

# The People's Rescue Plan



**A Strategic Vision to  
Rebuild and Empower**







**GASTON BROWNE**

*Dedicated To Serve  
and Empower*

**MORE JOBS-LESS TAXES-MORE INVESTMENTS**



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# THE MANIFESTO OF THE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA LABOUR PARTY, JUNE 2014



## “THE RESCUE IS ON”



**Mr. Gaston Browne**  
*Leader of The Antigua & Barbuda Labour Party*

### FOREWORD

The Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party is ready to rescue our country and equip our nation for success in the changing circumstances of the 21st century. Upon taking office, the ABLP will commence its 2014 governance with an emphasis on reversing the economic decline that Antigua and Barbuda has suffered, especially since 2009. The poor management of the economy by the outgoing UPP has caused the elimination of more than 10,000 jobs; failed to provide new jobs to youthful workers who are unemployed; caused hundreds of homes to be auctioned because of the inability of unemployed workers to pay mortgages; bankrupted hundreds of businesses; and spread misery everywhere.

On May 1, 2014, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published an assessment of the Antigua and Barbuda economy. In the statement, the IMF described the economy as “facing headwinds.” Forecasting rather anaemic economic growth for 2014, the IMF further declared that “risks to this outlook are high, stemming

in particular from the country’s unsustainable fiscal situation, and the large share of nonperforming loans in the banking system.”

In order to spur meaningful and sustainable economic growth, fix the fiscal shortfall, and attract new investments, the ABLP will place more than \$40 million back into the pockets of workers by eliminating personal income tax (PIT). The PIT was introduced by the inexperienced UPP government on All-fools Day 2005, following 28 successful years without such a tax. The ABLP has published a White Paper that explains fully the economic rationale for this tried and successful policy decision; the Paper enumerates the benefits that will flow to the

economy and the nation from the elimination of the PIT.

The ABLP will also set about to repair many government properties that have been either shuttered or are in an advanced stage of decline, because of the neglect by the outgoing regime. Not only will many construction jobs be created immediately, but the pride of ownership that should have been expressed in the management of the country’s real estate was sorely lacking. The ABLP will restore to greatness the Government House

**...the ABLP will place more than \$40 million back into the pockets of workers by eliminating personal income tax (PIT)....**



complex, including its fence, its burnt-out building and the decrepit roof and floor that make for disgrace. This will serve as a symbol of the new caring and progressive ABLP Government.

Many investments that failed to materialize during the 10 years of UPP Governance, will begin to flow almost immediately upon the ABLP assuming office. Several Memoranda of Understanding have already been signed by investors, willing to do business with an ABLP Government. Too many investors found the UPP leaders incompetent, sleepy, and without vision. These investors have agreed to commence their investment projects as soon as the ABLP wins the general election.

The inordinate delay, in holding general elections, is typical of the old regime. It is a clear demonstration that the UPP lacks quality leadership. The UPP fails to understand the damage which is inflicted on the Antigua and Barbuda economy and our workforce by the lateness in holding this vital, democratic, national undertaking.

The UPP's empty promises of new hotels and new manufacturing plants, bespeak the bankruptcy of imagination and of quality leadership. Voters are expected to believe that the UPP can achieve, if returned to office, the same promises it made in 2004 and 2009.

The ABLP brings to government a team of enlightened, competent and dynamic leaders who have excelled in their own disciplines. It is for this reason that we shall introduce a new style of leadership and management in Antigua and Barbuda. The old authoritarian leadership style that stifled growth and development will give way to key characteristics of Good Governance that include equity, effectiveness, mutual respect, consensus, transparency and accountability. Starting at the top, the new form of governance will lead to the flowering

of fresh and invigorated leadership, the sharing of insights and knowledge, and new ways of doing things. When this new approach cascades down to all social institutions, it will contribute substantially to the rebuilding of Antigua and Barbuda; and make our people more competitive in the global marketplaces of the 21st century.

The ABLP has a record of achievement and will place the shine back on Antigua and Barbuda. We will resuscitate the economy, create decent jobs, lower the levels of unemployment, reduce the cost of living, and deal a serious blow to crime.

In this manifesto, you will find in short, easy-to-read sections a host of strategies to place Antigua and Barbuda back on track. These include:- lowering taxes to unleash economic growth; putting businesses back in business; investing in tourism; restoring the cruise ship industry; recapturing the yachting market; protecting and growing our regional airline; building decent affordable housing; providing better health and education for our people; up-grading the social and physical infrastructures; developing a green economy; boosting agriculture, manufacturing and the cultural industries in order to diversify the economy; empowering our youth; and making our foreign policy work for Antigua and Barbuda.

We are ready! Ready to increase investments! Ready to rebuild! Ready to create jobs! Ready to lower taxes! Ready to improve the standard of living and the quality of life of our people!

By any measure, the ABLP is better for Antigua and Barbuda! The Rescue is on! We need your support to rescue Antigua and Barbuda from further decline and create a brighter future for all.

*Gaston Browne*





## SHORT-TERM BENEFITS FROM THE NEW ABLP GOVERNMENT

### (1) RAPID DELIVERY OF BENEFITS TO ALL

The ABLP intends to hit the ground running. Time is of the essence to rescue the economy from 10 years of UPP mismanagement and incompetence and to restore dignity and self-esteem to all the people of Antigua and Barbuda by ensuring they have work, money in their pockets and confidence in the future and in themselves. From the day we are sworn in, the ABLP will do the following:

- 1. Start the process to abolish personal income tax.** \$40 million dollars will be returned to the pockets of taxpayers.
- 2. Similarly, we shall abolish income taxes on the world-wide income of citizens and residents, thereby encouraging people to keep their money in the banks of Antigua and Barbuda** and creating greater opportunities for the financial services industry and for job creation.
- 3. All outstanding corporate and business tax assessments, as well as the EC\$500 monthly penalty ABST late filing fees, will be reviewed** with the intention of granting reasonable concessions to businesses.
- 4. Ship chandlers and other service providers will be charged only 10 per cent of imported products that they supply to yachts** and they will be able to warehouse supplies

for immediate delivery. They will immediately be relieved of courier costs and internal freight costs from importing countries.

- 5. We shall start the process of constructing 500 homes in 500 days,** in partnership with private and public sector organisations such as the Teachers, Nurses and Police Welfare Associations. The plans have been drawn up and work will begin within weeks, thereby creating 2,500 new jobs for contractors, architects, engineers, electricians, plumbers, masons, carpenters, labourers, and artisans.
- 6. We shall establish an economic residency programme** to attract more high net worth investors and to accommodate residents at Mill Reef, Jumby Bay and elsewhere, with ease of entry and the right to establishment.
- 7. We shall start repairing several Government buildings** at a cost of \$10 million dollars, creating thereby at least 100 new jobs directly in the building trades, and other jobs through spin-offs. The following Government-owned buildings will be immediately repaired:-
  - The Old Administration Building on High and Long Streets which houses the Ministry of Health.





- The Police Headquarters on American Road.
- The Justice Complex in Codrington, Barbuda will be completed immediately.
- The old Ministry of Education Building on Upper Church Street.
- The Multi-Purpose Centre at Perry Bay requires refurbishment. The building will be enhanced and sections of the car park will be paved.
- The Ottos School Building that has been shuttered will immediately be repaired and refurbished, relieving the crowded classrooms by providing more space to students.
- The Fence and burnt-out Buildings at the Government House complex will be tackled immediately.
- The unfinished State College Library and Classroom building will be completed by September 2015.
- The National Archives, the Newgate Street, St. John's Police Station, and the Ministry of Tourism Building will have their roofs repaired by Christmas 2014.
- The National Library will be completed and functional in 2014.
- Additionally, a programme to repair all School Bathrooms will be started immediately.





- **A Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) will be applied to Government pensions**, so that pensioners can be compensated for the cost-of-living increases they have endured.
- **The ABLP will reduce the price of Crown Land to EC\$2.50 per square foot** during 2014 in order to encourage acquisition and rapid construction.
- **The ABLP will provide vitamin supplements to pregnant mothers and toddlers** at Clinics, at no cost to parents.
- **Households owing APUA for electricity and water, up to 31 December 2013, will have their arrears reviewed** for concessions, providing that any monies owing for 2014 are first paid off.
- **Similarly, small businesses will also be considered for generous repayment terms** of their APUA arrears for electricity and water.
- **The ABLP will grant a waiver of work permit fees for CARICOM Nationals during the 2014 calendar year**, and will return to granting residency permits as soon as the Regulations are amended.
- **The ABLP will eliminate the \$5 weekly school meals fees, during 2014 in order to return about \$200 annually to all parents** whose children receive the meals daily.
- **The ABLP will write off arrears in outstanding fees owed to Mt. St. John Medical Centre by new mothers**, in order for the new citizens born there to immediately be granted the birth certificates which the law mandates shall be granted.
- **The ABLP will repeal the legislation that requires deductions of Medical Benefits payments from incomes of 60 to 70 year-old workers.**
- **The ABLP government will forge stronger relationships with companies that provide governments in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) with medical supplies**, so as to bring down the costs of medicines to the people, and to government operated institutions.

# READY TO REBUILD



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### **(3) HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ABLP PLAN TO MAKE THE ECONOMY VIBRANT AGAIN**

- **The St. John's Harbour will be transformed.** The harbour will be upgraded and further modernized with a marina, a yacht basin, a boardwalk, additional shops, a craft manufacturing tourism attraction, a business hotel, an entertainment zone and a museum.
- **The ABLP will revive St. John's,** overhauling its appearance as a clean, modern, vibrant city. The gaping holes in the sidewalks will be repaired.
- **We will reduce taxes on LIAT air fares from Antigua and Barbuda** which we are confident will boost revenues to the airline and to the economy of Antigua and Barbuda from an increase in visitors. We will also fight to ensure that the headquarters of LIAT remains in Antigua.
- **The garment sector will be resuscitated by diverting the manufacturing of uniforms, worn by myriad government and private sector workers,** to the industrious garment workers who clamour for this work. Hotels will be incentivized and encouraged to source linens and towels from local producers that will be able to deliver at cheaper prices to the benefit of both sectors.
- **Materials for manufacturing will be relieved of RRC,** ABST and Customs Duties upon entering Antigua and Barbuda; the tools and equipment required by manufacturers will be similarly treated.
- **A business-friendly environment will be created** by removing the requirement for importers to present certificates from Statutory Bodies and the Inland Revenue Department, before their goods can be released.
- **We will gradually lower corporate taxes** to the same level as St Lucia which has attracted a large number of corporations because of its lower corporation tax levels. This has brought increased fees and employment to St Lucia. Antigua and Barbuda must make itself competitive.
- **Water must flow through the pipes at all times,** except when an emergency causes a shut-off. The APUA's continuous suppression of water supplies belongs to another age. Commerce, government, homes cannot function without water, and healthy hand-washing cannot take place without potable water.
- **A Poverty Alleviation Fund will be created** in addition to the budgeted amount for the Board of Guardians, to assist the poor and the vulnerable; distribution is to be determined by means testing.



- **The ABLP will amend the laws governing the off-shore sector so that off-shore banks registered in Antigua and Barbuda, can on-lend funds to the Antigua and Barbuda development bank to help finance feasible projects by small and medium-sized businesses.**

The amended law will also allow off-shore banks to join in a consortium with interested on-shore banks to finance larger projects, particularly in tourism and especially for hotel expansion and improvements.

- **Barbuda will be made a Port-of-Entry with an immigration and customs division** established there particularly for the Yachting industry. Additionally, vessels supplying Caribbean countries with foodstuffs will be able to call directly at Barbuda, reducing both delivery time and costs, thus reducing the cost-of-living.
- **The ABLP Prime Minister will establish a Prime Ministerial Advisory Business**

**Council to advise on the ABLP's programme for the rapid development of the country.** The Council will be made up of representatives of all business organisations.

- **The ABLP will introduce legislation in Parliament to provide our nation's one living national hero, Sir Vivian Richards, with appropriate housing, transportation, household staff and a pension sufficient to meet his needs for life.**







# (4) **READY TO REBUILD ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

When the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party won the 1976 general elections after 5 disastrous years of the UPP's predecessor organisation, we rebuilt the country and made it into a robust and productive services economy that transformed the quality of life of the people.

The ABLP is ready to again re-build the economy which the United Progressive Party in two failed terms wrecked spectacularly.

In 1976, the ABLP government scrapped personal income tax. For 28 successive years, the economy of Antigua and Barbuda grew and grew, turning unemployment from 30% to 5% - many people had two jobs. We also created new economic opportunities that generated wealth in which all shared. Only in 1995, when Hurricane Luis destroyed three years of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 36 hours, did the economy fail to register growth. Thereafter, the ABLP turned catastrophe into opportunity by rebuilding the infrastructure for tourism and from it a fresh, spanking and highly competitive tourism product emerged. The economy returned to a steady growth path and Antiguan and Barbudans

enjoyed the highest per capita income and the most savings in the banks of all OECD countries.

Innovations of the ABLP that built modern Antigua and Barbuda were:

- **A vastly improved telecommunication service;**
- **A vibrant off-shore financial industry;**
- **The creation of Heritage Quay; and**
- **The facilitation of Redcliffe Quay.**

The construction of facilities for Cruise Ships brought a boon to the country and had established Antigua as a premier destination – a pinnacle from which our country has fallen as a consequence of UPP mismanagement, costing us lost opportunities, revenues and employment. The ABLP also brought the country a modern airport capable of taking the largest aircraft and thousands of tourists that boosted employment even more and brought in foreign exchange.





Today, although tourism accounts for almost 70 percent of our nation's GDP, it is in the doldrums – put there by a lack of vision by the UPP regime and the incompetence of its ministers. They have crippled the industry by overtaxing it and failing to provide the infrastructure that hotels need to attract visitors, expand and provide employment.

In the last five years, the loss of value in the economy caused more than 10,000 workers to lose their jobs, and triggered a decline of approximately 25% of Antigua and Barbuda's gross domestic product. The UPP were worse than any hurricane.

The tiny growth that occurred in 2013 did nothing to reverse the previous years of steady decline, and translates into continued high unemployment and bank foreclosures on

more and more homes.

