

# REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## BACKGROUND

The Turks and Caicos Islands Constitution Order 2006 was partially suspended after a Commission of Enquiry “into possible corruption or other serious dishonesty in relation to past and present elected members of the Legislature in recent years” and led by Sir Robin Auld in 2008 – 9 found there to be “...much information pointing to possible systemic corruption or of other serious dishonesty involving past and present elected Members of the Legislature in recent years...and also...indications of systemic weaknesses in legislation, regulation and administration and in related matters calling for attention.”

Despite the presentation of an Interim Report presented by Sir Robin Auld to His Excellency Governor Gordon Wetherell on February 28, 2009, the Constitution was not suspended until August 14, 2009.

The Governor under The Turks and Caicos Islands Constitution (Interim Amendment) Order 2009 Schedule 2 Section 8 appointed two Interim Governmental Bodies known as the Advisory Council and the Consultative Forum. These Bodies function closely to and mirrors the former Cabinet and Parliament respectively.

These Bodies have come under much abuse from the Public who continue to challenge their validity, legitimacy and authority in the absence of democratically held elections. Another reason for further challenge is the fact that both Bodies are purely advisory and its recommendations need not be followed. A further and perhaps more damning view held by the public is the public dismissal of the people’s views in the recent vote for passage in the Consultative Forum on the controversial Trial Without A Jury Bill 2010.

The Public has over the period of the Interim Administration been consulted on two major issues – Proposed Changes to the Constitution and Electoral System (led by Kate Sullivan, Consultant) and the Proposed Crown Land Policy (led by Jon Llewlyn, Advisor). The public feels largely that there is little to no consultation and has on many occasions voiced its view through various media houses and demonstrations.

In December 2010 recognising the need to hear from the people and to assure that the relevant bodies hear the views of the public and to channel same in the most proper and useful place, Mr Douglas Parnell, the Leader of the Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM Party) called for a national dialogue amongst ourselves: the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. This Dialogue was called The National Conversation. It is my understanding that this would form the basis for further dialogue with the other Partner in this relationship.

I was called upon to lead the Consultations throughout the Islands and I gladly accepted the call. In an effort to assure greater involvement at the organization level and to

ensure a checks and balance, I invited Rev Dr Conrad Howell and Mr Drexwell Seymour to co-lead The National Conversation.

A Schedule was prepared and an initial release was made. Periodic Releases were made and there was widespread coverage by print, radio and television media.

The National Conversation was divided into two Phases. The first Phase was designed to be more educational so that members would make more informed recommendations. The second Phase included the Town Hall Meetings on each of the larger inhabited Islands.

I am pleased that The National Conversation has been widely publicized and I am equally pleased with the support of the former Leaders, experts in their respective fields, the general public and the media houses.

The turn out at public meetings was not always strong but the support was overwhelming nationally. It would however be remiss of me not to mention the two major disappointments during the Program. During the first phase, we had hoped that the Chamber of Commerce would have taken part in the Panel on the Economy and their decline to participate in a Panel geared to move us forward struck a chord that reminded us of the difficult place we are in as a country. Secondly, we were disappointed that the meeting of Political Parties and Poll Workers did not materialize as we believe that there was much to gain from this conversation in making recommendations for electoral reform. These blows were softened by the eagerness of others to participate and the willingness of others to share words of wisdom and sound recommendations.

We believe that the National Conversation was a success and how did we measure this? Simply by listening to those we met in formal and informal settings and by the fact that the sentiments were largely the same. And also the fulfillment of a promise to channel all views expressed to the appropriate authorities hence you will find a comprehensive Report on Island discussions so as to ensure we kept our promise to those who took the time to attend and lend their voices.

We now commend this Report to the Leader of the PDM Party who commissioned this Program and we trust that we are afforded the opportunity to discuss its contents in another public setting.

Yours in service

.....  
Sharlene Cartwright Robinson  
Lead Coordinator, The National Conversation

## PART I - SUMMARY OF MAJOR ISSUES IDENTIFIED

1. Economy
2. Immigration and Labour
3. Civil Service
4. Crime linked to unemployment
5. Electoral Reform
6. Lack of Transparency and Accountability in the Interim Government
7. Role and attitude of CEO and Advisors/Experts
8. Healthcare
9. Local Government
10. Relevant Island Issues

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There must be greater transparency and accountability on the part of the Interim Administration. It is the general feeling that more should be forthcoming to the public which will allow for debate and possible buy in but more importantly out of respect for the people that it governs.
2. There is a call for the use of former Governors like Mervyn Jones and John Kelly who understand the dynamics of this country.
3. There must be a review of the role and attitude of the CEO who people feel are disrespectful and dismissive of the people he serves.
4. There is a call for a review of the role and attitudes of Advisors who continue to be disrespectful to those they work with and who continue to purposefully exclude those that are to carry out the systems that are to be implemented. There is a serious concern as to the legality of the role of the Advisors and the authority on which they instruct Civil Servants and Statutory Bodies.
5. There is a need to engage in further dialogue on the economy and proposed revenue measures. Persons understand that there is a need for a steady stream of revenue and VAT has not been dismissed entirely and may be worthy of further consultation. Property tax has been dismissed save for a single submission. It is believed that the time is right to explore the possibility of diversifying the economy.
6. There must be a review of the operation of TC Invest with a view to empowering the Institution to assist in moving this country forward through its Banking, Investment and Small Business arms.
7. It is felt that the milestones in the absence of deadlines leave the country to grave uncertainty. It is also felt that some of the items listed as milestones should be excluded from the list for example, a clear path to belongingship. Whilst persons agree that there should be a clear path, it is felt that the British Interim Administration does not have the moral or legal authority to address this matter in the absence of an elected government.

8. There must be a review of the recruitment process in the private sector as well as the public sector and the weaknesses identified must be addressed. There should be no allowance of an expatriate to conduct recruitments without proper checks and balances in the private or public sector. It must not be the role of these individuals to identify and state readiness of those understudying them.
9. There must be a National Census as soon as possible which will provide the basis for a population policy and vital information necessary for budgeting and planning purposes.
10. There should be a clear path to Belongership but it is felt that the UK Government has no moral or legal authority to carry out this mandate. Persons applying for Belongership should not be allowed to maintain dual citizenship which is the ultimate test to see whether the Applicant truly wants to be assimilated into the culture of these Islands. The definition of Belongership must not be included in the Constitution and only the means by which it is obtained whether by "marriage, decent or grant" should be included.
11. Labour Department must be strengthened and empowered to review and police Labour Laws. It is felt that Labour must be allowed to review Resumes to ascertain whether the qualifications required are necessary for the job being advertised. As a matter of urgency it is felt that Labour must establish a database of all employers, the number, nationality, skill set and immigration status of all their employees.
12. There must be a complete review of work permit holders. There must be a coordination of work between the Ministry of Education (Scholarship Secretariat in particular), OPSM, Labour Department and Work Permits Board in an effort to identify places for Belonger employment and returning students.
13. It is imperative that the Interim Administration review the skills set of returning students before the students are released from Bond. It is felt that since the country will not be able to offer scholarships as it did in time past, there must be a greater effort to absorb those in critical areas in the public sector to understudy the contract officer.
14. There must be a strengthening of local Government and the possibility of instituting elected councils must be reviewed.
15. There is a need for the Governor to visit the family Islands as he did when he first took control of the country. There is a serious disconnect and though unelected, he is obligated to hear the voice of the people his Government is to serve.
16. There is a need to review the operation of Primary Health Care in the Islands outside of Providenciales and Grand Turk with particular regard to the stocking of drugs in the respective Pharmacies.
17. More must be done to protect and defend the Financial Services Sector against over regulation proposed by countries that do not have the same regulations and requirements.
18. The Interim Administration must practice greater openness and transparency in the management and handling of finance. There must be periodic accurate and detailed reports on the true state of the country's finances.

19. Political Parties must be asked to disclose all donations made complete with the amounts and names of donors. Companies must be allowed to make donations. Caps on campaign finance is a difficult area as campaigns are expensive and the amounts proposed are too low. Political Parties should be required to present audited accounts and reports to the Registrar.
20. Immigration and Revenue Departments must be strengthened in man power and not downsized.
21. There is a need to review the health care services particularly on the Islands outside of Grand Turk and Providenciales where the Pharmacies are severely under stock due to budget cuts in the provision of drugs and supplies.
22. Transportation to the Islands of Salt Cay, South Caicos and Middle Caicos must be addressed. Salt Cay's Airport requires immediate attention so that the Island economy can once again benefit from tourism. The Airline Services to South Caicos is again being threatened with decrease flights which would make it extremely difficult for the Island. The causeway linking Middle and North Caicos requires urgent attention and is dangerous for users in its current state and remains at risk of being lost altogether in the event of the smallest tropical storm.
23. The proposed sites for mining and dredging in Middle Caicos and North Caicos should be abandoned and the local population should be consulted on these issues.
24. There must be structured dialogue with the British to make this exercise even more useful.

#### SUMMARY OF THE MOOD IN THE TCI

THE PEOPLE OF THE TURKS AND CAICOS ARE GRAVELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THESE ISLANDS. MANY ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE APPROACH AND ATTITUDE OF THE INTERIM ADMINISTRATION AND THEIR LACK OF INTEREST IN ENGAGING THE PUBLIC OR THOSE IN AUTHORITATIVE OR EXPERT AREAS. THEY ARE SORELY DISAPPOINTED IN THEIR LACK OF OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY AND MANY ACCUSE THEM OF CARRYING ON MANY OF THE PREVIOUS PRACTISES OF THE FORMER ADMINISTRATION WHICH IT SORELY CRITICISED.

MANY ARE EAGER TO RETURN TO AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT WHILST THERE ARE POCKETS WHO ARE 'EXPERIMENTING' WITH TALKS OF INDEPENDENCE AS A MEANS OF REMOVING THE COUNTRY FROM THE DESCRIBED "SLOW, DISRESPECT AND FAILING CLUTCHES" OF THE WETHERELL/CAPES ADMINISTRATION.

THERE ARE STILL A LARGE NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE BRITISH ARE NECESSARY BUT WISH THAT THEY WOULD HURRY AND DO WHAT IT IS THAT THEY HAVE COME TO DO.

TENSIONS ARE HIGH IN THE TURKS AND CAICOS AND LOT OF THE NEGATIVE ENERGY WHILE CHANELED AT THE SYSTEM FOR ALLOWING THE HIGH NUMBERS OF WORK PERMITS TO BE ISSUED AND THE HIGH LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT WITH RETURNING STUDENTS NOT BEING EMPLOYED ON RETURN, MANY ATTRIBUTE THIS SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER WHO IS SEEN AS DEFACTO GOVERNOR MORE THAN THE GOVERNOR. THERE REMAIN SMALL POCKETS CALLING FOR ACTION EVEN IF IT WERE TO KNOWINGLY BECOME VIOLENT.

THE VERACITY AND LEGITIMACY OF THE CONSULTATIVE FORUM AND THE ADVISORY COUNCIL IS CONSTANTLY CHALLENGED AND THIS EXERCISE HAD TO BE SOLD ON MANY OCASSIONS AS A PROGRAM SEPARATE AND APART FROM THESE BODIES IN ORDER TO GAIN SUPPORT.

THE LACK OF "KNOWN" PROGRESS BY THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATORS TEAM IS FEEDING DOUBT AS TO THE CREDIBILITY OF THE CASES TO BE BROUGHT.

THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING THAT THE INTERIM ADMINISTRATION LACKS COMPASSION AND DO NOT CARE ABOUT THE SOCIAL OR OTHER BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES AND AS SUCH THERE IS A SERIOUS DISCONNECT AND MANY OF THE PEOPLE FEEL THAT THEY HAVE NO REPRESENTATION.

THERE IS AN OVERALL DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THE INTERIM ADMINISTRATION AND THERE IS A SERIOUS ELEMENT OF MISTRUST FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND BOTH ADVISORY BODIES.

## PART II – SUMMARY OF RADIO INTERVIEWS

Former Leader Derek Taylor

1. The people of the Turks and Caicos Islands are passed the stage of having people "talk down" to them.
2. There is need for a Conversation between the Governor, the CEO and the people.
3. The FCO failed and people were not listening.
4. There must be human rights for all people including the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands.
5. There has been an erosion of revenue with the revision of the customs tariff. The last quarter into the first quarter of the year served as months to buffer the country when revenue would slow down during the summer months.

6. New revenue measures  
Registration of Ships  
Still have a currency. Explore the use and the Philatelic Bureau.
7. Attitudes of people must change. People must seek to work more honestly and fairly.
8. Likewise the attitude of the British must change.
9. The British must employ the use of the New Zealand model in the right sizing and down sizing exercise.
10. There must be improvement of Statistics.
11. The level of unemployment must be taken seriously and taken in hand.
12. There was no support for VAT which he felt will cause many small businesses to go out of business or Property Tax.
13. There must be an aggressive marketing of the country and there must be a return to the country's attendance as Conferences like the Miami Conference.
14. He called for compassion in dealing with the people of these Islands and a call for the Interim Administration to give Belongers an opportunity to work.
15. There is a need for greater transparency and openness on the part of the Interim Administration. People are not aware of what is going on and this is heightening the level of frustrations.

Former Leader Norman Saunders

1. There must be a return to elected government and the milestones set should be given to the elected body to accomplish.
2. The main challenge is the economy and too many Belongers are out of work whilst the number of work permits remains the same.
3. Under the Interim Administration development has dried up and is necessary to refuel the economy or the country will continue to suffer. The recovery will be slower and more painful with an unelected government.
4. The Interim Administration is not doing enough to engage the public and its area for advice is too narrow.



5. Turks and Caicos Islanders must be a part of the solution.
6. The Governor has a huge task and he is not managing the vast responsibilities well as too many critical issues are left unattended. Erroneous payments are still be made.
7. MP Rosindell's recent statement was encouraging but there was the feeling that he does not truly represent what the British feels as the representatives on the ground are not as willing to work with the Belongers.
8. There can be better ways of raising revenue. Can not support the introduction of additional taxes. There can be no Property Tax as this is too critical to our survival as an investor friendly country. We can not change the ground rules.
9. The CFO's role needs to be reviewed as her performance has been a dismal failure. The expenditure appears low because she has not agreed to pay most of the Bills and the Belongers in particular are not being paid. There must be a demand for transparency with regards to the public funds and not secrecy.
10. There is need for a National Census.

Former Leader Washington Misick

1. We have made mistakes and we were not alone, the FCO also has a responsibility.
2. Support the package of laws passed in the Forum to curb crime as our country is known as a low crime destination and we need to maintain that image.
3. Education must be a priority and the College must be progressed.
4. There must be a greater effort to employ Turks and Caicos Islanders especially our returning students. He recognizes that it is difficult to find persons at certain levels particularly in the hospitality industry in particular accounting where experience is required. Students must realize that a degree is an entry into the work force and he says there must be a realistic approach as students must realize that they are not able to take top positions on return from schools. As a compromise persons can perhaps be placed on an accelerated program to management level if they perform. He says the acquisition of a Masters Degree is not necessarily a plus as experience is still an issue.
5. There must be some effort to address those Chalk Sound Home Owners who have constructed their homes should be allowed to remain there even if it calls for systems to be put in place to minimize the impact. Those persons who have

- not built their homes as yet should be relocated. If there is a plan to utilize the property for something else, then persons must be fully compensated.
6. We are in a difficult time economically but we have had difficult times before and we need to be as industrious as we can as he is confident that we will “bounce back” as a country and again experience record growth. In 2008 he said we still recorded 12% growth and he believes that we can again achieve these record growths.
  7. There is support for the introduction of VAT as there is need for a steady stream of revenue.
  8. There is support for a system by which persons are elected to assure adequate representation proportionately and to assure independence of those elected to represent its people above party allegiance and also ensure adequate numbers are available to establish vital oversight Parliamentary Committees. Not sure the numbers proposed by Kate Sullivan are satisfactory but support a hybrid system.

#### Interview with John Skippings (Former Director Of Tourism)

The private counterpart to the government’s tourism agency is the Hotels and Tourism Associations, here designated the Turks and Caicos Hotels and Tourism Association. This association does for the private sector, including the hotels, dive operators, taxi operators and tour operators, etc., what the Tourist Board, or Tourism Authority does for the government. There is no reason that should change here. The governor is understandably, not an expert in tourism, and neither are the chairman and most members of the Tourism Working Group. And while the latter might have some credibility in suggesting ways of funding tourism marketing, the radical recommendation to shift destination marketing and control of our tourism industry from the hands of the public sector, to those of the unelected private sector can not be accepted.

#### PANEL ON THE ECONOMY (SUMMARIES – FULL PRESENTATIONS IN PART V)

##### E F Seymour on Public Finances (Former Leader of the Opposition and CPA)

- Government raises monies through fees and taxes.
- The structure is based on consumption and as such is not a steady stream of revenue.
- A Budget is simply projected figures.

- The past practice of sale of crown land and government assets must be discouraged as it is an unsustainable practice.
- There must be an effort to raise enough revenue to cover realistic expenditure.

Royal Robinson on The Role Of TC Invest (Former Chairman of Board and Deputy Premier)

The Agency has to be revamped along the lines that have already been suggested so that you avoid the "square peg in round hole" syndrome. This would add new vigor and life to the institution. Of equal importance must be the relationship between the Agency and the various government agencies that it relies on for information in a timely manner. A person in each department should be designated and dedicated to the provision of that information. It should be persons familiar with the format and type of information required to satisfy the requests from the Agency. In this information age, it should not be a hard slug to collect the required data in a timely manner and provide it to the Agency. Once the information is collected and collated, a recommendation can be made as to whether or not the proposed project is really worthy of being proceeded with. Once a positive indication is given, then the tough negotiations will begin to get the best deal for the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The incentives that would be given must be counterbalanced by the benefits to the public at large.

The Agency is tasked with negotiating the deals and as such has an intimate knowledge of the outcomes. It should be easy for it to monitor the various aspects of the Agreement to ensure compliance, and in the cases of noncompliance, issue the requisite sanctions. One of the hallmarks of most previous agreements was the requirement to provide funds for scholarships. There has hardly been much of a follow up and so many of the project proposers have gotten the breaks from TCIG, but have not been forthcoming with the money. This loophole needs to be closed by tasking the Agency with the responsibility for monitoring and follow up.

The Agency is responsible for a noble cause in ensuring that inward investment, the engine of our economic growth keeps ticking smoothly. We need to make sure that it has the resources, both human and financial to deliver for us!

