



Press Release

Climate Resilient Dominica

Resilience is the capacity to withstand and/or recover quickly from, difficulties... resilience is about toughness, flexibility... the ability to spring back into shape when something goes wrong.

So, a climate resilient country simply means a country capable of getting back into shape if ever and whenever it is affected by the destructive forces of our changing climate.

Forty years ago, this year, we stepped forth boldly into the world as an independent nation under God committed to the principles of Democracy, the constitutional rule of law and parliamentary governance.

For four decades, we have sung with exemplary patriotic fervor the words of our national anthem:

*Isle of beauty, isle of splendor
Isle to all so sweet and fair
All must surely gaze in wonder
At thy gifts so rich and rare
Rivers, valleys hills and mountains
All these gifts we do extol
Healthy lands so like all fountains
Giving cheer that warms the soul*

Today, in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria and under the widening threat of climate change devastation, the blessings of healthy land, rivers, valleys, hills and mountains seem like curses engaged to wreak havoc with our life and times.

Yet, our vulnerability shines a light on the opportunities beneath the threats urging us to appreciate the value of part in the context of the whole and thereby avert the pitfalls of failure.



Press Release

We are supposed to be a democratic country, run by a government of the people, by the people, for the people. We are failing with this all-encompassing, collective responsibility, but we expect to succeed with the challenge of building a harmonious relationship with our natural environment capable of lessening the destructive effects of climate change.

The climate resilient challenge is not new to us. We have been pursuing a low carbon climate resilient development strategy since 2012 with support from climate finance donors and development cooperation partners. The strategy envisioned specific resilience enhancing deliverables in:

- *Renewable Energy*
- *Protection of Carbon sinks*
- *Land Use planning*
- *Natural ecosystems,*
- *Forestry*
- *Slope stabilization*
- *Sea and river defenses*
- *Water resources,*
- *Agriculture, fisheries,*
- *Tourism,*
- *Coastal zones,*
- *Infrastructure and human settlements.*

Even so, in 2015 Tropical Storm Erika flooded away damages estimated at 100% of GDP... and in 2017, 226% of GDP went south in devastating winds and flood waters of Hurricane Maria.

The resilience we expected never materialized because the climate resilience initiative had no philosophical or cultural moorings, no people consensus, no youth buy-in and through it all, the foundation principles of democratic governance were excluded from the leadership and management of national affairs.



Press Release

No inclusiveness; no unity of purpose – instead we further divided what was not united; no elections with integrity; no fairness; no equity; no equal treatment of all of God’s children; no respect for the constitutional rule of law; no parliamentary oversight for the operations of government; no acts of parliament to articulate and enforce climate resilient behaviors; no transparency; no accountability; no proper alignment of resources to strategic initiatives.

The Constitution – our supreme law – provides for a prime minister with a Cabinet of ministers and a parliamentary opposition. When the parliamentary opposition is disrespected, ignored and sidelined the resiliency of our democracy is systematically undermined.

In 2018, six years after doing very little if anything at all with the distinction of being the first country in the region to have a climate resilient development strategy, we have set our sights on “Building the World’s First Climate Resilient Country” with the recognition that it is “Our Collective Responsibility”.

Resilience to climate cannot be isolated from the overall resilience of the country to social and economic difficulties, manipulation of democracy, disharmony with the environment, disrespect for divine law and governance failures. A resilient country means resilient people, united in purpose, working together – all for each and each for all – under resilient systems of democratic governance. Resilient people means people with resilient sources of food, clothing; resilient shelter; resilient means of livelihood.

Resilient people are God fearing, independent and empowered people who take individual responsibility for their well-being and progress and commit to collective responsibility for national development and the advancement of global civilization. Only climate resilient Dominicans will create a climate resilient Dominica.

Green trees; green forest. Climate resilient Dominicans; Climate resilient Dominica. Let us therefore focus on the skills, competencies and capacities that characterize a climate resilient Dominican. What tools must he/she be armed with to withstand and/or bounce back when the misfortunes of climate strike?



Press Release

What defensive skills and competencies should he/she have to deal with natural disasters?

How will he/she avert indeed help to prevent the looting on steroids observed post Maria?

How will he/she stand up against the politicization of relief supplies and look out for neighbors instead of rejoicing that the anti-resilience conduct of politicians in power resulted in personal benefit?

How will he/she be proactive, innovative and resourceful in recovering personal and community property and building back better?

How do we use our God given resources to get the most and the best value for The Dominican People of Dominica?

How best to use the wood, sand and stone gifted to us by Erika in 2015 and Maria in 2017?

Can we use Material from Roseau River to create & strengthen new small business on the Bayfront by backfilling and extending the Roseau Bayfront?

Can we use our river water, and displaced top and alluvial soils to create New opportunities for our young educated farmers, in order to rebuild Our Agriculture stronger, and make Dominica once more “The Food Basket of The Caribbean”?

In the Kalinago and African aspects of our culture – through self-help, koudment, creativity and innovation in the use of natural resources gifted to us for food, clothing and shelter – we answer these questions with clarity.

As soon as the opportunity presents itself, the United Workers Party will make Dominica resilient in every respect and every aspect; and we will shift our people from personal ambition to the resiliency of a larger national vision in the course of becoming the best place to live, work and enjoy life.



Press Release

In the meantime, lets us revise the 2012 low carbon climate resilient strategy with significant youth involvement, align resources to a clear strategy for implementation and work together like we have never worked together before to make it happen.

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