



# The Coalition of Independent Candidates



Unifying Dominica through  
Policies and Action

"In a crisis, a group is better than one."

# INTRODUCTION

## A Country in Crisis

The Commonwealth of Dominica, known to our population as the "Commonwealth", is a country in crisis. We, the Coalition of Independent Candidates (CIC), have heard the call of our people and listened to the utterance of the Leader of the Dominica Labour Party, who has acknowledged the need for a national reset, a fresh parliamentary term, and a new set of candidates to take the country forward. We, the members of CIC, are in total agreement and have put ourselves forward as a united front to fulfil that mission.

Judges

6 -14

*The Lord looked straight at him and replied, "go with this determination of yours and deliver Israel from Midian's domination. I've directed you, haven't I?"*

It is with alarm that we have witnessed our economy, culture and national pride being distilled into a series of sewo, cool-outs, drinking rum and economic inactivity, all centred on failed leadership of our nation. Even before COVID-19, our economy was the poorest performing amongst those countries that form the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Our population level has remained stagnant as our people leave for greener pastures. It's hard to believe that the *nature isle of the Caribbean imports bottled water from Antigua*, a country with the lowest annual rainfall in the Eastern Caribbean.

## The Coalition's 10-Point Plan

The Coalition of Independent Candidates seeks to reverse Dominica's misfortune through sound policies centred on hard work, equity and fair access to resources and services. The Coalition has extracted 10 points from this, *The People's Manifesto*, as a rallying call to the citizens of Dominica that change is not just desired but essential for our survival. We seek to unify our beloved nation and ensure:

1. The formation of a Government of National Unity for a fixed period before holding fresh general elections so that all citizens are encouraged and empowered to contribute to the development agenda (*Governance, Equity & Access*);
2. The completion of electoral reforms before any new election, and citizens are given the option of selecting "None of the Above Candidates" in all future election ballots (*Governance, Equity & Access*);

3. The formation of a Committee for Economic Development to set priorities for investment in Dominica (*Revitalising the Economy*);
4. The formation of a Committee for Sustainable Social Development to set priorities for tackling social ills (*Sustainable Social Development*);
5. An audit of the Citizens by Investment (CBI) programme with resources reallocated according to the priorities agreed upon by the Economic Development and Sustainable Social Development Committees (*Revitalising the Economy*);
6. A Points-based system for awarding educational scholarships based on academic excellence and the family's ability to pay (*Human Resources Development 2050*);
7. A points-based system for allocating housing based on the needs of the family and their ability to pay (*Sustainable Social Development*);
8. The publication of the criteria for awarding scholarships and allocating housing so citizens know how many points they have accumulated and their position on the housing list. That Parliamentary Representatives should not be able to determine the allocation of scholarship awards and housing (*Governance, Equity & Access*);
9. A programme for Youth in Agriculture should be developed with opportunities for youth to lease agricultural land at low rates (*Revitalising the Economy*);
10. A programme to allow citizens to scrap older and abandoned vehicles and receive some duty-free concessions for the purchase of newer vehicles (*Rediscovering the Nature Isle*);

## Governance, Equity and Access

### The first Casualty of War

The first casualty of the attack on the people of Dominica has been the systematic dismantling of governance structures resulting in inequitable access to state-controlled resources and services. Parliamentary Committees are dormant and/or dysfunctional, resulting in a lack of transparency and accountability.

The ruling party is using state-owned resources to favour the faithful of their party in exchange for votes. The criteria for accessing services are unclear and inconsistently applied. Citizens of Dominica cannot determine their position in the queue for some essential services and benefits, such as the provision of state-owned housing and access to educational scholarships.

The electoral system in Dominica is not fit for purpose. Successive Election Observer Missions and a recent court ruling have seriously questioned the suitability of the electoral process and procedures for a small island state.

The Coalition recognises that the strength of Dominica lies within its villages. Unlike other Caribbean countries, Dominicans have largely resisted the march to the cities, and it is incumbent that we retain the beauty of our villages.

The Village Councils can play a critical role in generating local employment and advocating on behalf of local communities. The Coalition will ensure that increased autonomy will be accompanied by greater accountability and audits. Independent candidates will be encouraged to stand for positions in village councils to break the main parties' stranglehold, stifling our democracy. Central government services will be accessible to villagers online or through mobile one-stop shops.