The ABLP and the people of Antigua and Barbuda cannot allow this woeful situation to continue. Five more years of the UPP would push our country over the edge on which it now teeters dangerously.

***Team Labour is ready to grow the economy robustly,***

initiating many new projects that will bring millions of dollars of investment to the country. Competence, care, character and completing the unfinished will be our guide!

**We are ready to rebuild!**







## **(5) LOWERING TAXES TO UNLEASH OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH**

We have an economic plan for Antigua and Barbuda – a plan to lower taxes to stimulate strong economic growth and make Antigua and Barbuda more competitive in the global economy.

### **Income Taxes will be abolished**

We will abolish personal income tax on earnings in Antigua and Barbuda and world-wide for all citizens and residents. We pledge to all families that the money you work hard to earn will not be taxed. We want to make your lives easier to meet your monthly expenses and to set aside some of your money to extend your home, buy land, become a first-time home owner, buy a car, and/or send your children to school and university.

### **Businesses will benefit**

Over \$40 million annually circulating in the economy will help to expand businesses and to create more employment. So businesses will benefit from people spending more because they have more.

### **Lowering Corporation Taxes**

The ABLP will in the medium term lower the rate of corporation taxes to the same level as competitive Caribbean countries in order to attract new corporations – particularly companies that want a favourable environment to establish their headquarters operations.

### **New businesses will be attracted**

Because Antigua and Barbuda will have no income taxes and lower corporation taxes, it will immediately

become a more attractive location for investment because the absence of income taxes will lower the cost of doing business. It will also be an incentive for the attraction of top-notch people in a variety of fields who will be able to transfer knowledge to our local community and build up a strong body of expertise in fields as varied as tourism, banking, insurance, telecommunication, and information technology.

### **Making Antigua and Barbuda the Headquarters for regional businesses**

The absence of personal income taxes and lower corporation taxes will also become a strong magnet for regional businesses within the Caribbean Single Market and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States.

### **More savings in banks, more money for lending**

Because personal income taxes will be abolished for all citizens and residents on their world-wide income, a great incentive will be created for the Antigua and Barbuda diaspora to take up residence at home where their earnings from pensions, rents or other businesses abroad will be free of taxes.

By abolishing personal income taxes, we will not only stimulate our economy making it stronger, we will be declaring to the world that Antigua and Barbuda is again open for business and that will lift confidence in our existing business community and the investor community looking for a safe haven.



## **(6) RESCUING THE ECONOMY BY PUTTING BUSINESSES BACK IN BUSINESS**

Under the United Progressive Party (UPP), families in Antigua and Barbuda have suffered tremendously. Unemployment and hardship grip many workers. Poverty is everywhere. Former breadwinners are without an income, while the cost of their families' food, electricity and other necessities has escalated, beyond anything imaginable in 2004 when the UPP took office.

Team Labour is determined to get businesses back in business so that they can expand, be profitable and employ more people on a full-time basis. The ABLP will rescue the economy. We have the talent, the drive, the experience and the knowledge to turn the UPP's failures around.

### **No more need for burdensome certificates to clear goods**

To give all businesses an immediate boost, the ABLP will end the practice of requiring certificates from the Medical Benefits, the Social Security, the Board of Education and now the Inland Revenue, in order to clear goods from the Port. The loss of imports and duty, by several million dollars monthly, is a consequence of these government barriers. The steep increase in the cost of all imports is driven further upwards with each new barrier the UPP implanted.

### **Repayment plan of APUA arrears for small businesses**

To give small businesses breathing space in which to recover from the oppressive policies of the UPP that killed many of them and crippled others, putting people

out of work, the ABLP will provide an arrears repayment plan within their means as soon as possible.

### **A Fund for Small and Medium-sized Businesses**

The ABLP will create a Fund to be administered by the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank to provide capital for small and medium-sized business. In part, the funds will come from an amendment to the laws governing the off-shore sector so that off-shore banks registered in Antigua and Barbuda, can lend funds to the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank to help finance feasible projects by small and medium-sized businesses.

### **A Prime Ministerial Advisory Business Council**

The new ABLP Prime Minister will establish a Prime Ministerial Advisory Business Council to advise on the ABLP's programme for the rapid development of the country. The Advisory Council will be chaired by a person selected by the Chamber of Commerce, the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourist Association, the Antigua and Barbuda Marine Association, the Bankers Association and the Manufacturers Association. It will meet three times a year with the Prime Minister and such other representatives of sectors of the economy that are relevant at the time.

The ABLP will return Antigua and Barbuda to a fully business-friendly environment enabling workers and owners to prosper.





## **(7) INVESTING IN TOURISM: JOBS FOR THE PEOPLE**

Tourism contributes 70 percent of our country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP); it is the single largest employer of people in our country, and it is our biggest foreign exchange earner. Therefore, tourism is our most vital industry and it requires constant attention and care to ensure that it does not decline, but expands and grows.

In this connection, the role of government must be to provide every incentive and support for the industry to grow by providing the necessary infrastructure for hotels and other plants, by pitching taxes only at a level that makes the industry competitive with other destinations, and that attracts new investors. Government must also actively promote and market the industry in major tourism destinations.

**ABLP negotiated the significant tourism properties**

The significant hotel investments projects added since 2004 were negotiated during the ABLP's time in government. They include the Sandals Grand expansion project, the Verandah Hotel, the expansion of Blue Waters Hotel, the Hermitage Hotel, Coco Bay Hotel, among others.

### **UPP Promises – All Unfulfilled**

The UPP Minister of Tourism promised 29 new luxury hotels in 2004. None has materialized ten years later. The number of hotel rooms has therefore stagnated under the UPP regime to a little more than 3,000.

The unfulfilled 2004 promise by the UPP to add 1,000 new hotel rooms to the stock of luxury hotel rooms has not been achieved. The revised promise to achieve that objective in the term beginning in 2014, ending in 2019, is also an empty promise, an invention of the UPP's imagination.



### **UPP failed to provide services to Hotels**

The evident inability by the UPP regime to service the hotels that now operate has discouraged further investment in new or derelict properties. Anchorage Road is filled with craters. Non Such Bay Road is a disaster for staff vehicles, buses, trucks and delivery vans. Sand Haven Road does not exist, and is made worse when the salt pond overflows each year. The decrepit condition of Willikies Main Road leading to Long Bay, where millions of new dollars in investments projects are expected to be executed, attests to the unrelenting incompetence of the UPP regime.

### **Derelict small hotels are also part of UPP failure**

There are a number of derelict small hotels that have suffered from UPP neglect and failure. The small hotels built during the UPP tenure have experienced years of continuously unprofitable seasons. Built primarily to make the most of Cricket World Cup 2007, the small hotels have stagnated and even closed in the years since. They could have been operating, providing for a niche market of budget-conscious travellers which exists and thrives in other countries. The inability to persuade the owners of these derelict properties to rescue their deteriorating investments is primarily a consequence of their unlikely profitability. The taxing environment, in which hotels and other businesses function under a UPP regime, has made new properties less likely and existing properties impossible to upgrade. The ABLP will reverse those policies that have undermined economic growth.

## **Elements of the ABLP Plan for Tourism**

The ABLP will cause derelict hotels across Antigua and in Barbuda to be resuscitated, and put hundreds of construction workers to work on both islands, in a short time.

The ABLP, even in opposition, has succeeded in getting investors to sign Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) in which they have agreed to begin their tourism investment projects in earnest, shortly after the ABLP is re-elected.

### **Urban renewal as a tourism project for Point, Greenbay and Gray's Farm**

Contemplated alongside this development is the most substantial programme of urban renewal, targeting the areas of Point, the inner city core, Greenbay and Gray's Farm. It is the view of the ABLP that the standards of urban infrastructure — housing, sewage disposal, shopping, retail and entertainment facilities, roads and drainage — should not lag behind that of the modern tourism/cruise ship facilities and the supporting commercial centre whose establishment the ABLP will facilitate.

### **Firm tourism link to agriculture and fisheries**

The Ministries of Tourism and Agriculture will combine

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their efforts to exploit the potential for exports. This has great potential for high yields to farmers for agricultural products since the export of the products will take place at the point of origin. This approach to exports has already been done with the export of potable water from the port. The ABLP does not regard tourism as a success unless the benefits from the industry redound to the taxi drivers, the vendors, farmers, the retail sector, and other providers of goods and services.

### **Tourism investment will spur construction**

The ABLP will attract more than US\$1 billion worth of tourism investment projects over five years; they will cause new capital to be injected into the economy, spurring growth and hundreds of construction jobs. Construction, which has been all but dead under the failed UPP, will come alive. Contractors, masons, carpenters, sheet-rock experts, plumbers, electricians, roofers, painters, labourers, architects, engineers and other skilled tradesmen will experience an upsurge in new opportunities within months of a re-elected ABLP administration.

### **Strengthening marketing of Royal Antigua Resort**

An ABLP Tourism Department will strengthen the marketing of the Royal Antigua Resort in collaboration with the owner, and persuade that owner to invest the US\$12 million that the UPP promised would have been spent, on upgrading the nine-storied structure. The Royal Antigua Resort was built by the ABLP Government. It opened its doors in July 1988 when the first CARICOM Heads

of Government Conference was held in Antigua. The road leading to the hotel will be lit; the potholes will be fixed; the signage will be erected so that the Royal Antigua Resort can be returned to its glory.

### **Settling Half-Moon Bay**

The Half Moon Bay Hotel will be resuscitated under an ABLP administration, and the amazing folly of the UPP regime will be fixed. Each day, \$15,000 of taxpayers' hard-earned money goes towards the interest payments alone, while a huge debt of US\$40 million dollars hangs over the nation. The ABLP will clean up the mess that the UPP has foisted on us.

### **Relaxing the entertainment code in a modern age**

The ABLP will amend the law that closes, at midnight, the bars, nightclubs and other establishments that provide drinks. The antiquated law was fashioned during an early period of our history and for a different time. The ABLP will establish a Commission to determine whether a license will be issued to an establishment desirous of selling beverages. Noise abatement, cleanliness, and other conditions of operation will be determined by a single entity rather than the hodgepodge of institutions that unfairly increase the expense to these establishments.

### **Incentivising the Tourism industry; marketing it vigorously**

The ABLP is perfectly aware that the government has responsibilities to the tourism industry which is the biggest employer and largest foreign exchange earner for our nation. To expand it, improve it, and make it more competitive, government has to play



a meaningful role. The ABLP undertakes to orient all its diplomatic missions abroad to full participation with our tourist offices in marketing our country's product. We also undertake to provide financial resources to promote the country in major destinations – traditional and non-traditional ones. The ABLP intends to be a full and sharing partner with the private sector in putting Antigua and Barbuda firmly back on the tourism map of the world.

### **Reducing taxes on Air Fares to make Antigua and Barbuda more competitive**

Tourism is akin to exports. Just as no sensible country would tax its own exports making them more expensive and far less competitive in a global market, similarly taxing air fares makes tourism to Antigua and Barbuda more expensive and less competitive. If these taxes on air fares were reduced – especially for travel on LIAT – we would boost our capacity to compete. The ABLP will address this issue in a comprehensive manner and in collaboration with the Hotels and Tourist Association and the airlines serving our country.

### **Easing visa restrictions and opening up new markets**

China and India are now two of the largest economies in the world with tens of thousands of billionaires and hundreds of thousands of middle-class persons who are now global tourists. The ABLP will eliminate the need for visas from these two countries although persons entering the country will have to satisfy all the requirements of tourists from Europe and North America.

Recognising the growing wealth in Latin America, the ABLP will also explore direct flights to nearby Latin American destinations such as Brazil and Venezuela, to take advantage of the proximity of those countries and the potential they offer for increased tourism, more foreign exchange and more jobs.

### **Relations with Tourism Organizations**

The ABLP will restore the good and credible relations with our industry partners; these would include the tour operators, travel agents, hotel operators, cruise ship operators, the Antigua & Barbuda Marine Association (representing the yachting industry), the FCCA, the CHTA and the CTO. The UPP has not acted in a manner that enhances the relationships so vital in advancing tourism growth in Antigua and Barbuda.







## **(8) CRUISE SHIP INDUSTRY: RESTORING OUR STANDING, EXPANDING EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS**

The ABLP administration facilitated and developed the Cruise Ship and Yachting Industries to diversify our economy and to create more avenues of employment for the people of Antigua and Barbuda. At the same time, we recognised that to sustain these industries, the government had to support them with the infrastructure and services that they needed. The ABLP government worked hand-in-hand with the Cruise Ship companies and Yachting operators to make Antigua and Barbuda desirable and attractive for their business.

In yachting, Antigua became the Mecca of the Caribbean and Sailing Week was firmly established on the calendar of the global yachting community. This has now all changed, Yachts have opted for other ports and Antigua and Barbuda cannot accommodate the larger cruise ships that go elsewhere. Jobs and revenue are adversely affected and the expansion that should have occurred is lost.

### **ABLP built existing facilities; UPP neglected them**

The UPP has failed to exploit the growth opportunities in the cruise ship industry. Unlike the UPP, the ABLP, cognizant of the expansion of the cruise industry, built the Heritage Quay pier in 1989 to accommodate the class of vessels in the industry at the time. In 2001, again in anticipation of further expansion of larger vessels coming on-stream, the ABLP dredged the harbour and built an additional pier at Nevis Street to accommodate the largest vessels in the trade at that time.

Antigua and Barbuda then was the only English-speaking Caribbean island with four dedicated cruise ship berths. In terms of infrastructure for cruise ships, we were ahead of Jamaica, St. Thomas, St. Maarten, St. Kitts and Barbados in 2003. These destinations have taken measures to improve their infrastructure to accommodate







the larger class of vessels that have come into the trade, during the UPP's tenure. The UPP has failed to put the necessary infrastructure in place to remain competitive and has therefore surrendered Antigua's leadership in the cruise industry to other Caribbean neighbours. With that our country lost jobs and revenue.

### **ABLP will dredge to attract larger vessels: vendors and taxis to benefit**

Immediately upon becoming the Government, the ABLP will make significant investment in the dredging of the St John's harbour to accommodate the Oasis Class vessels, the largest class of vessels today. The inner harbour will be dredged

to a minimum of 35 feet. Additionally, the ABLP will look at implementing a Comprehensive Harbour Development Programme, starting from the Fisheries Complex all the way to the Deepwater Harbour. This will create opportunities for additional cruise ships, luxury yachts, high-end shopping outlets, and high-end apartment residential areas and a hotel – all of which will create more jobs, bring in more foreign exchange and strengthen local businesses that will provide goods and services.

