

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>OUR APPROACH</i>	2
	<i>THE POLITICAL LEADER'S STATEMENT</i>	3
1.	<i>CREATING NEW GOVERNANCE</i>	5
	Constitutional Reform	7
	Tobago, Autonomy within the Unitary State	9
	Public Sector	10
	Foreign Relations	11
	Inter-religious relations	12
2.	<i>TRANSFORMING SOCIETY</i>	13
	Community-based Urban Rebirth	13
	Social and poverty reduction	17
	Housing Solutions for All	18
	A Patient-Centred Health Care System	19
	Full integration of Youth into National Life	20
	Ensuring the Dignity & Well Being of Women	22
	Education for the Development of Competent & Caring Citizens	23
	Culture and the Creative Sector	25
	Sport to Improve Communal Achievement and Well Being	27
3.	<i>ENSURING PUBLIC SAFETY & EQUAL JUSTICE</i>	28
	Public Safety Equal Justice	
4.	<i>MANAGING THE ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT</i>	31
	Economic, monetary and fiscal policy	32
	Labour	34
	Agricultural Development Towards Food Security	36
	Business Development	37
	Tourism	38
	Transportation	39
	Energy Resource Management	41
	National Information Communication Technology	43
	Land Use for the benefit of All	44
	Environment Management	45
	Coastal Development	46

OUR APPROACH

At the beginning of 2007, billboards posted along the nation's roads affirmed that the Congress of the People was "On the Road to Government".

This was not rhetoric. From its inauguration on September 10, 2006, the Congress of the People had been preparing for governing.

From the outset, we focused on imperatives for arresting crime, eradicating poverty correcting the mismanagement that had converted immense wealth to rising prices, social imbalance and widening polarization between rich and poor and between the major ethnic groups in our society.

Recognizing that the current power-centric mode of governance is outmoded, anomalous, and dysfunctional, the COP set about creating the framework for a new culture of governance driven by the involvement, insight and best interests of the people.

Thus began a series of consultations with stakeholder groups and individuals across the country involving experts in all areas of governance; professional practitioners; religious leaders; trade unionists; business leaders; university lecturers; creative producers; farmers; fishermen; students; homemakers; NGOs; youth; and numerous other interest groups.

Following this, a vast army of volunteers reviewed and distilled thousands of reports and recommendations in formulating this Framework for Governance for a COP Government, and for a new political culture in Trinidad and Tobago.

This is a detailed manual of best practices covering all areas of governance and all groups and areas of our society.

The COP Manifesto, **THE PEOPLE'S PLATFORM**, (which will be released during the week of October 21) and this **FRAMEWORK FOR GOVERNANCE** commit the Congress of the People to the plans and perspectives we present to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, as we seek a mandate to form the government of our Republic.

The Congress of the People offers the undertakings defined in both of these publications as a contract with people of Trinidad and Tobago.

STATEMENT BY THE POLITICAL LEADER

Many Voices, One Purpose

To secure the future, we need to chart a course that will protect the future generations. Securing the future requires real change which requires leadership, communication, trust and courageous patriotism. As a people, we must reaffirm our boundless faith in our identity. We must **build a nation of many voices with one purpose.**

Defining Our Society

The CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE is guided by the belief that we must have faith in our people. Our people must define our society if we are to create a strong nation. Our optimism in our own capability will define a compassionate society and a bright future for our country.

Our **Nation Building Effort** must develop a healthy society which elevates the well-being of all our people. Only by ensuring the quality of life of every citizen of the Republic can we positively change all aspects of society.

Our **Nation Building Approach** requires that we treat **National Character, Unification of the People** and **National Development** as distinct but integral components. Each is an interrelated, interconnected and interactive process with its own critical role and functions.

Defining Our National Character

Our people focused nation building approach must emulate the best of our diverse historical, ethnic and cultural experiences. Our national character, our culture must become our most valuable national asset.

Unification of our people

Our people focused **Nation Building Approach** requires developing and practicing a genuine **National Unity** of many voices with a common purpose. Only through National Unity will our many voices find a common purpose and such a common purpose is essential for **National Direction**.

National Development

Our people focused **Nation Building Approach** requires developing a society that is built on sustainable human development at the **Community Level**.

National development demands careful selection of developmental solutions to guide positive change:

1. **Political change** through participatory democracy with community based governance;
2. **Economic change** with sustainable growth in all sectors and industries;
3. **Social change** with equitable wealth sharing for an improved quality of life for all;
4. **Cultural Change** through efficient and effective nation-building policies and programmes.

1. **CREATING NEW GOVERNANCE**

A FOUNDATION STONE FOR NEW POLITICS

Top-down arbitrary rule has remained the model of government in Trinidad and Tobago for five hundred years, despite the achievement of Independence and the outward trappings of a Parliamentary system. Party politics has so far merely entrenched the 'divide and rule' approach adopted by colonial governments.

Clearly we need **New Politics**. Genuine democracy means transparency, participation and accountability. This is what the Congress of the People will provide. If we change the lives of people in communities, we will change the life of the nation.

A COP government will provide citizens and communities with the opportunity to determine what priorities, projects and services will be delivered to their respective communities. *Local Government* will provide the linkage between the citizen and participatory democracy at the community level by building a community-based democracy infrastructure.

We will encourage a *bottom-up approach* to governance at the local community level to satisfy the genuine and legitimate needs of citizens to improve their quality of life.

We will insist that *Regional Corporations and Municipalities* assume responsibility for basic infrastructure, maintenance and services and other facilities, which are approved but not currently provided.

We will *provide Local Government* with the necessary financial support and other resources from the central government in order that they can deliver quality services to the communities.

A COP Government will transform local government through:

- Devolution of authority and resources, within national policy guidelines, from central government ministries as e.g. Community Development, Housing, Social Welfare; Sports, Planning & Development
- Equitable financial allocation to regions
- Adoption of the THA model for regional development planning;
- Collaborative governance procedures
- Regional coordination of the delivery of water, electricity and telephones
- Community-based security and rehabilitation arrangements
- Expanded responsibilities for local representatives

These measures do NOT require constitutional change.

Transparency, participation and accountability at the Local Government level will create the demand for genuine democracy at the national level.

