

Manifesto of the Montserrat Democratic Party

Vision, Action, Trust & Integrity

May 2006

We care and we are fair

New direction for a shared vision

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Message

We, the Montserrat Democratic Party, are a group of people, who offer ourselves, all of our resources and skills to the service of the people of Montserrat.

We intend to ensure the practice of parliamentary democracy and good governance in Montserrat and uphold the principles of freedom, equity and social justice.

We will have as our main priority, the meeting of the essential livelihood needs of all individuals. The provision of employment and incomes is the most urgent requirement of the people who live on this island. This will be the number one focus of an MDP government. Wealth creation will be the underlying, over reaching, and ever present priority of an MDP government. A combination of public and private investment is needed for this to happen, and these inflows require trust and confidence in the quality of governance.

Getting this investment for housing and economic development requires legislation to deter, expose and punish corruption.

An MDP government will therefore enact Integrity Laws to :-

- 1 Require total disclosure of business assets and interests, as a condition for holding Ministerial office.
- 2 Require the disclosure through publication of the details and facts relating to negotiations in pursuit of agreements, contracts or concessions between the Government and any other party.
- 3 Require publication of requests for duty exemptions and concessions prior to decision by executive council.
- 4 Prohibit anyone involved in negotiations, authorization, approval or concluding agreements or contracts on behalf of the people of Montserrat, from accepting favours, gifts, shares or concessions in any form.
- 5 Allow the people of Montserrat the right and opportunity to recall a profligate government where this is found to be necessary.

We are committed to open and transparent government, and will propose that the proceedings of committees of the Legislative Council be public and that the decisions of Executive Council be published without delay.

We plan to complete the restoration of infrastructure and economic activities that will make our community sustainable and prosperous. Our guiding principles will be vision, action, trust and integrity, and we wish to be known as the party that cares about and is fair to everyone.

We pledge to provide leadership that is based on selfless service, integrity and respect. We intend to work as a team, and to utilize the technical skills and experience of civil servants, private sector experts and overseas consultants, to bring about a reform of our economy. Reform is required to bring more of our people back home, and increase our population.

Brothers and sisters of Montserrat, through the democratic process, we present the people of Montserrat with a choice. A choice of leaders, who will have a policy of inclusion, where every legislator is invited to participate fully in the rebuilding of our country. We want Montserrat to be a country where every person is encouraged and assisted in achieving their full potential. A country where the many members of our diaspora overseas, are encouraged to have meaningful participation in the affairs of our homeland.

We ask you to support the Montserrat Democratic Party and to help us make ours, a truly democratic and godly society.

Candidates

Dr Lowell Lewis

Political Leader, General Practitioner and Specialist Surgeon
Director of Health Services Montserrat
1984 to 1991
Lecturer in Surgery University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados - 1994 to 1999
Minister of Communication and Works and Deputy Chief Minister - 2001 to 2003
Member of Montserrat Legislative Council - 2001 to 2005

Jim Bass

Economist, Educator, Former Permanent Secretary
Anglican Lay Reader, Social Activist
Chairman of St Peter's Community Association
Chairman of Committee for Redevelopment of Montserrat
Member OPWA Board & Meals on Wheels Executive Committee

Claude Gerald

Agriculturist, Economics Teacher, Political Commentator
Director of Agriculture Montserrat - 1992 to 2006

J. Christopher (David) Gerrald

Businessman, Civil Servant, Community Worker
Assistant Registrar Land and Survey Department
UWI Executive Officer 1976-1997

Roy Greaves

Educator, Building Construction Foreman, Sportsman, Commentator, Journalist, Former Leader Salem Volcanic Crisis Committee
Vice-President Montserrat Cricket Association
Local Church Elder and Deacon

Elizabeth Piper-Wade

Manager, Business Woman, & Upholsterer
International Volunteer & Fund-Raiser
Community Development Specialist
NGO Management Lecturer
Drugs and Awareness Educator & Counsellor
Regional Emergency Personnel
Disaster Mental Health Counsellor
Television and Radio Presenter and Moderator
Culture & the Arts Creator and Presenter
P.O.A. International Volunteer of the Year 2002

John Ponteen

Businessman, Restaurateur
Former Agriculture extension officer
Manufacturer, Tourism specialist, Political activist
University Examination Invigilator

Donaldson Romeo

Businessman, Independent Journalist, Portrait Artist
Social activist, Men's Ministry Leader
Former President Montserrat Basketball Association