Gordon W Kerr on Financial Services Commission (Private Sector Lawyer and Member of FSC since its inception)

The Financial Services Industry and the TCI Economy

We need to be clear that in terms of dollars and cents revenues directly paid to TCIG, the FSI in the Turks and Caicos islands has never been anything more than a bit player. Gross revenues collected by the FSC in respect of all Financial Service related business for the last few years averaged about \$6,500,000.00 per year. This translates into net revenue to Government of something in the region of \$2,000,000.00. This is a mere fraction of the total revenue generated by TCIG.

However looking at it in this way is terribly short sighted. Even though its direct contribution to Government coffers may appear modest the FI's contribution to the economy is much more than that. As with every sector of the economy there is a trickledown effect and in the case of the FSI this is very significant indeed:

The FSI in its broadest sense is a major employer in the Islands. Add up the number of persons employed by Banks, insurance companies, accounting firms, trust companies, company managers and law firms etc and you will immediately appreciate that this is a very significant proportion of the community. When one then looks at the types of jobs available it is immediately apparent that many are well paid professional positions, many in middle and senior management positions. High earners are typically higher spenders and the salaries earned and spent by FSC employees add greatly to the sectors' contribution to the economy.

As a job provider it is key in absorbing some of the brightest and most valued local talent available. Every Belonger qualified in Business, Law or Accountancy will almost inevitably end up employed at some point in FI related business. Highly experienced professionals are often brought in and bring with them a wealth of experience that is passed on to less experienced staff and while it would of course be preferable to staff all positions locally, until that can happen, this exchange of experience should be welcomed since it comes at no cost to the local economy.

The FI is instrumental in providing the comfort and service needed by large scale investors. They are as essential in the process of attracting investment as well qualified architects, engineers and contractors. If the investor does not feel that his money is safe then he simply will not bring it here in the first place.

For no other reason than this it should therefore be of deep concern to all if the FSI shrinks and thereby the number of such opportunities reduces. Unfortunately that is precisely what we see happening.

Simon Wood on Balanced Development –

Steady, well planned and controlled development that allows social and physical infrastructure to keep pace (Balanced progression) will have a positive economic and social effect but rapid, unplanned and hasty development that moves ahead of Social and physical infrastructure development (Unbalanced progression) will be Ultimately detrimental to the lasting health of this nation.

PART III – ISLAND TOWN HALL MEETINGS

PUBLIC MEETING IN GRAND TURK

January 18, 2011

*The audience was largely that of Civil Servants. Also present was a Former Chief Minister.*

*Issues raised*

- a. labour matters and strengthening of the Labour Department;
- b. immigration: work permits and border control;
- c. education and scholarships,
- d. recruitment, training, rightsizing and redeployment in the Civil Service;
- e. preparation and actual retirement of civil servants to ensure a flow out of the Service and into the private sector;
- f. crime and the economy;
- g. taxes as a means of revenue generation; customs tariff;
- h. electoral reform;
- i. national census;
- j. lack of transparency and accountability in the Interim Administration;
- k. Role and attitudes of FCO Advisors;
- l. Integrity in Public Life;
- m. Development Orders and Investors;
- n. Possible use of former Governors;
- o. Local Government and Island Councils;
- p. Crown Land Policy;
- q. Role of TC Invest;
- r. Road Safety;
- s. Role of CEO;
- t. Youth and Sports.

*Discussion*

There was concern as to the number of persons present and several members expressed the position that there was indeed a climate of fear where persons were afraid to speak out during this Interim Administration. Nonetheless those present and prepared to participate felt that the time had passed where the people must speak out even if they were to be victimized as Civil Servants. There was a feeling that there are many who are not talking and there is a fear that that is a greater danger and felt that this exercise could be very useful.

- (a) Labour Department - The matter of Immigration and Labour was raised first and disgusted with the number of unemployed returning students and Turks and Caicos Islanders, one person recommended that the issuance of Work Permits should be halted altogether. Persons felt that there were enough jobs in the Islands for every Belonger to have a job. The matter of crime was linked to unemployment. Persons recognized the need for Labour to be empowered with more Staff to inspect places of employment and to not be more resolute in its

issuance of Labour Clearances. It was further felt that Labour needs to maintain a database of companies and a list of employees and skill sets needed for each company and country wide. It was felt that unemployment figures should as much as possible remain current and that it should be the role of District Commissioners in the family Islands to amass this information and produce it periodically to the Labour Department. It was also felt that OPSM and the Ministry of Education should register students before they are completed and to also work and share this information with the Work Permits Board. It is accepted that TCIG can not hire all students but that there are places of employment that can use the skills. It was noted that as recent as 2002 -3, the middle and top staff at Beaches Turks and Caicos was primarily Belongers and it was noted that with the breakdown and the allowance of them to recruit overseas unchecked, the face of Beaches has changed and it is felt that TCIG can work with Beaches TCI as was done before.

- (b) Lack of planning in TCIG - It was also mentioned that it was evident that there was no succession planning in the TCIG as persons now retiring are now being considered for remaining on when persons to replace should have been identified. It was felt that there must be a proper flow up and out of the Public Service. It was felt that the bottle neck at the higher echelons of the Public Service is what is responsible for stifling, stagnation and inefficiencies.
- (c) Attitude of CEO and Advisors - It was felt that Advisors needed to be addressed and defined. It was felt that the CEO's intentional neglect to meet with the Civil Servants is a clear show of his disrespect for the Public Service. It was also felt that the attitude of Advisors to work alone and to the exclusion of those who are to carry out what they may implement is a disaster waiting to happen. It was felt that there is a tendency on most of the Advisors' part to speak with the utmost disrespect to Public Servants and mention was made of the ladies attached to the Ministry of Finance – Cash Flow and Chief Financial Officer. There was also a concern as to the legal authority on which these persons work and stand and whether Public Servants were at law required to follow their instructions. It is felt that most of the Heads of Departments and Permanent Secretaries have been reduced to line staff and the Advisors controlling these levels of staff has caused a regression of the Public Service back decades. It is felt that this set up is making a mockery of positions and essentially feeds the beliefs that this current arrangement is not a Partnership but a dictatorship. It is felt that this attitude of the CEO and the Advisors teaches the next generation of Turks and Caicos Islanders to not report criminality or serious acts of corruption as all persons are treated with disdain and are being punished for the wrongdoing of others. It is felt that Advisors should respect those they are required to work with and to work together with those who are in positions and who are set to ensure that systems continue when the Interim Administration would have ended. It was felt that local knowledge should not be discounted and that it is wise to involve the Belonger. The example of the Sea Wall Project was cited as

the local Engineer advised against the proposed approach of the “Expert” and today we reap the benefit of a failed project that cost us.

- (d) Integrity in Public Life - There was great support for the Integrity Commission and there was a further suggestion that there should be Island Elders who would assist in ensuring that integrity is maintained in all dealings.
- (e) Role of FCO – It was felt that the TCI has been slighted by the FCO who failed to carry out its oversight role effectively and it was stated that Former Governor Poston waited until the very end of his tenure to begin to enforce “value for money” in contract dealings. It is felt that this should not have happened and that FCO should be made to bear some of the responsibility. It was felt that there are situations now where there are expatriates now in the Public Service who are carrying out gross acts of misconduct and because there is a focus on Belongers these individuals are being allowed to go unchecked.
- (f) Development Orders - It was felt that there must be a review of Development Orders and new Orders must have stricter employment terms and Apprenticeship Programs must be put in place. It was noted that there was a situation where copies of Development Orders which should have been maintained at the AG’s Chambers and TC Investment could not be found. It is felt that Labour Department should also maintain copies and be allowed to police the employment and human resource aspect.
- (g) Former Governors – It was felt that many of the Advisors that are sent to these Islands do not appreciate the dynamics of these Islands and there was a suggestion that the FCO looks to the possible use of former Governors Kelly and Jones who assisted in marketing these Islands when they were posted here. It was mentioned that Former Governor Bradley was used as an Advisor when the Constitution was being reviewed in 2002 and it was felt that these Governors can be used much in the same way.
- (h) Education – It was felt that there must be a return to the 2 plus 2 Program that required High School Graduates to attend the local Community College before they are able to apply for a scholarship for study overseas. It was felt that monies must be invested in the Community College to allow it to offer Bachelor Programs. It was felt that the Ministry of Education fell down on its responsibility in managing the scholarship fund and students. It was regrettable the monies spent on many non critical areas of study and it was felt that the time is right for a Revolving Student Loan Fund.
- (i) TCIG Revenue – It was felt that the Interim Administration has made some huge mistakes regarding decisions concerning the economy. The reduction in Customs Tariffs may not yield what the Advisor had intended. It was noted that historically the duties collected during the tourism peak season would be used to buffer the TCIG during the slower periods of revenue. It was further felt that the segregation of revenue to different Statutory Bodies. It was felt that Statutory Bodies must be reorganized and reviewed before monies are allowed to be collected by them. It was felt that these Bodies who are known to pay

exorbitant salaries and overheads generally should accept some blame and responsibility for what transpired over the years.

- (j) Right Sizing – It was felt that there must be careful studies which review posts and not individuals before this exercise is carried out. It is felt that the downsizing exercise must begin from the upper echelons as these persons are soon to flow out and training ought to be vested in the younger public servants and sometimes more trained public servants. It is also felt that there must be a plan to reduce reliance on expatriate labour even if it calls for a recruitment from the private sector in these Islands so as to reduce the cost of recruitment overseas and that as much as possible locals be given an fair opportunity which will call for a more transparent and mature approach in the application process. It was felt that retraining and retooling must also be considered and that skills needed in the future should not be done away with especially in light of the fact that TCIG is unable to train as it did in previous years. There is a general attitude of support as persons recognize the need to reduce the size of the service. It was strongly recommended that the New Zealand Model be employed when there is a need to down size and that there be serious consideration to “laying off” huge numbers in a shrinking private sector without a concerted approach with the sector and the Work Permits Board. It is felt that this would lend to an increase in crime, poverty and other social ills.
- (k) Performance of Civil Servants – It was felt that there were persons in positions of authority in the Interim Administration who have allegedly broken the laws and stopped Civil Servants from carrying out their functions under law. There are allegations of interference with the Immigration Department, Customs Department, Road Safety and Ministry of Health. For obvious reasons these allegations are considered serious and will be outlined in a separate document. It is felt that Civil Servants are intimidated by Advisors and the CEO and are in instances afraid to carry out their functions and properly. It was felt that those persons who have violated the General Orders and the Code of Ethics should not be allowed to remain in positions and this in itself was felt to be an indictment on the Interim Administration whose core function was to restore integrity and proper practices in the Public Service.
- (l) Local Government – It was felt that there is a need to decentralize Government and to strengthen local government whether through elected boards or councils.
- (m) Crown Land Policy – There must be a continuing of Conditional Purchase Lease as this allows persons to access crown land. It was noted that amidst all of the allegations of undervaluing, that the Interim Administration has not yet dealt with the Valuation Office which again cast a “suspicious” eye on this Administration. The appearance of John Llewlyn alone before the Forum presenting the Proposed Crown Land Policy also raised concerns. It was felt that this showed that he had little to no consultation with the Ministry and practitioners and this would felt to be poor as there must be ownership of the document eventually by the Ministry.



- (n) Regional and International relationships – It was felt that there should be some effort to maintain political relationships within the region and the world and it was suggested that this be done by allowing persons to attend Meetings of the Regional and International Branches of the Commonwealth Parliament Association and other seminars that we as a country can benefit from.
- (o) TC Invest – There must be a review of this Body and it must be strengthened so as to give loans to small business which can drive the economy and also to fulfill its mandate to market these Islands and bring in much needed Investment. It was noted that there has been no monies injected in this Body for a while and has been suffocated under the Interim Administration. It was felt that the move to have Business License issued by this Body was not a wise choice and again the segregation of revenue was frowned upon. It was felt that TC Invest must become an alternate Bank.
- (p) OPSM – It was felt that the practice of this Department must be reviewed. It was stated that there are no readily available job descriptions for many post in the Civil Service and that duties are determined by who the person is. It was noted that this was becoming more evident with the request of information for the newly revitalized Civil Service Association. There appears to be no more standard salary scales as recent posts advertised for the Integrity Commission stated salary as “negotiable”. It was also noted that the qualifications seem to be inflated now in an effort to ensure that Belongers do not qualify. The example cited was the recently advertised post of Director of Road Safety and Printing which both called for Masters in Public Administration (MPA), a post that scarcely saw a holder of an Associates Degree and with the adverse training policy in place for Civil Servants will ensure that Belongers do not hold these posts in the very near future. It was also felt that there should never be a contract holder or expatriate as Human Resource Manager in the Public Service especially when there are just as qualified Belongers. There were examples cited of instances where family and friends got preferences over other persons who were qualified. For obvious reasons again this matter would be under separate cover.
- (q) Border Control – It was felt that the UK has failed to properly carry out its constitutional role. This was felt to be a major player in the rise in crime and the entry of guns and drugs.
- (r) Health Care – Persons expressed their surprise at the findings of the Interim Administration when it stated that the Interhealth Contract was transparent. It was felt that this Agreement must be reviewed especially with regards to personnel and critical areas for TCIG. It was noted that the Facilities Manager, a critical post for TCIG, has been cut from the Budget for lack of funds and it was also noted that the Health Regulatory Agency has not been established despite the cries by many of the lack of proper care.
- (s) Economy and Revenue – It was accepted that there must be a steady stream of revenue for TCIG and the issues of Value Added Tax and Property Tax was raised. Property Tax was dismissed whilst VAT received arguments for and against with

- the proponents suggesting that there be no customs duties if VAT was to be introduced so that the items would not bear have been taxed twice before the consumer purchases the product. Those opposing felt that the introduction with VAT would create serious challenges to small businesses in terms of the required infrastructure that would be needed and the record keeping for TCIG. For TCIG it was felt that the policing would present a challenge. There was a healthy discussion on price control versus the need to allow the market to dictate. A single person proposed Income Tax and needless to say this matter was just as quickly disposed of.
- (t) Campaign Finance – It was felt that it is important to know who makes political donations and the amounts. Persons welcomed the recommendation to have Political Parties accounts audited and also to have limits placed on amount to be expended during a campaign. However it was felt that the limits proposed were low and the amounts must be realistically set.
  - (u) Census – There was overwhelming support for a national census to determine, the numbers, nationalities and skills in these Islands which is necessary for proper budgeting and planning.
  - (v) Aid From UK – There is an overwhelming feeling that the Aid now given to these Islands are solely to benefit the UK Advisors and are not benefiting these Islands as it should with the allegations of the large salaries being paid.
  - (w) Transparency – It was felt that there is little to no transparency and accountability in the Interim Administration. It was felt that there should be more openness and there is a feeling towards to a high level Interim Administration Official that he may in fact be behaving worse than the allegations levied against the Former Premier and his Government. It was felt that the attitude of the CEO is detrimental to the progress of these Islands and the relationship that the new Conservative led Government claims through MP Rosindell it wants. Persons felt that Martin Stanley was very respectful and responsive to persons who were in positions necessary to carry out and continue the proposed changes. It was felt that there are people who want to work with the Interim Administration but is being pushed away and ignored and it is further felt that if the attitude is not changed, then there will be a violent clash that can be avoided.
  - (x) Sports – It was felt that there are many ways to put this country back on track and that Sports among our youth should be encouraged. It was noted that treatment of the UK meted out to one of our youth who it could have endorsed so as to give him an opportunity to compete in the Olympics. He was identified as one of the tops five best in his age group in the world and the UK Authorities made a statement in a letter that “it would not help nor hinder”. This was felt to be an opportunity that the UK could have help to move this country forward as the marketing of this country would have been beneficial. The UK was not required to spend any monies just to write a letter.
  - (y) Returning Students – whilst the meeting understood that the Government can not hire all returning students, it was felt that enough was not being done to

recruit them and it was felt that in the interest of protecting the Government's investment and time in students, critical areas should have been recruited and students allowed to understudy and eventually contracted expatriates should be released and not allowed to accrue time which allows them to apply for PRCs. It was felt that TCIG was just as guilty as the private sector in requiring experience as a means to discourage applicants and not hire Belongers. It was stated that persons named as Advisors lacked experience elsewhere. TCIG should apply pressure on local companies to apply Belongers and encourage understudying of work permit holders but the meeting quickly agreed that TCIG was not in a position to demand until it led by example. There are persons who obtain positions in TCIG and do all they can to remain and make no effort to train anyone else and who remain in positions without persons understudying them. The meeting felt it a nonsense to have contracted Officers in the Public Service and expatriates in the Private Sector determining when someone is ready to replace them or to be apart of identifying a Belonger to replace them. There is a wedge now between Advisors and expatriates in senior posts and Belongers who feel left behind by the system. There should be available on the job training. The meeting admitted that there are still categories of labour that Belongers wouldn't want to do but they need to be given a fair opportunity to reject it. It was also felt that little is being done to recruit in critical needs areas as concerns are placed largely on cuts in expenditure. An example was cited that TCIG has no Quantity Surveyor at this time and this is unacceptable.

- (z) Former Prisoners – It was felt that Prisoners be given real skills at the Prison that are practical for life after their incarceration.

*Summary - Grand Turk was overwhelmingly concerned about the state of the Civil Service and the behavior of many of the FCO Advisors and the CEO. It was felt that the negative attitudes towards the people they are assigned to work with would incite ill feelings and will incite people to the point of violence. Of particular concern was the lack of interaction and their concerted effort not to consult or engage those with local expertise and then their "hidalgo class" attitude when they do. Members of the Civil Service were concerned as to their authority and the instruments appointing them. The public in Grand Turk feels that there is a desire on the part of the Belonger population to work with them but the olive branch extended is yet to be grasped.*

#### PUBLIC MEETING IN PROVIDENCIALES

January 20, 2011

*There was a heavy local presence with a few expatriates present. Also present were former Ministers of Government, a Former Deputy Chief Minister and Deputy Premier and current Leaders of both Political Parties.*

Issues Raised:

1. Immigration and Labour
2. National Registration/Census
3. Belongership
4. Population Policy
5. Elections
6. TCIG Revenue and Taxes

## Discussion

- (a) The public in Providenciales was concerned about immigration and the number of work permit holders especially in positions that Belongers can hold. It was felt that a National registration was warranted so there can be a database of readily available and accurate information. It is felt that all persons must be registered and anyone found after this process must be removed from the jurisdiction. It was suggested that introduction of a National Identity Card may also be a way for not needing to carry out the costly exercise of a Census every ten years. It was further suggested that in the increasing climate of document tampering, there should be required at Birth a DNA stamping to be maintained at the Registry of Birth.
- (b) Belongership – It is felt that this is no business of the Interim Administration and as such should not be listed as a Milestone to be accomplished before a return to elected Government. It is felt to be the business of an elected Government and further that the British Interim Administration has no moral or legal authority to address this issue which is so fundamental to the future of this country. This was seen as another way to enlarge the franchise and whilst there is a need to perhaps grow the population, it is for the people of these Islands to determine how, with whom and at what pace the population should be grown. Preference must be given when considering Belonger status applicants for those who are born in these Islands over and above the adult who comes rigid in his own country's beliefs and advancement. There was also a view expressed that all Belongerships issued since 1992 were granted illegally and should be reviewed. There must be a Belongership Commission and there should not only be a check list but clear evidence of assimilation which should be determined by the people through an elected Government. There must be harsh punishment of individuals who seek to sell or defraud this country of its birthright. It is felt that there has been a missed opportunity to embrace those that have grown up among us and that there is still an opportunity now but it requires us a people to reach out. There must be an effort to embrace them lest there be major clashes between the Belongers and those that outnumber us.
- (c) It is the feeling that the Interim Administration is a caretaker Government and ought not to delve in the fundamentals of this country.