## Rebuilding Confidence



The Coalition of Independent Candidates (CIC) has agreed that urgent changes are needed to rebuild the island's governance structures and provision of services and has proposed the following changes.

- The formation of a *government of national unity* to ensure government services are for all citizens of our nation, irrespective of an individual's political voting history or intentions. The Coalition believes that cross-party talent should be empowered to contribute to the building of our country.
- The development of new and *vigorously enforced Standards in Public Office* and the establishment of an Ethics and Integrity Committee. The Coalition will seek support from external and international agencies until confidence has been re-established amongst our citizens.
- The development of *objective criteria* for providing state-own public housing and educational scholarship and the introduction of points-based systems which allocate points according to the needs of the individual and their ability to pay or contribute financially.
- The allocation of financial resources to ensure *Parliamentary Committees* are established along with the accompanying regulations, standards, procedures and set timetables.
- The enactment of *electoral reform* together with a clean voters' register and voter identification cards for qualifying citizens. All future ballots should include a category called "None of the Above Candidates" so that no candidate seeking political office is elected unopposed, and citizens can reject candidates they consider unsuitable yet nominated by a political party.
- Reform and transform Dominica's public service so that there is a clear *distinction between the role of public officers and parliamentary representatives*. Accelerate the transformational agenda so the focus of public services is on providing services to our citizens and improving Dominica's 'ease of doing business' rating.
- The digitalisation of public-held records and the introduction of mobile '*One-Stop-Shops*' so citizens can access services online or via mobile vehicles that visit villages twice a week.
- Strengthening Village Councils to *develop and implement work programmes*.

# Revitalising the Economy

## It's The Economy, Stupid!

The phrase "it's the economy, stupid" was coined by James Carville, an advisor to Bill Clinton in his successful run for the White House in 1992 and reflected the importance the economy plays in all other decisions and improving the lives of the people. The Commonwealth of Dominica is no different. The lack of local development has hampered our ability to grow, attract new investment and access markets for our agricultural produce and products.

Our economy, under the management of the ruling party, has performed dismally over the past 22 years. Ross University School of Medicine departed after hurricane Maria in favour of Barbados and a "*leader with a bias for action*". Ross is not alone; 104 small and medium-sized businesses have departed from our shores, including the Royal Bank of Canada, Scotia Bank, HHV Whitchurch (Portsmouth), Colgate-Palmolive, Coca-Cola Bottling plant, Dominica Brewery and Beverages, the makers of Kubuli Beer, and more recently Rubis petrol stations. The ruling party, experts in winning elections, have neglected our economy and people.

The ruling party has made the typical mistake of using funds from the *sale of passports to replace rather than supplement* economic activity. Trinidad and Tobago economic strategy made a similar mistake in their use of funds from oil and gas production. Oil and gas can generate significant financial resources depending on the prevailing economic climate but do not necessarily generate large-scale employment. The result is that sections of the population are excluded from economic activity, leading to increased crime and other social ills.

The Coalition of Independent Candidates wishes to remind the ruling party that the economy and not just winning elections will lead to *peace and prosperity*. Agriculture, tourism, the digital economy, and small-scale manufacturing should be the mainstay of our economy and not the sale of passports.

## Revitalising the Economy – Dominica 2050

The funds from the sale of passports have an essential role, providing short-term cash injections, attracting investments, supporting struggling local businesses, accessing new markets, or developing the infrastructure. With the enactment of electoral reform and the introduction of fixed parliamentary terms, the Government of National Unity will be able to focus our attention on improving the economy and allowing *our record in office to speak for itself*.

The Coalition has agreed that we must encourage a cross-party, multi-disciplined approach to fixing our economy and propose the formation of a *Committee for Economic Development* (CED) to set priorities for investment in Dominica. The Committee will consist of local businesspeople, eminently qualified and experienced people locally, within the diaspora

and internationally, *not the skillset found amongst the new DLP line-up*. The remit of the CED will be broad and will, within 18 months, develop a holistic economic strategy and priorities to take Dominica forward to the year 2050.

