OUR VISION

Progressives United
Mission Statement

We endeavor to commit our talents to the enunciation of the Rights and Privileges of Virgin Islanders and further dedicate ourselves to protect and defend the right of every individual living within these Virgin Islands to a life that is free from all forms of discrimination.

Holding true to the ethos that this land owes every citizen a living, we put it to you that land in this case, is synonymous with women and men in the leadership of this country. As such therefore, we do take our responsibility for this with deference.

Accordingly, our goal is to build on intellect and wealth, develop our resources to the benefit of citizens, protect inhabitants from physical harm and diseases, and ensure our institutions produce people that encapsulates the pride to see themselves as equal among equals.

These are yet the finest hours of our land, as we see our two Political Parties mirroring each other in a bid to outdo the other with the masking of transparency and allegations of corruption rampant. While having a clear knowledge that one has failed you and the other can’t help you. There is no time like now for the alternative which we offer. We invite you to come onboard with us.
We commit ourselves to offer honest people for public office, who when elected shall adhere to principles based on the wisdom of our forefathers expressed in their teachings as handed down, and by our own platform.

Our Leadership will commit to embody the true meaning and experience of Integrity, Dignity, Trust and Prosperity, which are the rudiments needed to be deliberated and reinstated to provide this country, the next generation, and future inhabitants a realistic chance of survival.

To deliver on these promises we strived first to possess the very qualities we offer. Unlike what currently obtains in our current leaderships that has failed us, Integrity, *we recognize as the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles*, to be a must for all Group members. Dignity, *being the state or quality of being worthy of honor or respect*, is a prerequisite for all before being considered.

We want to make Trust, *your firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, and strength of every Group member*, because it was that lack thereof, which happened to be the single greatest cause for dissension within our rivals. We are keen not to make the mistakes of others.
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Making Greenhouse Technology a Reality in The Virgin Islands
Culture defined reads: The characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts.

The Center for Advance Research on Language Acquisition in taking this a step further defined culture as shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and understanding that are learned by socialization. Thus, it can be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group.

Following these constructs, Progressives United thinks it wise to dear not venture into what is or what isn’t Virgin Islands Culture. But to instead, ask the question: Whether Culture is static, or evolutionary?

A further question then becomes: Who gets to answer this question?

Progressives United recognizes the sensitivity of what’s involved here and therefore refrains from being so presumptuous as to attempt any definition whatsoever on any aspect of Virgin Islands Culture. But will however, commission a panel of experts to advise on the establishment of the process, keeping in mind that the definition speaks to culture being “seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group”.

And this brings us to another question: What is or who is this group? We certainly appreciate the complexity of this topic brought on by its sensitivity. And we pledge to support its promotion as an integral part of our strategy for rebuilding the territory.

Platform

We are committed to values-based politics as expressed in our Mission. These values we promise will guide us to a system that rewards individuals for expended abilities and not nepotism. These values will save the territory from the current downward spiraling destructive model of consumerism, and the uncontrolled wasteful consumption.

We will see a more fiscally prudent style of management which recognizes the current hemorrhaging of the territory’s finances as reckless and irresponsible.

We had a Country which took decades to reach its pre- Irma development, however filled with its shortcomings, but yet functional, and was worth being proud of. Our current Political Parties having been mere custodians, had never challenged themselves to produce beyond the norm, arguably because of their own inadequacies, but still somehow managed to exhibit weaknesses which resulted in failures. Failure to be transparent, failure to practice good governance, failure in political pragmatism, and failure to preserve a standard of living that is conducive to a healthy middle class.

Our platform will ensure a healthy and fulfilled middle-class with a penchant to absorb the working class as they both work towards narrowing the gap with the wealthy.

To do this, going forward we must set our sights on the following areas for improvements, and spare no efforts until significant tangible results are seen in the territory’s socio-economic condition.
Economy

With the type hit our economy took post-Irma a more proactive stance is needed to regain fiscal stability in the territory. Tourism which is a mainstay of our economy needs badly its arteries of air and sea transport up to full capacity, and those will be our priority. Modern sea terminals are a must in this 21st century, and they must happen now.

Financial Services must continue to get attention with the reality being that it has peaked in its contributions and that growth is unlikely. However, every effort will be made to maintain our share of the market.

Legislation to protect and promote local businesses is a priority for our government, as it is destructive to subject local companies to the same level of scrutiny as global traders of high finances, using special purpose vehicles, that often takes on the form of a shell, with lives sometimes as short as a single transaction.