- (d) Population Control – It was recommended that students of expatriates should be registered as foreign students as there is a grave error on the part of Governments to plan for what can be a transient group of people.
- (e) Return to elected government – There was some agreement with the statement of Former Chief Minister Norman Saunders when he said that the milestones set ought to be given to an elected government to accomplish and it was felt that there must be some way of persuading the Interim Administration that a return to self rule is the best way forward for this country.
- (f) Immigration and cheap labour – the influx of cheap labour particularly from the Phillipines has been detrimental to the local work force as labour costs/salaries and wages have been driven down considerably to the point of not being sufficient to mete out a decent existence. There is need to review this policy that allow for this influx and there is also a need to discontinue all forms of employment agencies whose role is counter the welfare of TCI employment.
- (g) There is a hope that the people's views expressed in this Report would be considered when the review of Overseas Territories is carried out and a report finalized.
- (h) It was posited that Independence is a necessary path forward but this was refuted by the fact that persons believe that the general population feels otherwise. Views were strongly put forward for an advanced Constitution through the institution of full internal self government. It was felt that there should be an effort to obtain as much power as we possibly gain and not accept an increase British presence. It is felt that Independence requires planning and a greater level of maturity. There must be a road map laid out and there must be a better management of the country's relationship with the UK.
- (i) The National Conversation must move forward and as much as possible do so devoid of politics. There was a call to the two Party Leaders present to come together and lead on a united front.
- (j) There was a general consensus that TCI should settle for no less than a return of the 2006 Constitution.
- (k) There must be an early return to elected government as the British Interim Administration does not seem to care or understand the "bread and butter" issues and the severe hardship faced by people in this country. There is felt to be a lack of representation.
- (l) Limitations on work permit holders and contract officers – there is need to review the Affordable Housing Scheme as Work Permit Holders, and Contract officers ought not to be able to benefit from the project. These persons should also be required to have their children at home and these Islands must look to the practices in countries like Bermuda and Cayman Islands and the treatment of these classes of persons as a means of immigration control.

- (m) Taxes – The climate is not right for the introduction of new taxes with low income and high unemployment as there is uncertainty that Government will yield the revenues it's looking to and it will also lend to pushing the people in greater levels of poverty. There should be a clear statement that there will be no property tax. If there is to be the introduction of VAT, then there must be a review of whether there should be customs import duty. There must also be a consideration of incentives to companies who will have to set up the infrastructure. There is an agreement that there is need to increase revenue but not all on the backs on the people of this country. There must be a greater policing and collection of what is in place and there must be a greater effort to attract new investment/ new monies.
- (n) New Industry – there must be greater efforts to introduce new Industries for example the importation of raw materials to engage in light industries.
- (o) There was a debate as to whether there should be price control and whether there should be price index for each Island. It was felt that the restructuring of the customs tariff late last year was of no benefit to anyone save for the businesses as Government lost much needed revenue and the cost savings was not handed down to the consumer.
- (p) There was also a discussion as to the possibility of reviewing the PPS Agreement which is said to guarantee the company a high percentage of profit.
- (q) Service charge and gratuities – It was felt that the full 100% must be given to hotel and restaurant workers and that the laws should be changed to reflect it. There must be a policing of the tips in the Casinos with a view to fairness in its distribution as well.
- (r) It was felt that the Governor's Office must be held accountable and responsible for the failings of the Civil Service that happened and the continued failings under the Interim Administration.

*Summary – Providenciales was largely concerned with the large numbers of work permit holders and the matter of Belongership. It felt strongly about the failings of the Interim Administration and its apparent attitude to not engage the public in consultations. It was felt that there should be a return at the very least to the 2006 Constitution. It challenged the legitimacy and the moral authority of the Interim Administration to handle such fundamental and sentimental national issues.*

#### PUBLIC MEETING IN MIDDLE CAICOS

*The audience was a healthy blend of the local residents which is largely an elderly population. Also present was the Island's District Commissioner.*

*Issues raised:*

- (a) Causeway
- (b) Interim Administration and Disconnect with people
- (c) Airlift and Transportation
- (d) Healthcare
- (e) Crown Land Policy
- (f) Sand Mining
- (g) Financing
- (h) Civil Recovery
- (i) Taxes
- (j) TC Invest
- (k) Immigration
- (l) Cost of Living and Provo Stevedoring
- (m) Electoral Reform

### *Discussion*

- (a) Causeway – it was felt that the Interim Administration is paying no attention to the Causeway which is vital to the life of the people of Middle Caicos as there is no direct Airlift into Middle or North Caicos. This Causeway represents the link by which food and all supplies get into the Island, by which students and workers access their schools and job each day and as there is no resident Doctor, it is the only means by which the Doctor can visit the Island and attend the sick. It is felt that the Causeway is in such a weakened state that a small tropical storm can wash away millions of dollars in investment and the means that connects Middle Caicos to the other Islands. It was noted that a team of men from the Island led by Mr Cardinal Arthur had volunteered their time and resources and mended the causeway to a point where it is more passable but that is only a temporary fix and requires urgent attention. Whilst the people understand the state of the economy, it is felt that this should be given priority and they are disappointed that the Interim Administration has not even attempted minor maintenance. It is said to be dangerous as there is a narrowing of the middle section which is due to the erosion and it makes it impossible for two vehicles to pass. It is important that this matter be addressed in the absence of any airlift into the Islands which is largely an elderly population.
- (b) Development of Island – It was felt that Middle Caicos and North Caicos are the future platform for development, it was felt that Islands must be developed on its own uniqueness and that it would not be the wishes of the people of Middle Caicos to be developed similar to Providenciales but to remain more of a residential Island where retirees will purchase homes and reside full time or part time.

- (c) Neglect – There is a feeling of neglect by all Governments and it is felt that the Governor should visit the people of Middle Caicos and consult with them on national and local issues. Though he is not elected, he is the government and a government must hear and be responsive to the voices of the people it is to serve.
- (d) Crown Land Policy – It was felt that the Conditional Purchase Lease can not be done away with. It was felt that the old Policy worked, that of issuing CPLs and allowing persons to construct to belt beam before freehold title could be acquired. The people warned against consultants coming in and having no local knowledge and making crucial changes. The people are disappointed that even after the information of the transaction involving a large tract of land on the Island, there was no government representation to the Island to address the issue. It was felt that where large tracts of lands are to be issued, there must be consultation with the people of the respective Island. There was also a concern that lands included in the Juniper Hole deal includes areas where flamingo breed and this can not be allowed to move forward.
- (e) Sand Mining – On the same point of the danger of experts/consultants lacking special local knowledge and not consulting the local population, the issue of the sand mining was raised. The people stated emphatically that they do not want to see this matter moved forward though tenders were scheduled to close soon. It was felt that if the experts/consultants had spoken to the local population, then they would be able to identify alternative sites that would not impact negatively the Bambarra Beach which is a local and tourist favourite spot. The people said that the Beach is significant for historical, social and economic reasons as it is a family spot and a tourist attraction. The people can not identify any reason for wanting mine sand there or generally and offered an alternative site in North Caicos where the closing of the Creek is causing hardship for boats carrying supplies to access the dock. There was a clarion call for a meeting on the Island of Middle Caicos to address this urgent issue.
- (f) Ownership of Bambarra Beach – The ownership of the beach was also raised and the matter was said to be in the hands of the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources. It was felt that the matter can be easily resolved should the PS search the title and to arrange if necessary for the designation of alternate land should it be privately owned. It was said that Bambarra Beach was a symbol of Island Pride as Big Ben is to the UK and Grace Bay beach is to Providenciales and it would hate to see this Beach taken away from a public that has enjoyed it for many years.
- (g) Mosquito Control – It was felt that not enough was being done to address the mosquito problem. In a bizarre twist of events, the person directly responsible came to the meeting and informed the people that the recent problem was due only to budgetary constraints and the difficulty



in getting the chemicals over to Middle Caicos as the Government had ruined its credit with carriers.

- (h) Financing – It was felt that the UK had to bear some responsibility for the financial crises in which the TCI has found itself. It was felt that there should be some financing put in place to assist during this time.
- (i) Civil Service – It was felt that little was being done to clean up the Civil Service as many persons in particular Permanent Secretaries were allowed to remain in the same positions held under the former Administration even after they were found to be engaging in improper practices. There must be seen to be fairness and accountability on the part of Civil Servants.
- (j) Transparency – It was felt that the Interim Administration continues to rate poorly on the issue of transparency and accountability. The lack of dissemination of information was likened to closed doors with black cloth over the windows. Persons expressed their disappointment in the attitude of the CEO in his unwillingness to answer questions in the Consultative Forum and the negative attitude of Advisors and others as it relates to the people of these Islands in particular those in the Treasury who show no interest in paying the local creditors. The lack of transparency concerns persons as the people do not truly know the state of the country's finances especially the total indebtedness.
- (k) Savings – It was noted that there was a large building under construction by the TCIG which can house all Government offices and which would eliminate the need to pay rents. It was suggested that monies be identified to complete the work so that rents can cease and the TCIG will realize a savings.
- (l) Helen Garlick – The approach of the SIPT is costing us in reputation, future investment and monies. It is felt that at some point the investigations must bring charges if it is remain credible.
- (m) Economy – There is a need to expand the economy and it was accepted that there must be a greater move towards self sufficiency. It was felt that the Government must begin to look at light industries and begin to implement friendlier policies that encourage this type of development. It was felt that property tax would not bode well for persons who inherited large tracts of family land and whose inability to pay might see the Government taking hold of properties. It was for this reason and the fact it is believed that this would not bode well with Investors either, that the people dismiss the introduction of this tax. The role of TC Invest in attracting Investors was also raised and it was felt that this Body must fulfill this role if the country is to move forward. The possible introduction of VAT was also raised and it was felt that there would need to be a review of whether Customs import duties should remain in the event this tax is introduced.

- (n) Cost of Living – it was felt that TCIG should terminate its contract with Provo Stevedoring which it is felt that the Government has already identified the role of Provo Stevedoring Company in the increasing cost of living.
- (o) Absence of Vital Government Departments – It is felt that vital Departments should be made to visit the family Islands so as to ensure compliance with the laws of the land. An example of lack of planning oversight in construction and it was agreed that this can be dangerous.
- (p) Support for Interim Administration – Middle Caicos showed signs of frustration of not knowing what is going on in the country and persons who supported the coming of the British, are now forced to rethink their positions and find themselves regretting their initial stance. It is felt that there must be some resolutions and some effort to move on. It was also felt that there must be some effort to keep the people abreast of what is going on. People are scared that while the Interim Administration tends to be marking time on spot, assets to be recovered for the public good are being depleted. It is felt that the Interim Administration is not doing anything to encourage inward investment.
- (q) Electoral Reform – It is felt that voters should be given voters' cards. It is also accepted that there must be disclosure of donors and donations to political parties. The meeting welcomed the audit of the accounts of political parties. But there was a concern as to whether caps or limitations are practical accepting the fact that the cost of elections is extremely high in this multi island country.
- (r) Belongership – It was accepted that there must be a clear path to citizenship determined only after a national census and population policy has been completed.
- (s) Chalk Sound - There was concern as to the unfair treatment of the residents of the Chalk Sound National Park. There was concern over a lack of representation for these persons in particular those who have already completed their homes.
- (t) Healthcare – The access to healthcare was also raised. With an elderly population and the lack of a resident doctor who is only accessible over a dangerously damaged causeway leaves much fear in the hearts of residents.

*Summary - Middle Caicos wants to be heard and wishes to invite the Governor to hear its concerns. It feels that there must be an urgent attempt to repair the causeway which is the Island's only connect to the rest of the country. It is also felt that the sand mining project must cease in the areas proposed and the ownership of Bambarra Beach must rest in the hands of the people.*

PUBLIC MEETING IN NORTH CAICOS  
January 27, 2011

*This meeting was poorly attended due to a lack of promotion on the Island and a change of venue by the District Commissioner within the last hour before the commencement of the meeting. However present at the meeting was the Island Representative from the Consultative Forum, Former District Minister of Government and Former member of the Public Service Commission.*

*Issues raised:*

- (a) Sand Mining and Dredging
- (b) Local Government
- (c) Return to Elected Government
- (d) Belongership
- (e) Island Development
- (f) Taxes
- (g) Advisors
- (h) Electoral Reform
- (i) Attitude towards Interim Administration
- (j) Human Rights Commissioner
- (k) OPSM and recruitment of returning students
- (l) Attitude of CEO
- (m) Contracts for PS
- (n) Right Sizing
- (o) Balancing the Budget

*Discussion*

- (a) Sand Mining – The people are upset that there was no consultation with the local population on the proposed sites for sand mining. Once again it was felt that local knowledge can lend well to solutions if Advisors and consultants would engage the local people in dialogue. It was felt that whilst this is thought to be a revenue generating measure, a local man who was in the mooring business for over 30 years stated that he is sure that these sites will not yield enough sand to make it profitable. Alternative sites were suggested and as in Middle Caicos the Sandy Point Dock was identified. It was also noted that the names that the experts cited also do not coincide with the sites they identified on the ground. The importance of consulting with the local population was stressed repeatedly. It was stated that there are too many people who are coming and playing professionals and who need to consult and don't. It is felt that this would be detrimental to us.
- (b) Local Government – There is a need to decentralize government and to strengthen local government. This is felt can be achieved through the introduction of locally elected District Boards or Councils. This Body can then raise its own funds and identify areas of priorities for the respective Island. It is

- felt that an election would ensure that the best person is elected and supports the idea that good governance must come from the people. As Ministers would have to live in Grand Turk, there is a greater support for local Government.
- (c) Elections – There must a greater effort towards preparing this country for Elections. The Interim Administration must announce when works with begin on the preparation of the Voters Register and the appointment of the Boundaries Commission. There is a real concern that elections can be delayed for these obvious reasons because the powers that be fail to prepare. It is felt that the level of uncertainty will only go away with an elected government.
  - (d) It is felt that there are too many issues left outstanding that will create “chaos” in these Islands, for example, the Constitution, electoral reform and Prosecutions. There is a feeling that nothing is being settled.
  - (e) It is felt that there should be a greater effort to encourage agricultural development. It is felt that monies can be generated from this Industry and as such needs the attention of the Interim Administration. North Caicos does not wish to be developed in the same manner as Providenciales but wishes to expand agriculture which they hope will be the Island’s mainstay.
  - (f) There is a need for the people of these Islands to put their way forward. The Budget cuts have no local flavour and local interests are not being protected. Foreign expertise is not necessarily beneficial if local people are not consulted. In this period, the division between Belongers and Expatriates has been heightened and a number of expatriates have taken advantage of this period to be disrespectful to Belongers.
  - (g) It is important that the Interim Administration finds out what systems were weak before changes are made. For example, all was not wrong with the Crown Land Policy and there is a serious concern that much of John Llewlyn’s work is misleading and may not have been necessary. An analogy was offered to express this position better - No doctor operates on a patient without running tests to ascertain what is wrong and even when this is done, the patient is asked about symptoms he/she may be experiencing.

*Summary – There was a statement made that was endorsed by those present and which I felt appropriate to summaries the views of the people at the Meeting and I paraphrase, there is no telling what the British agenda is but there seems to be a plan afoot to entrench expatriates in key positions in the private and public sector. The Interim Administration must realize that everything can not be placed in the Constitution. There is a growing level of uncertainty as to whether when and if elected government is returned whether it would have any power to represent the people who elected them but there is a need for Turks and Caicos Islands to reject any Constitution that is less than the 2006 Constitution. It is felt to be an affront to the people that there is this approach that we are all criminals and there attempt to legislate morals to the point of strangle holding the decision makers is insulting. It was said that everyone would not do all bad and every one would not do all good but it is for the UK to provide oversight not only of the local government but their persons representing them here and this process should*

*start now with oversight of this Interim Administration. The message sent by the passage of the Trial Without A Jury Bill was clear, the Forum does not represent the views of the people and the people of these Islands are not moral, decent or qualified enough to decide fairly. Something is wrong.*

#### PUBLIC MEETING IN SALT CAY

January 29, 2011

*There were very few Belongers present but a large contingent of winter residents/home owners on Salt Cay. Also present was the Island's District Commissioner. Though furnished weeks before with the details of the meeting, there appeared to be a breakdown in communication between the DC's Officer and the Coordinator of the Island as the meeting was not advertised and Belongers elected not to attend at last minute. Albeit a large number of the winter residents agreed to attend due the late notice and their views were greatly appreciated.*

Issues raised:

- (a) Airlift
- (b) Development of Island
- (c) Preservation of History
- (d) Local Representative
- (e) Taxes
- (f) Government Presence
- (g) Crown Land
- (h) Water Supply

#### Discussion

- (a) Airlift – it is felt that the limited access to the Island by air travel is detrimental to the Island economy. It was felt that airlift to the Island was better some 20 years ago. It was felt that there should be improvements made to the Airport that will allow for more than 9 passengers to come in at a time. The DC used the opportunity to update the winter residents on progress as it relates to the upgrading of the airport, the repair of the apron and the recruitment of additional firemen. It was felt that should the state of airline services remain, the Island economy would be further weakened and left to vulnerabilities.
- (b) Local Representative – This was welcomed as it was felt that the Island would or should be better able to receive undivided attention.
- (c) Healthcare – It is felt to be at its worse. There is no visit of a Dentist, Doctor (specialist) or Psychiatrist for years. The Clinic lacks the basic

medical supplies as simple as strips for diabetes testing. There must a review of this system.