Provisions will be made for adequate parking facilities and improved logistics to accommodate the efficient flow of traffic for commuters, taxis and buses. This will give taxi drivers more income and better arrangements for picking-up and dropping-off a larger number of passengers.







## **(9) RECAPTURING THE YACHTING MARKET: REGAINING ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA'S PREMIER POSITION**

Antigua and Barbuda, during the UPP regime, has not experienced growth in the yachting industry for which it has the potential. English Harbour, Falmouth Harbour, Jolly Harbour, and Crabbs Marina are not only among the most attractive Yachting Basins, but they used to be the preferred docking facilities for many luxury yachts.

The Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party Government will build upon the reputation of these harbours and aggressively exploit their potential for greater growth.

### **Plans for Barbuda and English Harbour**

The ABLP will make Barbuda a Port-of-Entry for the country. This will allow yachts to go directly to Barbuda and to provision there, creating opportunities for Barbudans to provide goods and services and also to develop skills in services that yachts need while they are in harbour. Immigration and Police outposts will be especially designated for the Barbuda port.

The ABLP will also make English Harbour a limited duty-free zone in order to attract yachts that are being lost particularly to St. Maarten. The yachts will be able to provision at English Harbour at prices that are competitive with St. Maarten.

### **Relieving costs to Ship Chandlers and other Yacht suppliers**

Ship chandlers and other service providers will be charged only 10 per cent of imported products that they supply to yachts and they will be able to warehouse supplies for immediate delivery. They will immediately be relieved of courier costs and internal freight costs from importing countries.

### **Yachting industry must be hassle-free**

To be competitive with other destinations, the yachting industry in Antigua and Barbuda must become 'hassle-free'. The ABLP will improve the efficiency of the clearance and processing of yachts by the Port Authority and Customs Department, using state-of-the-art technology.

### **Security in the Yachting Season**

To provide an extra level of comfort and to make Antigua and Barbuda a more desirable destination, a full security task-force will be deployed in the English Harbour, Falmouth Harbour and Jolly Harbour areas throughout the yachting season.

### **The problem of fuel**

The ABLP is keenly aware that many yachts have opted out of Antigua and Barbuda because the regulations in Europe require them to use a quality of fuel not available in Antigua. This problem will worsen from January when the US will also insist on a lower level of sulphur content. The ABLP will deal with this issue immediately by sourcing fuel for the yachting industry and establishing arrangements for supply through a local dealer.

### **Training for workers in Tourism and related businesses**

The ABLP will provide free training for those professionals who frequently come into contact with visitors, including the passengers, crew and owners of yachts. The training would encompass lessons on our history, our culture, and superior interpersonal skills and communication. This minimum training will first be extended to taxi drivers, vendors, commuter bus drivers, store clerks, restaurant workers, workers in the entertainment industry and the hotels.



## **(10) LIAT MUST BE PRESERVED: LIAT PEOPLE ARE OUR PEOPLE**

The ABLP maintains its firm position that LIAT is of vital importance to tourism for all the countries it serves. The ABLP Government will ensure that LIAT's headquarters remain in Antigua which has been its home since its founding in 1956.

### **A LIAT maintenance facility in Antigua**

The ABLP Government will work for the establishment of a maintenance facility in Antigua and Barbuda to provide repairs and maintenance of the LIAT fleet of ATR aircraft that cannot now be provided in the Caribbean. It is evident that the most appropriate place for the facility is at the headquarters of the airline in Antigua.

### **Helping to make LIAT competitive**

Several governments in the Caribbean – including the UPP regime in Antigua and Barbuda – apply taxes to air fares on LIAT. This has undoubtedly led to the reduction of the number of passengers travelling on

LIAT and the decline in its revenues. As a further assistance to LIAT and to increase its revenues so that it can deliver better service to the region and maintain its standing, the ABLP will reduce taxes on LIAT air fares.



### **LIAT's vital service**

LIAT provides a vital service to the Caribbean as a whole. It is the bridge between Caribbean countries that allows them to do business with each other and to keep the people of our Caribbean civilisation connected. It is also the link for tourists visiting islands without international airports and for tourists on multi-destination visits – all of which helps to keep Caribbean economies alive. An ABLP government will engage with other shareholder governments, the management and the several trade unions that represent LIAT workers to devise ways of improving the airline's vital service, maintaining the jobs of its employees and providing the quality of service for which passengers pay.





## (11) FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT:

# SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITIES, GROWING OUR ECONOMY

The success of the several Labour Party administrations in the past was brought about by our deliberate policy to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). Sir Arthur Lewis - the Nobel Prize-winning Economist, who championed the advantages of FDI in capital, technology and skills transfer - provided the philosophical underpinning for the Labour Party's years of success. His photograph is displayed on the \$100 bill as a reminder of his important lessons in economic development.

### **FDI fell drastically under the UPP**

Under the UPP, the level of FDI has declined steadily, leading to very little construction, no new jobs, and no increase in revenues to the Treasury or in foreign exchange. Indeed the failed Baldwin Spencer leadership has turned away investors. Spencer frequently fell asleep during presentations by investors.

### **Gaston Browne inspires business confidence**

By contrast, ABLP leader, Gaston Browne, is an alert, successful, former banker with a keen sense of the principles of doing business, of risk-taking, of raising capital and the need for investors to have confidence in the government of the country

in which they are investing. Gaston Browne's capacity to perform mathematical calculations that the UPP Prime Minister finds befuddling, conveys confidence and self-assurance. In China, the USA, the UK, Canada and everywhere he has encountered investors, the ABLP's Political Leader has impressed them with his skills, his knowledge, his forthrightness and his fairness.

### **Even in Opposition, ABLP has secured commitments for FDI**

Over the last three years in anticipation of becoming the government, ABLP representatives – particularly Gaston Browne – have travelled to meet potential foreign investors to interest them in sustainable projects in Antigua and Barbuda that would give them fair returns on their investment while energising and growing the economy.

### **Projects will be launched immediately**

Immediately upon assuming office, a Task Force for implementing all investments will be established in the Office of the Prime Minister to fast-track and implement FDI and local projects. Capital cannot be left idle. Once businessmen identify capital it has to be used immediately to give returns or they won't invest.

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## 12) NATIONAL DEBT:

# *Cleaning up the UPP mess*



No country can expect to grow without incurring some debt but that debt should be serviceable. The UPP borrowed lavishly to finance unsustainable, vanity projects that made no contribution to the economy, created no new employment, and gave no returns on investment. EC\$2 billion of debt later, the UPP has nothing to show for all that money, and while the Treasury is laid bare, there is not a single new asset to compensate for the mountainous debt.

The ABLP believes that prudent borrowing, especially for tangible projects that can pay for themselves, differs markedly from the reckless borrowings of the UPP during the past ten years. Debt has never accumulated so rapidly in the history of Antigua and Barbuda. When the real debt figure is taken into account, it is over 100% of our GDP.

### **No loan documents taken to parliament by the UPP**

The UPP government that promised transparency and accountability has not brought a single loan document to Parliament in ten years, contrary to the law. All

UPP borrowings are shrouded in secrecy, and no one knows where the money went.

### **UPP scuttled meetings of the Public Accounts Committee**

The UPP representatives refused to attend meetings of the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee to account for spending. The regime refused to provide any details of spending and borrowing, and scuttled meetings by deliberately not turning up in sufficient numbers for a quorum to be constituted.

### **Debt now in excess of \$3.1 billion**

Over the the past five years, the total borrowings by the UPP regime reached \$3 billion dollars. Debt under the ABLP was accumulated over 28 years and only after 6 hurricanes in 5 years – two of them in one year. Further, the ABLP government operated without personal income tax and government sales tax. By contrast, the UPP collected well over \$2.5 billion more taxes than the ABLP and had no major hurricane with which to deal.





In actual fact, by excluding several large outstanding debts, the UPP has understated the National Debt by almost \$1.1 billion dollars. The indebtedness of the Government is more likely to be in excess of \$4 billion dollars. These include debts to the private water company, debt to Antigua Power Company, debt to West Indies Oil Company, debt to Petro Caribe and the \$200 million Credit Suisse Airport Expansion loan.

### **A debt audit Committee of Experts will be established**

The ABLP will establish a Committee of Experts to audit the debt that the UPP has accumulated and to identify savings and efficiencies in all areas of government so that we can reduce government debt and start delivering better value for money and sustainable Budgets for the future.

### **Cleaning-up the UPP mess**

The UPP cannot clean-up this mess that they have created. Left to them, the situation will get worse. That is why 5 more years of the UPP would be five more years of catastrophe. To meet debt repayment obligations, they will dismiss public servants, institute a wages and salaries freeze on the whole country, impose new and more taxes on the people and business, and cut back on pensions and social welfare projects.

The answer is not the UPP formula of more and new taxes and laying-off workers. The real solution is to grow the economy, attract investment, get projects started immediately and generate funds to meet

debt obligations.

Re-negotiation of UPP's dubious debts and cuts in wasteful UPP spending

When the ABLP is returned to power, the dubious debts incurred by the UPP will be re-negotiated to provide for lower interest rates and longer maturity periods. Further, such cuts in government spending that will be made will be directed at wasteful, inefficient and unsustainable projects imposed by



# 500

## (13) HOUSING:

# HOUSES IN 500 DAYS

The ABLP has promised to build 500 homes in 500 days. It is a promise that the ABLP intends to start implementing immediately. The appalling failure of the UPP's several housing projects will continue to weigh down our national debt, with a slim likelihood that few of the units will be occupied anytime soon. The ABLP will be required to straighten out the housing mess, with its accompanied borrowings, that the UPP imposed.

### **Tackling overcrowding in Point and Grays/Green communities**

The ABLP will tackle the crowded housing arrangement prevalent in the Point and the Grays/Green communities. Incentives, to enable improved sewage and other infrastructural advancements, will be offered to residents. The ABLP intends to fix the problems associated with the two communities which the UPP has completely neglected for 10 years.

### **Partnership Arrangements**

The ABLP will create new housing and tackle crowded neighbourhoods through a number of schemes which will include partnerships with:

(a) Associations such as the Police Association, the Nurses Association and the Public Service Union;

(b) Unions representing private and public sector workers; and

(c) Alliances or co-operatives of private sector workers.

These arrangements will be linked to a consortium of banks and insurance companies in providing mortgages at affordable rates of interest.

### **Construction industry will benefit; jobs will be created**

Building 500 homes in 500 days will immediately create hundreds of jobs in the construction industry. Additionally, we shall include an optional solar energy option, enabling new home owners to pursue this tried and proven mode of energy conservation and cost reduction. An ABLP Government will also introduce a National Home Repair Program targeting those in society who, with the best of intentions, will never on their own be able to attain minimum accepted living standards.

This initiative will put our builders, engineers, architects, masons, carpenters, plumbers and artisans back to work. Up to 100% financing will be provided for these homes.





## **(14) VIOLENT CRIME:**

# CURBING A MASSIVE GROWTH AREA UNDER THE UPP, MAKING OUR PEOPLE SAFE



The UPP is of the view that there is no relation between poverty and crime. Consequently, it has not devised a crime-fighting strategy that takes into account unemployment, illiteracy, the need for skills and training, and employment to earn liveable incomes. Instead it blames others. Meanwhile, the use of handguns, against the population and our tourists, threatens to undermine our economic well-being further.

### **Elements of the ABLP plan to curb crime**

The ABLP will establish and implement a comprehensive and new crime-fighting strategy. It will not be piecemeal but proactive and holistic, taking into account the target audience, the link between poverty and crime, the literacy and numeracy skills that defendants failed to learn, and rehabilitation for those incarcerated.

The ABLP will encourage the formation of Community Councils to work with the schools, to help reduce crime, to name streets and number the houses, to work with the youth groups, and to rely upon the elected and unelected politicians to

bring together the disparate groups.

### **Regulating gun licences, combatting smuggling**

A Three-person Committee will be established to determine who will be granted a gun. The Committee will comprise the Commissioner of Police, the Head of the Military and a third person selected by the Minister of National Security. A register of all licensed gun holders will be held, regularly reviewed and submitted to Parliament by the appropriate Ministry.

The ABLP is also cognizant that guns are smuggled into the country. This is a problem for which the ABLP government will seek assistance from international agencies to make our borders more secure. We will introduce scanning and other surveillance equipment at ports of entry to curb reduce importation of contrabands such as arms and ammunition.

### **Duty-Free treatment for security equipment**



Duty-free and tax-free treatment of all security equipment will be offered to home owners, businesses and security firms.

### **Strengthening the Police Force**

The ABLP Government will ensure that the members of the Police Force continue to receive specialized training and that they are provided with the detection technology consistent with the age in which we now live. Fingerprint and other crime-detection technologies that are computer-based will replace the antiquated systems that are relied upon by our hard-working police detectives. The Police will be treated as the professionals that they are, to be reflected in their remuneration package. **We will introduce in Parliament the Jeremiah “Dodds” Joseph Act. This will allow spouses of police officers who have served more than 30 years, to receive a portion of the officer’s pension for rest of thier life.**

The ABLP will increase the number of uniformed officers on the beat in communities as well as significantly increase routine traffic checks and the number of patrol units on the highways of Antigua and Barbuda.

### **Beefing-up anti-drugs education**

The ABLP recognises that possession of guns and resultant crimes are linked to drug abuse and addiction. Therefore, while it implements all the other preventative measures outlined in this section, the ABLP will also intensify anti-drugs education in every community directly and through the use of traditional media and social media.

### **Reducing poverty and unemployment**

Crime and violence are inextricably linked to poverty. The ABLP will reduce poverty and unemployment through the various measures, projects and programmes that we have identified and elaborated in this manifesto.

### **Strengthening Existing Laws and Increasing Penalties**

An ABLP Government will ensure that local laws and regulations are kept apace with regional and international practices and provisions. We shall also increase penalties in gun related crimes and other acts of violent crime.