Priority Plans

- 1 The establishment of a Multi-sectorial Economic Recovery Task Force to review and monitor all government activities to boost economic growth.
- 2 Enactment of Integrity Legislation to ensure good governance and deter corruption.
- 3 Revise Volcano Management Action Plan and all matters relative to living and coping with the existence of an active volcano in Montserrat, including contingencies for the event of the threat of a pyroclastic flow down the Belham River that may require the evacuation of parts of Salem and Old Towne.
- 4 Review and revise the Sustainable Development Plan.
- 5 Renegotiation of the terms for purchase of government housing stock by tenants to allow total transfer of ownership and reduction of monthly payments.
- 6 Review and study the critical issues of land and housing strategy to increase home constructions by low and medium income families. This to include the provision of new building and home improvement grants and low interest loans.
- 7 Completion of roads, sports facility and safe harbour at Little Bay to allow regular visits by cruise ships and to promote sports tourism activities.
- 8 Implement island-wide road improvement program, and complete proposals for port and airport developments.
- 9 Review, study and renegotiate the cost of air travel and transportation to Montserrat.
- 10 Introduce a Ferry service for day tours to and from Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis, Guadeloupe and St. Martin.
- 11 Provide incentives to revive and strengthen the private sector.
- 12 Establishment of a sports tourism complex centred around the FIFA football field at Blakes.
- 13 Implementation of a Silver Hills Development Project to promote reforestation, preservation of the eco-system and condominium developments.
- 14 Implement the export of volcano materials and associated products, and the export of bottled water on a commercial scale.

- 15 Review and implementation of Energy Policy, to include the exploration and production of geothermal derived electricity and increased use of solar and wind energy.
- 16 Review and as necessary overhaul the education system with a critical and important implementation of a Youth Development Policy with a focus on the retention and return of the young people of Montserrat by providing opportunities for employment and home ownership.
- 17 Implement a health services improvement programme, which will include a national health insurance scheme and the provision of a critical care area and inpatient areas for children and medical patients.
- 18 Review and implementation of Sports, Culture, Entertainment and Media Policy including the provision of a budget to allow more frequent cultural activities with a view to seriously begin and encourage the development of nation building.
- 19 Introduction of a social development policy to promote integration and harmony among all people who live and work on Montserrat. To this end, the MDP will provide island-wide recreation areas and community facilities, for sports and entertainment to augment our new cultural centre. This to include replacement of the community centre for St Johns.
- 20 Boost agricultural and fishing activities to increase local food production.
- 21 The provision of cemeteries for communities.
- 22 Population development program. The MDP will plan to facilitate the return of up to 3000 Montserrat volcano evacuees over the next 5 years through the creation of employment opportunities, the provision of housing and improved Social Welfare and Health Care programs for the elderly.
- 23 Develop and strengthen a more cohesive relationship partnership and understanding with the United Kingdom Government as to their interest in Montserrat's sustenance, its development and future status of nationhood.

Governance

“Good governance exalts a nation and eliminates corruption”.

Transparency and participation will be the hallmark of an MDP government. Transparency moves us beyond mismanaged projects and conflicts of interest. It rebuilds trust with the British, and may open a way for renewing or replacing opportunities and viable projects that have been abandoned.

We will involve our young people as they embody the future. They will be provided opportunities for education, training, sports, cultural activities, jobs, land, and capital to support small business ventures.

We will appoint a youth and community development officer in the Office of the Chief Minister, to support community development projects.

We will support Village councils and provide budgets for their activities. We will promote linkages and partnerships with overseas Montserratian associations and friends of Montserrat in support of ventures, marketing (especially of Montserrat culture-linked products) and business partnerships.

Economic Development

After consultation the Sustainable Development Plan of Montserrat will be reviewed, and revised to allow achievement of our objective to increase the population of Montserrat to over 8,000 and be out of granting aid by 2011. Our programmes will be prioritised in 3 phases. Phase 1 , the first 100 days; Phase 2 Years 1 to 3 ; Phase 3 Years 4 and 5.

Once our government demonstrates a commitment to good governance and integrity in political leadership, the United Kingdom, European and other aid agencies, whose mandate is to create sustainable communities and alleviate world poverty, would support our proposals. Government of Montserrat would then cease being a financial burden for their taxpayers, and guarantee for its people a good quality of life.

Good governance legislation will also be critical to attracting investment in Montserrat.

An MDP government will use the available budget and existing projects for 2006, to achieve a 10% growth in the economy, thus justifying the provision of additional funds and loan financing required to access the estimated \$300 million plus required in capital aid for the 5 year period.

Earnings from goods and services will increase significantly in response to aggressive implementation of building programmes, tourism activities, export of volcanic materials and products, export of water and agricultural products, manufacturing, medical schools, real estate development and geothermal energy derived electricity.

The South of Belham Project, Silver Hills Development Project, Little Bay Town Project, Blakes Development Project and the New Villages programmes will provide opportunities for revenues from export of volcanic materials and from construction activities. Wherever possible, local control of these activities will maximize returns to Montserrat from the proceeds of the island's resources.