- (d) Government Presence – It was disappointing that there is one Police present on Island and who is not replaced/relieved during short absences from the Island. In these matters, the DC has been called on to deal with matters of law and order. It is felt that this can not continue and that there should be at least two Officers on Island and there is a need for police visibility on the Island. There is no presence in respect to Immigration where reports have gone forward on the presence of illegal immigrants. The DC stated that her monthly reports to her Ministry include reports on all Departments but there is rarely ever any response or support received.
- (e) Immigration – It was felt that the Interim Administration must spent this time to rid the Islands of as many illegal immigrants as possible and there is need to review and create a more efficient system of work permits processing. Illegal immigrants was linked to crime and it is felt that it is not good for the country and all Islands will suffer if the Islands were to be seen in such negative light for sporadic and violent crimes.
- (f) Sub Treasury – There is still a sub treasury on the Island and the previous practice of allowing the DC to collect and cash cheques for Government employees on the Island of Salt Cay is being threatened to be discontinued. This will cause an interruption on services on Islands and individuals will then have to travel to Grand Turk and spend the greater part if not all of the day to carry out banking business. This needs to be reviewed.
- (g) Docking facility at the Port in Grand Turk – there is a need for the replacement of a step for the elderly to access the ferry is vital. It was there before and there is a seriously rusted and eroded step that is being used now that is dangerous for use.
- (h) Taxes – It is shortsighted to believe that there can not be some implementation of some form of taxes to sustain the economy. Whilst property tax is complicated, it should be reviewed but it should not be the plan of any government to use expatriates as a funding source for government revenue as this can be further divisive. There should be a careful study of VAT.
- (i) Crown Land – There is support for any policy that will seek to manage properly the assets of the people and protect beach accesses and national parks. CPLs must be maintained so that Belongers can access land.
- (j) Salt Cay Development Project – The project has been scaled down and should be reviewed.
- (k) Water Supply – There should be a review of the water system and access points of water on the Island of Salt Cay. In 2011, long hoses are still seen

stretching across roads and floor ways. Residents ought to be able to have more access points and to be able to obtain water meters.

(l) There should be a dump truck in Salt Cay.

Development of Island – It was felt that Salt Cay can be developed as a tourism destination and there must be an aggressive marketing plan to get the tourists pass Providenciales. The Island's uniqueness must be marketed – whale and bird watching, diving, retreat and historical site. There is a need for a greater presence of the National Trust in the preservation of historical sites. The refurbishment of the Government Hill House complete with Reception and Conference Center, Café and Gift Shop must progress. There must also be an effort to reconstruct windmills and clean up salt pans which can be used as a historical display to show the process of raking salt.

*Summary – Salt Cay feels neglected and felt that a glimmer of hope recently felt has been dashed away. With the limited and sporadic flights to Salt Cay, it is felt that it will not become the viable tourism destination that it can be. It feels that the Island should be marketed for what it offers different from the other Islands and this would help businesses to grow and benefit the local economy.*

#### PUBLIC MEETING IN SOUTH CAICOS

February 1, 2011

*Among those present were Former Politicians and Ministers of Government including a former Chief Minister, the District Commissioner and several Pastors.*

#### Issues Raised

- (m) Economy
- (n) Immigration
- (o) Social Issues
- (p) Healthcare
- (q) Education
- (r) Airlift and Airport Operations

#### Discussion

(a) Economy – The following points were raised

- It was felt that the TCI needs to review and encourage cooperative development especially on the smaller islands where the economy is not doing well.
- On an Island level, it was felt that Supermarkets should also work together to share freight costs thus making items cheaper for the residents.

- It was felt that the TCI needs to explore agriculture and increase the duties on agricultural products so that we can encourage local development of agriculture.
  - It was also felt that TCI should review the need for building societies where individuals can put funds together and allow them to have enough to start a home. This is similar to an ASUE.
  - TCI should review and explore the possibility of Oil Refineries.
  - TCI should use the Salt Ponds and enhance it to promote marine culture and aqua hydro phonics.
  - TCI should explore the possibility of a super port free trade zone on the island of South Caicos similar to what is done in Panama. There may however be a challenge for land space.
  - TCI should carry out studies on countries similar to TCI and review and implement some of their ideas. We also need to train our locals to use local materials and use them to sell products at the Cruise Center as this will differentiate us from different markets which are basically selling similar products. We need to be aggressive in competing with the rest of the Caribbean Islands.
- (b) Immigration - It was pointed out that TCI needs to review their immigration status especially to those persons that reside here and are not entitled to a free education. TCI claimed to be highly educated but if this trend continues, then soon we will not be highly educated because among us will be residents who did not get an opportunity to education. This will impact our statistics as it relates to education.
- (c) Education – It was felt that the Community College needs to be upgraded offering tertiary level of education thus reducing the burden on the government of providing scholarships. It was further felt that the TCI Community College should also link with other universities and perhaps offer courses on line.
- (d) Social Issues - Social issues were addressed and aimed primarily to South Caicos.
- South Caicos currently does not have a Social Development Office since April 2010 and social problems continue to escalate.
  - South Caicos does not have a Youth Office
  - South Caicos does not have a Truancy Office



- Well Center is over-crowded and has 5 persons in a 2 Bedroom building while the building that was previously occupied by the Disable Center remains vacant. Wellness Center should be relocated.
  - There are individuals walking the street and do not have any medications. This could create a tragedy on the island of South Caicos. With the drastic cuts in the Ministry of Health, drugs supplies have been also been cut and the community has come together to stage fundraisers to raise monies to purchase drugs for persons on Island.
- (e) Healthcare – It was felt that the Health Arrangement needs to be reviewed. It is in poor state as there is no well stocked or maintained Pharmacy on the Island and there are occasions whereby individuals have to go to Grand Turk and Provo to get the medication.
- (f) Other Miscellaneous Issues:
- Control Tower – There is no Tower on the Island and individuals have to go on runway for communications
  - Airlift - The sole carrier, Air Turks and Caicos plans to reduce their flight arrangements to South Caicos and it is felt that this will have a further negative impact on the travel plans for individuals and for the island of South Caicos.
  - Civil Servants - There are individuals on probation period for more than 6 years in the Civil Service and there must be some representation of these persons.
  - Banking Operation - There is concern about the First Caribbean International Bank making renovations to the Government's Post Office to continue its rent free operation from these premises. Persons remain concerned that the Post Office has to close its doors on Wednesday to accommodate the Bank – a business that operates for profit.
  - Going Green - We need to promote a green environment and review green energy and solar and wind energy.

*Summary – South Caicos was largely concerned about matters relating to the national and local economy. Health and social issues were of grave importance as well.*

CIVIL SERVICE ASSOCIATION  
January 20, 2011

The Civil Service Association had several main concerns that were of immediate and national concerns:

1. The matter of Pensions and Gratuities – It was felt that the continued silence on this matter was having adverse effects on members of the Public Service. It was felt to be a sad situation when persons who had left the Service were months after completion not in receipt of any monies or explanation for their position. It was felt to be a genuine expectation and that persons who would have planned their retirement based on the calculations could be adversely affected. It was also mentioned that there was disappointment on their behalf on the part of the CEO who in response to a question in the Forum since December had promised to issue a release since the second week of December. It is felt to be a matter requiring urgent and careful consideration as any proposed changes can see an exodus of technical and skilled persons leaving the Public Service.
2. Reform Process – it was felt that this is necessary but should not be tied to the reinstatement of local Government as this would require time. It is also felt that its success depends on how it is executed and designed. It is felt that it should be removed from the list of milestones as there may be a rushed approach in an effort to accomplish it in time for an election or the reverse can also occur where elections may be delayed because there was no considerable development in this area. It was felt that even though it may be connected to balancing the Budget, efforts must be placed in raising revenue more than cutting as the Civil Service now suffers now in its functions because it does not have the required resources (in some cases the very basic items of ink, paper etc) to carry out its functions effectively. It is felt that there must be an Independent Body to review the Service and a proper survey must be carried out and questions as to why persons are not functioning should be asked – is it a lack of training or resources? These issues can not be dismissed.
3. Training – With the limited resources being placed in training and the denial of a meager \$5000 for one Department citing the example, Civil Servants are being forced to follow the dictates and regional training Agenda who continue to offer free assistance. This it is felt affects the local needs and it is felt that the local Program is hindered.
4. Job Advertisements – There is serious concern as to the recruitment process and the advertisement of posts within the Civil Service.
5. Increments – There are many instances where persons have been appraised and through no fault of theirs, they have not received their increments. It is felt that these persons who have been affected by the lack of performance on the part of the HOD, The PS or OPSM should not be punished but measures should be taken to deal with the bodies listed above.
6. Advisors - Again it was cited the difficulty in working with some of the Advisors due to their negative attitudes and their concerted effort to work alone and to the exclusion of Belongers. It was a real concern the fact that their Terms of Reference nor Job Descriptions are made available and persons with responsibility that overlap with their roles are unclear as to their respective roles and whether they are to report to them. It was also a real concern for the

Association, the role and definition of Advisors and the legal authority that these persons have over them. It was also felt that the recommendations of persons in positions of authority are not accepted unless it is passed through an Advisor and this lends to poor morale.

7. Resources – It was felt that the Civil Service can do so much better with more resources but are put in a place with much less and asked to do more. It was felt that there are some minimum requirements that the Service just can't go below and the Ministry of Health was cited as an example and for obvious reasons, the details will be cited under separate cover. It is felt that there must be a clear Guideline on Priorities of expenditure as an example was cited of a non budgeted item initially a donation was fast tracked through the system as a reimbursement.

#### MEETING WITH MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP IN PROVIDENCIALES

January 21, 2011

- (a) Taxes - The Pastors felt that the people of these Islands were already overburdened with taxes and any further direct taxation would hurt too many homes where persons are already struggling with reduced income whether derivative of reduced hours, or pay cuts (as in the case of the Civil Service) or job layoffs. It is felt that persons are finding it difficult still to cope with the deduction for the National Health Insurance Plan. The proposal to introduce property tax was rejected.
- (b) There was a concern as to why the Interim Administration removed export duties and there was also a concern as to the future of the Fishing Industry. It was felt that not enough was being done to diversify the economy and to capitalize on obvious markets for example deep water fishing. It was noted the ban that Nassau had placed on grouper catch and how it yielded benefits. It was felt that there should be some encouragement policy on the part of TCIG.
- (c) It was felt that the heavy handed mindset of the British ruins nations and a few examples were cited. It was felt that the attitude of the CEO lends to violence and his approach is of no benefit these Islands.
- (d) It was noted that the Church should lead the King and that the Church has already in a setting in which the CEO was present called for a reversion to the laws passed by the former Administration for example laws relating to liquor licensing and gambling.
- (e) There was a need to remind the people of what brought this country to this place and to keep it at the forefront of the people's minds simply for the purpose of ensuring that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past and allow any Government to take advantage of us as a people and to be allowed to persist in wrong doing.
- (f) The Ministerial Fellowship felt that the deep rooted division in these Islands between expatriates and Belongers (and even between the Turks versus Caicos Islands). But it was felt that these tensions can escalate to a negative place

where there are clashes. It is felt that the environment during this period is conducive to racial tensions and clashes. It was felt that there are serious prejudices on both parts that must be dealt with and legislation that seeks to discriminate against persons born here should be removed. It was also noted that it was important to work towards creating a cohesive society as much as possible. It was felt that there must be a balance between protectionism versus prejudice and we were reminded that persons protect with policies through the Civil Service and not with prejudice.

- (g) It was felt that politics continues to divide us and that education is necessary to counter this indoctrination.
- (h) Unity – true unity is necessary to move this country forward on the right path and that this unity must be led by and from the Church.

#### MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA

January 21, 2011

The Media Houses that chose to participate in this exercise expressed their disappointment in the handling of information from the Interim Administration. It was noted that there was hope for a greater level of transparency. It was felt that while the Interim Administration preached one thing, it was not prepared to share information that is far from secretive. They are satisfied with the need identified to establish protocol but it was felt that the current structure of having all request passing through one central place and person is not proving efficient and effective especially when that person has no pointed person in a particular Department or Ministry to make the request to. It is understood that all requests are channeled through the Permanent Secretaries and that the responses are slow and not readily forthcoming sometimes taking weeks to receive a response. It was felt that perhaps a pointed person in Ministry/Department should be identified. It was also noted again the attitudes of Advisors. It was felt that the Advisors had an attitude of not being approachable even when they are positioned to quell fears and anxieties with information. Whilst the Media understands the need for confidentiality and to ensure consistency in what is said, the overall attitude does not lend well neither does it promote an attitude or the practice of openness and transparency.

The Media would like to see more Press Conferences and more Press Briefing of the Advisory Council in Providenciales where there would be more interaction with the media. There should at least once per quarter be a Press Conference with a longer time frame and no limit on issues that can be raised. It was also felt that the Press Releases are far from detailed and should encourage the dissemination of more information through this medium. It was suggested that there be a designated full time Press Officer for the Police who may also divulge information at the request of the SIPT. With the circulation of rumors that can be detrimental to person's reputation and even health, there should be a haste to give correct information which can stem negative responses and reactions. In this critical period approaching, the Interim Administration must appreciate the need for

greater openness and transparency and the useful role of the media who remains committed to serving the public in an informative and responsible manner.

#### SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION BY E F SEYMOUR on PUBLIC FINANCES

- Government raises monies through fees and taxes.
- The structure is based on consumption and as such is not a steady stream of revenue.
- A Budget is simply projected figures.
- The past practice of sale of crown land and government assets must be discouraged as it is an unsustainable practice.
- There must be an effort to raise enough revenue to cover realistic expenditure.

#### Moving Forward -

1. There must be a greater management of the accounts.

*There must be an effort to save and grow reserves.*

2. There must be greater transparency and all financial activity must be made publicly available, for example, Budgets can be posted on TCIG's Website.

3. Parliamentary Oversight Committees must be accessible to the public.

*These meetings should be over radio and televised.*

4. There must be greater exposure on conflicts and potential conflicts.

5. There must be greater scrutiny of and adherence to laws that governs Statutory Bodies.

*There is usually very little detail during Budgets and there ought to be a separate Committee that scrutinizes their Budgets.*

6. There can not be any further segregation of Government revenues as is being done by the Interim Administration.

#### THE ROLE OF TCINVEST

Royal S. Robinson

7.12.10

One might wonder what does Royal know or have anything to do with TCInvest! I would give you a brief background. Between 1986 and 1995, I was the Chairman of the Development Board and responsible for the Inward Investment Agency before they were morphed into TCInvest. The first million dollar loan that we got from the Caribbean Development Bank was done during my chairmanship. It might sound like small potatoes now, but in those days and in that climate, it was a singular achievement! Additionally, I shepherded an internal document that indicated that the market was not ready for a full-fledge stand alone Development Bank at that time. Three hundred thousand dollars later, a KPMG report found the same thing that we did for free!

TCI Investment Agency has been established by statute and section 5. (1) says that "The functions of the Agency shall be to stimulate, facilitate and undertake the development of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The acquisition of any property or the carrying on of any business which the Governor may direct the Agency to acquire or carry on as the case may be shall be deemed to be part of the functions of the Agency." That is what the law states, but in order for the Agency to fully carry out its mandate, a number of policies and guidelines have had to be developed to articulate what the law says.

The Agency was designed to be a "One stop shop and clearing house" for development projects, whether they originated with persons here, or as the result of inward investment opportunities by persons from outside wanting to do business here. In order that persons know exactly what they would get from their being encouraged to develop, they were pointed to the Encouragement of Development Ordinance that laid out some of the ground rules. However, to make life a little simpler, it was TCInvest's specific role to pull the various pieces of legislation as well as policy initiatives together so that potential clients could have some semblance of understanding as to what they would be getting into and to avoid many of the mine fields that are normally associated with development projects.

There was a handbook that had been developed that enunciated the broad parameters in which projects would be evaluated. It was called "Doing Business in the Turks and Caicos Islands". Even though it had its genesis in the previous organization, TCInvest refined it into the document that it is today. This document covers among other things:

- (a) TCInvest
- (b) Incentives
- (c) Duty remissions

- (d) Crown Land
- (e) Investor Obligations
- (f) Immigration
- (g) Belonger Preferences
- (h) Business Incorporation
- (i) Business Licensing Fees
- (j) Customs
- (k) Financial Services
- (l) Company Formation
- (m) Financial Services Commission
- (n) TCI Facts

In each of the above, there is a blurb that provides some flavor of what is provided and expected. However, all of the details cannot be provided in the booklet, but the individual is provided with additional information and insights on interaction with the Agency.

Another booklet developed by TCInvest is called "Your TCInvest Guide to TCI". This gives a synopsis of the features of the six main inhabited islands as well as information on tourism, financial services, manufacturing, mariculture and fishing, agriculture and technology. It also lists a "development proposal guidelines", which lets one know the basic information that is needed to be provided in order for a project is able to be considered.

TCInvest also produced another booklet "Introducing a new Investment Destination" that further amplifies the various individual island and what the real potential there is for development. Grand Turk shows off the cruise ship industry and all of the related activities that can be obtained. Providenciales is portrayed as this mystical place in which to relax and do business. Through the building of the causeway between North and Middle Caicos, the connectivity and comparative advantages of those two island communities are shown. South Caicos is depicted as the fishing capital of the country with associated activities such as the research school dedicated to enhancing the capacity fish related activities. Salt Cay is the green island mainly because of the way that the island is kept free from litter as well as being an International Heritage Site.

Armed with these pieces of information, it is also TCInvest's responsibility to promote the country generally to the international investors that might be interested in a destination such as ours. In order to do that, overseas offices were established in key markets in conjunction with the Tourist Board. There was also the requirement to attend major annual events where persons looking for investment opportunities gather. One such event is the "Miami Conference of the Caribbean", that began as part of President Regan's "Caribbean Basin Initiative" which was designed to bring together key players in the American investment community with people and countries of Latin America and the Caribbean who were interested in opening up their markets for inward investments. Some of the other promotional events that the Agency participated in are:

1. Caribbean Hotel Investment Conference (Regional)
2. World Travel Market (London)
3. International Hotel Conference (Rome)
4. Arabian Hotel Investment Conference (Dubai)
5. Caribbean Multi-National Business Conference (Regional)
6. National Association of Black Hotel Owners, Operators & Developers Summit (USA)
7. Caribbean Investment Forum (Regional)
8. Caribbean Tourism Conference
9. Arabian Travel Market (Dubai)
10. Asian Offshore Association Conference (Hong Kong)
11. RIMS – Risk Insurance Management Society Conference
12. ALIS – American Lodging Investment Summit
13. Caribbean Multi-National Business Conference
14. Caribbean Hotel & Resorts Investment Conference
15. Lifestyle/Boutique Hotel Development Conference

The above is an indication as to how wide a net the Agency casts on behalf of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The results can be seen from the myriad of different groups setting up shop here!