Under a COP Government, the hundreds of civil society organizations at community and national level whose voluntary efforts have been responsible for keeping the fabric of our society together, can finally look forward to becoming permanent partners in planning and implementing the development of their own communities and regions.

The COP will achieve an enhanced quality of life for all citizens by focusing on people, and implementing policies and practices which would ensure that human development drives sustainable economic development. This would include:

- Promoting citizen **participation** in all levels of government
- Ensuring all citizens **equal opportunity in 'making a living'**
- Developing a highly **skilled and educated labor force**
- Encouraging private **ownership** of land, housing, and business
- Supporting those genuinely **disadvantaged**

We will reassess national, economic and social priorities and ensure that human development and the quality life of the individual citizen determines industrialization and economic development by Government.

We will reassess the use of **natural resources** particularly in the energy sector for sustainable development and for the benefit of all citizens and generations to come.

We will aggressively promote independent private enterprise. The state will occupy a catalytic role in this regard which will promote and direct development, and ensure that the benefits will accrue to the people.

*The COP commitment is maximum people involvement
in participatory governance.*



CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

The Congress of the People believes that there is widespread support among the people of Trinidad and Tobago for Constitutional Reform. Numerous occurrences have demonstrated certain deficiencies in the 1976 Constitution.

The COP believes that every democracy should give citizens numerous opportunities to participate in decision making, and provide for:

- checks and balances to safeguard against the abuse of power
- respect for the voices of minorities, as well as those of the majority
- a free press
- access to official information
- integrity in public life
- freedom from corruption

- a right of recall for non-performing parliamentary representatives
- a fixed election date
- opportunities for a referendum process
- limit the Chief Executive to two successive terms as head of Government

Based on information gathered through wide spread consultation, the COP will adopt the following procedure for constitutional reform:

- prepare and distribute a booklet which sets out the terms of the present Constitution, suggests possible changes and lays out arguments for and against each suggestion;
- hold meetings throughout Trinidad and Tobago to clarify and issues which may be raised;
- invite the public at that stage, to send in their proposals for reform;
- where necessary hold private sessions with groups or individuals who sent proposals
- hold a national convention to debate the shape which the new Constitution should take.

The COP firmly believes that widest possible consultation is vital to the process of constitutional reform.

The COP Government will therefore establish a Constitution Commission to engage in this exercise of Constitutional Reform and seek to develop a consensus as to the model of Constitution which would best serve the people of T&T.

The COP also believes that the arrangements with respect to the Tobago House of Assembly need to be revisited with particular reference to the aspirations of the people of Tobago and the terms of the Constitution Committee will extend to the legislative provisions touching upon the THA and the unique status of Tobago.

***The COP commitment is constitutional reform
based on maximum involvement
in consultation and consensus building***



TOBAGO, AUTONOMY WITHIN THE UNITARY STATE

The Congress of the People assures the right of Tobago autonomy within the unitary state. The Congress of the People supports the aspirations of the people of Tobago to stand side by side.

The COP will be responsive to the legitimate demands of the people of Tobago for the provision of basic government services within the island.

We will:

- enact laws for more effective administration of Tobago;
- create a Tobago police force to ensure the enforcement of all laws;
- collaborate with respective interest groups to devise policies designed by the people of Tobago and in the best interest of Tobago;
- raise revenue and allocate monies for more effective administration of Tobago;
- equitably settle all matters pertaining to Tobago's land and coastal waters;
- establish a Tobago Public Service Commission

*The COP commitment is recognition of
Tobago's right to self determination and equitable relations between
the partners of the twin island state.*



PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

The COP Public Sector Policy is geared to create a competent professionally managed Public Service which can effectively deliver goods and services. The public sector will be operated based on accountability, responsibility, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of all fiscal allocations.

The COP will:

- implement budgetary commitments on schedule and according to specifications.
- allocate resources on the basis of priorities to programmes with clearly defined objectives and measurable outputs.
- define and implement monitoring, evaluation systems and procedures designed to track the use of all fiscal and other appropriations.
- establish human resources and performance management systems based on merit in recruitment, placement and upward mobility.
- implement a structured management system consisting of policy development, programming, planning, budgeting, implementing, monitoring and evaluation.

***COP's commitment is to develop an effective
client centered public service***



FOREIGN RELATIONS

The COP Foreign Policy will be guided by the overriding principle of the sovereign equality of states. A major focus is to broaden the base of our economic dependence away from over-dependence on the hydrocarbon sector. Trinidad & Tobago is fast becoming a major if not a dominant world player in gas-based industries such as LNG, methanol, ammonia and urea.

The existing inroads made in international markets by these industries must be consolidated if we are to survive the challenges of a global and increasingly competitive environment as new energy-based players continue to emerge.

We will:

- encourage enhanced participation of local investments for monetizing its existing and still unexplored hydrocarbon resources.
- exploit our ethnic diversity in the national interest. An ethnically diversified staff reflecting our the best and most achievement-oriented high grade human capital in T&T will achieve and evoke greater diplomatic and trade successes for Trinidad and Tobago in the emerging cosmopolitan international setting.
- re-structure and re-focus the Foreign Affairs Ministry. The diplomatic service will pursue national interest identification, modification and clarification and will develop appropriate mechanisms for facilitating the achievement of these interests in the international setting.
- Review relations within the Eastern Caribbean, relations with Venezuela, measures to protect Trinidad and Tobago Investments in Caricom; Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs; the Tourism Imperative; the existing system of postings.
- ensure that the people and Parliament of T&T must be consulted on all major issues emanating from the Heads of Government Conference prior to the nation becoming party to such Protocols and Agreements

***The COP's commitment is the creation of an agile foreign service
which will showcase the unique location of
T&T within the family of nations***



INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS

A COP Government will partner faith-based organizations to implement measures intended to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities. The COP will welcome interventions of faith based organization and other non Governmental organizations designed to address pressing social issues. Avenues will be put in place for ongoing collaboration which would focus the immense energies of this sector for the common good. The COP will at all times respect the cultural diversity and plurality of our national fabric.