Tourism

Prior to the volcanic activity, tourism made a significant contribution to Montserrat 's economic development. The MDP will focus on providing opportunities for employment, income generation and improved local well-being while ensuring that all development decisions reflect the value of the natural and cultural environment.

We will create a variety of unique tourist destinations and complete a safe crossing of the Belham River. We will provide adequate air and sea transportation. Thus ensuring that tourism will once again become a major creator of wealth. A vibrant tourism industry will provide employment not only for those directly employed in the hospitality industry, but also empower the farmers and fishermen and create a multiplier effect.

In promoting cruise tourism, villa tourism, sports tourism, eco and adventure tourism and cultural heritage tourism, an MDP government will ensure intersectorial involvement, careful planning, strict guidelines and regulations to ensure that our resources are not destroyed.

Employment Creation

This will be a major objective of the MDP. Initiatives will include:-

The release of funds tied up in the purchase of houses already built, for the provision of grants and low interest loans for new home construction and improvement of existing homes.

Speedy processing of all investment proposals. There will be a guaranteed response to any proposal no later than ten days after receipt with assured follow-up until project implementation.

Establishment of a one stop point of contact within the governmental structure that will provide all necessary information and guidance to investors. A Ministerial subcommittee will facilitate this activity.

Encourage investment by local people. Foreign investment is very important but local investors have a major role to play in employment creation and national development as a whole.

Development of sports tourism. The FIFA financed international football field at Blakes will be a catalyst to sports tourism on Montserrat. An MDP government will assist and encourage the Montserrat Football Association in completing the planned pavilion and also provide additional training and playing areas to allow the holding of regional competitions and the hosting of more teams from Europe during winter months.

Similarly, a facility for visiting cricket teams at Little Bay will make an even bigger contribution to the economy.

The Silver Hills Development Project is expected to generate much employment. The area will be considered for condominium and golf course developments, while at the same time accommodating a programme for reforestation, and the improvement, protection and preservation of the environment, plant and wild life in the area.

The volcano provides large quantities of raw material for broad based industrial activity on Montserrat. In addition to the export of these materials, opportunities exist for the manufacture of heat resistant products, and building materials. Promoting the establishment of these industries on Montserrat will be a major objective of the Montserrat Democratic Party. This will be the main objective of the South of Belham Project, which will include a safe reliable crossing of the Belham River, a coastal roadway with utility lines from Isles Bay to Foxes Bay and on to Richmond Hill, and a barge ramp at the northern end of Foxes Bay.

An MDP government will support apprenticeship job placements for students, school leavers and unemployed adults, linked to vocational training programs at the Montserrat Technical College and other regional and international institutions.

Incomes Policy

Upon taking office an MDP government will immediately introduce a revised incomes policy to :-

- 1 Elevate all regular non-established workers to permanent establishment status and prohibit practices that allow employment without provisions for pension and or gratuity.
- 2 Implement a salaries increase of an appropriate lump sum per month for all civil servants and government workers.
- 3 Appoint an independent salaries commission of suitably and appropriately qualified independent professionals to recommend guidelines for the determination of legislators and ministerial salaries and allowances.
- 4 Enact minimum wage legislation with exemptions to encourage the continued employment of vacationing students and casual labour.
- 5 Reduce the period of service threshold at which public servants entitlement to pension on reaching the age of 60, from the existing twenty years to ten but with appropriate adjustments to the final salary paid as pension.
- 6 Revise pensions provisions.

Reducing the Cost of Living

An MDP government will:-

Upgrade the Department of Trade and Industry, giving it a renewed focus.

Support the administration of the Price Control Programme.

Restrict the privatisation and monopoly control of essential services.

Support the increased production and use of locally produced foods.

Seek measures to reduce port charges.

Reduce the cost of electricity by renegotiating the price of fuel with suppliers, and implementation of electricity generation from wind turbines and a geothermal plant.

Reduce the cost of shipping by jetty extension and protection.

Land and Housing Policy

An MDP government will:-

Carry out a general assessment of the housing stock, relative to adequacy, hurricane resistance, exposure to possible extreme volcanic events and/or hurricanes, floods etc.

Within 1 year empty all emergency shelters and in 3 to 4 years provide housing for the 250 families who are on lists to be housed, and move our people beyond temporary and emergency accommodation to permanent housing solutions.

Provide affordable lots 4000 to 10,000 sq ft, made available by grants, lease purchase over 10 to 20 years or by land purchase loans with 5 to 8% interest charges.

Revise the system of land registration to make the process cheaper and to bring into use more of the undeveloped and unclaimed land in the northern safe area.

Renegotiate, for reduction of the cost of purchasing government housing units.

Provide low interest loans for low and medium income households.

Explore new, affordable and robust house construction technologies and products.

Encourage multiple dwelling and multiple floor buildings to increase living space per sq ft and per construction dollar. Designs will allow for future expansion of house and land space and facilitate home gardens.