## **(15) COST-OF-LIVING:**

# **EASING THE STRAIN ON FAMILIES**

The cost-of-living in Antigua and Barbuda has risen year after year under the UPP regime. Combined with the high rate of unemployment that the UPP also visited upon people, poverty in our country is now greater than it has ever been. Families now have to make choices between good and services that were once considered essential. Sadly, begging has become commonplace and so too has vagrancy and homelessness.

### **Immediate measures for relief**

As one of the first items of business, the ABLP will bring relief to ever consumer, every household and every business by the following actions:

- **A Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) will be applied to Government pensions**, so that pensioners can be compensated for the cost of living increases they have endured.
  - **The ABLP will provide vitamin supplements to pregnant mothers and toddlers at Clinics, at no cost.**
  - **Households owing APUA for electricity and water, up to**
- **31 December 2013, will have their arrears reviewed for concessions**, providing that any monies owing for 2014 are first paid off.
  - **Small businesses will also be considered for concessions on their APUA arrears for electricity and water**, under the condition that all payments due in 2014 are first paid off.
  - **The ABLP will eliminate the \$5 weekly school meals fees**, during 2014 in order to return about \$200 annually to all parents whose children receive the meals daily.
  - **The ABLP will review all arrears in outstanding fees owed to Mt. St. John Medical Centre by new mothers**, in order for the new citizens born there to immediately be granted the birth certificates which the law mandates shall be granted.
  - **The ABLP will repeal the legislation that requires deductions of Medical Benefits payments from incomes of 60 to 70 year-old workers.**



- The ABLP government will conclude arrangements to bring down the cost of medicines.

These measures will have an impact on the cost-of-living for many citizens and residents in the short term. But for the medium and longer term, the ABLP will implement other measures which include remodelling the sources of energy

to reduce the cost of electricity and water and removing duties on essential food imports. We will also cut wasteful projects of the UPP regime and strive to reduce the GST on food, footwear and some services.

Together with our plans for immediate investment and job creation, the ABLP measures outlined here will bring down the cost-of-living and provide our people with the better quality of life they have been denied by the UPP.



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## MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM MEASURES

### (16) **BUILDING A HEALTHY NATION: PROVIDING SERVICES PEOPLE NEED**

#### **THE UPP DISASTER**

One of the big tragedies of health care under the UPP is the wonton recklessness exhibited by the UPP government at the Mt. St. Johns Medical Centre. The Mt. St. Johns Medical Centre was conceived, designed and built by the ALP administration amid great protest from the then UPP opposition. After holding up the project for 3 years, The UPP finally opened MSJMC in a watered down version, farming out the management to a start up foreign company. Incidentally they've now farmed out ownership of the cancer center to another foreign entity.

The chronic lack of basic medical and surgical supplies as well as life saving drugs compounded by intermittent and chronic non functional equipment along with a shortage of specialty physicians and surgeons (some of which are actually available on island) have led to an abysmal level of care, which has resulted in widespread morbidity and mortality. An entirely ill equipped and ill-staffed emergency room continues to result in inadequate management of critically ill patients resulting in poor outcomes.


The CAT scan at the hospital has not been working for months. The operating room was completely nonfunctional for well over a year during which time

only emergencies were performed in the delivery room of all places. The MRI was non functional for years. The lab provides only basic blood tests and even these machines are chronically nonfunctional. Many types of surgery including laparoscopic surgery is not available at MJS even though the expertise is available in Antigua and the expertise is available in Antigua.

#### **ABLP PLAN TO FIX MSJMC**

This has resulted in the need for many Antiguans and Barbudans to seek care privately in Antigua and abroad at costs that many cannot afford. The ABLP commits to finishing what it started.

- ABLP will ensure that the hospital is stocked at all times with the necessary drugs and supplies needed to deliver first class care.
- ABLP will reassess the state of diagnostic equipment at the hospital and through engagements of service contracts will ensure the smooth functioning of the diagnostic equipment.
- The emergency room will be revamped and staffed with qualified emergency room physicians with an emphasis on quality



assurance in the emergency room.

- The laboratory will be outfitted with machinery necessary to perform a wide array of tests needed in a modern health care environment. Here too, service contracts and reagent contracts will ensure continuous availability of tests.
- ABLP will ensure that procedures not currently performed at MSJ but that are available in Antigua will be made available at the MSJMC.
- ABLP will ensure that all medical and surgical expertise available in Antigua will also be available at MSJ.
- Mothers who gave birth to citizen children at MSJMC but who have not yet received a birth certificate because of outstanding debts will be able to immediately acquire the certificate as the law dictates.
- Working with teaching hospitals abroad ABLP will institute continuous postgraduate overseas specialty nursing training in specialty areas such as emergency room nursing, operating room nursing and ICU nursing.
- ABLP will ensure that a competent, experienced management team directly hired by the hospital board will be put in place and held accountable for the smooth and efficient running of the

hospital.

- ABLP will ensure that comprehensive and integrated contemporary cancer treatment including surgery; radiotherapy, chemotherapy, biological therapy, hormonal therapy and interventional radiology modalities such as percutaneous tumor ablation will be available to all Antiguan and Barbudans.

## Health Care for Barbudans

The ABLP government is committed to converting the Hannah Thomas hospital into an appropriately sized and serviced hospital, which will be equipped and staffed in order to provide primary and secondary health care for all Barbudans. This will include a well appointed operating room where most emergencies and basic operations will be performed. The Outpatient Clinic will be upgraded and outfitted to provide a high level of outpatient services to Barbudans.

## Mental Health

The ABLP will a new and contemporary Psychiatric Inpatient and Outpatient Hospital. For too long in Antigua and Barbuda, the issue of mental health has been stifled with affected individuals finding it difficult or impossible to access care.

Mental illness is an illness not a stigma and must be addressed with the same importance that physical illnesses are dealt with. The ABLP will ensure that the

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new psychiatric hospital is adequately staffed with psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors and social workers and that this widespread and very important disease is managed in a modern and effective manner.

### **Upgrading clinics to serve the people**

The ABLP will select those clinics that serve larger communities and villages in the more densely populated areas, and upgrade the services offered at these locations in order to relieve some of the burden on the MSJ emergency room.

### **A pick-up and delivery service for the elderly and confined**

The ABLP will introduce a medication pick-up and delivery service for elderly and confined villagers living outside of St. John's, who require prescriptions to be filled by the Medical Benefits Scheme.

### **Free Vitamin food supplements for pregnant women**

The ABLP has already entered into an arrangement with a philanthropic organization to provide World Bank and US Drug Administration approved vitamins to pregnant women and toddlers. The ABLP program of free vitamins will be available to all pregnant women and toddlers,

### **Curbing Drug Addiction**

The ABLP is determined to rescue those of our people who have turned to drug and alcohol abuse. The ABLP government will seek the advice of the established, privately-owned drug rehabilitation centres in Antigua

on how best to establish a public-private partnership to encompass an appropriately staffed centre in order to rehabilitate persons willing to be treated.

### **Tackling the challenges of HIV/AIDS**

The ABLP administration will intensify efforts to identify carriers and to provide the antiretroviral drugs required to fight this disease. No one suffering from the disease need fear that they would be denied treatment as many of them do now. Everyone in our society – especially the poor and vulnerable - must be educated to understand the fatal risks to which they expose themselves by unprotected sexual relations. The ABLP will also establish a multi-media public education programme to provide information on this and other communicable diseases,

### **Cancer and cancer treatment**

Cancer treatment in many instances today consists of multi modality therapy including surgery, the administration of drugs (chemotherapy, hormonal therapy and biological agents), and radiotherapy. Patients are currently able to access surgery and chemotherapy in Antigua but not radiotherapy. When the MSJMC was designed and built by the former ABLP government a linear accelerator, the machinery necessary for the administration of radiotherapy, was planned as phase 2 of the MSJMC project. This never happened under the UPP government. Instead they entered into an agreement with a foreign-based company for a privately owned radiotherapy unit. The ABLP will revive this arrangement and ensure that all types of treatment for Cancer including radiotherapy will not only be available but accessible to all Antiguan and Barbudans.



## **(17) DELIVERING BETTER EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS:**

# **MAKING OUR YOUTH COMPETITIVE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY**

The appalling failure of our students in Mathematics and English is primarily the result of the UPP's voluntary separation package. The UPP scared many of the experienced professionals, especially teachers, into accepting the separation package. The educators then transferred to private schools or migrated to countries where they are in demand.

### **The disgusting UPP legacy**

School buildings and facilities all around the country need serious repair. Leaks, fungi, moulds, and pungent odours have forced schools to close or made children ill. In Green Bay, students had to be rushed to Mount St. John Medical Centre to receive oxygen after pungent odours caused them to faint, and the school to close.

### **THE ABLP PLAN FOR EDUCATION:**

**fixing school buildings and  
facilities**

The ABLP will fix all the school buildings in which the UPP left our children to languish. We are also committed to furnishing ALL secondary schools with laboratories that can facilitate learning; these will include Science Labs, Vocational Labs, Home Economic Labs and Arts & Crafts Labs.

### **Improving conditions for teachers**

Teachers, who have remained in the system, giving generously of themselves, will receive continuous training, and the ABLP Government will equip the teachers' staff rooms with air-conditioning so that they may be far more comfortable, than under an uncaring UPP regime.

### **Improving the delivery of education: Mathematics and English to be priorities**

Under the UPP, standards have been lowered at the common entrance level in order to provide a glowing report for a failed education policy. Students

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enrolled in Government schools, except for the AGHS and AGS, do poorly on Maths and English.

The ABLP will introduce special clinics for enhancing Mathematics and English scores across the country and will focus upon specific schools that are underperforming badly in these two critical subjects. More teacher-training will be offered at no cost to the educators, and a focused plan to improve student results in CXC and CAPE will be implemented.

### **ABIIT to be autonomous and integrated in the international community**

The Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Technology (ABIIT), which was founded in 1997 under an ABLP administration, will once again be given the autonomy that allowed it to expand and to receive the accreditation that vaulted it over many obstacles. The ABIIT will seek to increase the number of universities in the USA, Canada and the U.K. that accepts its credits; many more students will then be able to complete their last two years of university in other countries or, by way of Internet offerings, in Antigua.

### **Making tertiary education work for students**

The unfinished building at the State College will be completed, and the environs made safer for students. The ABLP regards the State College as a significant institution for moving us to the next level — the University College of Antigua and Barbuda. A national university is the aim of the political party which brought us government-owned primary and secondary schools, beginning in the 1950s. The ABLP will seek first to make the University College a fifth campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), but if for any reason this is not possible, the closest co-operation and collaboration will be encouraged and established with UWI. The ABLP will particularly encourage a Business School as part of the University College focussing on entrepreneurship and business innovation. Students will be encouraged to attend from the Caribbean and further afield.

### **Database to help students attain goals reflective of their talent**

A national student database to track the educational development of all students from preschool will be implemented. This tool will enable educators to track student performance from pre-school to tertiary level and to provide counsellors with data that can inform tailored programmes to provide the most effective means of student instruction.

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### **Use of Information Technology as an educational tool**

Extensive use of Information Technology applications will be relied upon in schools for efficiency, improvement in service provision, access to e-books, to global libraries and to research papers.

### **Schools Security and an end to bullying**

The ABLP is very concerned about the safety of our children at all schools. The ABLP will encourage the development of security through an integrated schools-community-police-Education Ministry approach where systems will be put in place for managed security. Teachers will also be trained in special courses to detect bullying and to deal with it in a systemic way which will involve parent-teachers association and student mentoring.

### **School meals and Uniforms grants**

The ABLP believes that a good nutritious meal is a requirement for all primary school students. The school meals programme, first promoted by an ABLP Team as early as 1946, and which was begun in 1950 with protein-rich milk products, will continue. However, all the UPP's school meals contracts will be reviewed to eliminate the excessive profiteering and improve the quality of food.

Vendors, who have not been paid by the UPP regime for the uniform vouchers they have received, can depend upon the ABLP to make good on the government's obligations.

Education is the key to personal and national development. The ABLP will ensure that annual budget allocations to the delivery of education and training is adequate to produce young people who can take their place in society, finding good jobs, and contributing to the growth and development of our country.







## **(18) THE STATE OF OUR ROADS – A MEASURE OF UPP FAILURE:**

# **THE ABLP PLAN FOR RECONSTRUCTION**

Our roads have become a disaster. For example, the roads around the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium cost more than \$10 million per mile. By funnelling corrupt contracts through road-building, the UPP has increased the cost of roads while diminishing the life of all those roads that were poorly constructed.

### **Elements of the ABLP roads plan**

It is not fair to ask motorists to drive on roads that are so pot-holed that the value of the cars, SUVs, buses, pickups and trucks rapidly declines. Hence, the ABLP intends to re-organize the Public Works Department so that the Road Building and Road Repairs Departments are sufficiently staffed and funded. The object is to ensure that roads within communities, villages and even the middle of St. John's can reflect the high standard that is expected of the Government body which exercises a monopoly on road-building and repairs.

### **Dedicating motor vehicle licenses to a Fund for roads**

Once the ABLP has done the audit of UPP waste and inefficiencies that have drained the Treasury and diverted money to wasteful projects, a study will be done as to whether licenses paid for all motor vehicles could be dedicated solely to road building

and road rehabilitation. The ABLP will create a dedicated and predictable road building Fund that would allow for planning road reconstruction on a regular basis.

### **Road signage**

The ABLP will continue the highway signage system that was started more than ten years ago. This will serve to more readily identify and point to communities, hotels, entertainment facilities, the National Parks, landmarks and historic sites. The ABLP will also identify rest areas that will include restaurants, bathrooms, and other kinds of traveller facilities, on the highways in order to make our visitors far more assured among our people who gladly welcome them.