The COP will:

- create avenues for religious leaders and elders to make public comment on important national issues and render advice, without the fear of victimization, to the chief servants of State.
- work with Faith Based Organisations [FBOs] in promoting religious harmony.
- support the work of Religious Ministers in correctional institutions.
- collaborate with FBOs to create programmes that will harness the abilities of the youths giving them opportunities to convert their talents and skills into entrepreneurial and other employment opportunities.
- launch an ongoing peace awareness drive which will promote dialogue on our multi-ethnic, plural society and affirm human dignity and respect for the environment.
- implement International Human Rights conventions through the setting up a local 'Human Rights and Race Relations Commission

***The COP commitment is
harmony and respect for religious diversity***

2. **TRANSFORMING THE SOCIETY**

COMMUNITY-BASED URBAN REBIRTH

Port-of Spain North/ St. Ann's West, Port-of -Spain, South, Laventille East and West are interconnected urban constituencies that surround and include the capital city of Port-of-Spain. They have suffered gross neglect under the present administration. This is reflected in the high crime rate, the decayed infrastructure, the ghetto stigma that is attached to parts of Port-of-Spain South and Upper and Lower Laventille, the social disintegration, reflected in high rates of teenage pregnancies and divorce, gang warfare, domestic violence and structural unemployment.

In these areas there has been no concern for the restoration, preservation, conservation and presentation of the historical and cultural heritage. Moreso, sections of the capital city of Port-of-Spain are suffering from social decay as manifested in noise and garbage pollution, vagrancy and drug dens proliferating, in spite of the influx of new buildings. The Congress of the People has concluded that a programme of urban rebirth is needed to restore the vitality of these communities.

- Port-of-Spain North/ St. Anns West - **Residential/ Commercial/ Historical**
- Port-of-Spain South- **Residential/ Commercial/ Cultural/ Recreational/ Artisanal**
- Laventille West- **Residential/ Industrial/ Cultural/ Historical**
- Laventille East/ Morvant- **Residential/ Commercial**

For the first time in the political history of T&T, these four constituencies are being clustered for a single campaign. Clustering the constituencies will accomplish the following:

1. Each constituency will benefit from the strengths of their own candidate as well as those of the other three candidates.

2. The four constituencies will be able to collaborate and cooperate with each other to obtain maximum benefit from their development plans.
3. Integration of development plans in the four constituencies will facilitate the dismantling of the hostile borderlines and improvement in community interrelationships.
4. Weaker communities within and across the constituencies will benefit from the stronger communities.

What is Community Based Urban Rebirth :

The Congress of the People's vision for community based urban rebirth refers to a process of solving the problems of underdevelopment by revitalizing communities within the four constituencies through:

- Infrastructural development and redevelopment
- Community co-operation and collaboration
- Local government reform
- Participatory governance
- Community economic development
- Building community resilience
- Cultural regeneration, preservation , conservation and presentation
- Renewal of national commitment
- Implementation of Business Improvement Districts(POS, Woodbrook and St. James)
- Replacing criminality with creativity
- Poverty eradication and social development.
- Renovation, innovation and investment
- Maintenance of community rights and entitlements
- Traffic Management

Community-Based Rebirth will:

- Improve the physical environment in the residential and commercial areas of the constituencies to increase property values and revenues
- Eradicate gang warfare and improve community inter and intra relationships
- Decentralize decision -making authority and resources and ensure equity, participation, transparency and accountability

- Facilitate the involvement of the people in the governance process
- Increase economic activities and improve the economy and self-reliance of communities
- Empower communities in the constituencies to take intentional action to increase the capacity of individuals and organizations to bring about social and economic change
- Enable communities to document and archive their historical and cultural heritage for future generations while at the same time restoring, preserving , conserving and packaging the material and immaterial heritage for presentation and sustainable economic exploitation.
- Achieve a collective commitment to shared principles and values
- Provide enhanced services for the business community, improve the business environment and strengthen investor confidence while retaining business and attracting new business and investment
- Reduce crime and delinquency and establish a safer and cleaner environment
- Remove and reduce poverty and enable the poor, the disabled, the aged, single parents, and other vulnerable groups to enjoy a decent standard of living.
- Rebuild substandard housing and businesses, initiate new technologies, creative ideas and new activities and encourage investment.
- Ensure that communities maintain their rights to their assets.
- Reduce traffic pile ups and traveling time.

Community Based Urban Rebirth will not:

- Dislocate people
- Destroy communities and community identity
- Encourage dependency
- Disrespect people
- Trample on people's rights
- Cause community conflict

Urban Rebirth be Accomplished through:

- Community mapping and profiling
- Research , analysis and documentation
- Funding and resourcing
- Legislation
- Organized interventions that are market based, system oriented, strategic and measurable.
- Self governing partnerships anchored in the private sector
- Advocacy and consultation
- Physical works
- Promotion and activity programming
- Incentives and business development
- Governance arrangements
- Public and private investment.
- Cultural inventories and assessments.
- The people, the organizations, the resources and the processes

This programme will be driven by the four candidates of the Congress of the People when they become Members of Parliament in collaboration with government agencies, the private sector and all stakeholders.

Urban Rebirth will be a collaborative project facilitated by:

- The hotels and businesses
- The industrial enterprises
- The historical and cultural assets
- The residential communities
- The community icons
- The non-governmental and community based organizations
- The constituents



SOCIAL AND POVERTY REDUCTION

In order to ensure the quality of life for all its citizens, a *COP government* will identify causes of poverty and other social constraints and work with the affected citizens by providing opportunities for them to become economically self reliant.

The COP National Social Policy will give priority to citizens who are specially challenged and in need of support. We will:

- provide the necessary assistance for the academically challenged, physically challenged, medically challenged and employment challenged, among others.
- institute finance and evaluate social programmes in rehabilitation, income support, skills support and personal guidance and counseling.
- develop poverty eradication strategies targeted for specific populations including but not limited to single mothers, the disabled, the aged, the infirm, widows and orphans. These strategies will be developed in collaboration with NGOs and the private sector and will be implemented within a community framework .

***The COP 's commitment is the alleviation of poverty,
the promotion of equity and maximum
access to the national patrimony***



HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR ALL

The COP housing initiative will address the housing needs of all citizens. A COP government will provide appropriately designed quality houses at the most affordable prices possible. Provision will be made for the citizens to have the option of building their own houses with the aid of the private construction sector. In other cases, citizens will have the option of engaging the principle of sweat equity.