The Coalition expects modest economic growth in our first two years in office but expects *a steady 6% growth* from 2025 onwards. This growth will be fuelled by strategically using Citizens by Investment (CBI) programme funds, supporting government and local businesses to use technology, and positioning our tax regime, customs charges and social security policy to attract and retain investments.

The Coalition using the recommendations from the CED, will;

- Scan the broader economic environment using statistical evidence, existing studies and international trends and develop *a sound economic strategy* for Dominica that reflects our unique natural resources.
- Review and recommend revisions to Dominica's tax regime, customs-related duties and charges, and Social Security policy so that these are favourable to citizens seeking to work and those wishing to invest in Dominica.
- Develop a strategy to enable Dominica to *increase its exports of agricultural produce* and products by 20% by 2027: using our agricultural and water resources, especially targeting the northern part of the eastern Caribbean as a potential market.
- Review and *recommend transport arrangements* for goods and tourist passengers, including refrigeration shipping, fast ferries, an international airport, and regional and international air transportation.
- Examine Dominica's current *human resource capacity gap* and those needed to fulfil the economic strategy. Make appropriate recommendations for academic and vocational training and the introduction of apprenticeships to help close the skills gap.
- Introduce *favourable tax arrangements* to encourage companies to employ apprentices and interns.
- Develop proposals for encouraging youth to train and play a *critical role in agriculture*, including leasing government-owned agricultural land at peppercorn rates for fixed periods.
- Allocate land to produce and export *medicinal marijuana*, creating employment for an additional 100 farmers.
- Conduct an *audit of the Citizens by Investment (CBI) Programme* with resources reallocated according to the priorities the Committee for Economic Development agreed upon.
- Utilise *opportunities in the digital economy*, including Artificial Intelligence, Cloud-Based Computing, and blockchain, to generate employment for a further 500 citizens by 2027.



- Examine Dominica's tourism product and develop strategies so that Dominica targets the relevant *niche tourism market* and develop an action plan so that Dominica's tourist facilities and sites are of the highest quality and standards.
- Explore, expand, and *export Dominica's creative economy* (The Orange Economy) through music, crafts and the visual and performing arts, thereby creating an additional 500 jobs.
- Support Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) so that *proper and accurate financial records* are maintained, allowing owners to access loans and other financial assistance.
- Work with our telecommunication companies and Business Development Organisations to provide our MSMEs with *high-speed broadband, accounting support and website development*
- Utilise renewable energy, including geothermal energy, to *lower citizens' living costs* and make businesses and services more competitive.

## Sustainable Social Development

### Establishing a Social Services Safety Net- Capturing the most vulnerable

The social service of a country is established to deliver and provide a range of support to at-risk groups and individuals. Social service departments are supposed to be adequately equipped to address the social challenges and concerns faced by the nation. In Dominica, the demand for social service support has increased however the means and funds at those essential departments are below the average spending by other CARICOM states. This is primarily due to the strategic replacement of Social Services with the *political machinations* popularly known as the "Red Clinic". This political involvement resulted in the disabling of key agencies within the social protection sphere on the island. And, of course, the neediest are again placed at a clear disadvantage.

Some social issues that have been increasing in Dominica are gender-based violence, substance abuse and child abuse. We also recognise the need to place special attention on mental health. Regarding mental health, the current practice has been to either place those with mental health issues in hospitals or prisons or leave them on the Streets. Recognising these pressing social issues, we propose the following.

- An audit of the Citizens by Investment (CBI) programme with resources reallocated according to the priorities agreed upon by the Sustainable Social Development Committees
- Provide professionally trained Social Workers and Psycho-social therapists in all the districts.
- Include *substance abuse rehabilitation and mental health centres* within the China Friendship Hospital to include mandatory anger management counselling.
- Relocated within the Social Welfare Division, the financial emergency assistance programme for vulnerable families and have trained social workers to administer the programme. Thereby ensuring that best case management practices are observed and the most vulnerable received priority care and support.

- A *centre for battered women* which provides support services to assist all victims and survivors of gender-based violence.

- Providing a second *Chance Home* in the East of the Island to cater to the needs of vulnerable children in the South-Eastern to the North-Eastern part of the country.

- A *Save Our Sons* programme for all boys at primary and secondary schools to include life skills, anger management and financial literacy

- Increase the payment of \$300 to \$350 to all senior citizens on the island.