# TEAM L



**BROWNE** *Gaston*  
ST. JOHN'S CITY WEST



**BENJAMIN** *Londel*  
ST. JOHN'S RURAL WEST



**JONAS** *Dean*  
ST. GEORGE



**GREENE** *E. Paul Chet*  
ST. PAUL



**NICHOLAS** *Melford*  
ST. JOHN'S CITY EAST



**JOSEPH** *Molwyn*  
ST. MARY'S NORTH



**WESTON** *Lennox*  
ST. PHILIP'S SOUTH



**FERNANDEZ** *Charles "Max"*  
ST. JOHN'S RURAL NORTH



**NIBBS** *Arthur*  
BARBUDA





# ABOUT



**MARSHALL** *Samantha*  
ST. MARY'S SOUTH



**BROWNE** *Michael*  
ALL SAINTS WEST



**BENJAMIN** *Steadroy "Cutie"*  
ST. JOHN'S CITY SOUTH



**JAMES** *Colin "Tin Tin"*  
ALL SAINTS EAST & ST. LUKE



**LAKE** *Eustace "Teco"*  
ST. JOHN'S RURAL SOUTH



**MICHAEL** *Asot*  
ST. PETER



**BIRD** *Lester*  
ST. JOHN'S RURAL EAST



**YEARWOOD** *Robin*  
ST. PHILIP'S NORTH

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LABOUR**

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## **(19) RENEWABLE ENERGY:**

# **REDUCING HIGH COSTS, DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES**

The Prime Minister stood at the UN podium and promised that reliance on fossil fuels will be greatly reduced. Soon after that he entered into two separate multi-million dollar contracts for fossil fuels electricity plants - with the Chinese Ex-Im Bank and the Antigua Power Company. These agreements caused Antigua to be tied to high-cost fossil-fuel electricity for more than 50 additional years, or past the year 2055. That has to change.

### **ELEMENTS OF THE ABLP PLAN FOR ENERGY: BEGINNING IN BARBUDA**

The ABLP will begin its renewable energy project in Barbuda. Its population is largely concentrated in Codrington or within a four square-mile radius, leaving more than 58-square miles largely uninhabited. Hence, wind turbines and solar farms can be located away from the population centre; the electricity produced can then be transmitted to the centre and the periphery of Codrington, without interfering with the tranquil environment that Barbudans enjoy.

### **A new arrangement with the Chinese**

The ABLP intends to enter an agreement directly with

the Chinese for credits towards a renewable energy plant, to replace the failed Wadadli Power Plant that was negotiated by the UPP for US\$52.5 million dollars. This arrangement will be government-to-government and will not be done through any third parties such as the German company with which the UPP had a deal.

### **Street lights, traffic lights and solar panels for hot water**

The 1,500 street lights, installed two years ago that now consume 6 megawatts of electricity, and the 3,000 other street lights that rely upon power from the APUA fossil-fuel grid, can be powered by a non-fossil-fuel source which the ABLP intends to negotiate within the first two years of returning to office.

The ABLP will pursue a plan to introduce solar energy for traffic lights, street lights, electricity and hot water for government buildings. This will significantly reduce the cost of electricity for the government. In addition, the ABLP will provide incentives to businesses and homes to invest in solar power as an alternative to fossil fuels to reduce significantly the national energy bill. Where there is excess production, the national grid will buy it.





## **Wind Power**

Wind power technology has also been refined and modernised making it possible for its introduction in Antigua and Barbuda as a supplement to the delivery of energy by traditional fossil fuels and solar power. The ABLP intends to integrate all three sources of energy to bring down the cost of electricity for homes, businesses, hotels, and manufacturing.

## **Reducing costs of energy for motor vehicles**

Oil accounts for as much as 70 per cent of transport fuel use. This is a serious drain on the country's foreign exchange earnings to pay for oil. If this pattern continues, the economy will be drained of tens of millions of dollars that could be better spent on health, education, job creation and social welfare. The ABLP therefore wants to see vehicle fuel economy improved. One of the important

ways is to work closely with vehicle importers and encourage them to promote and sell electric motor vehicles or hybrids (part petrol part electricity). We will also work closely with the Global Fuel Economy Initiative (GFEI) on a national fuel policy designed to reduce spending on fossil fuels.

The ABLP's energy strategy is to reduce dependence on expensive fossil fuel and introduce renewable energy generation such as solar power and electric or hybrid motor vehicles. The objective is to reach 20% of non-fossil-fuel capacity by 2018. The ABLP will lend support to the Bio-diesel initiative started by the team of Antigua and Barbuda nationals, and by the hotelier in Barbuda. Other hotels will be encouraged to rely upon renewable energy to light their compounds and to provide hot water. This strategy will result in significant reductions in the foreign exchange spent on oil and gas, reduce the cost of energy to all consumers and provide a cleaner environment in which our people live.





## Timeline for implementation of ABLP's Energy Policy

### • First 30 Days

We will form the Antigua Barbuda National Energy Council (ABNEC) charged with the responsibility of overseeing policy initiatives of the Government. ABNEC will have minority government representation through senior Civil Servants.

### • Within 60 Days

Antigua and Barbuda will join St. Lucia and Grenada as full members of Eastern Caribbean Electricity Regulatory Authority, ECERA, World Bank funded program.

### • Within 90 Days

We will amend the Fuel Charge Calculation, making it a transparent charge directly related the energy to fuel used ratio. APUA and APC Power Plants will be required to operate at fuel efficiency in accordance with manufacturers specifications and industry norms, the Consumers should not be caused to pay for inefficiencies in the power plants fuel consumption.

### • Within 120 Days

The new ABLP Administration will require ABNEC to ensure that APUA issues a transparent Request For Proposals (RFP) for renewable energy by wind and photovoltaic (solar). The RFP will target transitioning 10% of the total energy generated for Antigua and Barbuda by July 2016.

### • Within 150 Days

Introduce a Feed-In-Tariff (FIT) for distributed renewables generators including Roof-Top Solar and small wind turbines. The sizes of these renewable generators will be capped for residential and commercial

consumers to ensure that the maximum number of consumers can benefit from this program.

### • Within 180 Days

20-20-20 Green Antigua Policy by 2020. ABNEC will be required to establish a timeline for achieving by 2020. 20% of energy to be generated from renewable generation based on the best cost effective mix of wind, solar, waste-to-energy and biomass. 20% reduction in the Carbon Footprint of Antigua & Barbuda. 20% improvement in Energy Efficiency.

### • Within the 1st Year

Introduce Duty and ABST concessions with respect to ABNEC approved equipment, materials and services that have a quantifiable benefit to the 20-20-20 Green Antigua Policy, including; Small wind turbines; Roof-mounted photovoltaic systems; Energy Efficiency equipment and materials that meet guidelines to be established by the ABNEC; Energy Management software and services for medium and large commercial/industrial consumers that meet guidelines to be established by the ABNEC; Electric Vehicles and Motor Bikes; Electric Charging Stations.

### • Within the 1st Term

By the end of 2018 to create a single corporate entity that covers all energy related components of the economy: Oil & Petroleum Products; Electricity generation, transmission and distribution; By 2019 to reduce the cost per kilowatt-hour of electricity by 15% when compared to the present cost of electricity and the present cost of fuel.





## (20) THE ENVIRONMENT:

# KEEPING OUR COUNTRY GREEN

Our environmental policy will be larger than just using alternative and renewable energy sources for electricity for homes and businesses and for motor transport. It will be a 'green' policy designed to preserve and protect the green spaces of our twin-island nation. Our strong environmental policy also extends to our territorial waters, to our reefs and our marine life. We intend to make Antigua and Barbuda a model for a 'green' environment world-wide. This will have a two-dimensional approach – domestic policy and foreign policy.

### Aspects of our domestic policy

- **Green standards will be developed and an incentive scheme established to encourage all new buildings to meet green standards** which will include the use of solar power and water storage.
- **We will institute a programme that will see all traffic lights and street lights powered by solar energy.**
- **Government buildings will convert all incandescent lighting to fluorescent; and water and energy-saving devices** and equipment will be phased in over time.
- **The hotel and restaurant sector will be given incentives to comprehensively retrofit to the use of solar water heaters, energy-saving devices and equipment;** to recycle water for irrigation and secondary use; and to green their facilities.
- Incentives will be given to property owners including hotels to produce energy from renewable sources for their own use and with any excess being sold to APUA to be fed into the national grid.
- All new investments will be required to meet environmentally sustainable levels.
- We will ensure Antigua and Barbuda against the effects of hurricanes or other

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natural disasters through the Commonwealth Disaster Management Agency (CDMA) and the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) run by the World Bank.

- We will work directly with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre on developing best practices and regulations to protect our environment, our property, beaches and land.

### **The Coastal Environment**

- The ABLP will undertake stabilisation, rehabilitation and enhancement at sites where the coastline is under threat.
- We will develop an action plan to evaluate,

protect and, where necessary, trans-plant our reefs which are vital habitats for marine life and for coastal integrity.

### **The foreign policy elements**

Our mission to the United Nations, our efforts in the Commonwealth and in the African Caribbean and Pacific Group will take a strong position on Climate Change and Global Warming and their adverse effect of sea-level rise which could submerge part of Antigua and most of Barbuda.

The ABLP will also give strong support to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency so that it can receive more international support and resources to place it in a better position to prevent and respond to any natural disaster in the future.







## **(21) INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES:**

# **MAKING ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA VIBRANT AGAIN**

Baldwin Spencer, as Prime Minister, declared the offshore financial sector of our economy to be “extinct”. He did so in the midst of increasing growth in the sector in our competitor countries — the BVI, Cayman Islands, Bermuda and the Bahamas.

The legal environment for International Financial Services was created by the ABLP’s post-Independence vision to provide a multi-sector base to the then tourism and sugar economy. Today, the financial services sector continues to be a vital sector for the development of many Caribbean economies, to the extent that the financial services are the second largest contributors to gross domestic product (GDP) in the entire Caribbean region. The UPP’s policy, going back to 2004, was hostile to the offshore sector and its operators, causing many to find alternative destinations for their lucrative business. It did nothing to attract a share of the growing demand for financial services

from independent Caribbean jurisdictions.

### **THE ABLP PLANS TO RESTORE AND REJUVENATE THE FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR**

**We will restore strong leadership to Antigua’s International Financial Centre, and integrate the sector into the national economy** to the extent possible in areas that generally require external funding and would not directly compete with the commercial banking sector. The rejuvenation of this sector will increase employment opportunities and the local demand for skilled and professional services.

**Restructuring the role of offshore banks in the local economy:** making more money available

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Offshore banks located in Antigua can finance projects in other nearby Caribbean countries but cannot do so in Antigua and Barbuda where they are located. The ABLP will therefore amend the laws governing the off shore sector so that banks can on-lend funds to the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank to help finance feasible projects by small and medium-sized businesses. In addition, the amended law will allow offshore banks to join in a consortium with interested onshore banks to finance larger projects, particularly in tourism and especially for hotel expansion and improvements.

### **Creation of new offshore services**

Every avenue for growing the Antigua and Barbuda economy will be exploited fully creating attractive business offerings and niche services such as call centres, payment services and micro-finance. The 1982 International Business Corporations law will be updated with modern legislation to better govern

international financial services and allow the sector to make a stronger contribution to the local economy.

### **An offshore sector promotion authority will be created**

While strengthening the regulatory and supervisory machinery for the offshore and onshore financial services sector to the highest international standards and best practices, the ABLP will establish an authority to promote our country's financial services abroad. Similar to Tourism promotion, the Authority will comprise representatives of Government and the financial services providers. The Authority will share offices abroad with our nation's tourism offices.

The ABLP is determined to make the Financial Services Sector of our country vibrant and meaningful, and, in particular, ensure that it makes a bigger and more direct contribution to the economy of the country through participation with local banks in providing development and commercial financing.

**OFFSHORE BANKING BUSINESS**

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## 22) BARBUDA:

# ENDING NEGLECT, DEVELOPING BARBUDA FOR THE BENEFIT OF BARBUDANS

The shameful UPP policy of denying the Barbuda Council any increase in monthly subventions, such that, on occasion, fifteen weeks have passed without moneys to meet the wages and salaries owed to employees of the Council, is a vicious act of discrimination.

## THE ABLP PLAN FOR BARBUDA'S RAPID DEVELOPMENT

The ABLP will ensure that projects approved by the Barbuda Council are treated with respect and quickly ratified by the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda.

## BARBUDA REPRESENTATIVE TO SERVE IN THE NATIONAL CABINET

**The ABLP elected Member of Parliament for Barbuda will be accorded a guaranteed place in the national Cabinet** to make the government constantly aware of concerns and challenges in Barbuda and to advance Barbuda's interests directly.

## RE-OPENING BARBUDA'S HOTELS

**The ABLP will ensure that the three shuttered hotels will be re-opened** with financing from the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank. The revenues emanating from the operation of these properties will flow into the coffers of the Barbuda Council.

## THE FEASIBILITY OF A GOLF COURSE WILL BE TACKLED

**A golf course, to complement a high-end housing project, will be pursued.**

An environmental study will first be conducted so as to safeguard against any harm to the natural environment.

## BARBUDA WILL BE MADE A PORT-OF-ENTRY

Barbuda will be made a Port-of-Entry with an immigration and customs division established there particularly for the Yachting industry. A limited duty-free facility will also be established so that yachts can provision in Barbuda. Additionally, vessels supplying Caribbean countries with foodstuffs will be able to call directly at Barbuda reducing both delivery time and costs, thus reducing the cost-of-living.

## UPGRADING THE BARBUDA DOCKING FACILITIES

The docking facilities will be rebuilt and upgraded in a public-sector/private sector operation between private investors and the Barbuda Council with a guarantee from the Antigua and Barbuda government. The private sector investors will build and operate the dock until the investment is recovered at which time the facility will be handed over to the Barbuda Council.

The ABLP is determined that Barbuda and its representatives are treated with respect and dignity and that economic and social development of the island is fast-tracked for the benefit of the people.



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## **(23) DELIVERING BETTER SOCIAL SERVICES AND GENDER EQUITY FOR A BETTER SOCIETY**

The ABLP has shown its commitment to being an equal opportunity partner. In that we believe that the women in our society have always played a vital role in every aspect of our lives. As mothers, they have fed, clothed and cared for every one of us from birth. We intend to stand by the side of all our hardworking women with love, respect and admiration.

The aim of the ABLP is to build a 'one-nation' society in which our people are looked after without discrimination, in a just and equitable manner. Our country, our economy, and our sense of nationhood can only be meaningful if our people – young and old – are confident of the care of our national institutions.