The COP will:

- Pursue a policy of ***citizen ownership*** of house and land, with clear title.
- ensure adequate, affordable, quality housing for our citizens by providing housing solutions; the COP will also empower citizens ***to build their own houses*** with the appropriate support from the private construction sector.
- Go beyond the construction of houses, to build infrastructure to enhance communities with provision for sport, leisure, youth and family activities.
- ensure the provision of the necessary physical ***infrastructure*** for housing communities.
- ensure immediate and easily available ***financial support***, for those in need, working through the private financial sector.
- establish a citizen friendly house building ***approval system***
- restructure the Ministry of Housing and its agencies. In addition to providing efficient and effective housing solutions, the Ministry will evolve into being a ***regulatory agency and facilitator*** in the housing sector.

***COP's commitment is affordable quality housing
in viable communities for all citizens***



A PATIENT-CENTERED HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The gross neglect and inadequacies of the existing health care system are clear indicators of the extent to which the Manning regime has failed the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The Congress of the People will implement a *Patient Bill of Rights* entitling accessible, affordable, timely and professional healthcare services to all persons, at all times. This will ensure that patients will be treated with respect and dignity by all health care providers.

We will:

- provide a *patient* driven health care service with reliable, efficient, effective and sustainable delivery systems.
- provide *patient* oriented professional and administrative support to all who access the health system.
- provide high quality service at all national, regional and community based health facilities.
- guarantee the provision of *patient* friendly physical facilities and state-of-the-art medical equipment.
- address the disparity in service between private and public healthcare systems. Consideration will be given to adopting a universal health care system.
- address the gross physical inadequacies in the health sector and the administrative inadequacies in the *Ministry of Health and Regional Health Authorities*

***The COP's commitment is efficient, affordable,
timely and accessible health care for all citizens***



FULL INTEGRATION OF YOUTH INTO NATIONAL LIFE

A COP government will reintegrate citizens 30 years of age and under, into the social, economic and political fabric of Trinidad & Tobago by removing barriers to information, education, economic opportunity and youth activism.

We will foster an environment in which today's young people will be fully engaged in the nation's development -- culturally and economically -- and will feel that their unique needs are respected and fully met alongside the needs of citizens of other age groups.

The COP will:

- undertake the reformation of the education system to address the full range of educational needs of youth—emotional, physical, cultural and spiritual as well as academic.
- assist youth in making the transition to the working world by providing for practical assistance, financial incentives and technical support programmes to aid young people in either creating their own businesses or joining the workforce as employees.
- ensure that youth enjoy equal and appropriate access to the full range of services needed to address their unique health needs. The Youth policy will inform Health policy by focusing on education and disease prevention.
- reduce the risk and rates of drug abuse among youth by supporting youth to develop healthy lifestyles and to build effective support networks at the family and community levels.
- promote the unique values of young people, especially in regard to their concern for the environment.

- reduce the rate of involvement of young people in criminal activity by establishing programmes to ensure equal and open opportunity for all youth in education, culture and employment.
- enhance access for young people by strengthening the infrastructure and providing better funding for leisure and entertainment in all parts of Trinidad & Tobago.
- give voice to Trinidad & Tobago's youth culture by ensuring adequate funding for youth-driven cultural activities
- remove barriers to Internet and other technologies and encouraging skills development in non-traditional, technology-driven fields.
- engage the citizens under 30 in the life and governance of our society by promoting and providing assistance to youth organizations within institutions of all types — local and national government; media; international forums; NGOs.

COP's commitment is the activation and full deployment of our young citizens



ENSURING THE DIGNITY & WELL BEING OF WOMEN

The **COP will** champion the interests of women and will systematically shape public policy and implement practices which are sensitive to the special needs of the women of our national community. The COP vision is for a more gender sensitive society with a greater awareness of women's issues and rights.

The COP will:

- promote gender equity and provide for the inclusion of women at all levels in the decision making process, particularly with respect to key women's issues.
- champion legislation with particular relevance to women's needs including:
 - Equal opportunity at the workplace including access to non traditional employment opportunities
 - Modernised maternity benefits
 - Equal access to educational and vocational training
 - Social welfare reform including a revised National Pension Scheme
 - Assistance to single mothers in becoming economically self sufficient.
- enact legislation to address domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and children. Legislation governing health and safety issues, access to premium health care, ante natal care and the HIV/AIDS epidemic will also be enacted.
- establish for a at the community level to ensure that women's voices and perspectives are reflected in major policy debates and in implementation of projects within the respective communities.
- strategies to address the needs of women will be community driven. In each town or village, a programme will be created that will monitor and assist women who are socially and economically disadvantaged.

COP's commitment is enhanced gender equity and full inclusion of women in democratic processes



EDUCATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENT & CARING CITIZENS

A COP Government will focus on the development of human capital as a critical component of the nation building process. Education and training are pivotal to social cohesion, deepening of the democratic way of life, with social and economic equity for every citizen and the development of responsible, caring, competent and productive citizens.

The COP Education Policy will make the effective delivery of education for living a priority in the nation building process. Resources will be dedicated to develop physical infrastructure and institutional capacity to deliver the appropriate levels and quality of education.

We will:

- establish a clearing house unit will be established in the Ministry of Education to swiftly address the back log of vacancies of teachers and administrators at the primary and secondary levels.
- strengthen the partnership between state and denominational boards. Revitalize funding formula for capital and recurrent expenditure in all these schools.
- decentralize the current education system into six autonomous regional authorities – Tobago, North, Northwest, East, Central and South. The Ministry of Education will exercise regulatory, monitory and accreditation functions.
- revise the curriculum to promote learning diversity, lifelong learning and civic loyalty.

- modify the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and the Primary curricula, as well as the networked programme existing among the ministries responsible for health, sports, culture, legal affairs, social development and transportation to facilitate early detection and treatment of learning disorders, medical, psychological, social and other problems that may hinder the classroom learning process.
- develop an effective special education program
- re-examine the SEMP curriculum and all other certification programmes at this level with a view to evaluate their philosophy, relevance and competence, in keeping with the philosophical underpinnings of diversity in teaching/learning.
- promote character-based education and value-balanced programmes as a critical component of reform to be timetabled into the curriculum. Teachers will be trained to offer this new program.
- review the entire teachers and administrators compensation package and disburse retirement benefits promptly.