What happens to a dollar made in the Virgin Islands could mean the difference between a growing economy and a shrinking economy. This is important going forward.

Youth Activities

In our research, we have identified the critical elements essential to the healthy development of young people. And we subscribe to the theory that our youths will benefit from experiences providing: they feel physically and emotionally safe; are made to feel Belonging and Ownership; allowed to Develop self-worth; given the opportunity to Discover self; are given your trust in order to Develop quality relationship with peers and adults; afforded the chance to Discuss conflict values and form their own; being allowed to feel the pride and accountability that comes with mastery; and Expand their capacity to enjoy life and know that success is possible.

We must train our youth first and foremost, then make opportunities for their professional and career advancements. The key to these opportunities must be incentives.

As a government, it will be incumbent upon us to ensure policies which favors our youth are made, because it is in our national interest for them to be positioned to take on the leadership and management of the territory when that time comes.

Culture

There is nothing about this topic that is without challenge to any writer, even if they are careful not to place themselves into it.
Immigration

The vital importance of immigration to the territory can never be over emphasized since the majority of persons at one point utilized the process. We will continue to welcome well-meaning individuals here as visitors and encourage those with the skills we will need from time to time to join us.

Immigration globally is dynamic and is in constant reform. We believe that ours is no different, particularly, given our small size.

The Elderly

These are the ones who built this territory and has gone full circle and now back to dependency. We owe them a decent life in their final years. While efforts are continuing to provide for the elderly through various programs, evidently it is not enough.

And we still get the impression that the system believes their involvement is just a favor rather than an obligation.

Budgeting a sizable sum for senior care is an eventuality no government should try to shirk. We consider their contribution to the development of these islands to be an investment. Therefore, we see their care as dividends being collected.

Because the elderly has limited regenerative abilities, they are more susceptible to disease, syndromes and sicknesses than young people, therefore making health care accessible will be a priority.

Health Care

Apart from the facilities which have now fallen into the state of abandonment and has to be addressed, the system needs an injection of innovation. We will provide incentives within the industry, especially for nurses that will make walking away very difficult. The profession must become attractive.

Government will provide upwards of one million dollars each year for the research development and implementation of a program to prevent chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and kidney failure.

Education

Education shall remain universal and accessible to all children and shall be mandatory. A nation is only as good as its standards, and education is key. To that end, it is imperative that we develop our own standards to which anyone wishing to establish themselves in these islands must meet.

To have schools in this 21st century without basic amenities such as Gymnasiums, Auditoriums, and Dining facilities is anachronistic, and will be addressed. We will provide incentives within the system, especially for teachers that will make walking away very difficult.

The profession must become attractive. It is crucial that at all times the very best be given that privilege to mold our youths.
There must be adequate funding for our schools. It is important to note however, that recognizing the need for expansion in the system coupled with a slow growing or possible contracting economy, it is conceivable that these funds will have to come from unconventional sources.

**Jobs**

We encourage businesses to patronize each other by outsourcing rather than trying to be all-inclusive to the detriment of others. We will ensure that favorable conditions exist for the fostering of growth and profitability. All facets of the Labor Laws are to be adhered to in order to ensure the rights of workers. Discrimination based on gender is wrong, which means equal pay for equal work.

A critical look must be taken at our industries for needed skills in order to determine our priorities and facilitate them. We must train for the jobs at hand and prepare for new industries. This we consider a National Security. Particular mandates must be advanced in order to ensure a viable and sustainable workforce.

**Agriculture**

You don’t have to know our history as an agrarian community to know that the sector is sick and can do well with a much-needed injection. Getting back to the fundamentals would be a start. We will empower our farmers by assisting with the utilizing of their lands. Introduce and develop new technologies, and make the sister islands priority.

**Transportation**

The signs were evident since 2008 when American Eagle signaled its intent to pull out from the region, that the Virgin Islands would be at the mercies of its neighbors if nothing of significance was done to our air facilities infrastructure.

To date nothing has changed since the Terrence B. Lettsome International Airport was opened in 2002, and we are essentially cut off from San Juan as a hub, while relying heavily on St. Thomas USVI to save us.

Postponing the inevitable is never a good approach when there is no strategy. We understand that the time has long gone when we were a little sleepy town content on whenever or however someone shows up on our islands, because today our very survival depends on them. We must address the issue of airlift with urgency.

After significant investments in airport development in the early 2000, focus should have been placed on seaports development from the mid 2000 on. Unfortunately, to this day none of this was done.