Another important aspect of the Agency is its Small Business Division. This has been modeled in part on the US's Small Business Administration. Here assistance can be gotten by anyone, but especially Turks and Caicos Islanders who want to get in business and add to the variety of activities here. Three key areas on which courses and seminars were conducted are those of "good record keeping", "collecting of market intelligence" and "business plan development". Without those building block, it is nigh impossible to present a proposal for funding to any of the commercial lending agencies.

Has TCInvest been living up to its full potential and expectation? I would have to say no! That in my opinion is because of financial constraints on one hand and its inability to respond in a timely manner due in part to the ineffective way that various Government departments respond to requests for information. This is then further compounded by the Agency's own tardiness and sometimes lack of focus due in part on the cynicism with respect to the real prospect of working to complete a task that would end up bearing dividends.

To overcome the main structural impediment to the success of TCInvest, I would propose that we move to a similar solution the Planning Department uses. The project proposer completes the form that has the minimum requirements and this is presented to TCInvest and the political arm simultaneously. Once the political directorate indicates that the project is one that can be supported, TCInvest engages the potential developer so that all of the due diligence could be completed and the viability of the project ascertained. This would cut out a lot of the time spent in vetting a project that in the



end would not have government's approval in order to proceed. Lest we forget, the political directorate has to keep its eye on more than just the "ticked box score"!

The Agency has to be revamped along the lines that have already been suggested so that you avoid the "square peg in round hole" syndrome. This would add new vigor and life to the institution. Of equal importance must be the relationship between the Agency and the various government agencies that it relies on for information in a timely manner. A person in each department should be designated and dedicated to the provision of that information. It should be persons familiar with the format and type of information required to satisfy the requests from the Agency. In this information age, it should not be a hard slug to collect the required data in a timely manner and provide it to the Agency. Once the information is collected and collated, a recommendation can be made as to whether or not the proposed project is really worthy of being proceeded with. Once a positive indication is given, then the tough negotiations will begin to get the best deal for the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The incentives that would be given must be counterbalanced by the benefits to the public at large.

The Agency is tasked with negotiating the deals and as such has an intimate knowledge of the outcomes. It should be easy for it to monitor the various aspects of the Agreement to ensure compliance, and in the cases of noncompliance, issue the requisite sanctions. One of the hallmarks of most previous agreements was the requirement to provide funds for scholarships. There has hardly been much of a follow up and so many of the project proposers have gotten the breaks from TCIG, but have not been forthcoming with the money. This loophole needs to be closed by tasking the Agency with the responsibility for monitoring and follow up.

The Agency is responsible for a noble cause in ensuring that inward investment, the engine of our economic growth keeps ticking smoothly. We need to make sure that it has the resources, both human and financial to deliver for us!

## THE FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY

Gordon Kerr

Misick and Stanbrook.

Basically speaking the Financial Services Industry includes all manner of businesses that to a greater or lesser extent offer some form of financial advice or product in return or payment. There is a common misconception that the industry is solely offshore driven, or put another way deals only with foreign clientele. This is not true and in fact a very substantial part of the business is generated locally and services the local community. Certainly the industry does service foreign clients and this is important to it but every time someone opens a local bank account, buys car or life insurance or takes out a mortgage they are dealing with the financial services industry. The classification of businesses that falls under the financial services umbrella has been steadily expanding over the years and is set to expand further into related non financial service providers

such as real estate companies and businesses that typically handle cash in substantial amounts.

Turks and Caicos is classified as an "offshore finance center" this being the current preferred name for what was once described as a tax haven. It puts us in the same category as Bermuda, Cayman, the Bahamas, Switzerland and many other countries whose domestic tax regime and manner of taxing foreign income is perceived as being favorable to citizens of countries that are not classified as offshore centers. Of course we don't call ourselves a tax haven any more but the early growth of these centers was inextricably linked to their ability to offer products and services that allowed individuals and companies to structure their affairs in such a way as to defer, reduce or avoid payment of some or all of their taxes in their home jurisdiction. So even though there were other services available the catchy and somewhat exotic title of tax haven fell into popular usage.

Another feature of these havens which was also very popular was their guarantee of privacy or secrecy. Partly this was by design and partly it was simply because there was no adequate regulatory framework to dictate otherwise. Whatever the reason it existed and was popular with those who did business here. But of course it also made the havens susceptible to abuse by less legitimate sources. They were targeted by criminal enterprises as places where money could be laundered or hidden, by people who wanted to hide money from creditors and people who wanted not merely to avoid but evade taxes. For this reason the tax havens became tainted in the eyes of the authorities and earned a somewhat sleazy reputation that lingers to this very day. It would be both naïve and untrue to say that at least to some extent that reputation was not justified. And of course it was only a matter of time before the authorities both here and abroad was going to take steps to stamp it out.

So ironically the very attributes which originally attracted significant business to the tax havens ultimately attracted ever increasing attention from the authorities in other countries as they waged war on organized crime and set in motion a gradual but relentless increase in regulation of the offshore finance centers. This continues to this day and I will touch more on this later.

#### The Financial Services Industry and the TCI Economy

We need to be clear that in terms of dollars and cents revenues directly paid to TCIG, the FSI in the Turks and Caicos islands has never been anything more than a bit player. Gross revenues collected by the FSC in respect of all Financial Service related business for the last few years averaged about \$6,500,000.00 per year. This translates into net revenue to Government of something in the region of \$2,000,000.00. This is a mere fraction of the total revenue generated by TCIG.

However looking at it in this way is terribly short sighted. Even though its direct contribution to Government coffers may appear modest the FI's contribution to the economy is much more than that. As with every sector of the economy there is a trickledown effect and in the case of the FSI this is very significant indeed:

The FSI in its broadest sense is a major employer in the Islands. Add up the number of persons employed by Banks, insurance companies, accounting firms, trust companies, company managers and law firms etc and you will immediately appreciate that this is a very significant proportion of the community. When one then looks at the types of jobs available it is immediately apparent that many are well paid professional positions, many in middle and senior management positions. High earners are typically higher spenders and the salaries earned and spent by FSC employees add greatly to the sectors' contribution to the economy.

As a job provider it is key in absorbing some of the brightest and most valued local talent available. Every Belonger qualified in Business, Law or Accountancy will almost inevitably end up employed at some point in FI related business. Highly experienced professionals are often brought in and bring with them a wealth of experience that is passed on to less experienced staff and while it would of course be preferable to staff all positions locally, until that can happen, this exchange of experience should be welcomed since it comes at no cost to the local economy.

The FI is instrumental in providing the comfort and service needed by large scale investors. They are as essential in the process of attracting investment as well qualified architects, engineers and contractors. If the investor does not feel that his money is safe then he simply will not bring it here in the first place.

For no other reason than this it should therefore be of deep concern to all if the FSI shrinks and thereby the number of such opportunities reduces. Unfortunately that is precisely what we see happening.

#### Reasons for contraction in the FSI

First let me make it clear that no matter what happens there will always be a FSI in existence. As I have said throughout this presentation the FSI covers a wide range of businesses that service the local community. While there are still people living and working here there will always be the need for a FI. The offshore financial industry servicing foreign clientele is another matter. But both arms of the FI are impacted to a greater or lesser degree by the same factors and I will turn now to examine these.

There are two main factors that are affecting the TCIFI. The first of these is exerts most influence on the OFI and consists of what might generally be described as external pressure. The offshore leg of the FSI depends almost entirely on overseas clientele. As I mentioned earlier the initial startling success of many FS jurisdiction was based on their strict secrecy laws and ability to provide effective tax avoidance structures for wealthy foreigners. But ironically these features have ultimately been significant contributors to the gradual constriction of the OFI industry.

As the global war on drug trafficking and money laundering from that and other illegal enterprises gathered pace through latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, attention was focused on jurisdictions whose lack of regulation and transparency offered a haven for money flowing from these activities. The Turks and Caicos were no exception and substantial pressure from large overseas economies was brought to bear to implement or tighten up laws that had hitherto been weak or lacking altogether to combat and prevent these activities. And in reality there can be no objection to or criticism of this. However this

together with the increasingly tarnished reputations of some OFC must certainly have discouraged some prospective legitimate business.

However having turned the spotlight on the tax havens in relation to clearly illicit funds the larger jurisdictions then extended their examination of the tax practices of these jurisdictions and to what extent this could or should be controlled. There had up until this point always been an established principle that it was not the responsibility of one country to assist in tax collection on the citizens of another by their home country. But during the course of this decade the larger economies started to change their view on this and decided that this created an economic advantage to the low tax countries and that this was inherently unfair.

And so under the twin mantras of leveling the playing field and tax harmonization they sought to tighten up their own tax laws to prevent hitherto legitimate tax avoidance by their citizens while at the same time insisting that the offshore centers adopt laws and regulations that allowed the overseas authorities easier access to information needed by them to ensure compliance with their own tax laws. The economic dependence of off shore centres on these large economies meant that there was little alternative but to comply.

The cumulative effect of all these measures was a quantum increase in regulation in the offshore finance industry. And regulation costs money. With each new set of regulations an increased number of regulators are required to administer them. The new regulators have to be paid for and so the cost of business increases to pay for this. In addition some of the new regulations created new licenses, the need for additional staff e.g. anti money laundering compliance officers, additional staff training, new software, additional time consuming know your client procedures and the list goes on. So both the direct and indirect cost to the private sector increased.

To compound the impact the increased regulation both at home and in the OFCs coupled with increased cost of doing business meant that less and less prospective clients were inclined to use the services offered by the offshore finance centers. So at the very time the cost of doing business was increasing the number of clients wishing to avail themselves of that business decreased. The resultant decline in business is therefore not surprising and certainly not peculiar to TCI. In fact the global FSI has shrunk quite dramatically in the last 10 years.

The second factor affecting the FSI is of course the economy in general and this impacts both the domestic and the offshore FSI. Like every other business in TCI, the FSI was directly affected by the financial meltdown of the last couple of years. In fact possibly no industry other than construction has been affected more visibly and more dramatically. The smaller the jurisdiction the more vulnerable it is to such a calamity. With no central bank to prop up the banking system and no capital reserves to draw on to "bail out" the economy we simply have no way to mitigate the effects of the global economic collapse.

From the point of view of the FSI the global economic collapse meant that overseas Clientele started concentrating on economic survival rather than investment. Banks stopped lending and many collapsed. Countries from which we historically drew our client base became more and more aggressive in ensuring that their citizens could not

avail themselves of the services offered by OFCs. The population drain from the TCI has meant that there are less and less people buying financial products such as insurance, the banks' deposit base is being eroded as people spend their savings in lieu of lost income or withdraw them altogether if they depart from the islands. New investment has dried up in the development sector so fewer companies are being formed and more and more are being struck off as they are no longer required.

As business declines in the private sector, FSC revenues decrease and yet the pace of regulation continues to accelerate with no end in sight.

Is it all gloom and doom?

We are not done with increased regulation yet. The TCI is still undergoing review by several overseas watchdogs appointed by the EU, the OECD and others. We are not yet fully compliant with all of their existing requirements and one can expect yet more requirements will be placed upon us as the consultants dream up more and more ways to "harmonize taxes" and "level the playing field". Compliance with their recommendations will inevitably mean yet more legislation and consequently more regulation and regulators.

If I can digress for a moment on this topic I should point out that regulation is not inherently a bad thing. If it is effective it minimizes risk to the public when investing or buying financial services products. It promotes professionalism and high standards of business practice and helps to prevent obviously corrupt or criminal enterprises. At its worst however it creates red tape and hinders legitimate business from growing and adds a completely unnecessary cost to doing business. And if I can put on my FSC hat for a moment I should emphasize that it is typically not the regulatory body such as the FSC which is responsible for the imposition of new or additional regulations. They are charged with implementing them once in force but the passing of new regulations is a function of Government and it is at this level that the ever increasing burden of regulation must be addressed. I make this point, not to defend the FSC but to set the framework for recommendations later on.

I believe that the "level playing field" concept that is so often trotted out to justify the increasing regulatory pressure being brought to bear on the OFC's is totally disingenuous. When one examines the effect of the leveling process once can see that in fact it does anything but that. As a starting point let me say this. "I think the whole level playing field analogy is fundamentally flawed". Whether the playing field is level or not is irrelevant if you aren't playing on it and make no mistake we simply don't play on the same playing field as the super economies that have been so instrumental in the many and far reaching changes to our regulatory framework. We don't even play on the same playing field as some of our perceived competitors. It's more akin to a tennis competition where the top seeds play on center court and the lower seeds are relegated to playing on outside courts. We are an unseeded qualifier and are playing on the outermost of the outside courts and even there we face much stronger opposition and are (in FS terms) almost invariably the underdog in every match we play.

Clearly we are not in competition with the US or the EU in terms of economics. And the bigger OF jurisdictions can absorb the changes, the increased regulation, the downturn in business and the increasing cost of doing business much more effectively than we can. So the ultimate effect of the much vaunted leveling of the playing field is that while this may be true for the top seeds the knock on effect to us is that the playing field on which we compete becomes more and more tilted and sadly almost always against us. Successive Governments in the TCI have done little if anything to address this imbalance perhaps because our FSI is not seen as a major contributor to Government revenue. Or perhaps because we lack any perceived bargaining position. This is a shame because I believe opportunities have been missed and may now be lost forever.

What I mean by this is that any reasonable analysis of the effect on our FSI of compliance with these new regulatory requirements would inevitably show the adverse financial impact on our industry and consequently on our economy as a whole. This impact is almost certainly quantifiable. When Governments of larger economies take steps that negatively affect one sector of their own economy or a particular industry, they almost invariably offer subsidies to compensate for that. Farming and Fishing subsidies are examples that spring readily to mind. We have signed numerous bilateral treaties which are bilateral in name only. I doubt that we will ever use the reciprocal provisions contained in them and in reality they are simply a one way street for information gathering. There really is no good reason why we should not have advanced a case for compensation on the strongest possible terms when we signed the agreements. Maybe it is not too late to do so. The cost to the other side would be negligible in the overall scheme of things but the difference to our economy would be significant.

This then leads me to what recommendations I would make with respect to the future of the FSI in TCI and I suppose my first has already been made. That is when we are required by the wishes or threats for use of a better word to implement new and costly regulatory measures that have no discernable benefit to our economy other than to remove us from a unilaterally imposed black listing, then we should seek some quid pro quo for that. It need not be direct cash but could be services or goods that we need at preferred or nominal rates. Perhaps even payment for the regulators that will be needed to police it.

We also need to ensure that the business that we do have remains with us. There are areas of the offshore market in which we have a significant share. One such area is Producer Owned Reinsurance Companies or PORCs as they are usually called. TCI is pretty much known as the domicile of choice for these products and they account for a very significant percentage of new exempt company incorporations each year. The FSC is currently engaged in an ongoing dialogue with industry designed to reach mutually acceptable levels of regulation of these types of company. It is hoped on both sides that a satisfactory compromise will be reached and that this sector of the OFI will then be left alone to flourish. Any threat to it from outside should be very carefully scrutinized and resisted if at all possible.

Steps should also be taken to harmonize some of our own laws as they relate to FS revenues. Share transfer duty tax is collected by the FSC under the LHCSTDO whilst stamp tax is collected by the treasury. The basis of calculation of these two almost identical taxes is different and the rates at which they are charged are also out of step. Treatment by Government of assessing them has always been blurred and so a common approach to both would make sense.

Revamping the Business Licensing Laws is long overdue. A coherent statement of what businesses would be welcome and concessions offered to attract them would be helpful. Along this line efforts should be made to identify new FS products and to market them.

Very careful consideration is needed before yet more regulatory provisions are imposed. I doubt that there is anywhere in the world where it is more difficult to open a bank account than here. Certainly not the United States where it takes very little in terms of due diligence or source of funds to satisfy the bank's requirements. The requirement that all businesses no matter how small have AMLCO seems incredibly onerous. Ask a major New York law firm what due diligence they need before accepting a new client .... The answer is virtually none. Compare that to your experience when you approach a firm here where everything but you inside leg measurement is now required if any part of the business we are doing for you has a financial element to it.

I realize that there is not much hope of rolling back regulations that are already in place. I would ask however that some recognition be taken in the future of the relatively tiny FS sector, the comparatively insignificant amount of money that actually flows through the islands and whether the threat that we pose truly justifies the measures imposed to counteract it.

And finally and this is a more general statement not necessarily restricted to FI. We must create certainty. As nature abhors a vacuum, business abhors uncertainty. There are simply too many unknown factors to doing business in TCI at the moment. Here is a list of typical questions that any prospective investor here may ask me and the answers that they will get from me if I am honest:

Q. As a foreigner can I get a business license without much difficulty

A. I don't know

Q. I understand I need work permits for foreign workers. Are there people available to do the jobs there and if not will I be able to get work permits reasonably easily

A. I don't know

Q. Assume I invest a couple of million dollars can I get a PRC.

A. I don't know

Q. What are the rules about obtaining Belongership

A. I don't know

Q. I see the Constitution is suspended and is being amended. When will all that be finished?

A. I don't know

Q. Is there going to be any new taxes in the future

A. I don't know

Well you get the picture although the list is by no means exhaustive. And of course the last question always is, why on earth would I invest there now. Well you know the answer.

We need as a people to decide on these thorny issues. To settle upon a plan and make the tough decisions that will attract investment back to the islands. Be warned though that investment needs people. We are not going to get back to a balanced budget and economic stability unless we are prepared to face the reality that this will need more people, to share in increased tax burden. The Government for its part must grasp the nettle and close these uncertainties. It is my hope that this national conversation will open a dialogue between Government and the people in a constructive way so that these uncertainties can be laid to rest and a coherent mapped out for the future well being of the Turks and Caicos Islands

#### PRESENTATION DELIVERED BY SIMON WOOD

National Conversation

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Simon Wood.

I am an architect and have been living and working in the Turks and Caicos Islands for over twenty years.

First I would like to say that it is a great honour for me to have been asked to participate in this National Conversation and I hope that my contribution to the discussion is, pertinent, timely and well received. It is my understanding that this is (as the title suggests) "a conversation" and as such what I intend to share, are my own thoughts and carefully considered opinions which I hope will stimulate the conversation further.

I have been asked to share my thoughts on the subject of "development" and more specifically the subject of "balanced development". I can only assume that I was chosen to speak because I have for the past twenty years been at the forefront and intimately involved in a considerable amount of development within the Turks and Caicos Islands. I do not profess to be an expert in all things but given my experience and perspective I feel I do have a lot to add to this conversation.

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Balanced Development

What exactly do we mean by "development".