### **THE ELDERLY AND PENSIONERS: GIVING THEM BACK THEIR MONEY**

The UPP decision, dating back to 2010, to begin extracting Medical Benefits charges from the pay cheques of 60 to 70 year-olds who return to the workforce, is absurd. The elderly have contributed to making our country a better place in which to live; it is unfair to ask them to give even more of themselves in their twilight years. The ABLP will repeal the legislation that requires deductions of Medical Benefits payments from 60 to 70 year-old workers.

**A Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) will be applied to Government pensions,** so that pensioners can be compensated for the cost of living increases they

have endured.

The late payment of pensions will not continue under an ABLP administration. Under the law, the first claim on the Consolidated Fund is payment to pensioners. The ABLP will not depart from this important requirement imposed by the constitution and the reasonable expectations of the elderly.

### **GENDER EQUITY**

The ABLP will encourage gender equity by promoting and appointing a wide cadre of females into senior managerial and governance positions in the public sector, including Senatorial and Board appointments.

### **ADULT DAY CARE CENTRES WILL BE ENCOURAGED**

The elderly can be taught new skills and enabled to contribute to nation-building by the acquisition of new life-skills both for practical application and, in some cases, for productive occupation. A joining of Adult and Child Day Care Centres will be pursued to allow for a synergy of mixed generations in a single space. The ABLP will help to train the staff employed at Adult Day Care Centres, Child Care Centres and Pre-School Centres.

### **HELPING HOME HELPERS**

**Training will be offered to Home Helpers.** The ABLP intends to ensure that Helpers are employed to assist the elderly who are living on their own.





## **CARING FOR OUR PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED**

The ABLP will sign and implement the provisions of The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Those government buildings that can be retrofitted to comply with the UN Convention will be adjusted over a five-year period. The Physical Planning Act will also be amended to take into account the architectural improvements that will be required for new buildings. Changes to all new drawings must be incorporated to accommodate wheelchairs and the like.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS AND HOMES FOR AT-RISK CHILDREN**

The ADELE School came into existence during an ABLP administration more than a decade ago. Since that time, it has not expanded sufficiently to take into account the population of children with special needs. The ABLP pledges to enlarge the classroom

and teacher availability, and to ensure that no child goes without the special attention required to make life more rewarding and fulfilling.

**Children at-risk, who face violence and neglect, need special protection by removal from the households where the dangers emanate.** Presently, two denominational Homes provide secure living conditions for girl children. The ABLP pledges to assist these homes with government subventions to meet costs.

## **THE BOYS TRAINING SCHOOL**

The Boys Training School, which falls under the aegis of the Governor General, requires immediate attention. Boys at risk require special coping mechanisms if they are to overcome the challenges that confront them, and take up productive roles in society. The ABLP will begin to address these shortcomings immediately after re-election.





**(24)**

## **PUBLIC SERVANTS: REWARDING WORK, RESPECTING TALENT, NO VICTIMISATION**

The ABLP will bring all the available skills to the forefront to assist in rebuilding our country. Lessons will be learned from the failed Economic and Social Council.

### **ESTABLISHED AND NON-ESTABLISHED WORKERS SYSTEM WILL BE RETAINED**

**The ABLP will retain the two-tiered system of Established and Non-Established employees, and will ensure that there is equity among and between the two groups.** The ABLP will ensure that equilibrium is maintained in the search for reform of hiring practices in the civil service.

We will ensure the meritocratic promotion of public servants to include senior police officers, nurses and teachers to fill key strategic positions to make the public service more efficient.

### **SUCCESSION PLANNING AND TRAINING**

**Throughout the Public Service, the ABLP will introduce systems of training and succession planning so that there is a smooth system of promotion.** Public servants will be assured of predictability in their careers, and they will be given the opportunity for training in their particular disciplines.

### **CONDITIONS OF WORK: THE PHYSICAL SPACE**

**The ABLP will pay particular attention to the physical environment in which public servants work – buildings and their facilities.** Hence, a comprehensive audit of all buildings will be conducted and a priority roster of work will be drawn-up and systematically implemented.

At the same time public servants must respect the public for it is they who provide the money to pay salaries and wages. The ABLP is determined that such mutual respect should be the hallmark of our public service and we will provide the training and the incentives to make the public service efficient and productive.

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## The Forgotten Voter

For the Public Service to be the best, it must be able to attract, retain and reward the best. The Public Service is not only an institution of the state but is also a vital and indispensable part of the machinery for successful governance.

The following are among the more pressing issues affecting public servants in Antigua and Barbuda:

- THE ABSENCE OF A NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AFTER 10 YEARS. It is vitally important that people visualize where it is that their government is taking them, it is the fairest way in which they can judge performance and understand what can or can't be achieved within given timeframes
  - The creation of a well-structured modern public service that does not discriminate between Established and Non-Established employees but rather harnesses and harmonizes the abundant talents and capacity in the interest of national development. That is to say ALL workers will have an equal opportunity to build capacity through retooling programs and advance in the public sector.
  - THE CREATION OF A REWARD SYSTEM is absolutely critical in order to incentivize productivity. One way to achieve this is by offering annual bonuses (e.g. an extra month's salary at the end of the year would be attractive but not guaranteed if performance standards are not achieved) for the accomplishment of targets.
- The creation of career paths in the public service will allow for our most talented young people to pursue personal and professional development goals while forming part of a robust talent pool.
  - Equal compensation for equal work. A pay and regarding analysis is important and should be one of the first initiatives undertaken by a new administration. A proper classification system will be developed to ensure that no public servant is under-valued when compared to his or her counterpart.
  - Revision of pension laws to consider cost of living adjustments to ensure that after more than 40 years retired public servants are able to receive adequate returns on their equity in the public service.
  - The development of a rigorous and comprehensive professional development strategy at every level of the public service. This covers the processes of recruitment and selection to identifying and building on the strengths of public sector employees that will contribute to the creation of a highly competitive and high performing public sector.
  - The commitment of the government of 1% of budget for one year to fund public sector modernization (estimated at about 8 million) over a 5 year period. A special fund will be created to ensure that there is sustained momentum for continuous improvement and building of capacity in the public service.



## **(25) HONOURING AND PROVIDING FOR OUR NATIONAL HEROES: STARTING WITH SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS**

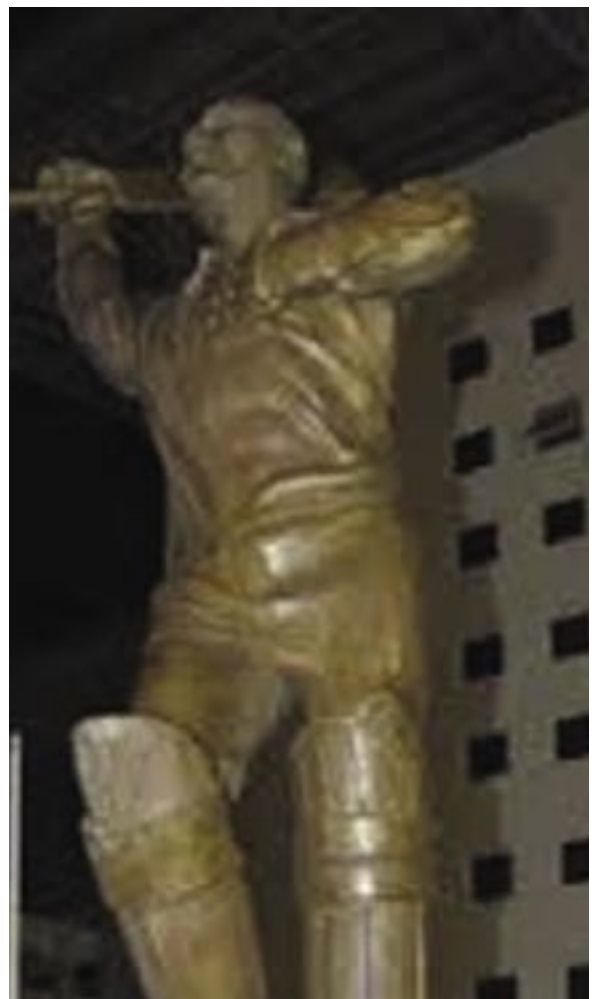
Every nation honours its national heroes in various ways: but no nation should leave its National Heroes to depend on the vagaries of commercial life, competing in their mature years with others to make a living. This is disrespectful to the status of National Hero.

### **LEGISLATION FOR ACCOMMODATION AND A PENSION FOR LIFE FOR SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS**

**The ABLP will introduce legislation in Parliament to provide our nation's one living National Hero, Sir Vivian Richards,** with appropriate housing, transportation, household staff and a pension sufficient to meet his needs for life.

A special place in the Protocol arrangements for national and official occasions

**The ABLP will also cause the Protocol Department to make arrangements for recognising our National Hero** in the ranking of officials at all national and official occasions to which he should be invited as a matter of course and at which he should be treated with all the dignity and respect that attaches to his unique position.







## **(26) YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT**

Young people are not only the inheritors of the future, in Antigua and Barbuda they are very much part of the present. A significant number of our people are below the age of 25 – that makes them important in the policies that are designed for their governance and the decisions that are made for their future. They should therefore have a strong voice in policy formulation and decision-making.

### **A NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL WILL BE CREATED**

**The ABLP will create a National Youth Council that will be a legal entity whose members will be nominated by youth groups, business organisations and the Ministry concerned with Youth affairs.** The mandate of the Council will be to provide informed advice to Government. The Council will make submissions to Cabinet on a range of national issues. The Council will be staffed full-time by a Secretariat and will be required to submit monthly and annual reports of its work programme. Very importantly, the Cabinet of Ministers shall identify a number of statutory boards and organizations to which the NYC shall be invited to nominate a Director.

### **LAND/HOME FOR YOUTH**

**The UPP completely gutted the successful ABLP 'Land for Youth' programme which saw hundreds of youthful citizens acquiring a piece of the rock for housing and investment.**

Many young men and women, who made down-payments before 2004, have not received any word of their payments or of their land. The ABLP will conduct an audit and offer those youth an opportunity to acquire land that is earmarked for distribution. The ABLP will reduce the cost of Crown Lands during 2014 to EC\$2.50 per square foot in order to encourage acquisition and to spur home construction in what will be titled The National Home For Youth Initiative.

### **YOUTH SKILL-TRAINING**

**The ABLP intends to make the Youth Skills Training Programme, now called the Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE), a cost-free training ground for youth.** A small stipend will be granted to every student who attends classes regularly, in order to enable them to meet transport, meals and materials expenses that enrolment will



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cause. We will also give incentives to businesses who employ young people as apprentices while they acquire skill training and who give them full-time employment at the end of their training.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

**The ABLP will strengthen higher education through the establishment of a University College of Antigua and Barbuda that will seek affiliation either as a fifth campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI) or as a College in association with the UWI.** The purpose will be to allow Antiguan and Barbudans of all ages, but particularly young people, to pursue higher education at home where the costs to them or their parents will be significantly reduced.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

**The ABLP will actively engage the international community for scholarships for our young people to pursue higher tertiary education overseas.** The ABLP government will also continue our own Scholarship programme in skill

areas needed by the country and for which we created the Education Levy.

## JOB CREATION

**The main thrust of the ABLP's economic programme is to bring in new investment so as to create new jobs for the benefit of our young people coming out of school.**

We shall also provide youth entrepreneurial funding, through loans and equity participation, to aid in the start up and expansion of youth-pioneered enterprises. A Loan Guarantee Scheme will also be introduced as a means of helping young people to transform ideas into practical businesses.

**The ABLP recognises that the youth of Antigua and Barbuda are the most technologically knowledgeable of any generation of our people.**

We also know that they are better informed than any previous generation and that they aspire to a place in society in which they help to shape the future by making decisions in the present. The ABLP embraces this development as exciting and productive.

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## **(27) DEVELOPING SPORTS:**

# **PROMOTING SPORTS, CARVING NICHES FOR ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

For every country, sports play several important roles. Participation in sports, at all ages, builds a healthy and fit nation; the success of talented sports persons gives pride to a nation; good sports facilities attract overseas sports persons for essential practice; the staging of sports events brings fans of the games to our country to boost tourism.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OUR SPORTS PERSONS**

Antigua and Barbuda has a long and rich history of sports accomplishments. Athletes from a number of disciplines have made their mark internationally and have brought much benefit and recognition to the country. Our coaches and administrators have performed at the very highest levels and this too has had positive benefits for our country.

### **UPP CORRUPTION AND NEGLECT ROBBED OUR SPORTS**

Recently, our performances have dropped and the recognition once enjoyed has slipped. The UPP

administration has reduced sports from a major endeavour once used to showcase the athletic abilities of our people to an under-resourced, poorly organized, bastardized activity where ministers and their cronies plunder the national treasury under the guise of sports infrastructure development.

### **ELEMENTS OF THE ABLP PLAN FOR SPORTS**

**The Ministry responsible for Sports will draw up a comprehensive plan for sports in collaboration with the proposed National Youth Council for an initial five-year period.** The ABLP will provide funding for these operations and charge the Ministry and the National Youth Council with the responsibility of building a network of links to local, regional and international organisations with a view to getting (a) technical assistance, (b) coaching expertise, (c) additional funds and (d) scholarships for gifted sports persons. Additionally, they will be tasked with organising regular fund-raising events to advance the sports programme.



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## IDENTIFYING AND NURTURING TALENT

**All school aged children will undergo talent identification searches.** Thereafter, they will be trained according to their competences. A reorganized inter-school programme sports will enable athletes to emerge.

## INVOLVING COMMUNITY CLUBS AND NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Sports at the community level have deteriorated. Participation, sponsorship and spectatorship have all fallen. **The new ABLP administration will re-establish the Community Sports and Games Department** which will work in tandem with the national associations in delivering coaching support at

the community level and the development of national leagues.

## PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS

Football, Boxing, Athletics, Swimming, Tennis, Netball and Motor Sports are targeted for immediate attention with upgrades to existing facilities and training opportunities for our athletes. **Through a process of phased and sustainable development the ABLP administration, alongside the national associations and other stakeholders, will work towards our nation's first Olympic medal and consistent performances at all other regional and international Games and Tournaments.**







## **(28) CRICKET:**

# **A FOCUS FOR 'BRANDING' ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

The Antigua Recreation Ground is historic and iconic in international cricket. It was a beloved ground of international test match cricketers and world famous cricket commentators and writers. It should have been preserved not only as part of the heritage of Antigua and Barbuda, but as an integral part of the heritage of international cricket. Yet, the neglect of the Antigua Recreation Grounds under the UPP is unmistakable. Everything has fallen into disrepair and decay.