Make a vigorous case to DFID for immediate restart and reform of the self-build grant program. We will request that grants include allocations for land acquisition, materials and labour.

Varying levels of assistance will be given according to assessed need. 30%, 50%, 75% or 100%.

Provide home improvement grants and loans.

Introduce a Social Welfare Rental Assistance.

Consider the exchange of lands to facilitate infrastructure development of roads and utilities. Promote new villages developments.

Introduce a housing program for young professionals and returning Montserratians (eg nurses, policemen, teachers, firemen, and junior civil servants. Expand the sheltered housing units at Look Out by another 20 units.

An MDP government will

- Make an approach to the UK government to revisit the soft mortgage loan scheme.

- Vigorously encourage local private initiatives to access investment funds for home construction.
- Urgently seek permanent housing solutions for the families still occupying temporary housing in such areas as Cheap End in St Peter's, Davy Hill, and Hope and Friths villages in Salem.

Review and revise the zoning of residential areas with a view to establishing appropriate covenants which are meant to allow economic activity, but also preserve the value of high quality real estate, in areas allocated to encourage this form of inward investment.

Support private developments and "retirement" housing and/or villas for tourism rental.

Investigate the morality of continuing demands for outstanding mortgages on destroyed properties in the exclusion zone and review the liabilities that may still rest with the insurers of these properties.

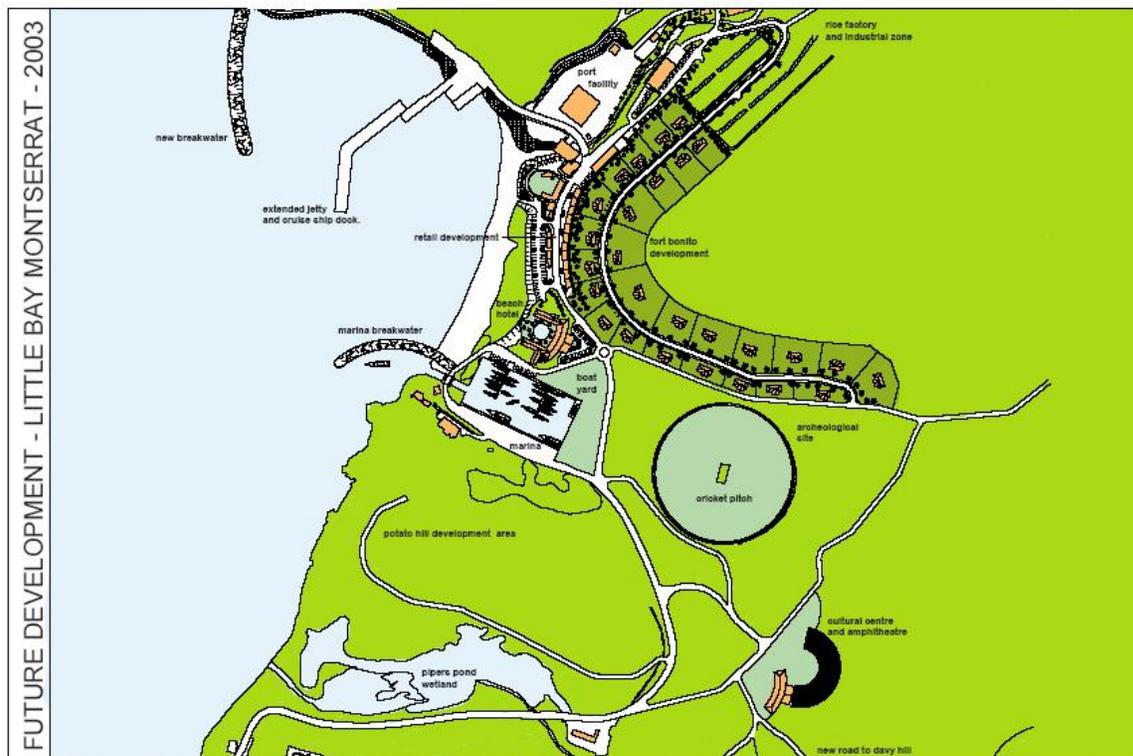
Infrastructure Development

Montserrat's development as a viable entity in the short, medium and long term is dependent on the urgent provision of basic transport infrastructure that will permit easy, adequate and hassle free access to the island by air and sea. The MDP will be relentless in the pursuit of the following:

A revised Physical Development Plan to meet our development needs.

An airport with a runway length not less than 1200 metres. A review of airport options will guide decisions on improving safety and air lift capacity in and out of Montserrat. This will include a period of assessment of the Old Quaw and Thatch Valley area, to determine wind patterns in that location.