It is an all encompassing generic term that refers to the act or process of growing, progressing or developing. In the contemporary globalized world, the term "development" is almost invariably associated with economic considerations, which are cited as the primary objectives of development. Without economic benefits, the value of



any development would be dubious. Probably because we use the term "development" to describe a construction project most people have come to understand the word "development" as being synonymous with "construction". And simply put, the general understanding is that "more construction is a good thing, it is a sign of positive development". My most important message to you this evening, and one which (given my background) may seem quite surprising, is that this understanding is, in short, a falsehood....More construction does not alone equate to economic development. More construction alone does not equate to social development. More construction alone does not equate to the positive or progressive development of a nation, of a people. Due to this misuse of the term, when we refer to a "developing nation" most people think that we are referring to a nation "under construction". For clarity, I propose that we cease using the word "developing" in this context and substitute it with the word "progressing". The construction of buildings and infrastructure or "physical development" is only one ingredient to "progressing a country". Other equally, if not more important ingredients include a whole slew of social, economic and of course spiritual progressions.

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Not all physical development is positive, and frequently it comes at a great cost to social and environmental baselines. In order to ensure optimum results, it is therefore imperative that progressing a country involves balance. Meaning; that the social, economic and spiritual needs of the people are carefully considered along with development, each with as much weight as the other. I hope this forum will allow all voices to be heard and enable us to start the process towards a "balanced progression" into the future. Just to be clear then, when I refer to the developing of the nation I will use the term "progressing" or "progression" and when I am referring to construction I will use the term "developing" or "development".

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I assume given my background that I have not been asked to speak about anything other than development (meaning construction) but I believe it is shortsighted and naïve to consider this in isolation of all other factors. Therefore I ask that my hosts forgive me for rewording the title of my subject to "Balanced Progression".

I will come around to talking about development but before I do I think it pertinent that we address the general issue of "progression" and we should outline our goals.

What do we collectively and individually hope to achieve from progression?

Realistic Goals

1. Good, lasting jobs that provide a living wage (for all).
2. Capital for the construction of physical and social infrastructures.
3. Ongoing revenue for the maintenance and management of those physical and social infrastructures.

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4. Mitigation and Management of the negative consequences of development.
  - a. Environmental degradation.
  - b. Crime
  - c. Excessive immigration.

### Unrealistic goals

1. Excessive wealth for everyone. People with a total net worth of \$70,000 represent only 10% of the world's population and this nation is no more blessed than many others in this regard and it is completely unrealistic to think that everyone here can become financially wealthy.
  2. High level job/career expectations without appropriate education or training.
  3. Unlimited economic growth without significant consequences.
- I believe that the vast majority of people in the country would agree with my summary of what are realistic and what are unrealistic goals.
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### Our past and how we got to where we are today.

It is a fact that the growth in the economy in this country over the past 30 years and in particular the economic boom we have experienced in the past decade has been almost entirely driven by development. Only a small fraction of the country's revenue has come directly from tourism and even less from financial services and fishing. It is fair to say then that our economy (over the past decade at least) has been one based almost entirely on the construction industry. It is my understanding that in the past decade between 70 and 80% of National (that is Government) revenues have been directly related to the construction industry. As development rapidly grew and grew so did the population of the country. More people were needed to service the demand for construction, with more people there became a need for more infrastructure, schools and classrooms, roads and hospitals. With more people there became more strain on the system leading to more

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crime and more degradation of the environment which in turn lead to the need for greater government and more spending. All of this growth was precariously balanced on top of and totally dependent on the construction industry so when in 2007 the financial crisis started in the USA and investors stopped speculating on development projects, it all started crumbling. A quantitative assessment of the economic trends in TCI over the past three decades would probably reveal that uneconomic growth was taking place, particularly in the past decade when increased development did not add more and better jobs for citizens but rather strained infrastructures and created an impetus for illegal immigration.

It is also interesting and worthwhile to note that during the explosive boom in construction, tourist arrivals (not including cruise ship visitors) showed only a modest albeit steady increase. So what was really driving this construction boom? The answer sadly, is simple.... "speculation". People were gambling on the bet that buying real estate would realise quick and safe return on investment.

As architects (whose projects service predominantly foreign investors) we are uniquely positioned in the economic curve. Like the proverbial "canary in the coal mine" architects feel the economic shifts first and I can testify to the fact that it was in the fall of 2007 when our phones stopped ringing. No new projects. I at the time expected this was temporary and so (unwisely) passed it off as a hiccup. But alas it was no hiccup. By the middle of 2008 I had begun warning those in the construction industry to brace

themselves for a slow down also. I still believed the slump would be over soon but it was not to be. The recession had taken a strong hold and there was no clear way out. With the following collapse in ongoing construction projects in 2009 the government's revenue stream dried up almost over night and what we are now left with is all the negative consequences of rapid development without the funding and resources to cope with or manage them.

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I hope it is clear for us all to see now that to base an entire economic system on development and to encourage it to grow unchecked is tantamount to playing Russian Roulette; gambling everything on the hope that the investors will keep coming. In following this philosophy, we set ourselves up for inevitable failure. It was a classic case of what is referred to as the "boom – bust" scenario. A period of rapid growth followed by catastrophic collapse. It was not a matter of if it would collapse but when. A heavyweight house of cards.

In short; rapid and hasty development that moves ahead of social and physical infrastructure progression is ultimately detrimental to the lasting health of a nation.

Summary of the pitfalls of a Development based economy.

1. Often irreversible degradation of the environment
2. Irreversible and permanent consumption of prime real estate (our only real asset)
3. Inequitable benefits and distribution of wealth.
4. Financially unpredictable and therefore risky. Dependant on the mood of the market (as we have seen).
5. Increase in Population leading to:
  - a. Increase in Crime
  - b. Increase in immigration problems
  - c. Increased stresses on all public services and infrastructures.

Summary of the limitations on the growth of a "development based" economy.

1. Finite resource base. TCI has only so much prime real estate. Once it is all gone what will happen?
2. Environmental degradation. The past, present and future of the TCI tourism industry is based on our greatest selling point of "Beautiful by Nature". Once our environment has degraded (it is heading that way already) and we are no longer

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"Beautiful by Nature" our tourism market will suffer. The tourism markets are fickle and there are plenty of other destinations and beautiful islands in the world for people to visit.

3. Sustainability. An economy based on development is ultimately unsustainable as it is solely based on finite land resources.
4. Corruption. The temptations to provide favors for developers due to the large sums involved are too strong.
5. Human resources. We only have a very small population. An economy based on continuous development requires a continuously growing population which by default will necessitate an "expansion of the franchise". This has been proposed as an option recently and has clearly proven to be undesirable.

It is clear then that the current status quo cannot continue, that we need is a shift in our thinking and a change to our economic model.

Where then do we go from here?

Assuming we all agree that our collective goal should be the creation of good jobs whilst still maintaining our land base and environmental values into the future (the only future for the TCI tourism industry), our actions from this point on must be targeted to facilitate these goals. We cannot continue with "business as usual".

Currently our jobs and economic growth are primarily construction and development based. This is clearly unstable and unsustainable for reasons stated above. The TCI economy needs to change from a "development based" to a predominantly "service and maintenance based" economy. Jobs for the future include management, maintenance, tourism, eco-tourism, environmental monitoring, service sector and financial industry. Other unexplored areas include aquaculture and creative agriculture.

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I am not suggesting for a second that development should cease. On the contrary.

Because our workforce is already geared up primarily for construction the first thing we need to do is to stimulate some development to give the economy a "shot in the arm". Once we have the economy moving again we then need to focus on the future. A focus which should be a considered and committed move away from a solely construction based economy.

To get the ball rolling, we need to attract investors to the country. Not just any old investors but the right kind of investors.

What are the "right" kind of investors?

In short they are the people that are not only financially invested but are physically and morally invested in the nation and its people. Not people who are only speculators who, like the sharks on wall street, are only interested in exploiting our natural and human resources to make money without consideration of the social and environmental damage that may be caused.

How do we attract the right kind of investors in the short term when there are so few out there? We exist in an era of tough global competition and we need to rise above all others to be seen.

In my opinion; the best short term plan in this case is actually to have a long term plan. We need to think of the nation as a business, as a development if you will.

As the old adage goes: "Those who fail to plan, plan to fail" and a smart, long range and committed investor understands this adage and can quickly determine which countries do have realistic plans, which have unrealistic plans and which have no plans at all.

Just as a development that has a well considered, financially feasible and realistic design will be more likely to attract buyers, the same is true of the country. We need to attract investors to buy into our design, our concept, our Country Plan.

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I propose that this plan reaches high, with grand but realistic long term goals. Not a five year plan or even ten years but fifty years. A long term plan that is based on sustainable development practices. Socially, economically and environmentally sustainable

practices. A balanced approach.

I suggest that a very marketable plan will be one that aims to make this entire country environmentally clean with close-to-zero carbon and pollution emissions. Powered entirely by the sun and the wind (elements of which we have copious quantities), we can power the vast majority of homes and businesses in the country and we can ALL drive electric cars and trucks. If this initiative alone were executed I am certain that we would receive world wide exposure, recognition and praise, which in turn will attract the right kind of investors. Of course we would not stop there; the plan will be extensive and include what, where, how and when we develop all the while ensuring that our population growth is kept in check and that social services and infrastructure development can keep pace. The plan must involve the growth of green energy systems, local agriculture, local aquaculture, better primary, secondary and tertiary education. What all this means is that the long term plan will be one of slow but steady economic growth with absolutely ZERO tolerance for...

Wild and crazy "get rich quick schemes"

Corruption

Greed

Filth and prostitution

Crime or theft of any kind.

A plan that considers all the people. Not just Belongers but all the people who have been invited to join.... in the progression of this nation.

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And once we have the economy moving again?.....

Once the economy has been jolted back to life; any new development projects need to be addressed on the criteria of how they will meet the needs of the new TCI economy.

Beachfront Development?

Encouragement of high-density beachfront development I suspect will not be on the cards as this serves only short-term profits of a few individuals and does not add to the net long-term welfare. It necessitates further immigration for staff, stresses social and physical infrastructures, adds to environmental degradation, and erodes the remaining land base etc etc.

Crown Land.

The straight sale of crown land simply to bolster the government revenue stream is woefully short sighted. The government (the country) gets a one-time cash infusion, while a select few get long term profitability. In my opinion Crown land should really be referred to as Public or Heritage land because that's what it is. It belongs to all Belongers and should be treated as a precious commodity. We should view this Heritage land with the same perspective as the ancient indigenous people viewed the land: (Proverb) "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children". It should for the most part be placed into a reserve for the future generations and only ever developed in accordance with that carefully considered Country Plan I referred to earlier.

It should only be developed if its development will benefit all and will not be detrimental

for future generations.

The Ancient Iroquois Confederacy, a council of six tribes from the Northeastern US had an actual overriding law that no action could be taken that would adversely affect the next seven generations. With this singular and simple law in place all actions became necessarily sustainable. Clearly we have a lot to learn from such ancient wisdom.

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I believe that anybody that has received more than their fair share of this Heritage Land should be asked to return it to the people.

Rather than selling Heritage Land for development, the development of current privately

held property should be encouraged and we should focus on improving the quality of existing developments and infrastructures (both services and physical).

Immigration / Population Control.

To maintain a service-oriented economy, the population will need to go through a necessary decline and adjustment. This is already happening with many expatriates leaving in the diminished economy. Now is a good time to establish new development rules for the future that will discourage runaway immigration from happening again.

Jobs.

We need to educate and train the Belonger population to work within the tourism and services industries such that all of the jobs available can be carried out without the need for bringing in foreign labour.

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The future of tourism

We need to face the fact that we are an expensive destination and that we cannot compete

in the lower to middle (high volume) tourism markets. I believe our best hope is to concentrate on the market segments that remain robust. These are the wealthy "high end"

tourist and the Eco-tourist. We need to preserve our natural wonders and make substantial improvements to our image and our attitude as it relates to providing service to our visitors. We are competing in a world market where tourists have options and we need to raise our standards of service. They are sadly nowhere near high enough currently to keep these people happy and coming back for more. Not only must they feel

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that they are receiving value for money but they must be made to feel welcome and therefore happy to return time and time again. The success of a hotel is measured by the volume of its repeat clientele, so should the success of our tourist destination and we should endeavor to make effort to ensure that every tourist leaves here wanting desperately to come back. As far as future tourism based development is concerned we need to diversify and improve our portfolio of accommodations by encouraging as example the development of true hotels that are NOT condominiums, and insist on high standards to capture and maintain the experienced and wealthier visitors.

What could the plan look like and what type of development should we focus on?

It is perhaps ironic that the most appropriate metaphor I can conjure up for how best to describe progressing a nation is that of constructing a building. You should never build a strong house with a narrow or weak foundation. You need a wide strong foundation which takes time, skill, understanding and good quality materials. You should never build in haste or cut corners and you should never build without a well thought out and professionally prepared set of plans and a realistic budget.

For a country to experience lasting progression it first needs a set of plans, a road map. Not based on some narcissists egocentric dream but a real set of plans based on the realistic collective goals of the people. These plans need to be thoroughly prepared, checked and double checked. After that, every careful step needs to be taken in accordance with that plan and budget. Mistakes will be made requiring corrections, and minor changes may be desired or necessary requiring adjustments, but the overall plan should remain as the focus and generator of all decisions and our leaders (the foremen and supervisors) need to be charged with overseeing the construction in accordance with that plan.

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This country is unique in many ways and we need to develop our plan for the future to take advantage of the things that make us different from all our competitors.

We have many different islands all with their own unique qualities. It would be tragic if all the islands were developed in the same way and with this in mind I would propose that the following basic and overall plan be adopted for each island.

Providenciales. Already established as a medium to high density destination for serial beach goers and party animals, this island should be the only place where higher density development should be allowed to continue. In accordance with the aforementioned however; newer developments should be high quality and carefully controlled.

North Caicos. The Garden Island. Should concentrate on developing small to medium sized projects with a vibrant high end villa rental market. The eyesore shell of the failed Royal Reef Resort should be leveled and not be given a chance to be resurrected. The business model for this project was never and will never be viable. If it is kept it will hold the North Caicos' recovery back for a very long time and if it is ever completed it will remain a thorn in the side of the truly sustainable developments that are viable. The existing settlements should be carefully planned for expansion with controlled design standards that reflect the traditional character of historical buildings on North Caicos.

Islands that have carefully controlled design standards such as Harbour Island in the Bahamas, Bermuda and Nantucket have developed over time strong and vibrant economies. Investors of small to medium sized projects have been attracted by the collective desire and will to maintain such carefully controlled design standards. It should be noted however that these are standards that **MUST** be recognized and respected by all who build. Agriculture should be actively encouraged to service the growing tourism market with fresh and locally grown produce. Agro-tourism is a growing market in Europe. We could be pioneers of a similar movement here on this side of the Atlantic. Middle Caicos. With its wide open expanses of rugged beauty and

very small population should be limited to extremely low density eco-sensitive development.

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East Caicos. Should be preserved for future generations (far in the future).

There should not be any sale of land on East Caicos and any land that has already been sold should be purchased back under a compulsory purchase act.

East Caicos represents a unique tourism opportunity. As a large, entirely undeveloped island, the whole of East Caicos could be planned as a totally government owned and operated LEED certified, entirely sustainable, ultra low density tourist destination with renewable energy and green buildings. As an entirely sustainable island, such an "East Caicos Project" would be the first development of its kind in the world and this would be better marketing for the TCI than any full page glossy ad in the New York Times.

South Caicos, The big south. I believe should be developed to its former glory as an industrial power house of the TCI. With a deep sea port a real possibility an encouragement act could possibly help establish a free port trading center for the establishment of certain manufacturing industries and/or a trans-shipment port serving as a link between the Caribbean and South American countries and the east.

The long discussed "link road" that will link South Caicos to East, Middle and North should be part of the long term plan which will allow the new deep sea port to service all of the Caicos islands with economical freight. South Caicos would be the best location for a large scale alternative energy electricity generator for the entire country also.

The Big South also offers a unique opportunity as a very high end, boutique sports fishing destination and the historical part of town (under similar design restrictions as Grand Turk) could become a vibrant and almost avant garde tourist destination (like Key West, FL was many years ago).

Grand Turk should remain the capital and historical center. Like North Caicos, the design of any development should be strictly controlled such that it does not dilute but builds upon the unique historical character of the island. Capitalizing on the existing infrastructure; the cruise ship industry can be encouraged to grow bringing ever more revenue.

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Salt Cay, should have its character preserved. Harbour Island in the Bahamas is a great example of how a very small island can thrive if its residents have the right attitude towards development and the preservation of historical character.

All of these ideas and goals (or variations of them) should be placed into this long term plan with the understanding that they are goals that will be achieved over time.....lots of time.

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Summary.

Steady, well planned and controlled development that allows social and physical infrastructure to keep pace (Balanced progression) will have a positive economic and social effect but rapid, unplanned and hasty development that moves ahead of social and physical infrastructure development (Unbalanced progression) will be ultimately detrimental to the lasting health of this nation.



POSITION PAPER ARISING FROM THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION, ON THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE TURKS AND CAICOS TOURISM INDUSTRY, WITH PARTICULAR CONCERN FOR THE MAKING OF ORGANIZATION, AND DESTINATION MARKETING AND ITS FUNDING.

We first of all find it necessary to address the findings of the Tourism Working, appointed by H.E. Governor Wetherell on September 7, 2009, appointed *“a Working Group under the chairmanship of Mr. Clive Stanbrook QC to make recommendations on the future organisation and funding of tourism promotion in the Turks and Caicos Islands”*; this no doubt a result of findings by Sir Robin Auld’s Commission of Inquiry, of serious irregularities at the Board between 2003 and 2009. Following release of the TWG’s Report later in the year, the People’s Democratic Movement found it necessary to issue a public response addressing those findings and recommendations felt to be unacceptable to the great majority of our people of all political persuasions. Parts of that response have been incorporated in this paper.

In section 11 of its report, under the heading Background, the TWG states the following:

16] *The Board grew relatively steadily until 2003 when its budget was approximately \$2.4 million and the cost per tourist arrival was roughly \$15. From then the cost of the Board roughly doubled then tripled and by the 2007/8 fiscal year it had increased six fold arriving at a total expenditure of over \$14.6 million. This meant the TCI was then spending on promotion the equivalent of \$58 in respect to every tourist that landed (the average destination promotion spend in the Caribbean is less than half this figure).*

[17] *Nobody could say the money was well spent. Between 2004/08 there was a net increase in visitors to the TCI of only 21,000 or 10% (less than 2.5% per year). Perhaps more alarming is that through the years 2006/8, the Tourist Board failed to cover its expenditure and, as a result, by the end of 2008 it had saddled the country with a debt in excess of \$8 million having failed to pay many of its essential partners in the industry.*

The above two paragraphs are of extreme importance, as they clearly show that the recommendation to transfer control of the administration and promotion of our tourism industry from the government, where it rightfully belongs – and would undoubtedly make us unique in the world in this regard – to the private sector, is based solely upon events at the Tourist Board between 2003 and 2009. During this period there were such factors as 1.) Lack of value for money spent, 2.) Alleged corruption, as spelled out in the Commission of Inquiry Report, 3.) Cronyism in hiring, and 4.) Gross mismanagement, resulting in great part from persons not qualified to undertake the tasks at hand.