***The COP 's commitment is to
the development of educated citizens
who are fully capable of guiding the national
development effort.***



CULTURE AND THE CREATIVE SECTOR

A Cultural Policy is fundamental to the development of a proud and productive Trinidad and Tobago. The vision is of a people who value ourselves; respect our cultures; and contribute meaningfully to the nation's rich cultural diversity and expressions, comprehends the importance of the creative process to the human spirit. The manifestation of our creativity and cultural diversity will be recognized in our policies and practices in every sphere – educational, social, economic, financial, planning and developmental.

The COP will:

- recognise that culture is derived from the people, and that the living culture in communities must be encouraged and facilitated.
- respect the works of artistes which envision our society, and broaden our self appreciation.
- establish an independent body for the Endowment for the Arts to give financial and other support to individual artists, artistic organizations, productions and festivals.
- preserve those cultural activities and expressions which can be best shared in a museum setting. Towards this end, the COP will establish a network of community museums, upgrading and funding those presently functioning. These museums will be overseen by a national museum organization.
- establish an up-to-date and efficient system to archive and protect historic continuity of artifacts, documents, buildings, and cultural skills both traditional and new.
- strengthen the legal fabric that protects the artist and his work (copyright and censorship), and provide exemptions from taxes associated with cultural activities. Enhanced tax benefits to organizations, which fund artistic endeavours.

- enhance training of arts administrators, curators, art historians, archivists, tutors, creative and technical practitioners. Schools' curricula will recognise and include exposure to the plastic and performing arts.
- respect the inestimable communal value of national celebrations and festivals, especially street and open air events such as carnival. The COP will provide appropriate structures to accommodate the historic, traditional and evolving experience of mas players, musicians, steelbands and onlookers, which will not undermine the intrinsic value of the green spaces and public thoroughfares.
- To further promote and expand the creative sector of Trinidad and Tobago, the Congress of the People will-:
 - o Market access grants
 - o Funding for research and development
 - o Training and human resource development
 - o Access to credit, e.g. loan and venture capital
 - o Harmonization of the import regime and the removal of harmful tariffs
 - o Trade facilitation, business support services for export-ready firms and entrepreneurs.
 - o Alignment of trade, industrial and intellectual property policies.

***COP's commitment is the full expression
development and preservation
of our diverse and evolving cultural practices***



SPORT TO IMPROVE COMMUNAL ACHIEVEMENT & WELL BEING

One of the most effective strategies to deal with the positive development of the citizenry is through sports. Although youth are inextricably linked to sport, sport must be developed to cater for all ages and for the differently abled. Sport must be used to promote healthy lifestyle and overcome diseases such as diabetes and obesity.

The COP will:

- design community leisure facilities which prioritize parks, jogging tracks, and play areas to encourage family outings, picnics, leisure walks etc. Security will be provided for such facilities.
- will initiate meaningful dialogue with competitive sporting organizations. Where there are no existing sports bodies, they will be operationalized within the first year of a COP government.
- Based on “conversations” with these bodies, strategies will be developed taking into account each group’s priorities.
- develop sports infrastructure in communities. These facilities will allow a broad cross section of the population to explore and expand their love of sport. They can also lead to early recognition of gifted young persons who have the potential for professional sporting involvement.
- place emphasis on sporting and recreation in every school.
- provide qualified coaches and trainers.
- encourage professional involvement in sport and provide facilities and financial assistance to enable gifted athletes to compete on the world stage.

3. ***PUBLIC SAFETY & EQUAL JUSTICE***

PUBLIC SAFETY

Safety is a pivotal component of a better quality of life. The *COP's National Security and Safety Policy* will assure that government provides enhanced safety and security, protection of private property, fairness and equality before the law, and justice for all its citizens.

The full range of COP initiatives has been widely disseminated in *The 101 Steps towards a Safer Trinidad and Tobago*. In summary, the COP will:

- **protect the quality of life** of the nation's citizens by safeguarding the individual citizen's security and safety, at all times
- prioritize the **development and coordinated functioning** of the three major components of the criminal justice system – Police Service, Justice and the Prison System – while guaranteeing their independent functioning. All necessary financial and other resource support will be provided.
- ensure a highly professional police service focusing on crime reduction through continuous **community policing**, protecting the citizens and property by improving early crime detection and swift apprehension. The police service will be provided with the necessary policing infrastructure.
- ensure a highly **professional prison service** that guarantees the security of the inmates and provides maximum options for prisoner rehabilitation. The prison service will be provided with the appropriate administrative facilities and physical infrastructure.
- conduct an **overall program review and evaluation of the functions and management of the Ministry of National Security** and related agencies in attaining their current mandate.



EQUAL JUSTICE

The very heart of the COP's vision for Trinidad & Tobago is that all of our people should live in peace and harmony. It is essential that justice flourishes throughout the land, for without justice we cannot have peace and without peace, no one prospers. We will target the marginalized in our society for special assistance in terms of access to justice.

The role of the Criminal Justice System is of crucial importance if we are to work towards a just society. This system has fallen into gross disrepair.

We will:

- ensure a highly **professional judiciary** that dispenses fair, timely and equitable justice for all. The judiciary service will be provided with the required infrastructure.
- establish a Ministry of Justice with the primary mandate being, in the first instant, to overhaul the entire Criminal Justice System so as to achieve the following objectives:
 - o Ensuring that justice is delivered on time
 - o Initiating a proper service for victims and witnesses
 - o Rebalancing the criminal justice system in favour of law abiding citizens
 - o Simplifying, streamlining and speeding-up the prosecution and court system where bureaucracy and technicalities do not get in the way of justice
- through the Ministry of Justice, collaborate with all stakeholders in the Criminal Justice System to ensure that from the point of investigation – to the arrest of an offender – through trial and ultimate release of prisoners – the system works smoothly to ensure swift justice and rehabilitation of prisoners.