Seaport facilities at Little Bay including a breakwater of sufficient scope to accommodate berths for cruise ships, roll-on roll-off freight carriers and yachts. Average depth of water alongside berths to be no less than 35 feet.



Until this facility is available, the creation of a marina and safe harbour in the location of the festival city area, to allow safe disembarkation of passengers from cruise ship tenders, will raise millions of dollars in revenues from day tours. This will increase further on completion of the substantive Port developments. Note that the proposed design of the marina/safe harbour will preserve access and use by the public of the entire beach at Little Bay.

The proposed \$30 million road programme will allow the people of Montserrat to carry out their daily routines in safety, and extend the life of their vehicles. More importantly, this programme would enhance the quality of cruise ship day tours as well as the villa and hotel tourism activities.

Land for infrastructure partnerships will guarantee the completion of good quality roads to all housing development areas, and roads to agricultural and industrial areas will drive the increased annual economic growth, which will be a feature of the MDP 5 year plan.

The MDP will seek to obtain funds to:

- (i) Properly pave the roads in residential areas that were hastily established during this volcanic crisis. Priority areas will include the Barzeys, St Peters Virgin Islands, Mongo Hill, Judy Piece, Jones Hill, lower to upper Drummonds, Peaceful Cottage and Dick Hill.
- (ii) Access roads will be cut into areas for new residential settlements. These include Banks, Davy Hill and St Johns.

Utilities Development

An MDP government will:-

- Ensure that all households have access to supplies of electricity and water at the most reasonable cost.
- Will seek DFID funding for the installation of essential services of water and electricity to housing areas.
- Work out an arrangement for the provider of electricity and water to shoulder the greater percentage of the initial capital cost of these services, thus offering a necessary incentive for increased home construction. The cost of installation to new buildings are to be recovered over up to 5 years, with an appropriate interest charge to protect the revenues of the provider.
- Take all necessary measures to protect those areas that contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of national water supplies.
- Encourage the construction of storage tanks and collecting systems for rainwater, and the construction of mini dams to provide drip irrigation to household gardens, by the tax incentives on these items.
- Encourage the export of bottled water by local entrepreneurs. Increased storage facilities will allow supply to docked cruise ships, and new housing and a industrial developments in the safe northern area.
- Prepare a Water IV Project to provide for increased storage and distribution systems in the Silver Hills, Blakes and Bottomless Ghaut areas.
- Given Montserrat's potential for the commercial exploitation of geothermal energy for electrical power generation and the ever increasing cost of oil, the MDP will seek to develop all sources of alternative energy that will reduce dependence on oil.

Geothermal Energy Development

The existence in Montserrat of steam above 200C at relatively shallow depths is very encouraging and data has revealed the existence of several major hydrothermal circulation systems on and around the Soufriere Hills volcano one of which is safely accessible at present in the Richmond - Elberton area of the current Daytime Access Zone. Exploratory drilling is estimated to cost not more than US\$1 million) with a view to developing a power plant of 5 megawatts capacity in the first instance. Capital cost of such a plant is estimated around US\$13 million and could be expected to have operating costs more than four times lower than current oil fired engine costs. Accordingly, an MDP government will pursue development of Montserrat's geothermal

power with utmost urgency and persistence as its successful exploitation should revolutionize life in Montserrat in terms of:-

- Providing access to cheap electrical power for all.
- Creation of an environment most attractive to a wide range of industries seeking cheap electricity.
- Generating the monetary resources that will free Montserrat from dependency on UK grant aid funds and contribute significantly to financing the island's infrastructural requirements.

Development of geothermal energy by an MDP government will be totally transparent in order to ensure that the financial benefits are shared by the entire Montserrat community.

An MDP government will maintain local control of the geothermal resource.

Agricultural Policy

The MDP will maximize the use of Montserrat agricultural resources with a view to supporting local farmers and reducing the importation of food. The measures it will implement to realize these goals include:

- Assisting with road access to and the clearance of suitable land in an environmentally friendly way for use by both crop and livestock farmers.
- Addressing the chronic problem of loose livestock. Steps will be taken to control livestock owners who allow their animals to roam and to ensure that livestock wardens, pound keepers and crop appraisers do their jobs properly and fairly.
- Providing subsidized fencing wire to all farmers and opening up markets for the export of livestock.
- To work in partnership with the Montserrat Animal Protection Society to control dogs that attack livestock.
- Employing a qualified vet as the island's Chief Veterinary Officer.
- Constructing the long overdue abattoir, thus ensuring that all livestock is slaughtered there. This will reduce the problem of the illegal sale of meat from stolen animals.
- Addressing the hazard to life and environment posed by the expanding population of loose and increasingly wild livestock in the exclusion zone by entering into arrangements with stake holders to utilize the animals for production of pet food locally.
- Access to low cost credit, provision of irrigation supplies and advice relative to maximum use of water for irrigation, plant disease control, marketing of produce and continuing assistance to agricultural cooperatives and related organizations within the industry.
- Constructing mini-dams in ghauts and river courses to enhance drip feeding systems to back yard gardens.
- Reinstating a proper Government plant nursery stocked with good quality vegetable slips and grafted fruit trees.
- Replacing the multipurpose food processing plant destroyed during the volcanic crisis. This will ensure processing of the large quantities of mangoes, guavas, breadfruit and other fruits that go to waste each year because no suitable processing facility is available.