Whilst it would be extremely difficult to find anyone that can credibly dispute any of these factors, it would be equally difficult to find anyone that could credibly dispute that it was not the geniuses of Wall Street and "The City", or "The Square Mile" – the UK's financial centre, that through a combination of greed, mismanagement and corruption put our world's economy in a tail spin, approaching, and might eventually equal the great world depression of the 1930's.

Let us have a brief look at the Tourist Board and its performance and achievements prior to the end of 2003.

- ❖ The Tourist Board's budget for 2002/2003 was \$2,085.835.00, 26% of which was Salaries & Wages.
- ❖ The budget for 2003/2004 was \$2,412,859.00, with 26% being Salaries & Wages.
- ❖ Stop-over Tourist Arrivals for 2003 were 163,584, \$14.75 per visitor.
- ❖ Stop-over Tourist Arrivals for 2004 were 173,027 – this being a result from promotional efforts pre 2004.

On October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2002 the Tourist Board presented to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Communications, Transportation & Immigration, its 3-year evaluation report, which included among other things, the following:

- For financial year 1999/2000, with limited budgetary resources, and to achieve maximum efficiency, the Board gave training for both its own employees and industry personnel alike, top priority. Short-term training courses were provided in the following categories:
  - ❖ Public Relations
  - ❖ Tourism Marketing
  - ❖ Tourism Management
  - ❖ Devising/Implementing Tourism Strategies
  - ❖ Statistical Data Entry Processing
  - ❖ Finance
- The Tourist Board, in a joint effort with the T&C Hotel & Tourism Association hosted a one-day Marketing Conference. The main objective was to foster a better working relationship between the Board and Hoteliers, while at the same time discussing ways to get maximum benefits in co-operative advertising campaigns between the Board and the Turks & Caicos Hotel Tourism Association.
- For the financial year 2000/2001, in January 2001, the Board appointed a Training Officer to head the new training unit, with the main goal of developing

and introducing the TCI-Host Programme, fashioned closely after the BahamaHost Programme in the Bahamas. The objectives of the Programme were:

- ❖ To create self-awareness and foster positive attitudes among people actively involved in the hospitality industry.
- ❖ To promote proper working attitudes and professional behavior in the work place.
- ❖ To create amongst participants, the desire to be professional in rendering service of any kind.

The programme also familiarized participants with accurate information about the country's history, geography, government, culture and places of interest; and those taking part included Immigration and Customs Officers, professional business personnel, teachers, students, hotel workers and service drivers.

- Due to the Board's efforts, and in cooperation with the private sector, on December 1 2000, Delta Airlines commenced service to the Turks & Caicos Islands. The service continues until the present.
- For the first time, the Board provided its staff members with health insurance.
- In August of 2000, the Board successfully assembled a Cultural Troupe that very ably represented the Turks & Caicos at the millennium celebrations in front of hundreds of thousands of potential visitors, both at Disney World and at the London Millennium Dome.
- For Financial Year 2001/2002, again as a result of efforts by the Board with the support of the private sector, British Airways inaugurated flights to Turks & Caicos from Heathrow Airport. That service is still with us.
- The Board's own publication, "Snapshot", was launched in November 2001, carrying information about the latest news relating to the tourism industry, with a special focus each month on one of our islands, highlighting their cultural and touristic attributes, as well as their potential for development.
- In January of 2002, the Tourist Board retained the services of an independent consultancy firm, the Valiant Group of Trinidad, through competitive bidding, to

review and make recommendations on its Staff Policies & Procedures. To be considered by the consultants were:

- ❖ Staffing requirements
- ❖ Sick leave policy
- ❖ Retirement/Gratuity Policies for all employees
- ❖ Termination of Services and Related Payments
- ❖ Vacation Leave
- ❖ Staff Allowances
- ❖ Development of a Salary Scale
- ❖ Analysis of Staff Training and Change of Job Titles.

The Valiant Group's recommendations were subsequently accepted and implemented by the Board.

- During the three year period leading up to the evaluation report, the Board fostered a close working relationship with TC Invest, collaborating on a number of country presentations, including those made in New York, Atlanta, Charlotte North Carolina, Miami and London.
- The Board introduced the Licensing and Grading of Accommodations facilities throughout the country, during 2002. As a direct result of this exercise, carried out annually, the Board was able to ensure that all tourist accommodations meet the minimum criteria as required by the Tourist Board, Fire Department, Public Health Department and Planning Department.
- Under the leadership of the Board's Special Projects Unit, "The Custodian of The Bight, Five Keys and Blue Hills Group" was formed. The primary objective of the Custodians was to identify problems within these communities and to take actions to correct them; and to assist local tourism-oriented businesses in improving service standards; and in beautifying and keeping the island of Providenciales clean. This group met once every month.
- In January of 2002, the Board instituted the TCI Expert Programme for travel agents. The programme teaches travel agents all about our destination, qualifying them as experts on our tourism product. Once they had completed the course, they were better able to sell us to their clients; they were also required to take familiarization trips here, where the final exams are given and the actual graduation takes place.
- The Board co-sponsored the Conch Carnival in Grand Turk; the South Caicos Regatta; Middle Caicos Extravaganza; North Caicos Festarama; Provo Day Festival; and Fool's Regatta and the Kite Flying Competition in Providenciales.

- The Tourist Board co-sponsored the islands' first ever Free Diving world record attempt of Ms. Tanya Streeter, along with Red Bull and Tag Heuer. The P.R. Department coordinated live and other media coverage of the event; circulated a wide range of Press Releases; drafted the Sponsorship Agreement between the Board and Ms. Streeter, and policed the fulfillment of the conditions of the agreement from the offset, through to completion.
- On November 2, 2002, US Airways commenced service to Providenciales four times weekly from Charlotte, North Carolina. This culminated a two-year effort by the Board, with the cooperation of the Hotel & Tourism Association.

These things all happened with a government controlled Tourist Board, with the cooperation and assistance of the industry partners. Those serving on the Tourist Board during 2002, included Mr. Jeremy Jones, General Manager of Beaches; Mr. Harry Apostolides, General Manager of the Parrot Cay Resort & Spa; Mr. Marvin Handfield, local musician and entertainer; Mr. Mitch Rolling, Owner/Operator of Blue Waters Diving in Grand Turk; and Mr. Alpheus Gardiner, P/S in the Ministry of Tourism.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP (TWG).

We will now proceed to directly address some of the recommendations and comments of the Tourism Working Group:

- Paragraph (52) a), calls for *"A true partnership between all stakeholders for the promotion of tourism on the islands"* stressing the *"need for coordination with the Hotels and Resorts"*.

Response: There are numerous instances spelled out above demonstrating a history of cooperation between the Tourist Board and the Turks & Caicos Hotels & Tourism Association, TCHTA, resulting in some major achievements. This tradition may have been broken between 2003 and 2009, however, the PDM does not agree that having a privately run Tourism Authority replace the government controlled Tourist Board as a result of this, is justified.

- Paragraph (69,) b), The TWG's report calls for *"A new inclusive promotional programme for promoting tourism in the Turks and Caicos Islands as a whole"*, with a *"need to rethink the concentration on the high end Tourism"*.

Response: While this might have been the case after the year 2003, the media schedule for 1999/2000, for example, included such publications as:

- ❖ Caribbean Travel & Life
- ❖ Bridal Guide
- ❖ Modern Bride
- ❖ Dive Training
- ❖ Skin Diver
- ❖ Sport Diver
- ❖ Sport Fishing
- ❖ Recommend
- ❖ Latitudes – American Eagle
- ❖ The Toronto Star
- ❖ Conde Nast Traveler

These outlets are quite varied, but by no means demonstrate a sole concentration on the “high end” traveler. The Board was quite aware that our tourism industry could not strive upon high end tourism alone, and so there was no tendency to *“exclude giving any attention to the other sectors of the market.”*

- Paragraph 133. *“... in any case where decisions directly impact the tourism business there should be a formal consultative process. The process would require the Government to inform the [industry appointed] Tourism Authority of its proposals and give it a reasonable period of time – say 45 days – to respond”,* continuing with what must be an unprecedented affront to any elected government and its people, *“The Government would then be under a requirement in presenting its decision to [meekly] explain why it does not agree with the Tourism Authority’s points and why it has chosen to take a different view. Failure to go through this process would mean that any decision taken would be void.”*

Response: While we agree that good communication between government and industry stake holders is prudent, we strongly reject the recommendation that a body such as a privately operated Tourism Authority will have the power to halt government business that will obviously affect more than just the tourist industry. This type of industry tunnel vision is exactly why an elected government must retain the authority on such matters. We challenge the Working Group to name one country where the people’s government must seek the approval of the business sector to act in the best interest of the country. The Tourism Authority should not have final approval on what the people’s government deems in the best interest of the country.

- Paragraph (136): New Structure of Entity for promoting TCI as a tourist destination, *“The TWG recommends that the Tourist Board be restructured (and rebranded) to resemble a true public/private partnership. To be called for the purpose of this discussion, the “Tourism Authority”*

- Paragraph (139), Board of Directors: " *It is proposed that the Board [of the new Tourism Authority] will consist of 12 directors, of which at least eight will come from the private sector and four from Government. . On behalf of the Government, the Permanent Secretary for Tourism, Trade and Industry, the Permanent Secretary for Border Control, the CEO of the Airport Authority and the Director of Culture will be ex officio members. The private sector directors will be appointed through a voting process that provides a vote for each member of the Tourism Authority.*"

Response: Even a 50/50 partnership in this case, with the people's government abdicating its responsibility to do the people's work, is preposterous. Furthermore the suggested make-up of the Authority, of one third Government and two thirds private sector hardly equates to a "true partnership". We wonder why so many of the proposals coming out of the interim government, point to a totally emasculated and powerless elected government, whenever we do again get one. The government appointed members would be loyal to the interim government that appointed them; so like the remaining eight members, they would have no obligations to the people they supposedly serve.

- Paragraph (148), " *It should be noted that the budget of the previous Tourist Board historically spent the majority of its budget on payroll, (over 60%). In the private sector it is widely accepted that a marketing-driven business (like the Tourist Board) generally will spend the majority of its funds on direct marketing & sales activities, not payroll. Therefore, the proposed budget for the new Tourism Authority has set a minimum of 55%-60% of total expenditure for pure sales & marketing initiatives (with the majority of this being deployed in international markets) and the balance split among payroll (25%) and general administration (16%).*"

Response: We believe that it is important to point out that the recommendations being put forward are a direct result of poor fiscal management by the previous government during the ending period of 2003 to the beginning of 2009. While the number of years is important, any serious review of any system, must take into consideration the administration of these systems under both political parties. In the two years prior to the quoted period, approximately 74% of the Tourist Board's annual budget was spent on marketing while 26% went to pay salaries.

While we feel that there needs to be some obvious changes made at the Tourist Board, we cannot and will not standby silently and appear to accept these conclusions and recommendations of the Tourism Working Group. We cannot endorse the transfer of a governmental function, to the private sector simply because of the previous

administration's mismanagement of the Tourist Board. This would in effect be outsourcing a function of the people's elected government.

We believe the TWG means well and thank them for the work they have done, however to make drastic recommendations to eliminate the Tourist Board and basically privatize an important Government function, that is responsible for our number one industry for growing our Country is unacceptable. We believe that the TWG's error in their review was that while they uncovered the failures of the management of the Board during recent years, they ignored the Tourist Board's successes prior to that period. Just a brief review would have shown that Tourism was growing at a steady pace, and that the majority of Tourist Board funds were allocated and used for the right purposes, such as Marketing and Promotions. It does not make sense to throw the baby out with the bathwater. What should be done in areas where weaknesses have been identified by the TWG is that internal controls should be established and implemented immediately to address and prevent those weaknesses from recurring.

As clearly demonstrated above, the people of the Turks & Caicos Islands have successfully and responsibly managed their tourism industry in the past, and we feel that it is no one's right to deprive them of doing it again. We are no less capable than all the other countries in the region, if not the world, that are in control of their countries' tourism sector; and we have neither the wish, nor the desire, for creating any undesirable precedents, that could eventually very well become the norm for our fellow Overseas Territories.

#### Reorganizing the Turks and Caicos Tourist Board:

That there were excesses, inefficiencies and apparently some degree of corruption at the Tourist Board during the period immediately preceding the Interim Government is without question. Millions of dollars were spent, supposedly to market and promote the country as a tourist destination, with precious little to show; there was no corresponding increase in tourist arrivals. Staffing at the Board doubled, in many cases providing jobs to party supports that were not actually there. We now see some of these persons being laid off, because tough economic times, in part, make retaining them unsustainable. This of course, is no fault of our people now without jobs, in an economy that makes it extremely difficult to find a new one. If self-serving politicians, however, would have allowed them to get real jobs, they could have very well still been working today, not finding themselves in this terrible situation.

#### The Board of Directors

On 7 August of 2009, His Excellency Governor Wetherell *"appointed a new, smaller Board under the Chairmanship of Dr Hubert Fulford to conduct the business of the Board until further notice. The other members of the Board will be Mr. Kingsley Been, Mr.*



*Alpheus Gardiner, Ms Anya Williams and Mr. Keith Bellamy.*” We support this downsizing of the Board of Directors, usually with nine members including the chair. This makes for a less cumbersome, and a less costly Board, and we feel it does not hurt its effectiveness. After much thought and consultations, we are of the opinion that the new Board of Directors should include the following:

1. A representative from the Turks and Caicos Hotels and Tourism Association, TCHTA – providing representation for its membership, including the hotels and dive operators.
2. A representative from TCInvest – matters relating to investment and partnering with the Tourist Board in promotions.
3. A community representative – for community concerns and liaising, a pastor, etc.).
4. A representative from the Cruise Industry
5. A representative from the Airline Industry
6. The Permanent Secretary – to liaise with and represent the Ministry).

This makes for one more than the current Board, but we feel covers all the bases, giving representation to all stakeholders, including the government, businesses, and the people impacted by the Tourism industry.

There will be a Secretary, appointed by the Board; and resources persons would be invited to appear before the Board, as needed. These include such as:

- The Police Department – for safety matters
- The Department of the Environment and Natural Resources – where the environment may be affected

#### The Director of Tourism

We feel there should continue to be a Director of Tourism, versus a CEO; this is the industry standard, and the job title really states what the position is all about. We disagree that this is just another corporation environment, and should be treated that way.

The Director would not be a voting member, except when there is a tied vote on any matter. He/she would be present at all meetings, bringing along various resource persons from the organization as might be deemed necessary. The Director of Tourism shall be a Belonger; and the remuneration package would total \$125,000 – this includes salary and benefits.

#### Funding of the Tourist Board

The truth is that there are just two ways to fund destination Tourism promotion: 1.) directly from government revenues, and 2) through taxes on our visitors. Any contribution from the industry is clearly not an option, they would vigorously resist, saying that they have their own properties to promote, and cannot afford anymore. In fact, they have traditionally demanded that governments should bear the burden of promoting their destinations.

The claim, seemingly made by the TWG that the private sector can do more, effectively and efficiently with less, is we feel a bogus one. Except for the exorbitant and outlandish spending during the 6-year period, which has proven to have had little to do with tourism promotion, and much to do with corruption, the government's Tourist Board has done exceptionally well. The TWG for example, is proposing that there be a \$4.5 million budget to do the job they feel that is needed to be done; well we became the envy of our region tourism, as well as economic-wise, while our Tourist Board never had an annual budget exceeding \$2.4 million.

We cannot but point out that at the international level, it is the supposedly efficient and competent private sector, aided by inefficient, incompetent and corrupt politicians, that has brought our world, including ourselves, to the miserable economic state we are all in, resulting in much human suffering. Locally, many in government and on the street, strongly feel that the private sector can and should be doing more to alleviate our cancer of joblessness; this by giving more priority to training and hiring our own people.

The only thing new in the TWG's Report, is the abolishing of the Tourist Board, replacing it with a Tourism Authority controlled by the private sector, with authority over our tourism policy and promotion. However, the people and the government would continue to fund these operations; this through such as portions of our Hotels Tax and our licensing fees. Nary a penny directly from the coffers of the private sector. There is no bargain here for us, for we have proven that we can do a very effective job ourselves, and at a very reasonable cost.

Therefore, that the private sector can do it better has proven to be a myth; perhaps the quasi government entity, providing a mix of government and private participation, is really the most effective system. Our Tourist Board failed only when there was undue interference by the ministers, and if there is one thing that needs to be fixed, it is putting in place mechanisms to prevent this from ever happening again. The proposed Tourism Authority would be an over-kill, with no assurance of achieving what has in the past been consistently achieved by our Tourist Board.

We can do away with unfunded Ministerial mandates – that is, funding would have to come from the Ministry whenever the minister orders the Tourist Board to undertake any projects that are not already in the Tourist Board's budget. And the minister should be prevented from over-riding any decision of the Board.

Hotel Room Tax, or Occupancy Tax, as it is sometimes called, in the Dominican Republic, the Caribbean island with the most visitors, is 23%. Jamaica and the Bahamas, the two best performers in the English speaking Caribbean, have Hotel Room Taxes of 15% and 12% respectively. Our Room Tax is at 11%. We are therefore proposing that our tax be increased by 1%, resulting in estimated \$2 million revenue annually, which would be earmarked for the Tourist Board. We propose too – as was actually also recommended by the TWG's Report, that there be a \$.50 charge on all cruise passengers, resulting in no less than \$150,000 a year in revenue. While the cruise industry might claim that they are not benefitted by our marketing and promotion and that they market themselves, surely the actual, or potential environmental damage from their operations warrants a minimal fee. Then whatever the difference is between these two contributions, can come from the general fund, already benefitting from 11% hotels tax.

### Staffing the Tourist Board

We first note that there are certain operational and staffing requirements for any tourism promotional entity that cannot be ignored; while we do not overlook the fact that during the years following 2003 when the staff at the Board more than doubled, there was definitely more employees that were needed to run the Board. There are however, the needs for such as:

- 1) Administration
- 2) Marketing and Promotion
- 3) Product Development
- 4) Community Tourism Involvement
- 5) Training
- 6) Statistics Production
- 7) Quality Control

We therefore recommend the re-visitation of the report prepared in 2002 by the Valiant Group of Trinidad, for the Tourist Board. This very thorough document provides staffing needs and qualifications for the Board, as well as salary recommendations, based upon surveys of other regional tourist Boards. We could request that the Valiant Group update this portion of the report, having their recommendations based upon current realities in the tourism industry, and in our economic situation. We anticipate though, that there would be a smaller staff than has previously been the case, even pre 2003.