### **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CRICKET ACADEMY**

**Our country is blessed with some of the greatest icons of international cricket. Our quartet of Cricket Knights, the Sirs – Vivian Richards, Andy Roberts, Richie Richardson and Curtly Ambrose – are household names in every cricketing country. The ABLP is determined that we**

**should make use of their skills, knowledge and contacts to create a Cricket Training Academy in Antigua and Barbuda to which not only Antiguan and Barbudans can attend, but also talented cricketers from all over the cricket-loving fraternity.**

**The ABLP will link the Cricket Academy to the University College of Antigua and Barbuda** once it is formed, and we will ensure that it has a close and co-operative working relationship with the Cricket School and the 3 W's Oval at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies.

### **ARG - THE SITE OF A CRICKET ACADEMY AND A CRICKET MUSEUM**

**The ABLP will restore the Antigua Recreation Grounds for several purposes.** It will become the location of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Academy proposed

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earlier in this section. It will become a venue for inter-school cricket events. It will also become a Cricket Museum that can be visited by our own people – particularly our school children – and by tourists giving our country another aspect of heritage tourism.

The shameful planting of a monster car park on St. John's Cricket Grounds will be addressed immediately upon assuming office. If needs be, it will be dismantled.

### **COMMITMENT TO THE WEST INDIES CRICKET BOARD OF CONTROL**

Our country is proud to host the Headquarters of the West Indies Cricket Board of Control that the ABLP first invited here. **The ABLP will continue to provide the WICB with the facilities**

**and support it needs to continue its operations in Antigua and Barbuda.**

### **COMPLETE SUPPORT FOR THE CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE T20 TOURNAMENT**

**The ABLP completely supports the exciting and high quality Limacol CPL T20 Tournament that has brought both spectator entertainment and revenues to our economy. The tournament generated over EC\$270 million across the Caribbean in which Antigua and Barbuda shared. The ABLP pledges its full support to the fullest participation of Antigua and Barbuda to the tournament.**







## **(29) CULTURE:**

# **DEVELOPING THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

As a nation, Antigua and Barbuda, will establish a holistic international 'brand' only when we unleash our full potential for creativity and turn it into more than a pastime and into economic goods that benefit the creative and talented people and the county as a whole. Jamaica, for instance, has a world-wide and enduring 'brand' for reggae music and athletics. The ABLP believes that Antigua and Barbuda must also establish a world-wide cultural 'brand'.

### **ENHANCING CARNIVAL AND TAKING THE 'BRAND' WORLD WIDE**

Carnival in Antigua and Barbuda has always been a popular festival with our local community and our diaspora – many of whom return home as often as they can to participate in it. However, not enough has been done to internationalise the brand and to turn it into an attraction that will encourage greater awareness and participation by tourists.

**The ABLP will establish a working relationship between the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Association and the Carnival Organisers to:**

- (a) **advertise Carnival in**

**neighbouring Caribbean and Latin American countries;**

**(b) encourage participation by troupes from Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil and Cuba on an annual basis;**

**(c) establish Charter flights from New York, Toronto and London, as well as Brazil and Venezuela; and**

**(d) settle arrangements with LIAT for special charters from the**

**Caribbean to attend Carnival in Antigua.**

**Additionally, the ABLP government will actively support film companies and international Television networks coming to Antigua to produce programmes for their audiences.**

**A Recording Studio, Music School and a Theatre: the framework for earning from culture**

Our country has a wealth of talented musicians. In the past, going back to the late 1940s and 1950s, our nation produced some of the finest steel bands and their records sold throughout the Caribbean and abroad. Our musicians in other areas enthralled audiences in the Caribbean and the United States.



# **VOTE LABOUR**







The ABLP is determined to help our musicians turn their craft to revenue not just for themselves, but for the economy as a whole. **To achieve this, the ABLP will embark upon a foundation plan to enhance the learning of music by creating:**

- (a) a state-subsidised music school which will be open to musicians of all ages to hone their skills;
  - (b) a modern state-of-the-art recording studio as a private sector/public sector partnership project at which our musicians can record their music for sale; and
  - (c) a theatre for the Arts – both music and drama.
- (d) a Promotional Grant to assist artists in the marketing of their music and other talents.

The ABLP will approach the Government of China for help with the construction of the latter. The Economic Partnership Agreement with the 27-nation European Union encourages musicians and other artists to enter Europe for performances that would provide a market of over 400 million people. This is an opportunity for our artists and our nation that the ABLP will encourage.

Culture is an expression of the talent of our people in a variety of fields and the ABLP will encourage such expression. Culture is also a marketable product that could have a world-wide audience and earn our creative people and our nation both pride in their accomplishments and revenues from their work. The ABLP will also encourage the economic and financial advantages of cultural expression.







## **(30) AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY:**

### **DELIVERING THE OPPORTUNITIES**

Until young men and women see agriculture as a respectable business, and not a career of last resort, the Antigua and Barbuda economy can continue to expect no more than 5% of GDP to be its output and national economic contribution. When agriculture is properly portrayed as an expression of clever and informed scientific advancement, its attractiveness as a career will increase.

#### **ELEMENTS OF THE ABLP PLAN**

In many parts of the world farmers have grown food crops in conditions that are even more arid than Antigua. The Israeli government has already offered training in their agricultural techniques which they have refined and modernized over the years. They will be invited to send teams to Antigua to train our farmers, and particularly young people, in the techniques they have used to make deserts agriculturally productive.

#### **GIVING AGRICULTURE NEW LEADERSHIP**

**The ABLP intends to place very smart people, with a flair for impacting cultural trends, at the head of Agriculture.** The ultimate goal is to raise output so that exports of agricultural products can be enabled, and incomes expanded. The ABLP will enhance the importance of farmers to our food stock and raise their standing among the youth.

#### **FISHERIES AND FISHER FOLK: A BETTER DEAL**

The only profession that, in the 21st century, still engages in hunting is fishing. The cost of fuel, replacement parts for boat engines, and the costly equipment required to venture out and search for fish, considerably diminish the profits of the fisher folk. The ABLP therefore intends to bring a mix of artisanal fishing with fish farming, in order to draw youth to the possibilities of profits and entrepreneurship. By generating cheap renewable energy to circulate water, and by providing technical expertise, the youth will find the possibilities for fish farming endless.

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## **CURBING PRAEDIAL LARCENY**

Animal husbandry faces many challenges in Antigua and Barbuda, particularly in the dry season. However, Praedial Larceny (or theft) is the most serious problem facing small farmers. **The ABLP will update existing legislation on Praedial Larceny to ensure that it acts as a deterrent to the those who deprive farmers of the benefits of their hard work and sacrifice. Stiffer penalties will be imposed.**

## **LONGER LEASES FOR FARMERS**

Farmers encounter difficulties raising finance for their farms in many cases because they either do not own the lands they farm or the leases that they have are too short. The ABLP government will give farmers a hand-up. Where they lease government land, they will be given longer leases that can be used as collateral provided that the land is used solely for agricultural purposes.

**The ABLP will provide greater support to small farmers and bring the critical expertise needed to their assistance.**

Too often, when the need is critical, the UPP regime is nowhere to be found. **The ABLP will turn around the fortunes of Antigua and Barbuda's farmers.**







## **(31) BOOSTING MANUFACTURING:**

# **DELIVERING MORE JOBS**

The exports of Antigua and Barbuda, except for tourism, are negligible. Our country produces very little for export because the cost of manufacturing exceeds the prices which can be charged in order to make a profit. The inputs are frequently imported. The UPP did absolutely nothing to help our small manufacturing industry to grow and deliver more jobs. The UPP did nothing even to support our successful Rum production from the threats that it faces. The ABLP will address these problems vigorously and energetically.

### **DROPPING DUTIES AND CUSTOMS FEES**

**The ABLP pledges to drop all customs duties, Revenue Recovery Charge, and Customs Fees from imports that are intended as inputs into manufactured goods for export.** By lowering the cost of the raw materials and of the cost of energy, especially electricity, the ABLP intends to give a hand-up to the manufacturers of goods for export.

Support for the Rum Industry

Antigua and Barbuda's Rums are favourites not only in Antigua and Barbuda but also overseas. But our own market is too small to sustain the production of rum. The industry depends on exports to the wider world. The ABLP will actively support the local rum producers in their efforts to market their rums in traditional markets in Europe, the US and Canada. Additionally, the ABLP will help with efforts to open new markets for our niche mature rum in the high-end markets of China, India and Japan. The ABLP will also put its full diplomatic support behind the local rum producers in any unfair competition they encounter from subsidies to rum production in competitive countries.

### **A NEW BEER FACTORY**

**The ABLP has already identified an investor for a new Beer factory in Antigua. The existing beer factory facilities will be resuscitated and the factory made operational.** The new factory will benefit from the removal of customs duties, Revenue Recovery Charge, and Customs Fees from imports of inputs and this will bring



down the cost of production and the price to the consumer.

## RE-STARTING THE GARMENT SECTOR

The garment sector will be resuscitated by diverting the manufacturing of uniforms, worn by myriad government and private sector workers, to the industrious garment workers who clamour for this work. Hotels will be encouraged to source linens and towels from local producers who will be able to deliver at cheaper prices to the benefit of both sectors.

## TAKING ADVANTAGE OF FAVOURABLE TREATMENT UNDER THE CARICOM TREATY

Our country enjoys very favourable terms for exports under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. But, for the last 10 years, despite all the changes in the global environment, including multi-country production for certain products, the UPP government did nothing to develop the manufacturing sector or to take advantage of the opportunities that the CARICOM Treaty provides.

**The ABLP will seize the available opportunities for export through CARICOM. We will:**

- (a) Establish 'Export Antigua and Barbuda' – an agency of manufacturers and the government to give dedicated focus to exports;
- (b) create a Fund administered by the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank, for providing capital to manufacturing companies for feasible projects;
- (c) facilitate the introduction of reduced energy rates for off-peak usage by manufacturing companies; and
- (d) create the legal framework for manufacturers in Antigua and Barbuda to become part of a multi-country chain of production for certain products such as pharmaceuticals.

Seeking production partners in other countries

In countries such as China, India and Brazil there are many companies that are now exporting to the US, Canadian and CARICOM markets and facing high duties and tariffs. **The ABLP will approach such companies to locate the finishing (and adding value) to their products at plants in Antigua and Barbuda to gain them entry at a lower tariffs. Antigua and Barbuda will get more jobs.** It will be a win-win situation for all.

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## **(32) FOREIGN POLICY FOR DOMESTIC GOOD:**

# **MAKING OUR DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS WORK FOR OUR ECONOMY**

A nation's foreign policy should be driven by its own domestic interests not the interests of others.

### **RE-ENERGISING OUR FOREIGN POLICY TO DELIVER ECONOMIC GOODS**

**The ABLP's foreign policy will be re-focused to the delivery of economic betterment of Antigua and Barbuda.**

The primary focus of our diplomatic missions abroad will be oriented to the following:

- (a) **securing investment in our economy;**
- (b) **promoting and advancing the primary sectors of our economy, namely tourism and the financial services sector;**
- (c) **safeguarding our nation's economic interest in rule-making bodies such as the**

**World Trade Organisation and UN organisation; and**  
**(d) advocating the interest of small states through the Commonwealth.**

**In this regard, the ABLP will create better and more effective integration between overseas missions, tourism offices and the Financial Sector Promotion Authority that we have proposed in this manifesto.**

### **JURISDICTION OVER MARINE SPACE**

Antigua and Barbuda's territory extends beyond its land space to its territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). **The ABLP will ensure the full exercise of our jurisdiction over the fisheries and mineral resources within the marine space that has already been settled.**

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## **ANTIGUANS AND BARBUDANS OVERSEAS**

**The ABLP will develop a mutually beneficial relationship between Antigua and Barbuda and our people overseas. We will encourage their active participation in our country's development efforts through investment,** the transfer of skills and through advocacy in their countries of residence for policies favourable to our nation's interests. At the same time, we will provide them with reasonably priced government land to build retirement and other homes; we will help with the delivery of infrastructure and services; and we will provide opportunities for them to buy 'Diaspora Bonds' that will give them a higher rate of return than they could earn on government bonds in their countries of residence.

## **EXPAND NETWORK OF ROVING AMBASSADORS, HONORARY CONSULS AND SHARED REPRESENTATION**

**No country can afford diplomatic missions all over the world. Hence, while the ABLP will maintain diplomatic missions in key places such as the United Nations in New York, we will reduce the cost of our diplomatic missions by sharing offices with other CARICOM nations;** by joint representation with some Caribbean nations in other capitals; by assigning high-level and experienced Roving Ambassadors to deal with special challenges and opportunities of importance to Antigua and Barbuda; and by the appointment of a network of influential Honorary Consuls that will cost us nothing but will provide services in several capitals of the world where we can promote investment, financial services and tourism.

## **TRAINING OUR DIPLOMATS**

**The ABLP will advance the idea within CARICOM for a Diplomatic Training Academy for the orientation and training of our officers from all ministries who are involved in cross-**

**...we will provide our overseas nationals with reasonably priced government land to build retirement and other homes...**





**border negotiations and in representation at diplomatic missions overseas.**

In the meantime, the ABLP will establish a training school of its own, drawing on the experience and knowledge of diplomats who have served our country in various capitals and organisations as lecturers.

**COLLABORATION WITH LIKE-MINDED NATIONS**

While the ABLP recognises that sometimes in the national interest, our country may have to fight battles alone, there is strength in unity. **The ABLP will therefore strengthen its relationship with governments of like-minded nations in the OECS, CARICOM, the OAS, the Commonwealth and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group to advance our country's interest and the welfare of our people.**

**RELATIONS WITH TRADITIONAL FRIENDS**

The United States, Canada and the United Kingdom are countries with which we have had historical, special relationships. The members of our diaspora live primarily in these three countries; they are the main sources of tourists; our students select these countries as places for higher education; and much of the foreign investment in our country originates from them. **The ABLP will actively pursue beneficial relations with these three traditional**

**friends on the basis of shared interests and mutual respect.**

**DEEPENING RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS**

China is now the world's second largest economy and a huge investor worldwide. The ABLP was the first country in the OECS in 1983 to establish diplomatic relations with China that have remained unbroken.