- Providing support for individuals who wish to set up and promote hydroponic farming systems.
- Protecting local crop farmers against the importation of vegetables when necessary.

An MDP government will :-

Introduce modern technologies and marketing approaches through "agri for all" curricula in schools, starting from early primary years. Institute formal agriculture education through certificate courses at the Community College.

Establish partnerships with charitable development agencies with interest in pioneering ways to renew agriculture in the Caribbean and Africa.

Establish partnerships in a production and marketing network across the OECS, using experts and experienced business people to access markets in neighbouring islands for our produce.

FISHERIES

An MDP government will:-

Provide training and financial assistance to fishermen to enable them to learn new techniques and to increase the returns for their efforts. This will include preparation of a project to bring a fishing trawler training vessel to Montserrat.

Complete a safe harbor at Little Bay for the boats of fishermen. This safe harbour/marina is expected to have permanent berths for 20 yachts and 10 sports fishing boats.

Education

An MDP government's education policy will include the following:

Improvement of literacy

Promotion of computer literacy and language skills in Spanish and French from kindergarten level with an immersion approach. Support the placement of a computer in every home.

Support for community programmes by the provision of equipment and trained personnel, to encourage as many citizens as possible to acquire computer skills. Our children can learn more programs from an early age and senior citizens can be engaged in computer programs or games. Children of parents who cannot afford a computer at home would not be at a disadvantage, because this service could be offered in community centres and churches.

Vocational training to build technical skills base. Electricians, plumbers, engineers, technician, mechanics, carpenters, architects, computer technicians.

Re-introduction of religious education now offered by CXC as part of the secondary school curriculum. To be delivered by properly trained religious education teachers.

Introduction of Civic studies and Democracy and Human Rights education in the schools curriculum.

Support of pastoral care, special education, learning support, mentoring and disaster risk perception.

Provision of tax concessions to parents paying college or university fees for children attending these institutions.

Grants and scholarships for students attending the technical college and other institutions.

Sponsored awards for every class and provide government scholarships for at least the top three students.

Providing subsidy incentives to youth, women and/or employers to widen the range of training opportunities available on island.

Establishment of a continuing consultation process within the island community to ensure that information on local job opportunities is communicated to Montserratians abroad who may want to fill these vacancies.

Reintroduction of supervised extracurricular sports sessions and a school band.

Promotion of discipline and community service by encouraging participation in parent - teacher association activities, and other extra curricular activities such as scouting, girl guides, St Johns Ambulance Brigade, and the Cadet Corps.

Encourage Talent search and development education in arts, music, drama, media, and sports. Arrange coaching clinics, artists in residence and cultural promotions.

Establish partnerships and twinning ventures with similar programmes elsewhere (also with an eye to marketing our talent and productions).

Health Improvement

A properly managed health service which provides primary and secondary care services is essential. This is necessary for adequate care of medical and surgical emergencies, the care of elderly persons who do not wish to travel overseas and also needed to encourage visitors and retired persons, who wish to be full or part time residents, to feel comfortable in Montserrat.

An MDP government will :-

Fill the vacant post of Chief Medical Officer

Secure the services of an obstetrician /gynaecologist

Appoint a physiotherapist

Upgrade the accident and emergency department and provide it with a minor operating theatre.

Train nurses locally.

Revise and increase allowances and remuneration for nurses and all health staff.

Make arrangements for adequate eye care services.

Monitor ash and dust levels (PPM) throughout the island regularly.

Provide an air conditioned high dependency care ward for critically ill patients. Provide a separate inpatient area for children. Provide semi-private and private beds.

Introduce a National Health Insurance Scheme.

Improve community-based care for the elderly, especially in terms of healthy nutrition.

Reassess and reform mental health care.

Utilize retired nurses as a pool of expertise that can be tapped for home care of elderly.

Support government in partnership with community based and voluntary organizations as a cooperative network of support for the poor and for those in need of assisted living and health services.

Review and reform approaches to HIV/AIDS, HPV, H5N1, diabetes, cancer, asthma and other potential epidemic challenges. This activity to be coordinated by a Health Promotion and Research Unit in the Ministry of Health.

Sports & Recreational Facilities

The importance of these facilities cannot be over-emphasized.