- o Introduce a code of practice for victims of crime and a witness charter
 - o Make the DNA legislation work and improve available DNA Technology
 - o Enhance the case management system involving case progression officers. Streamline the Magistrates Courts by providing enhanced information technology
 - o Introduce dedicated Violent Crime Courts
 - o Ensure a workable plea bargaining system
- Implement restorative justice to rehabilitate criminals so as to reduce the incidence of repeat offenders. As part of this restorative justice initiative, the COP will:
 - o Reform prison conditions and review penalties, sentencing and probation
 - o Encourage rehabilitation by establishing half-way homes
 - o Introduce programs to tackle illiteracy, unemployment and homelessness
 - o **Collaborate with NGO's to achieving this objective. We will ensure that appropriate resources and measures of accountability are in place to empower NGO's to work effectively at the rehabilitative task.**

*The COP's commitment is maximum citizen safety,
justice and equality before the law.*

4. MANAGING THE ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT

Politics and economics are inseparable. Politics without economics is disastrous. Political decisions have created the current distorted and mismanaged economy. Politics must set it right. Our mismanaged economy has:

- no sustainable national development policy,
- misdirected priorities placing buildings before people development,
- misallocated national resources,
- mismanaged the massive transfer payments from the energy sector into mostly unproductive activities.

Therefore, a COP government must not only address the mismanaged economy but we must also address the distortions and impact on our society.

- The mismanaged economy has distorted the culture and behaviour of the entire society. It has had a corrupting influence on all economic, social, political activities. The fledgling democracy has been replaced by a creeping dictatorship.
- The mismanaged economy has diverted critical national resources and economic activities to unproductive use. It has shifted the focus from hard work, productivity, wealth creation and long term sustainable development, to short term measures for the sake of political advantage.
- The mismanaged economy has destabilized the society and its major institutions. The huge transfer payments from the energy sector has been to sustain political power. While the rich have been getting richer, more people have now been ranked as working poor and numbers of those dependent on the state for employment have also increased.
- Finally, the Manning administration with its misplaced economic priorities has not dealt with the increased threat to our safety and security from the powerful illicit and particular drug economy. Drug transfer payments have been flowing into this country causing not only violence but major economic distortions, impacting all aspects and levels of our society.

The Congress of the People is ready to set the politics and the economics right. The COP government is ready to reclaim our country and chart a new direction for the future.



ECONOMIC MONETARY AND FISCAL POLICY

The COP Economic, Monetary and Fiscal policy is designed to enable Trinidad and Tobago to compete in the global economy. This means that we will compete for markets, for technology, for skills and investment. This focus will facilitate growth and development, reduce poverty, accommodate urbanization, increase living standards and create sustainable jobs.

An enabling environment is a prerequisite for investment and growth. Accordingly COP will assume responsibility for providing security, ensuring contracts, managing the macro economy, and shaping industrial policy.

We will:

- create appropriate political, social and economic institutional structures to facilitate efficient business interactions and effective implementation of development strategy.
- align government's fiscal policies more closely to Central Bank's monetary policies
- develop strategies to increase domestic savings, to facilitate low interest rates for investment, sound property rights, good governance, expansion of the domestic market and low rate of inflation
- allocate resources and provide incentives to encourage research and innovation particularly in the non-energy sector and the services sector.
- review and redress regulatory barriers to investment, and processes and procedures that unnecessarily increase the cost of doing business.
- implement the balance between consumption and savings.
- implement strategies to ensure more equitable income distribution to contain and correct the weakening of the social structure.
- promote the efficient use of resources: human skills, natural resources and capital as productivity is vital to economic growth.
- function with a high degree of fiscal integrity. There will be zero tolerance for corrupt practices, and unwise and wasteful expenditure.
- develop initiatives to increase the level of national savings including the deepening of the stock market using appropriate divestment strategies

- and encouraging international firms to list on the Caribbean Stock Markets and/or to develop other long term investment instruments like tradable deposit certificates.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

The country's institutional structures are vital to its economic development. Accordingly COP will review and critically examine the core institutional structures: banking system, court systems, police and military and rule of law, labour management arrangements, saving systems and the separation of power between the legislative and executive arms.

COP's approach to strategy and implementation will be consistent with its people centered philosophy and its participatory approach to governance. We will therefore embed the following mechanisms and culture in the governance process:

- establish a proficient Economic Development Board (EDB) which will report directly to the Prime Minister. COP believes that the days of the super individual technocrat with unbridled authority and power can no longer be in the public interest.
- establish Stakeholder Advisory Councils (SAC) across sectors to provide a vehicle for experts to make a meaningful contribution to economic development and foster commitment to implementation of development strategy.
- strengthen the Central Bank and allow it to operate autonomously in the discharge of its authority and responsibilities
- strengthen acceptable legacy policies and devise effective means of implementation.
- revisit the legislation that established the Stabilisation and Heritage Fund with a view to de-linking and streamlining the funds.
- The Vision 2020 Strategy Plan is now used cosmetically by the PNM government as a political marketing tool. COP recognizes the invaluable effort made by technocrats and other stakeholders in the development of this vision. COP will revisit the Plan and pursue implementation strategies of aspects of the plan that satisfy economic development policy objectives.

The COP commitment is to astute economic, monetary and fiscal policies which would enhance the nation's global competitiveness, and facilitate sustainable development and equitable access to the national patrimony



LABOUR

The COP National Labour Policy will provide the participants of the labour market with the necessary pro-active support required for the promotion of free collective bargaining; the provision of efficient conciliation/mediation services; effective occupational safety and health inspections and enforcement; labour market regulation; appropriate training opportunities; and, fostering consultation, social dialogue and social partnership in labour relations issues.

The COP will:

- provide a guarantee of the rights of all participants in the free collective bargaining process.
- promote best practices in the conduct of industrial relations.
- revamp the role of the Ministry of Labour which currently functions as a fire-fighter dealing the effects of poor labour market and developments policies. Re-establish the Ministry's pro-active and leading role in labour administration in all of its facets.
- complete the modernizing of labour legislation within 14 months of taking office. Reshape in particular,
 - the Industrial Relations Act,
 - Equal Opportunities legislation
 - Retirement and Severance Benefits Act
 - Basic Conditions of Employment legislation
 - Compensation or Workplace Injury legislation, and complimentary links between difference legislations such as NIS and Maternity Rights etc.