- Provide a childcare training program for young families within all the health districts on the island.

- Provide Persons with Special needs with income-generating training in technology, arts and agriculture and provide start-up funds to begin a business.



- Reduce VAT on the cost of adult diapers so that they are more affordable.

## Sustainable Housing for All

The Ruling Party has used the limited supply of suitable housing as a political football, designed to put additional pressure on citizens with the sole purpose of winning elections. Their strategy of providing housing primarily for their supporters is insufficient and unsustainable and excludes large sections of our population.

The Coalition of Independent Candidates seeks to break this circle of dependency on the DLP for housing through the introduction of the following initiatives:



- Transfer the management and maintenance of government-own properties to an *Executive Corporation* to ensure properties are:

- of the highest standards,
- Insured; and
- agreements adhered to by residents.

- The introduction of a *points-based system* for allocating housing based on the family's needs and their ability to pay or contribute financially. Vulnerable citizens, including the elderly, young families, and those with disabilities, should be given priority for housing. The criteria for allocating housing will be published, and applicants will know how to access housing, how many points they have accumulated and their position on the housing list.



- The introduction of a *Housing Renewal Programme* to bring 1,000 old and abandoned properties back into use. The Coalition seeks to re-establish the Dominican principle of citizens having their "ti papier" (owning their title deeds) to avoid dependency syndrome.
  - The Coalition will establish a *special housing unit* to identify the ownership of abandoned properties and arrange the sale to local families needing housing. The team will support the new owners by providing technical support in the form of architectural plans, surveys, engineering expertise and quantifying the cost of renovations.
  - The Coalition will introduce an *endowment* with local banks and credit unions so new owners can obtain loans to purchase these properties.
  - The Coalition will provide *grants and technical assistance* to enable the new owners to develop the foundation of their new home, including new or renovated septic tanks. The grants will include vouchers for fixed amounts to allow the new owner to pay for transporting materials locally.
  - The new owners will contribute financially and through their efforts (*sweat equity*) to develop their homes.
- Use the CBI funds to provide Dominica's financial institutions with an endowment of \$5,000,000 to enable households to get reduced loans to *install solar panels* to alleviate the cost-of-living crisis.
- Introduce a *Housing Adaptation Grant* of \$6,000 for essential adaptations to enable 5,000 households with a disabled or elderly occupant to better access or use their property.
- Introduce an *Owner Occupier Grant* of EC\$6,000 so citizens living in the estimated 2,000 properties without electricity, running water or flushable toilets are brought up to standard.
- Introduce a means-tested *Housing Renovation Grant* of \$15,000 for households whose homes were severely damaged, uninsured, or under-insured before Hurricane Maria. The grant will also be available to enable 3,000 families living in overcrowded conditions to create additional bedrooms.
- The Coalition will amend the tax regime to ensure that works undertaken through Housing Adaptation Grants, Owner Occupier Grants and Housing Renovation Grants are *exempt from paying VAT* for the associated materials.

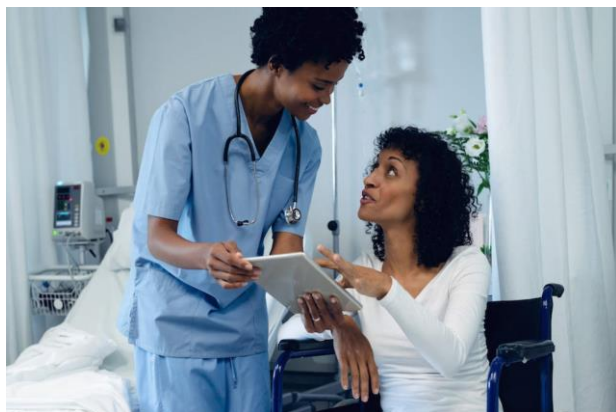
## Health is More Than Bricks and Mortar

The Ruling party, with support from the People's Republic of China, has contributed to improved physical health facilities. However, these facilities are of little value to citizens if there are insufficient staff or medical supplies to serve the citizens of Dominica.