**We intend to build on the good relations with China in an open and transparent manner.**

Brazil is an untapped market for tourism and investment in Antigua and Barbuda. **The ABLP will strengthen its relations with Brazil including by seeking to establish airline connections to the north of Brazil for tourism, and to encourage Brazilian investment.**

Venezuela has always been an important nation in the economic and geopolitics of our region and the Hemisphere. The PetroCaribe arrangement with Venezuela has benefitted our economy by the loan component in the payment for oil. In contrast to the secrecy and corrupt behaviour of the UPP, **the ABLP will establish a transparent relationship with Venezuela and work out with its government an acceptable and affordable repayment schedule for the debts that will be publicly revealed.**



**VOTE LABOUR**





## **OECS AND CARICOM – a lead role for our nation**

The idea of the OECS was embraced by the leadership of the ABLP, as indeed was the concept of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. We transferred the trade union concept of ‘strength in unity’ to our international affairs – an OECS working in harmony and collectively would make us stronger than we were alone. **The ABLP will build on that successful platform and, once again, we will give leadership in the OECS to build a strong and vibrant organisation staffed by the best brains in our sub-region to advance the economic interests of our people.**

Under the UPP, Antigua and Barbuda’s previously sparkling role in the development of CARICOM became tarnished. Further, the UPP failed to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (the CARICOM Treaty). **The ABLP will resume its role as a chief architect of the regional integration process which started at Dickenson Bay, Antigua in 1965 under Sir Vere Cornwall Bird, Barbados’ Errol Barrow and Guyana’s Forbes Burnham.** The ABLP knows that a strongly integrated Caribbean is the best defence for all our countries and our people against the slings and arrows of external threats of all kinds. Therefore, we will adopt an active stance with CARICOM in the following matters:

- Strengthening the Single Market to allow for cross-border investments, joint ventures, and

integrated production;

- Joint diplomatic work in establishing trade arrangements with outside countries; and in resisting threats to our Rum industry and our financial services sector; and in rules and regulations formulated by OECD countries and imposed on our region to its disadvantage;
- Harmonising our work in the international community to fight the harmful effects of Climate Change and Sea-level rise that threaten the erosion of large parts of our countries;
- Enhancing all areas of the provision of common services so as to share costs with all CARICOM countries and reduce the costs to Antigua and Barbuda alone, including work on HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases;
- Bolstering our monitoring and implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with the European Union to maximise the benefits to our countries while meeting our obligations;
- Strengthening our joint capacity to curb drug trafficking that has plagued all our countries;
- Contributing to the effort for ‘Reparations for Slavery’. This is not an effort that any one Caribbean country can advance on its own; the collective weight of the Caribbean as a whole is integral to its advocacy.





## CONCLUSION

Team Labour is ready to administer the affairs of our country in a manner acceptable and accountable to you - the citizens and residents of Antigua and Barbuda. Together we are a team of experienced persons who have served in government, business and the professions. We have crafted this plan for our beloved country to relieve the burden of taxation that has been placed upon you by the UPP, to stimulate the economy so that businesses can thrive and employment can be expanded, to give you short term relief and long-term stability, to attract new investment and to grow the economy sustainably.

We also have a vision of "One Antigua and Barbuda" where discrimination and victimization are no more, and all the talents, skills and knowledge of our people are drawn into a common collective for the benefit of all. We want to give our children a solid education and a sound start in life; we want to care for our elderly in their golden years; and we want to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are not swept onto the sidelines.

This is the safer, better, richer Antigua and Barbuda that we envision, and to whose creation we are pledged and **READY TO REBUILD**. May God Bless you and our beloved country!!

### **The UPP record of corruption, mismanagement and incompetence.**

The past 10 years of misery and decline must be brought to an end. Our country has suffered 10 miserable years of incompetence, mismanagement and corruption that has reversed our economic and social development; deprived our young people of employment and progress; heaped burdens on our elderly; made a large number of people poor; increased unemployment; and assaulted our democratic institutions and system. The ABLP is determined to end all that immediately and to restore our economy, revive our national dignity and reinstate our democratic system for the good of all. In doing so, the ABLP leadership will demand high and accountable standards from all – especially those persons who hold government positions.

The UPP passed three laws to address corruption, but they gave no teeth or substance to any of them. They failed to operationalize the new Contracts and Procurement Act, creating a loophole through which the country was fleeced of hundreds of millions of dollars through corrupt government contracting. The ABLP will strengthen the governance framework to include the full operationalization of the Contracts and Procurement Act. Additionally we shall adopt a policy of zero tolerance of corruption through the implementation of more robust rules and regulations



governing the actions of political appointees in particular.

Over the last 10 years, the numbers of UPP corruption scandals are many, even as they witch-hunted ABLP leaders, spending millions of dollars in tax payers' money to no avail. Among the UPP corrupt activities are:

- The fences scandal
- The airport scandal
- The port dredging scandal
- The power plant scandal
- The giving away of the Royal Antigua Hotel in return for election financing
- The sale of our valuable beachfront land scandal
- The jelly-bean sidewalks scandal in St. John's
- The unfinished car park scandal
- The building of one mile of road for \$10 million.

There are many others such as buying buildings that the government and statutory bodies did not need but for which kickbacks were paid; kickbacks for the Citizenship by Investment Programme; and

kickbacks for public works contracts.

### **UPP contempt for the law**

In ten years, the UPP has not abided by the law which requires that all loans be brought to Parliament, that all supplementary loans be laid in Parliament, that the public accounts be audited and submitted to Parliament annually. The UPP has been reckless and unaccountable in ten continuous years of poor governance. The UPP deceived the Antigua and Barbuda public by promising transparency and then resorting to secrecy and underhandedness over what has happened with the people's money.

### **UPP undermined democracy, stained our nation**

The UPP has blatantly and flagrantly violated democracy and the rule of law in our country. The acts of lawlessness and tyranny have been many, among them are:

- Unlawfully dismissing Sir Gerald Watt QC, Chairman of the Electoral Commission and others, and replacing them with hand-picked cronies of the Prime Minister to do his bidding.
- Ignoring the decision of a distinguished Panel of senior Caribbean judges who decided, as Arbitrators, that the Prime Minister acted illegally and instructed that Sir Gerald Watt be reinstated.
- Causing the Electoral Boundaries



# **VOTE LABOUR**







Commission, dominated by hand-picked representatives of the UPP, to change the electoral boundaries, without consultation, just months before the General Election was due in order to gerrymander and hijack the elections. The ABLP rightly appealed to the Courts when the UPP absolutely refused to negotiate an equitable arrangement.

- Causing the Electoral Commission, months before the general elections were due, to alter the register of electors eliminating persons that the UPP leaders believe are not their supporters. This was another vulgar measure to steal the elections that the ABLP rightly took to the Courts.
- Interfering with the Police and other authorities and badgering and bullying them to manufacture cases against the ABLP leadership. The UPP caused Antigua and Barbuda to have three Directors of Public Prosecutions in 10 years, and hounded two of them out of office.
- Abusing the State-owned media and the resources of the Treasury for blatant political

purposes. The UPP has commandeered the State-owned media for political broadcasts by its failed leadership and they have used persons paid from the Public Purse and Treasury to promote their political agenda.

### **UPP shamelessness and tyranny**

We have outlined in this section some of the many incidents of UPP corruption and destruction of our democratic systems. In all this, the UPP regime has made Antigua and Barbuda unattractive for doing business. No investor – local or foreign – is willing to put money into a country where the government is tyrannical, its systems undemocratic, and on top of all that its ministers are incompetent. The ABLP is determined to change all that for the good of all Antiguan and Barbudans.

The ABLP will deliver a strong, stable, accountable government that puts the interests of the nation first; and will deliver a better future for all Antiguan and Barbudans. In this connection, high standards and best practices will be demanded of all elected officials, and the leader of the Party and Prime Minister of the country will tolerate no breaches by anyone.

**...the UPP regime has made Antigua and Barbuda unattractive for doing business. No investor – local or foreign – is willing to put money into a country where the government is tyrannical, its systems undemocratic, and on top of all that its ministers are incompetent...**



**VOTE LABOUR**





# THE ABLP WILL DELIVER

## STRONG, STABLE, ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

### RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY

The ABLP will restore accountability that the UPP has scorned; we will improve transparency measures by taking the people into our confidence in the many projects and programmes that we will institute to diversify and enliven the economy, stimulate business, bring investment and create employment.

We will govern for all citizens and residents of Antigua and Barbuda and not for any one group. Ours is a small country and our people should be able to cohabit here in peace and in an atmosphere of equity where each has the opportunity to fulfil his or her ambition without fear of political victimization or discrimination. The ABLP pledge is to build and maintain that atmosphere of fairness and right.

### REFORMS FOR GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY

To ensure greater accountability and transparency in government operations, the ABLP will undertake a number of reforms including:

- Prioritising the reform of systems, rules and procedures to enhance and modernise service delivery across those Government departments on which the public and the business community most heavily depend.
- Reconceptualising statutory corporations and the economic and societal interests which they serve and ensure that there is a greater level of participation by partners in the private sector and civil society.
- Reforming the system of Government procurement of goods and services to provide greater access to and participation by larger numbers of Antiguan and Barbudans.

- Implementing immediately both the National Youth Council and the Prime Ministerial Business Advisory Council that have been detailed earlier in this manifesto so that young people and the business community are involved in a wide spectrum of nation building activities.

### CONSTITUTIONAL AND JUSTICE REFORM

Our constitution now over 32 years old has formed the basis for the creation of an equitable and egalitarian society. Modelled on that of the UK, the particular circumstances of our developing society and inequalities that are increasingly evident require that some adjustments be made.

During the last 10 years, the UPP has consistently made direct attacks on the freedoms and rights of the citizens guaranteed by our constitution. These attacks relate to the right to free speech; the right to freedom of association; the right for protection against unfair detention by the police; the right to timely bail hearings; the independence of the judiciary from political interference; the abuse of the police force for the furthering of a political agenda; the failure to secure the tenure of the Director of Public Prosecution; and the failure to secure tenure for our judges.

The ABLP will seek an amendment to the constitution for the election of Parish Councils and the appointment of a Mayor for the City of St John's.

The ABLP will also seek official recognition for Rastafarianism as a religion.





## **Gaston Browne is a strong leader with a record of success**

- Gaston Browne was a senior and effective Minister for five years. He has experience of government, of parliament, of regional and international bargaining on behalf of all the people of Antigua and Barbuda.
- He is an experienced and successful banker with a keen sense of financial matters.
- He was head of his class of international students including those from the UK, Singapore, and Malaysia, and distinguished alumni of City Banking College in the United Kingdom.
- He can walk with captains of industry and heads of businesses; yet he maintains the common touch as a champion of the people.
- He is happily married to a supportive wife.
- He has pledged his life to the service of the people of Antigua and Barbuda.
- He has made it clear that his government will be a government dedicated to the rapid development of Antigua and Barbuda for all its people.

## **THE LABOUR TEAM IS A MIX OF EXPERIENCE AND TALENT**

Because Gaston Browne and several of the ABLP candidates were experienced Ministers, they will hit the ground running on the day they are sworn into office. Along with the new talent – experienced in areas of business, telecommunication, and education – they will get on with the job, immediately delivering results.

## **WORSE OFF SINCE 2004, BUT BETTER OFF FROM 2014**

There is no doubt that people are worse off now than they were under the ABLP in 2004. They earn less, they are taxed more, they have suffered victimization and discrimination, the cost-of-living has risen, crime has escalated and the economy has shrunk. That is what 10 years of UPP incompetence, corruption and mismanagement has dumped on our nation. Are you not worse off now than you were 10 years ago? The time has long since passed for the UPP to go. We must vote them out.

The ABLP has a successful track record: we will hit the ground running

The ABLP has a successful track record of rebuilding the economy after it had been wrecked by other political parties; and of innovation to diversify the economy, to bring investment and to create jobs. For example:

- When the ABLP left office in 2004, unemployment was 5 percent: under the UPP it is now over 25 percent and rising.
- Under the ABLP, Antiguan and Barbudans had the highest per capita income in the OECS: their real income is now far less and they pay income tax on top of that.
- Year after year the ABLP administration created growth in the economy of an average 4 per cent in which business thrived and many people had two jobs: under the UPP economic growth declined steadily to negative status for several years recording only a paltry rise in 2013.

***The ABLP will use all the experience and knowledge of their previous successes with the economy, to grow it again for the benefit of the nation. The ABLP is ready to come to your rescue and rebuild our country.***









## **VISION**

To transform Antigua and Barbuda into a harmonious, prosperous, and modern nation; an economic powerhouse in the Caribbean; a country of equality of opportunity and justice irrespective of colour, creed or class.

## **CREED**

The Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party believes in the empowerment of our people in the principles of good governance, the elimination of poverty, the provision of full employment, equitable distribution of wealth, and the equality of opportunity and justice.

# HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ **JOB CREATION**
- ✓ **ELIMINATION OF PERSONAL INCOME TAX**
- ✓ **COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE FOR PENSIONERS**
- ✓ **MAKE BARBUDA A PORT-OF-ENTRY**
- ✓ **FULL UPGRADE OF BARBUDA'S LONE HOSPITAL**
- ✓ **MAKE ANTIGUA & BARBUDA A MODEL FOR "GREEN" ENVIRONMENT WORLDWIDE**
- ✓ **PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR THE POLICE**
- ✓ **500 AFFORDABLE HOMES IN 500 DAYS**
- ✓ **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ANTIGUA**
- ✓ **RE-INTRODUCTION OF THE LAND FOR YOUTH PROGRAMME**
- ✓ **A YOUTH ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME COMBINED WITH AN ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FUND**
- ✓ **A REWARD SYSTEM FOR ALL CIVIL SERVANTS TO INCENTIVIZE PRODUCTIVITY**
- ✓ **TERM LIMITS FOR PRIME MINISTER**



## READY TO REBUILD