- determine and set the appropriate level of minimum wage in the context of the current economic situation, within 6 months of assuming office. Establish a bi-annual review of minimum wage and sector-specific conditions where necessary.
- Restrict the role of political negotiations in the public sector as a whole and ensure negotiations are carried out so as to ensure current contracts exist in the public service and state organizations.
- While respecting the independence of trade unions, include trade unions and employer organizations in national dialogue on labour policy, wages and prices policy and all matters pertaining to the employment relationship.
- encourage industrial democracy and lead by appointing trade union representation to the boards of statutory agencies and state-owned enterprises
- establish a national pension scheme and revise pension laws to protect pension funds, the sole purpose which is the provision of benefits for workers as deferred earnings.

The COP commitment is to safeguard the rights of worker to industrial democracy, through just and timely legislation, best practices in industrial relations, and trade union representation within the governing process.



AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FOOD SECURITY

In order to ensure the quality of life for all its citizens, the COP will provide the farmers with the opportunity to own the land allocated to them for farming. Our agricultural policy will provide consumers with affordable, high quality, local food supply by aggressively developing a growth oriented, financially viable, economically sustainable agriculture sector with the capacity of product diversification.

The COP will:

- sustain a **viable agriculture sector** in harmony with our overall national development objectives of providing a degree of national food security, fostering agro processing industry and developing selective agricultural products for export.
- provide farmers with ownership of the land they cultivate; make agriculture an attractive investment opportunity for both large and small intensive agricultural business; and create attractive employment opportunities, particularly for young persons. We will provide equitable access to government financial and technical support.
- create a land inventory in which agriculture land is zoned and classified. Lands will be allocated for farming based on a system which considers type of farming to determine quality of land and amount of acreage.
- develop an appropriate agricultural infrastructure concentrating on roads, bridges, irrigation, storage and market facilities while ensuring the use of sound environmental practices in food production.
- develop a renergised sugarcane industry which will be based on allowing the farmers to share in the ownership of St. Madeline Sugar Factory, the development of a paper based industry and other related clusters.

***The COP Commitment is the establishment of a
growth oriented, financially viable,
economically sustainable agriculture sector***



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

A COP government would provide the citizen businessperson with the opportunity to conduct business in a competitive environment free from state dependency and would stimulate the growth of new and existing business.

We will:

- encourage the growth of private enterprise in the free market and globally competitive environment, limiting the involvement of the state.
- reduce delays and / or hindrances created by Government agencies.
- develop sector plans to ensure that downstream energy manufacturing and other manufacturing is sustainable in Trinidad and Tobago.
- establish incentives and encourage the formation of knowledge based industries to ensure sustainable human development of the population.
- utilize early teaching techniques in conjunction with NGO's like Junior Achievement to educate as young as five (5) year old Trinidad and Tobagonians about business in order to stimulate a new generation of entrepreneurs.
- encourage the involvement of all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago in strategic Government investments.
- review and evaluate the role, functions and overall management of the *all existing state owned* and other state managed to determine the extent to which they satisfy the national business development and contribute to national development in the context of nation building.

The COP's commitment is maximum citizen involvement in business and entrepreneurship



TOURISM

The Congress of the People will maximize the economic and societal benefits to be derived from the tourism sector. The tourism thrust will promote the beauty of our environment, the diversity of our culture, the richness of our history. Tourism services will be community based and will conserve environment.

The COP will:

- ensure the re-branding of Trinidad and Tobago as the destination for yachting; surf, sun and ambient climate; heritage and festivals; cultural expressions and carnival; eco adventure; sports and health promotion and business.
- develop tourism promotion initiatives in existing metropolitan and other markets. In addition we will develop the infrastructure to expand the cruise shipping and yachting industries.
- promote Trinidad and Tobago for the rich biodiversity of its birds, butterflies, plants and other wild life.
- develop national parks with emphasis on conservation through government / community / NGO collaborations.
- promote the development of Trinidad and Tobago's natural and human resources in order to generate where pride in self, community and country.
- restructure the Tourism Development Company to include representatives of the Tourism Associations.
- create an academic program designed to train people for meeting Global requirements in this industry.
- establish a net work of effective Tourism Information Centers
- Create incentives for small scale entrepreneurs within the industry
- support low interest loans with moratoriums for vetted projects
- Provide quality training for workers in the field

***The COP's commitment is a thriving
community-based tourism industry***



TRANSPORTATION

In Trinidad and Tobago today, traffic congestion has severe negative economic, social, health and environmental impacts and degrades the natural and built environment. The cost of mobility is growing, and the percentage of income devoted to transport has increased substantially, and this has placed an increased burden on those with the lowest incomes. The most disadvantaged – those without access to a private car – are usually women and children. They rely on maxi-taxis, taxis, PH, PTSC, and walking, and therefore have the most limited accessibility.

The Manning administration has adopted a “Decide, Announce, and Defend” procedure for project implementation commonly known as the DAD Model. Failure to engage the population in meaningful, informed decision-making on relevant issues exposes us to significant inefficiencies and inequities. The Congress of the People proposes a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders, to develop mobility improvements that fit the physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety.

The COP will:

- invite early and ongoing public participation and involvement in developing plans, programmes, or projects. Public involvement will allow the state bodies to know the impacts as viewed by the community.
- maximize existing infrastructure. There is a need to balance investments for infrastructure expansion with preservation of the existing infrastructure while maximizing the return from past investments.
- design strategies to reduce personal auto usage, particularly during peak hours. This will include developing alternative work hours, including a compressed work weeks which allow employees to complete 40 hours of work in four 10-hour days, staggered hours; and, flexi-time.

