

- Integrate information technology into all aspects of the curriculum at the upper primary, secondary and tertiary school levels, supported by a cadre of qualified Computer Science teachers countrywide.
- Develop advanced skills training in ICT to prepare the workforce for participation in new ICT-based economic opportunities.
- Promote internship programs with industry leaders and educational institutions.
- Make capital available for ICT-related investments, through development banking initiatives.

For Business

The UDP will:

- Open up the telecommunications sector by addressing the regulatory issues plaguing it, removing obstacles to competition, and creating an enabling environment for greater investments in this sector.
- Enact legislation governing eCommerce in order to make Belize an attractive location for Internet-based businesses.
- Encourage opportunities for joint venture investments and initiatives with global partners in the ICT sector, to provide new economic opportunities and close the knowledge gap ("digital divide").
- Create ICT Parks to attract, promote and facilitate the development of ICT businesses and to create linkages between potential clients, firms, universities and training centers.
- Market and promote Belize internationally as an attractive location for ICT-based business by creating a secure, cost-effective environment offering state-of-the-art ICT infrastructure and a skilled workforce.

For Good Governance

The UDP will:

- Computerize key government services and use Internet technology to enable the public to access these services online, to realize greater efficiency, to improve transparency and to reduce the costs of service delivery.
- Establish a suite of electronic national databases including a national digital identification system tied into vital statistics, a national credit bureau, automated payment processing systems, and a national crime information database.
- Establish an Office of Information and Communications Technology to guide the integration of ICT into public sector operations and promote and enable its development in the private sector.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Building the Nation's Backbone

The UDP recognizes that a well-developed and properly maintained infrastructure system enables and promotes efficient economic growth. To build the nation's infrastructural backbone, the UDP will:

- Identify National Infrastructure Development Priorities in consultation with all major sectors of society, with an emphasis on areas that will result in the fastest economic growth and long-term job creation opportunities.
- Establish a National Infrastructure Project Management Authority, reporting directly to the Cabinet, that will provide oversight during project implementation to ensure that the people of Belize get value for money.
- Secure financing from World Bank for countrywide municipal infrastructure projects, including a new Belize City infrastructure project, to provide thousands of new jobs and spur economic development. Establish urban renewal initiatives in each municipality with a specific aim toward improvement in aesthetics, safety, security and recreation for Belizeans, while providing strong support for our growing tourism industry.
- Invest heavily in national road infrastructure to support the productive sectors, improve road safety, and support public transportation networks.
- Expand and improve water terminals and municipal airports to improve travel options to remote areas, reduce travel congestion, and improve air and water travel safety.
- Expand the budget for infrastructural maintenance to protect the investment and reduce the need for costly repair or replacement.
- Expand utility networks, through cooperation between government and utility companies, to areas that show promise for productivity.
- Strengthen legislation governing public utilities to ensure that their operations and goals are in harmony with the National Infrastructure Development Priorities and national development goals.



TRANSPORTATION

Belizeans deserve a reliable, safe, and affordable transport system that improves their quality of life. For a young nation like Belize, public transportation for commuting to school and for work and business is paramount to the upliftment of those communities that depend heavily on the bus service. Furthermore, an efficient delivery system reduces the cost of goods; especially from our farming communities.

Moving Belize and Belizeans in the right direction

The UDP will transform the transport system by:

- Taking immediate and firm action to limit the control of any one investor or set of investors over the public transport industry.
- Developing a National Transportation Plan that includes the participation of all sectors of transportation in order to deliver a reliable, safe and affordable system for the movement of people and goods, that will integrate road transport along with water and air travel.
- Providing special discounted rates for students and pensioners using public transport in all modes of travel.
- Introducing penalties to ensure that all buses, stick to posted arrival and departure schedules at all official bus stops along the major highways, as well as terminals.
- Upgrading bus stops, air and water terminals in partnership with bus, airline and boat operators to provide adequate protection, access and comfort for commuters.
- Introducing higher operating and safety standards for all public transport providers and private motor vehicle owners which will be enforced by traffic officers with active public participation.
- Establishing national standards and certify garages to inspect vehicles and issue road worthiness permits.
- Assessing the state of our roadways to provide information to the Ministry of Works for rehabilitation to safe standards.
- Improving the Transport Department data management system to provide more reliable data to track the performance of the industry.
- Ensure that the certification of operators of all public transport meets high standards so as to safeguard commuters.



**Fī U,
Fī Me,
Fī All a We...**



Vote **UDP**