Dominica has experienced an unprecedented *exodus of nurses* seeking employment overseas because of the disrespect shown to them by the ruling party. In some cases, nurses are so disillusioned with their terms and condition that they have left the health service without providing their employer with the requisite notice period. Citizens cannot access Dominican doctors because their employment contracts have been frustrated, denied, or shortened because of their previous political voting history or voting intentions.

Patient records in Dominica are an unmitigated disaster, and patients must complete multiple records, costing the health system time and money.

The Coalition of Independent Candidates seeks to redress some of these issues and grievances by:



- Developing a *retention policy* for nurses and doctors that address contract terms, promotion opportunities and pay. The Coalition will work with other regional governments to standardise employment terms, pensions, and the advertisement of jobs, to encourage regional migration and the portability of employment benefits.
- Providing *support to nurses* in their efforts to get their degrees and during their training by commissioning the development of an online educational resource library and study materials, and providing small grants, loans and stipends for books.
- Providing *duty-free concessions* (similar to some public officers) so nurses required to work evening and night shifts can purchase vehicles.
- Work with regional governments to develop *Centres of Excellence* for treating some medical conditions and introduce *telemedicine* so citizens can have access to specialist medical care and online diagnoses without having to leave Dominica.
- Introduce patient record ownership, which is secure, confidential, and transportable.
  - The Coalition Government will invest in cloud-based software so patients can retain control of their medical records on their mobile devices.
  - Patients can visit any registered doctor's surgery or be seen in any hospital or clinic, knowing that their medical records are up-to-date, accessible, and accurate.
  - Doctors can access the records by synchronising their office computer with the patient's mobile device using a unique QR Code.

- The doctor can update the record, provide prescriptions, or order medical tests.
  - Medical tests will no longer have the patient's name, but a Unique QR code linked to the patient to help ensure test results are confidential.
  - The laboratory will alert the patient's mobile device when the test results are ready. The patient can make an appointment to visit their doctor for proper discussions and further treatment where necessary.
- Overhaul Dominica's *primary health services* with an enhanced community nursing programme emphasising interventions and quick NCD diagnoses. Take action to support our elderly and disabled citizens and residents with special needs.

## Human Resource Development- 2050

### A Ship Without a Destination

The ruling party has not made the necessary arrangements to ensure citizens are prepared for the current work environment, let alone the world in 2050. The Dominica State College remains in a deplorable condition following the passage of Hurricane Maria. The priorities for Dominica's education system have not changed significantly since the 1970s, so today, it is easier to engage a lawyer than a skilled carpenter or tradesperson. The ruling party has no strategy that positions the country and its citizens for the medium term. For example, Japanese vehicles account for approximately 90% of the vehicles found in Dominica, and the Japanese government has decided to stop producing gasoline vehicles from 2035. Yet, there is no plan for Dominica to limit the importation of carbon-emitting vehicles or retrain Dominican mechanics to handle the vehicles of the future.

### Being Prepared Is Half the Victory

The Coalition of Independent Candidates seeks to position Dominica and its citizens to respond to and utilise opportunities presented by the changing global environment. The Coalition is committed to meeting the United Nations' recommended allocation of 1% of Dominica's GDP on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths.

Our plans include the following:

- Fully rehabilitating the Dominica State College and offering a full range of academic and vocational courses per the Committee for Economic Development recommendations.
- Developing a production studio at the Dominica State College for students seeking careers in television.



- Expanding options for students seeking careers in music, art, and the performing arts and offering play writers courses.
  - Establish a culinary centre within the Dominica State College.
  - Introducing a Points-based system for awarding educational scholarships based on academic excellence and the family's ability to pay or contribute financially and publishing the criteria for awarding scholarships.
- Ensuring all teachers and Lecturers have a minimum of a first degree.
    - Providing support to teachers in obtaining their first educational degrees by commissioning the development of a specific online educational resource library and study materials.
    - Providing teachers with small grants, loans or stipends for books and other study materials.
  - Providing facilities for students requiring special needs assistance.
  - Train sufficient Counsellors for each of our primary schools.
  - Developing a Youth Empowerment Strategy with prioritises on sports and physical activity and building an Olympic size swimming pool and sports complex

## Rediscovering the Nature Isle

### Streets Paved with Litter and Cars

Dominica is labelled the Nature Isle of the Caribbean, yet there is significant evidence that we are not living up to this label. Hundreds of abandoned vehicles can be found in our towns and villages, and a few abandoned ships are along our coastline. Many of our historic buildings are in a deplorable state, and Roseau is dirty, with drains that smell of sewage and few pavements for residents and tourists. The streets of Roseau are congested with vehicles and buses; disabled and wheelchair access is non-existent. Government services are scattered across the city and often occupy some of the most valuable real estate, including the buildings on or close to the bayfront.