Other than the recreation ground serving the Salem area, no similar facility exists in any other part of the island. Where physically possible, the MDP is committed to establish or support the establishment of multi-purpose recreation facilities in the three remaining village centres on island. (i) St Peter's, (ii) Baker Hill to Brades, (iii) Davy Hill to St Johns and Look Out.

Village recreation areas will incorporate space for athletics (via an external running track), cricket, football, basketball/netball and lawn tennis. Furthermore, there will be a great incentive for youth to use their energies in sports that will build both body and character instead of using their spare time to engage in socially destructive activities.

An MDP government will begin preparations for sending a Montserrat team to the 2012 Olympics in London.

An MDP government will encourage maximum development of the surrounding Blakes area as a major sports centre with facilities to include tennis and basketball courts, a golf course and conveniently sited villas to house visitors.

Sports and recreation facilities will be designed and equipped for use as emergency shelters, so that schools and churches will no longer be needed for such purposes.

Culture & Festivals

An MDP government will :-

Support research and documentation of our Montserrat culture with a view to heritage preservation, resolution of identity issues and establishing links with tourism and other aspects of development.

Encourage the production of local speciality products including gift items, drinks, snacks, and other foodstuffs, for local use and export.

Promote all aspects of entertainment and assist musicians, masquerades and other performers to perfect their skills and access income opportunities from local and overseas markets. Special financing will be provided for a monthly national entertainment event to encourage all year round work for artisans, calypsonians, dancers and dramatists.

Actively pursue international radio and television links to market local productions overseas with a view to gaining a larger share of the global advertising revenues.

Youth Programmes

An MDP government will formally adopt the proposed National Youth Policy of Montserrat and put in place mechanisms which will allow the youth to have inputs in the formulation of national policy.

We will implement the recommendations for economic participation of our youth, for their education and training, sports and recreation, and participation in cultural activities.

We will implement recommendations for health promotion and health care, control of drugs, violence and crime, and participation in religious activities, clubs and non-governmental organizations.

A Youth and Community Development Officer will be appointed in the office of the Chief Minister.

An MDP government will arrange at least two joint parliamentary sessions each year with the Youth Parliament.

Public Cemeteries

Public and private church cemeteries are essential parts of community infrastructure. Government should ensure that public cemeteries are strategically located in a manner that is most convenient for the entire Montserrat community.

An MDP government will

- Establish public cemeteries to serve the respective areas of (i) Cudjoe Head/Banks/Baker Hill/Cavalla Hill/ Nixons/Brades, (ii) Davy Hill/St John's/Mongo Hill/Geralds/Look Out and adjacent areas. iii St Peters
- Ensure that the public cemetery at Salem will be supervised and maintained in a manner reflecting modern practice. Another site will be identified and reserved against the day when this relatively small location is used up.

Environmental Issues

The MDP is fully committed to the protection, preservation and restoration of our environment where necessary. It will upgrade and enact an Environmental Protection Act to ensure this. Projects will include:

- The re-forestation/rehabilitation of the entire area north of the Little Bay / Marguerita Bay line, which is a national necessity. This area is approximately 1200 acres. It is estimated that implementing a comprehensive programme of rehabilitation and re-forestation will provide employment for 75-100 persons for an average period of 5 -7 years. Financing may be obtained in part from the many private and international organizations that are always willing to support environmental projects. Restoration of the tree cover through natural re-growth and organized implanting of trees will re-establish the forest and contribute to increased levels of rainfall.
- Introducing legislation to curb indiscriminate tree cutting.
- Following up on the contact already made with a North American Centre that specialises in the creation of artificial wetlands, with a view to modifying the sewage disposal plans for the Look Out area, thus creating at Marguerita Bay, a fertile clean area for recreation that will be a unique tourist attraction.
- Controlling the now large numbers of loose livestock of all kinds that are damaging the environment, thus protecting Montserrat's many micro climatic zones. Proper management of these zones will allow for increased horticulture, controlled livestock grazing and tree cropping.
- Eradicating the feral pigs that are preying on marine turtle eggs and pose a threat to fresh water springs and humans. Marine turtles are an important potential tourist resource. By not protecting them adequately, Montserrat is in breach of its international treaty obligations.
- Controlling littering generally and sand mining at beaches.
- Implementing an effective and non-discriminatory garbage collection programme.
- Exploring opportunities for exporting exotic flowers to other Caribbean islands and North America.
- Opening up trails for hiking and encouraging coastline rod fishing thus improving recreational facilities.
- There is a great need for proper waste disposal facilities on Montserrat. An MDP government will take appropriate measures to improve the garbage dump at Jack

Boy Hill with a land fill facility that is both hygienic and in keeping with international practices.

Public Administration

Montserrat is blessed with some of the best educated and well trained public servants in the western hemisphere. However, a competent public service also requires high quality leadership at the political level as the political directorate must provide leadership that is creative, innovative, trustworthy, bold and sympathetic.