### US Representation

We had begun phasing out overseas offices prior to 2004; we had an outside rep in Canada, and had given our UK reps notice of termination of their contract with us, as we were no longer satisfied with their service. We felt it necessary to have a small office in the US, having established one in the Fort Lauderdale area – versus Miami, where it

would have been more costly. We concluded that it would be more convenient and less costly to operate our 800 line and undertake our mailings from within the US, our largest source market. With communications being the way they now are, and tourist offices really not catering to foot traffic, location is unimportant. We are convinced too that having Public Relations representation in the US, our main market by far, is extremely necessary. We would, incidentally, be alone in not having one.

#### UK Representation

Neither would a one person operation in the United Kingdom be adequate and wise. Prior to 2003, the Board had no employees in the UK, and we feel that that should still be the case. As in the US, however, we believe that having the services of a Public Relations entity is essential. The UK is a very important market for us, the presence of British Airways service attests to this; and our UK representatives have traditionally covered the rest of Europe for us. We cannot leave this to a single "executive", as recommended by the Tourism Working Group.

#### Canada Representation

Since at least the year 2000, we have had an outside representative in Canada, and this has proved to be effective for us. Additionally, the US based office also provides services to the Canadian market, liaising with the Canada rep. This situation we feel should continue.

In each of the member countries of the Caribbean Tourism Organization, CTO, there is a government run and controlled tourism agency, be it the Tourist Board, as is the case in most of these countries, or the Tourism Authority as it is a handful, including Barbados. This agency is responsible for promoting their various countries as a tourist destination, as well as advising the government on tourism related matters, and executing government's tourism related policies.

#### Conclusion

The private counterpart to the government's tourism agency is the Hotels and Tourism Associations, here designated the Turks and Caicos Hotels and Tourism Association. This association does for the private sector, including the hotels, dive operators, taxi operators and tour operators, etc., what the Tourist Board, or Tourism Authority does for the government. There is no reason that should change here. The governor is understandably, not an expert in tourism, and neither are the chairman and most members of the Tourism Working Group. And while the latter might have some credibility in suggesting ways of funding tourism marketing, the radical recommendation to shift destination marketing and control of our tourism industry from the hands of the public sector, to those of the unelected private sector.

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THAT NATIONAL CONVERSATION: TOURISM, ITS FUTURE ORGANIZATION AND FUNDING

*End*

PRESS RELEASE ONE



### THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Official Launch - News Release of Schedule of Talks Interview over RTC	
Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec	Expressions with Former Leader Oswald Skippings (Did not materialize)	
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	Expressions with Former Leader Derek Taylor	
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Expressions with Former Leader Norman Saunders	
Monday	On Your Mind Show (PTV) With Rev Dr Conrad Howell	7 – 7:45pm
Monday	Meeting with Pastors in Provo	8pm
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Fame FM Pastors	National Identity
Tuesday	Meeting with Media Houses	10am
Tuesday	(Kate Sullivan's Recommendations) Donhue Gardiner, Sharlene Robinson	Blaze 1pm Until
Tuesday	Panel on The Economy (PLS)	7pm (Covered live on Radio)

Balanced Development	Simon Wood
Public Finances	E F Seymour
The Economy and Taxes	Chamber of Commerce Rep
Employer vs Employee	E J Saunders
Financial Services	Gordon Kerr
The Role Of TC Invest	Royal Robinson

Wednesday  
8<sup>th</sup>

Expressions with Former Leader

Washington Misick

Friday  
10<sup>th</sup> Dec

Expressions with Former Director  
Of Tourism

John Skippings

Thursday  
9<sup>th</sup> Dec

On the Street

Monday  
13<sup>th</sup> Dec

Expressions with Dr Linda Williams

Education &  
Civil Service

Island Meetings - Week of December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Middle Caicos/Salt Cay/South Caicos/Providenciales/Grand Turk/North Caicos

PRESS RELEASE TWO

### **PRESS STATEMENT**

**The National Conversation set out to a great start last week with coverage by several media houses which got the Turks and Caicos Islands on a buzz to talk.**

**The first Official event on Program was the appearance of the Lead Coordinator, Mrs Sharlene Cartwright Robinson on the popular Talk Show, “Expressions” with its host Mr Robert Hall. Mrs Robinson used the opportunity to encourage the public to join The National Conversation and to present the Program of Events over the next three weeks. During the interview, a number of issues surrounding the economy and the rising crime were addressed. Callers were invited and the following issues were raised: the lack of forthcoming information (openness) and transparency on the part of the Interim Government, unemployment, difficulty with former convicts being re-employed, need for education and dialogue on vital Bills for passage.**

**Mr Derek Taylor, longest serving Chief Minister followed on Friday. He was able to identify decisions made over the past year that may have compromised or eroded the revenue of these Islands and he also offered possible new ways of revenue generation for the Government. He called for a change in our attitude as a people and he also called on the British Government to look at the New Zealand’s Model on Public Sector Reform which allowed for persons who were laid off by the Government to be absorbed by the Private Sector in a pre arrangement.**

**The National Conversation continues in its second week with the following Program:**

**This morning, Monday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Former Chief Minister Norman Saunders appeared on the Talk Show “Expressions” and with great wisdom outlined among other things, the need to involve the people of these Islands in the rebuilding efforts as we are the ones who would have to take over the reins eventually. He also identified the challenges we face as a people, the need for good and wholesome leaders and the absolute necessity for new development to help the country rebound economically.**

Monday	On Your Mind Show (PTV) With Rev Dr Conrad Howell Appearing will be Mr Drexwell Seymour and Mrs Sharlene Cartwright Robinson	7 – 7:45pm
Monday	Meeting with Pastors in Provo At the Sure Foundation Ministries	8pm
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Pastors Bradley Handfield, Bryan Cox, Pedro Williams and Conrad Howell Of the Provo Ministerial Fellowship will appear over ROJ Faith FM 98.9 to discuss the issue of National Identity	10am
Tuesday	Meeting with Media Houses	10am
Tuesday	Discussions surrounding Kate Sullivan’s Final Recommendations over Blaze FM	1pm Until
Tuesday	Panel on The Economy (PLS) 7pm at the Gus Lightbourne Sports Center Public Finances The Role Of TC Invest Financial Services Balanced Development Becoming the Employer vs Employee	E F Seymour Royal Robinson Gordon Kerr Simon Wood E J Saunders
Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Expressions with Former Leader Washington Misick	
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Expressions with Former Director Of Tourism	John Skippings

**Island Town Hall Meetings will be held the week commencing December 13, 2010. More details will be made available by the end of the week.**

Please make every effort to participate in and join The National Conversation

.....  
Sharlene Cartwright Robinson

**PRESS STATEMENT***Released Wednesday 13, 2011***THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION REVISES ITS PROGRAM FOLLOWING  
JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

The first phase of the National Conversation lasted two weeks and this new phase will last another two weeks before completion. I am pleased to report that the dialogue has gone extremely well thus far.

The first Official event on Program was the appearance of the Lead Coordinator, Mrs Sharlene Cartwright Robinson on the popular Talk Show, “Expressions” with its host Mr Robert Hall. Mrs Robinson used the opportunity to encourage the public to join The National Conversation and to present the Program of Events over the next three weeks. During the interview, a number of issues surrounding the economy and the rising crime were addressed. Callers were invited and the following issues were raised: the lack of forthcoming information (openness) and transparency on the part of the Interim Government, unemployment, difficulty with former convicts being re-employed, need for education and dialogue on vital Bills for passage.

Mr Derek Taylor, longest serving Chief Minister followed on Friday. He was able to identify decisions made over the past year that may have compromised or eroded the revenue of these Islands and he also offered possible new ways of revenue generation for the Government. He called for a change in our attitude as a people and he also called on the British Government to look at the New Zealand’s Model on Public Sector Reform which allowed for persons who were laid off by the Government to be absorbed by the Private Sector in a pre arrangement.

The first week saw the appearance on Expressions of two former Chief Ministers, Norman Saunders and Washington Misick. Again our Leaders offered their insight on how they see the state of affairs in these Islands. They both shared recommendations on going forward. Mr Misick accepted that we have made mistakes but that we are not 100% at fault. Mr Saunders feels that a return to elected Government is the solution to the majority of the problems we face.

For the first time on Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010, all Coordinators of the National Conversation appeared together on the PTV Talk Show “On Your Mind”. Mrs Sharlene Cartwright Robinson, Mr Drexwell Seymour and Rev Dr Conrad Howell (who is the Host of “On Your Mind”) weighed in on issues of national issues, the Rosindell’s Speech, the role of the Forum and the National Conversation Program.

On Tuesday, December 8, 2010, Lead Coordinator for the National Conversation made an Appearance on Popular Radio Station Blaze where she together with Mr Donhue Gardiner discussed the Kate Sullivan’s Recommendations on Constitutional and Electoral Reform.



A Panel on the Economy was held at the Gus Lightbourne Sports Complex on the evening of Tuesday, December 8, 2010. A Panel of four persons discussed different matters relating to the economy and the audience was allowed following the Presentations to ask questions and to also make recommendations.

Mr Royal Robinson spoke to the Role of TC Invest and as a former Director of the Agency (previously named Development Board) he was well poised to answer questions from the audience. Recognizing how important the Agency with its various arms (Banking, Inward Investment and Small Business Development) is to the economy of these Islands, he made suggestions so as to improve the efficiency of the Agency.

Mr Seymour gave an overview of how Government makes its monies and expressed the need for a steady stream of revenue but discourages the new taxation plans being considered. He offered a few suggestions on how to move forward with a sound call for greater openness and transparency in dealing with the Government's finances.

Mr Gordon Kerr a resident of over 20 years spoke to the role of the Financial Services Commission. As a member of the Board since its inception, Mr Kerr was properly positioned to address this. He spoke to the overregulation of the Industry which still brings only nominal revenue to the Government's coffers. He spoke to the need to challenge some of the regulatory measures. He also spoke to the uncertainty of the present climate in the TCI and the negative impact this is having in attracting investors.

Mr Simon Wood, a resident of over 20 years and an established Architect in a leading Architectural Firm. He spoke of the shortsightedness on the part of successive governments to rely almost solely on the construction industry to fuel the economy. He pointed out that we often defined development with construction and usually equate more construction with positive economic development. He reminded us that not all physical development is positive.

Representatives of the Ministerial Fellowship took to the airwaves on Faith FM 98.9. Rev Pedro Williams, President of the TCI Baptist Union addressed the topic of National Identity generally. He said we must embrace those things that make us unique – our dialect and other practises. He made a clarion call to patriotism. Pastor Bradley Handfield addressed the topic of "Who We Are". He explored this topic by looking at the history of Britain as to how she established herself as a nation and called on us to identify and take pride in who we are, the heirs of hard working slaves that were let here on barren land and left to fend for themselves. He call on TC Islanders to embrace all those who were born here and to establish clearly who are Turks and Caicos Islanders. Bishop Bryan Cox spoke led on the topic of culture. He spoke of the use of culture in Churches so as to encourage pride in national symbols. Rev Conrad Howell spoke on the issue of appreciating who we are.

As we closed the second week, we had the benefit of a Release from MP Andrew Rosindell and the Joint Ministerial Statement made by British Ministers. The National Conversation Program welcomes the list of milestones to the extent that it allows for

pointed dialogue. To this end, we agreed to revise the Program. We have also taken into account the feedback and the requests of many of our citizens who had not had the opportunity to listen to the various Interviews over Expressions and The Panel on the Economy. To this end, we are trying to negotiate times with various media houses to replay for the benefit of the Public. Whilst this is ongoing, the Program will gear discussions surrounding Electoral Reform, the Civil Service, Belongership and Immigration generally. The Full Revised Program is as follows:

Meetings throughout the Islands will be as follows:

Tuesday, January 18, 2011	Public Meeting in Grand Turk at 6pm St Stephen James Hall aka Baptist Sunday School Hall
Thursday, January 20, 2011	Meeting with the Political Parties and Poll Workers on Electoral Reform at the Gustarvus Lightbourne Sports Complex at 5:30pm  Public Meeting at 7:30pm at the Gustarvus Lightbourne Sports Complex, Providenciales
Friday, January 21, 2011	Expressions on Radio Turks and Caicos at 10am Guest: Dr Linda Williams on Civil Service and Education  Meeting with the Media at 10am (Providenciales)  Meeting with the Pastors at 2pm (Providenciales)
Tuesday, January 25, 2011	Public Meeting at the Community Center, Conch Bar, Middle Caicos at 3pm  Public Meeting at the Community Center, Whitby, North Caicos at 7pm
Saturday, January 29, 2011	Community Center, Salt Cay at 6pm
Tuesday, February 1, 2011	Iris Stubbs Primary School, South Caicos at 6pm

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Discussions will be held with Members of the Police Force, Financial Experts, Immigration Enforcement and the Civil Service Association.

In the main time we are exploring the possibility of erecting a Website that will upload the Events of The National Conversation so that persons will be able to listen at their leisure.

Thanks to all the participants thus far. This National Conversation Program has seen the coming together of talents and resources and we wish to thank Mr Gregg Been, Techno Sounds, the Sports Commission, RTC especially Mr Robert Hall and Expressions, all the media houses for your coverage, and the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

*End*

PRESS RELEASE FOUR



### **PRESS STATEMENT**

*Released January 19, 2011*

The National Conversation held its first meeting in a series of Town Hall Meetings last night, January 18, 2011 in Grand Turk.

Though the turn out was not as large as I would like for it to have been, the members of the Public attending raised matters that were of concern to themselves and matters which they held to be of national importance.

A wide range of issues were raised and these issues were consistent with those raised in previous dialogues. Sound recommendations and solutions were offered in a spirited debate.

There was a heated and passionate discussion on the following:

- u. labour matters and strengthening of the Labour Department;
- v. immigration: work permits and border control;
- w. education and scholarships,
- x. recruitment, training, rightsizing and redeployment in the Civil Service;
- y. preparation and actual retirement of civil servants to ensure a flow out of the Service and into the private sector;
- z. crime and the economy;
- aa. taxes as a means of revenue generation; customs tariff;
- bb. electoral reform;
- cc. national census;
- dd. lack of transparency and accountability in the Interim Administration;
- ee. Role and attitudes of FCO Advisors;
- ff. Integrity in Public Life;
- gg. Development Orders and Investors;
- hh. Possible use of former Governors;
- ii. Local Government and Island Councils;
- jj. Crown Land Policy; Role of TC Invest;
- kk. Road Safety;

- ll. Role of CEO;
- mm. Youth and Sports.

Persons were supportive of the National Conversation and encouraged dialogue so that persons can “let their frustrations out”. There was a continuous cautioning to the Interim Administration to change its mindset towards the people of these Islands and its form of governance in particular regard to the attitude of its Advisors, before persons become unruly and violent.

The National Conversation continues in Providenciales tomorrow at the Gus Lightbourne Sports Complex at 7:30pm.

PRESS RELEASE FIVE



**PRESS STATEMENT**  
*Released February 5, 2011*

The National Conversation last week ended its second and final Phase with the conclusion of its Town Hall Meeting on all the inhabited Islands of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Turn outs, while not always favorable, yielded heated and beneficial dialogue. The issues raised were consistent throughout and the message was clear. The following issues continue to be of national concern and again the views were for the most part all consistent:

- (p) Economy – Introduction of new taxes, as it relates to crime and unemployment
- (q) Immigration and Labour – Need for policing and for a review of work permit holders versus unemployment of Belongers.
- (r) Civil Service – Right sizing and attitudes of CEO and Advisors.
- (s) Crime – More as it relates to unemployment and the inability for former inmates to find employment.
- (t) Electoral Reform – More as it relates to campaign finance regulations and Political Parties reform.
- (u) Transparency and Accountability in the Interim Government – The lack thereof and the attitudes of the Advisors.
- (v) Island Issues relevant to the particular Island

One single issue requiring immediate attention was identified in North and Middle Caicos. The General Public in these Islands has serious concerns about the proposed sand mining and the fact that neither the DECR nor the Consultant has spoken to the public about proposed sites. Persons with specialist and local knowledge identify the problems that will likely flow from dredging the proposed sites and warned against the approved activity. Both Islands have identified other sites where dredging will be more environmentally friendly and referenced the Docking area where boats carrying supplies are experiencing difficulties in getting in. This matter is flagged for urgent attention.

The Causeway at Middle Caicos is also flagged for urgent attention as in the absence of direct flights and boats, this Island is being sustained by the causeway which is in a serious state of disrepair and in serious jeopardy of being lost. Mention must be made of the residents who carried out minor works under the supervision of Cardinal Arthur.

Of major and immediate concern for the Island of South Caicos is the fact that the Clinic sorely lacks basic clinical supplies and medication. The people of this Island have (in an attempt to help themselves) embarked on fundraising initiatives.

The Report will include discussions of all participants and will catalogue all recommendations made. It is scheduled to be released February 16, 2011.

*End of Report*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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2. Mr Drexwell Seymour and Rev Dr Conrad Howell who graciously accepted to assist in coordinating the Program.
3. Mr Robert Hall who practically abandoned his usual program and wholly supported the exercise by conducting the Interviews of the Former Leaders and Former Director of Tourism.
4. Blaze Radio and its Owner Devon Williams.
5. Members of the Panel on the Economy – Floyd Seymour, Royal Robinson, Simon Wood, Gordon Kerr.
6. Mr Donhue Gardiner for his appearance on Blaze FM.
7. Techno Sound for its donation of its PA System.
8. Pastors of the Ministerial Fellowship.
9. Members of the Executive Management Team of the CSA.
10. Alvin Parker and the Sports Commission for use of Gustarvus Lightbourne Sports Center.
11. Members of the Media: RTC, TCI Free Press, WIV4, PTV and TC Weekly News who gave coverage to The National Conversation.
12. District Commissioners on Middle Caicos, Salt Cay and South Caicos who prepared venues for the meetings on the respective Islands and a special thanks to Ms Emily Malcolm and Mrs Dottis Arthur who rallied their communities as well to participate.
13. The Principal and Staff of the Iris Stubbs Primary School in South Caicos for use of their venue.
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15. To H.E. The Governor for allowing his First Secretary, Mr Dave Morgan, to attend the Town Hall Meetings to hear the people's views.
16. To Mr Dave Morgan whose demeanour made the environment more conducive to persons sharing their views.
17. Salem Baptist Creole Ministry for use of St Stephen James Hall.
18. Finally, to Pastor Chad Archbold whose Sermon inspired the name of the dialogue "The National Conversation".