### Regaining Our Title

The Coalition of Independent Candidates seeks to regain our title as the true nature isle of the Caribbean by:

- Developing a *purpose-built bus station* on the outskirts of Roseau, equipped with a multi-story car park, petrol station, washrooms, shops, and food court.
- Introducing *Park and Ride services* from the car park into the city, using electrical rickshaws.
- Developing *purpose-built sheltered bus stops* with solar-powered charging points for mobile devices.

- Ensure bus stops are off-road so buses can't delay the traffic flow.



- Entering a Public, Private Partnership to consolidate government offices into a *purpose-built complex* and sell valuable buildings for commercial activity.
- Developing Portsmouth as a *premium tourist destination*, with a vehicle-free tourist village, cruise ship docking and yachting marina.
- Introducing a programme to allow citizens *to scrap older and abandoned vehicles* and receive duty-free concessions or vouchers for purchasing newer, primarily electric or hybrid vehicles.



- Accelerating the *reforestation programme* so that island fully recovers after the passage of Hurricane Maria.
- Accelerating the development of Geothermal electricity to help reduce prices for citizens and businesses faced with *hikes in the cost of living*.
- Supporting owners with a *historic building* to bring these back into use through grants and concessions.
- Designating the Roseau bayfront and Portsmouth as *Urban Tourist Zones*, with priority given to businesses and shops catering to tourists.

## Independence Day<sup>2</sup>

Dominica's true wealth is unknown to its citizens. The funds from the Citizens by Investment programme are not in the consolidated fund, so it is unclear if those funds are allocated in our population's best interest. The Coalition proposes an audit of the CBI programme and reallocating funds according to the Committees for Economic Development and Sustainable Social Development recommendations.

The Coalition has estimated that the Dominica Labour Party spent \$72,000,000 financing its 2019 election campaign. We estimate a further \$30,000,000 is being spent on this election campaign. We know that ordinary labour party membership fees do not cover the money the party spends. We understand that the cost of providing the Prime Minister and his family with accommodation and associated costs is \$64,000 per month; that is \$768,000 per year and \$3,840,000 over a full parliamentary term.

The Coalition believes that the *105,840,000* being spent by the Dominica Labour Party and to accommodate the Prime Minister could fund the following housing initiatives in this Manifesto.

		<b>105,840,000</b>
<b>Housing Renewal Programme</b>	Bring 1,000 old and abandoned properties back into use. Maximum Grants \$30,000 per household	-30,000,000
<b>Housing Adaptation Grant</b>	Essential adaptations to enable 5,000 households with a disabled or elderly occupant. A maximum grant of \$6,000	-30,000,000
<b>Owner Occupier Grant</b>	Citizens living in the estimated 2,000 properties without electricity, running water or flushable toilets are brought up to standard. A maximum grant of EC\$6,000	-12,000,000
<b>Housing Renovation Grant</b>	Households whose homes were severely damaged and families living in overcrowded conditions to add a bedroom. Estimated 3,000 households and a maximum grant of \$15,000.	-45,000,000
<b>Balance to be found by Government</b>		<b>--11,160,000</b>

The Coalition estimate that we could have *impacted the lives of 11,000* Dominican households. If the estimated \$300,000 per government-owned apartment was used wisely, we could build homes and impact twice as many families in Dominica.

The People of Dominica must recognise the danger of allowing the Dominica Labour Party to continue in the seat of power. The Coalition has risen to the challenge and collated our proposals in just one week. Imagine what we could do if voters gave us *the mandate for five years!*

We need to move beyond this single-party state and a party that uses threats and unfair enticements to ensure it stays in power, despite its dismissal performance over the past 22 years. We seek your support and vote in declaring **December 6<sup>th</sup> as Dominica's second Independence Day<sup>2</sup>**.