What’s worst, is being reliant on St. Thomas USVI for airlift with our woefully outdated and inadequate ferry terminals which is embarrassing, to say the least. We do not have a choice as to which comes first between our airport and the seaports, both must be addressed with the same urgency.
This lack of competence has to do with its lack of independence, which will necessitate a greater involvement by members. Similarly, the partisanship will forever continue, as long as the Executive remains in the Legislature under its current format.

The absence of bipartisanship is the cancer for bad laws and evil in a society. We believe that the only logical remedy is the introduction of a Bicameral Parliament that is structured to ensure meaningful debates and desired outcomes.

**Infrastructure**

A long-misguided practice of cutting cost by building on the cheap, has led to a culture of accepting less than ideal roads in the territory. Our road infrastructure was never developed using a comprehensive strategy, and was therefore neither appropriately engineered nor properly constructed.

These are facts that we have acknowledged, and thus commit to seeing the complete and wide-ranging engineering and construction of our road system.

The damages done to our electrical grid by hurricane Irma speaks to its anachronism. The territory is all in for the securing of our distribution system so as to avoid a repeat of the post Irma debacle. Five months without electricity is unacceptable. We are all in on making this a reality.

Water and Sewage will be made priorities as we believe that every community is entitled to a reliable supply of potable water on a consistent basis. Public sanitary sewers are past due in some of our more developed communities and we intend to remedy that.

**Agriculture**

Agriculture has to play a substantial role in ensuring our food security, it is also important in mitigating our balance of trade deficit. A vibrant agricultural sector is in the interest of our National Security. We will protect Agriculture as an industry from any form of unfair competition, in the interest of the people of the Virgin Islands.

We can no longer afford to look at Agriculture in a vacuum for what is economically expedient for merchants and consumers, given the reality of the potential for it being a detriment to the national economy. We must try harder to keep our local commerce strong.

**Fishing**

No one in this Arena knows better than our Chairman does, the potential of the waters of the Virgin Islands Exclusive Economic Zone, in terms of Fishing.

He was there so he should know, when in Murcia Spain a delegation led by him as Minister for Natural Resources and Labor, the Virgin Islands through the UK became a contracting party to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna - ICCAT- in 2001, thus acquiring an annual catch limit on the world’s most lucrative catches, such as: the Atlantic Bluefin tuna which grows up to 1000 pounds and fetches as much as $55 per pound.

To date however, we are not aware of this quota being utilized, and Progressives United expects to exploit this opportunity to the benefit of our fishing industry. There has always been talk of developing Sport-fishing in the BVI on a scale rivaling our neighbors being a reality, and we believe if the possibility exists now is the time.
The laze-faire approach to Fishing and practically every facet of the territory’s economy is largely to blame for our economy’s under performance. We promise that in the interest of the territory, a more hands-on approach after consultations is forthcoming.

Women

Women must be made to feel comfortable to coexist in whatever environment they choose, as no form of intimidation will be tolerated. The menace of sexual harassment must be identified without equivocations and avoided at all expense.

Women are owed the privilege to compete on favorable terms for any position in our society they desire.

We hold that women and men are not more or less capable, we just have an issue with women not having opportunities. We endeavor to make women a part of the solution, not perpetuating the problem.

Land

Since the days of the cadastral surveyors in the 70’s there has not been an earth shifting reform to lands in the Virgin Islands.

We believe that we are past due for the next revolution. We also recognize that the territory will need a government that has the foresight, but more importantly, it must be one that cares.

Land ownership is sacred for Virgin Islanders, so we understand that Legislation in this regard is vital and necessary going forward.

Crimes and Law Enforcement

Adapting Western European attitudes towards crime and criminal activities is never helpful for small societies like ours. They can be erosive and ultimately destabilizing. We support efforts to ensure our courageous police officers are equipped with the best technology, equipment and innovative strategies to prevent and fight crimes.

Ensuring that the basics for our officers, such as adequate patrol gears including vehicles is a must. It is past time that we face the reality that the crimes being committed are not 19th century anymore, and that our officers are irresponsibly outmatched. We will not be satisfied with just being supporters of our police but also strong advocates for reform.

We believe that mandatory and minimum sentences are deterrents to crime, and that the responsibility for determining such sentences is a function of the Legislature and not the Judiciary.

Legislative Reform

We believe that a model Legislature should be Competent, Bipartisan, and Efficient, but many feel that the Virgin Islands Legislature falls short on all three.