



Press Release

The United Workers Party (UWP) calls on the DLP Administration to expand and accelerate Recovery and Reconstruction in the Housing Sector

The United Workers Party is concerned that the present laissez-faire approach of the DLP administration to recovery and reconstruction in the housing sector post Hurricane Maria will cause many home owners and families to remain in unsuitable housing conditions for the 2018 hurricane season and beyond.

This DLP administration is well aware that Hurricane Maria devastated Dominica's housing sector with a billion-dollar hit that left over 4,000 houses destroyed and over 23,000 houses with different levels of roofing and structural damage.

Consequently, thousands of our citizens were left homeless, thousands were forced into temporary uncomfortable housing conditions and thousands more were forced to relocate and even migrate.

With the heavy rainfall in recent months, residents in severely compromised housing conditions all over the island face the continuous threats of flooding and landslides.

The government is also aware that just a minority of home owners whose homes are insured will receive adequate payment from their insurance providers to properly reinstate their homes because the majority were either under insured or had no home insurance due largely to financial limitations.

The UWP and Dominicans in general are very thankful to our brothers and sisters at home and abroad, the international aid agencies and disaster relief organizations, the development cooperation partners and the entire global family of countries, people and governments represented by the United Nations who have rallied to assist us in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

Included in the wide list of relief supplies, financial and technical aid already received by the Roosevelt Skerit administration for and on behalf of our suffering fellow citizens are containers of building materials and household items.



Press Release

Yet, four months after Hurricane Maria and notwithstanding the grave situation facing home owners and householders, Government has not found it necessary to publicly unveil an equitable method of distributing the housing assistance in its possession to needy citizens particularly the most vulnerable among us.

While we welcome government's pronouncement of duty free concession on building materials for the limited period of only six months; it must be noted that the UWP has consistently called for removal of duty on building material as part of measures to stimulate the economy particularly the construction sector.

Accordingly, the UWP calls on Government to immediately implement the following measures to improve and accelerate recovery and reconstruction in the housing sector:

- *Inform the public about the amount, value and sources of building materials actually donated and pledged to Dominica to date and government's plan to utilize these materials for climate resilient rehabilitation and construction of houses*
- *Immediately commence equitable distribution of building materials and household items in government's possession to all deserving home owners and householders, giving priority to the most vulnerable, low-income families whose homes were not insured and single parent householders.*
- *Procure essential building materials as necessary to supplement that already received for distribution to deserving families.*
- *Provide a one- time housing assistance grant of no less than \$5000 and \$2000 to every home owner and head of household whose annual income fall between \$12,000 to \$36,000 per annum.*
- *Allow duty free concessions and VAT exemption on building materials for a period of not less than one year commencing January 2018.*
- *Facilitate availability of essential building materials in the local market through the offer of low interest line of credit to established local hardware suppliers where necessary.*



Press Release

- *Allow corporate profit tax exemption for a period of three years to financial institutions who derive such profits from products bearing interest of not more than 4% specifically targeting home owners and householders.*
- *Facilitate local private sector participation in the supply and delivery of new housing units nationally. In this regard we call for adherence to provisions of the Public Procurement Act and forcefully condemn the recent awards of a non-tendered contracts for supply of new housing to foreign companies.*
- *Pursuant to the Dominica Building Code and in consultation with the Dominica Societies of Architects and Engineers, the Planning Division, local financial institutions and home insurance providers, appoint a “pool” of Certified Special Inspectors with authority to monitor and issue Technical Compliance Certificates on behalf of the planning authority in respect of post Hurricane Maria residential building repairs and reconstruction works.*
- *Facilitate a more proactive role for the Physical Planning Division in post Hurricane Maria reconstruction by appointing a civil engineer to head the Development Control Section of the Division and posting Development Control Officers of that Division in the various districts throughout Dominica.*
- *Immediately engage appropriate technical assistance personnel coupled with qualified local counterparts to prepare “Area Action Plans” for the protection and/or relocation of vulnerable communities and localities facing eminent environmental threats of flooding and landslides.*

The UWP strongly urges the DLP administration to adopt these policy measures in the public interest of effective national reconstruction without further delay.

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