An MDP government will provide this type of leadership, putting in place some of the basic management systems operated by many of the world's most successful private and public sector organizations.

All public sector employees will be encouraged to make use of opportunities for training where possible to enhance their competence on the job as well as for their own self-satisfaction.

An MDP government will upgrade and build a cadre of top managers by creating posts in the public and private sector with challenging responsibilities and appropriate attractive remuneration packages.

Telecommunications

The contract which designates Cable & Wireless (C&W) as Montserrat's telecommunications monopoly provider ends in 2007. In carrying out any negotiations with C&W or any other telecom provider, an MDP government is committed to obtain the best terms and conditions for Montserrat.

In keeping with OECS policy, the telecom market will be liberalized thus ending monopolies in this sector, we will demand :-

- Services made available by telecom providers must be reliable, high quality and affordable.
- That providers utilize the advances in telecom technology e.g. broadband infrastructure and applications, in delivering quality and affordable service.
- Major reductions in the price of international calls and other services.
- The best possible technical and financial advice in taking forward these negotiations.
- End of long term franchises such as those awarded in the past.

Transportation

An MDP government will:-

- Introduce a Ferry service for day tours to and from Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis, Guadeloupe and St. Martin.
- Provide facilities to allow the safe docking of tenders from cruise ships.
- Negotiate with Winair a reduction in airfares to Antigua of \$150 for a day return ticket and \$250 for an open return ticket.
- Negotiate the end of the monopoly air service to allow operations by other airlines into Montserrat.
- Implement a road safety programme with appropriately placed road barriers, sun screens, signs, side walks, bus stops and rain shelters.
- Subsidize bus travel for elderly persons and children.
- Give additional concessions to bus drivers who participate in a scheduled bus service from 6 am to midnight.

Immigration Policy

An MDP government will:-

- Foster harmony through policies based on a foundation of justice and fairness. There will be respect for the legitimate rights of indigenous people and non-nationals.
- Create an immigration service separate from the police service.
- Amend immigration laws so that they are consistent with the post volcano situation in Montserrat.
- Demand that customs and immigration officials treat locals, tourists, visitors, guest workers and other non-nationals with politeness, hospitality, respect and fairness at all times.
- Make the process for visa acquisition and extensions more rational and easy. Fees will be reviewed, the period of permits will be increased from 3 months to 6 months and permits for 1 year will be given after 3 years of residency.
- Make vigorous representation on behalf of individuals who have been unjustly denied citizenship and attempt to make arrangements for all children of Montserratian fathers to be entitled to citizenship, to ensure that no child remains stateless.
- Appoint an immigration ombudsman to address intractable problems.

Regional Affairs

An MDP government's long term goal is for Montserrat to share a common economic space with all CARICOM territories and the European Union as future economic stability will require participation in global economic activities.

In the short term, an MDP government will guide Montserrat's entry into the Caricom Single Market Economy under the OECS umbrella, but with derogations to match our economic situation due to the volcanic crisis.

Montserrat must negotiate special arrangements with the OECS that is in the process of entering the CSME. The objective is not for us to seek handouts but to be assisted in achieving reasonable viability. MDP has a clear vision as to how these negotiations should be structured at both OECS and CSME.

Constitutional & Legal Issues

An MDP government will:

- Review the reports of the ongoing constitutional talks and the draft proposed constitution. We will ensure comprehensive discussion with the public at all stages of the process and negotiation with the British Government will be by a bi-partisan team of Montserratians with the expertise to ensure that the most favourable terms are secured for the island, including constitutional advancement and self determination.
- Embark on a comprehensive law reform exercise to modernize Montserrat's many antiquated and, in some cases, unjust laws.
- Establish a Human Rights Commission on Montserrat.

MDP Legislative Programme

- Standing Orders update - Parliamentary calendar, question time, private members' bills
- Integrity Legislation
- 1989 Constitution Order Amendment Act
- Monopolies Act
- Montserrat Development Corporation Act
- Public Companies and Statutory Bodies Act
- Unclaimed Land Act
- Minimum Wage and Unemployment Benefit Act
- Educational Institutions Act
- Compensation for Investment in Public Facilities and Roads Act
- Environmental Quality Act plants, forests etc
- Natural Resources Act
- Tribunal and Ombudsman Act
- Agricultural Land Commission Act
- Public Transportation Levy Act
- Social Welfare Act
- Health Services Improvement Act
- Mental Health Act
- Volcanic Disaster Response Act
- Parental Responsibility Act
- Child Protection Act
- Civil Liability and Protection Act
- Energy Conservation Act
- Immigration Service Act
- Montserrat Nationality Act
- Telecommunication Act
- Civil Rights and Democracy Act
- Freedom of Information Act