- Place focus on appropriate public transport. In relation to the rapid rail project the COP supports the position taken by the Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad and Tobago (APETT) and others that realistic budget limitations have to be placed on plans and programmes. The COP will explore the feasibility of this new technology which will require complex maintenance processes, and heavy state subsidies.
- de-centralise government services. The COP will situate a larger quantity government services in rural areas. Greater use will also be made of computer technology in this regard.
- establish affordable park and ride facilities. We would also seek to provide adequate shuttle services within the capital city and its environs
- design mobility policies which will cover both passenger and freight transport.
- establish a Transit Authority to serve as commissioner for the needs of all patrons of public transport and to administer a well-organised transit system that delivers high quality passenger transport services in a safe, cost-effective and environmentally sound manner.
- streamline the Priority Bus Route for High Occupancy Transit (HOT) Vehicles, such as Buses and Maxi-Taxis, with a heavy emphasis on very large buses such as articulated, accordion-types. We will increase monitoring to ensure dedicated use for this purpose.
- Establish a Road Authority which would conduct planning and analysis to meet short-, medium- and long-term mobility needs. It would formulate policies and implement public involvement programmes to secure public understanding and support.
- Establish a dedicated school bus transport service would ensure safe, efficient and reliable transport. As a result, school children could be shielded from undue influence, duress or social de-motivation.
- Employ Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) for monitoring traffic incidents on the routes, including a Traffic Management Centre and CCTV.
- Use helicopters to continuously monitor traffic conditions, particularly in the short term, when the advanced traffic control systems have not been installed.
- Dedicate additional lanes being constructed on the Churchill Roosevelt Highway and the Uriah Butler highway as High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes. This provides incentives for individuals to change from driving alone to taking transit, or carpooling. HOV lanes can be monitored using strategically located video cameras.

COP's commitment is the provision of a safe, affordable, efficient and an environmentally sound transportation system.



ENERGY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

In order to ensure the quality of life for all its citizens now and in the future, **the COP Energy Policy recognizes that** energy sector of the economy is the primary source of national income, consequently clarification and transparency of the terms and conditions of energy ownership is mandatory and the transfer and utilization of Energy Income is vital to the *Nation Building Effort*.

The Energy Policy will guide the exploration, exploitation, utilization and monetization of our Energy Resources for the current and future generation, while safeguarding and protecting the environment.

The COP will:

- seek to increase the local content participation and ownership in energy projects and the services sector
- review, revise and update the laws, taxation, regulations and recommended practices governing the Energy industry so that there will be transparency and accountability in all matters. Before new energy-based industrial plants are given final approval stakeholder consultations and approval will be required.
- address the training and development of Nationals in the Energy Sector.
- manage the allocation of reserves for the Energy exports, conversion into energy-based products and domestic requirements and ensure that citizens have access to affordable electricity and transportation fuels in the long-term

- address the Exploration and Proving-up of new reserves in order to maintain a healthy “Reserves to Production” Ratio – energy security.
- provide incentives for Research and Development on Alternative Energy sources
- address the issues of marginal field production, Heavy Oil recovery, tar sands and small operators in order to stimulate these sectors
- address the issues of collaboration with other Energy Producers in the Caribbean and Latin American region. Special attention will be given to matters concerning Petrocaribe and CSME.
- review and evaluate the role, functions and overall management of the *Ministry of Energy* and its related agencies to determine the extent to which they satisfy the national energy needs and contribute to national development.

***The COP ’s commitment is
sustainable development of our natural resources
for the benefit of our present and future citizens***



NATIONAL INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The COP Information Communication Technology Policy will provide the necessary policy framework to accommodate the convergence of the information technology and communications sector to promote national development.

We will:

- update the national ICT policy and strategic plan
- work closely with stakeholders to make ICT hardware and software more affordable.
- increase the residential penetration of computers and Internet access. This will entail collaboration with stakeholders to provide discounted and more attractive Internet packages.
- collaborate with ICT service providers to continue investing in their infrastructure and introducing affordable and innovative services.
- promote improved universal access to basic ICT service and ensure that tariffs are competitively priced.
- connect all government departments to the Government Backbone in order to allow for secure integration of the various information systems of government
- computerize the core processes of Government Departments with appropriate information systems
- make Government Services (E-Government) available online on the Internet, where appropriate, for access by businesses and the public:
- modernize the ICT legislative framework to bring it in line with established and developed ICT markets.
- undertake conversations with all stakeholders on the drafts of these legal devices
- enhance the residential penetration of computers and internet access.
- expand a nationwide, all pervasive wireless network for Internet access
- generate new work opportunities within the ICT sector.

The COP's commitment is an enhanced ICT network as a platform for an expanded industrial development thrust, more effective governance and increased citizen access.



LAND USE FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

The COP Land Use policy will manage and utilize the land resources of Trinidad and Tobago for the benefit of the majority, in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The COP will develop an integrated, coordinated transparent and participatory process for the **management of our limited national land resources** in both the public and private sectors. The policy addresses land use planning; land administration; state lands management; property taxation; coastal zone policy; land distribution and land reform; environmental and resource management.

We will:

- develop a proper ***state land management authority*** with proper policy guidelines on the use and disposition of state lands and will evolve into a one-stop shop for development and building approvals.
- develop a proper ***national land information system***.

The COP commitment is the environmentally sustainable management and utilization of the nation's land resource for the benefit of its present and future citizens.



ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The COP Environment Policy promotes sound environmental practices which are in harmony with pursuit of nation building. Consequently, all planning and development activities must take regard of environmental impacts.

The COP will:

- be guided by key considerations of sustainable development, caution, consequences and technology in its management of the environmental challenges of Trinidad and Tobago. :
- require the Environmental Management Authority to enforce all the outstanding rules and regulations of the Environmental Management Act, 1995.
- submit an annual report to Parliament containing complaints received and resolved, external and internal investigations completed.
 - o promote sound environmental practices
 - o Review notions and practices of environmental justice and the role of the Environmental Commission
 - o Reform the Green Fund and the imposition of green taxes
 - o Dispose of consumables in an environmental safe way
 - o Partner with business to create environmental incentives
 - o Adhere to international environmental obligations
- review and evaluate the role, functions and overall management of the *Environmental Management Authority* and its related agencies to determine the extent to which they satisfy the national environment compliance and contribute to national development.



COASTAL DEVELOPMENT

The COP National Coastal Zone Policy will ensure the development and implementation of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy which requires a synergy and meaningful partnership between Government agencies and the appropriate coastal community stakeholders for protecting, restoring, enhancing and developing in a sustainable manner our coastal and oceanic resources.

The COP National Coastal Zone Policy will ensure the development and implementation of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy which will pay attention to:

- Coastal erosion;
- Effective management of inshore and off shore fisheries resources
- Coastal Development;
- Impacts due to climate change and sea level rise;
- Economic development strategies.
- Wetlands Management
- Eco -Tourism Development
- Capacity building

The COP's commitment is promotion of sound environmental practices