

MARK J.

INTRODUCTION AND SALUTATIONS

Madam Chair,

Eighty-six years, Comrades! For 86 years we have been ending our political year and starting a brand new one by celebrating the anniversary of the beginning of this noble movement, the People's National Party.

This year... PNP river come down bank to bank! What energy! What a spirit in this place! Anywhere that 'the word is love', it can be felt! I feel it right here in the National Arena.

I greet:

- My wife Sandra and our children your love has been steadfast, true and sustaining. Thank you for always being here.
- The people of South St. Andrew who have shown me the possibilities that come with making meaningful CHANGE in the lives of our people.
- Our guests from the Diplomatic and Consular Corps
- Our visitors from overseas, especially our powerful Diaspora who have come to Jamaica for this Conference.
- The officers, Executive Members, NEC members, Regional Committees, Members of Parliament, Counsellors, Candidates, Constituency Committees, Group members and their chairs, cluster managers, workers, warriors, foot soldiers - all members and supporters who play a role to make this People's National Party function!
- The teams at the PNP Headquarters and the Office of the Leader of the Opposition;
- Members of the media providing coverage for this joyous occasion;
- In particular, I want to provide a word of comfort to those ravaged by Hurricane Beryl in July this year - in particular the people of Clarendon,

Southern Manchester, St Elizabeth and Westmoreland.

• I welcome those listening to us from your homes and communities, in Jamaica and wherever you are in the world....

In Ecclesiastes 3 v 1 it says – "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." Well, I stand before you today and say, the time has come for CHANGE.





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PNP & CHANGE

Yes, Comrades, it is time once again for Jamaica to choose CHANGE. Things cannot continue the way they are, and the People's National Party will bring CHANGE.

Comrades, the PNP has been at the centre of positive change in this country from 1938, over twenty years before political independence from Britain. Over the years our leaders implemented a vision that led Jamaica forward. It is undeniable - the People's National Party has led Jamaica through every stage of its transition to a modern nation state.

Founding father, Norman Washington Manley, led political change, including universal adult suffrage, political independence and nationhood. Michael Manley led the transformational social change that empowered Jamaicans to stand firm and shout from the mountain tops "I might be a simple man... but simply a man am I". Equal pay for women was transformational social change. The no bastard law was transformational social change. Minimum wage was transformational social change. And rights for workers was transformational social change.

Percival James Patterson delivered a vast range of achievements for the Jamaican people. He led infrastructure change, reminding this country that the road to development is indeed the development of roads. He was the chief visionary behind the modern highway network. And he became Jamaica's most successful political leader. That is why we still say PJ. Portia Lucretia Simpson Miller led the economic change that others are now claiming, and time come for Sista P to get the credit she deserves. Let us never forget her, the JLP Government ran from every test, and drove the country into a deep crisis. It was under

Sista P that we turned that around and put the economy firmly on track. And while navigating the necessary sacrifices, she always showed love for the people. That love is reflected in her powerful instruction, "never look down on a person unless you are going to lift them up". This is the heartbeat of the message from Sista P.

Dr. Peter David Phillips was the principal architect of our nation's successful fiscal transformation. His hands were on the financial wheel when Jamaica worked our way from under the heavy yoke of unsustainable public debt, creating new vistas of opportunity for realising our full potential.

We are where we are today as a nation because the team of Portia Simpson Miller and Peter Phillips guided us through the most turbulent times. We commit today as a Party to forever defend their great legacy.

The works of our former leaders inspire us to deliver a better life for all Jamaicans, guided by our progressive principles of equality and justice, and built a firm foundation of utmost integrity!

Our leaders have inspired us to move forward, to make new decisions for new times. We are now in a new phase of global change and uncertainty that, more than ever, must be navigated by strong, principled leadership. Together, we will continue our noble mission, with our next stop being Jamaica House. Jamaica is ready. We are ready. The PNP is more than ready...!

Today, as President of the People's National Party, humbly and respectfully, I make it clear to all Jamaicans and the world...WE CHOOSE CHANGE. Our twenty-first century mandate is one of CHANGE for Jamaica Land we Love. Together, we will deliver on that mandate.







MY PHILOSOPHY ON CHANGE

I want to say something about where I am coming from, as a teenager and young adult, I spent time on the Jamaican streets. I loved the rhythms and energy of our culture. My world view was inspired by the music and culture of Jamaica, as much as by anything I ever read. In the streets and dances I saw, heard and felt the need for our society to change.

I met the love of my life on one of those moves, and on the first night we met, we ended up in a dance competition and won a dinner for two at a restaurant Downtown. So you could say that we danced our way into each other's lives, we have been rocking it together for 40 years ever since, with 3 children and a beautiful granddaughter.

I grew up in a home environment which believed in giving the most vulnerable people opportunities to live their best lives. My father had the vision to build the country's leading centre for the rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, and my parents dedicated their careers to empowering and uplifting that community. My father also founded the Hope Valley Experimental School with the mission for children from all walks of life, able-bodied and disabled, to learn together, play together and grow together.

Those who could not walk had the same opportunities as those who could. There was no place for discrimination where I grew up. I born-and-grow with the understanding that whatever your colour, class or creed,

people are people. That is what I know. Never look down on someone unless you are lifting them up. This speaks to engendering positive values and attitudes in a nation, by making our most vulnerable our most valuable. A caring nation requires moral leadership that puts people first.

These experiences taught me that, as donkey say, "the world nuh level", and that the system had to change if this was going to change. So, I have grown and lived the tenets of the People's National Party. No doubt, that is what led me here!







TIME COME

Time Come for us to recognize the rights of all Jamaicans. No child should be excluded from school or adult from work because they wear locks, and no Government should ever fight in court to defend any rule that excludes a Rasta child for wearing locks.

Time Come to complete the re-imagining of our ganja industry, liberating small farmers and bringing them into the centre of our policy to make the industry work for all Jamaicans.

Time Come to give our people access to rivers and beaches for their recreation, to de-stress and enjoy the natural beauty of their island home.

Time Come to eliminate abusive labour practices, like the device of contract work in the public and private sector that denies workers their basic employment benefits.

Time come to once again provide affordable housing for our people, and to regularise the land ownership of thousands who have lived without secure tenure for decades.

Time come for a liveable wage that adjusts with inflation, so that a basic quality of life is assured to all our workers. and to do more for our long suffering pensioners

Time come for a fair deal for our teachers, our police officers, our nurses, our firemen and our correctional officers, who serve the public and deserve to be treated with respect.

We have work to do! I know these things are possible with the will and skills to achieve them. These are part of the mission of the next PNP government. The Prime Minister just needs to fly the gate! Call it, Andrew, call it....and I will sound the trumpet! Choosing CHANGE

After eight long years, the people have had enough – the captain and his ship are sinking, and his sailors are bailing out. Jamaican governance has become more coarse, more corrupt and more corrosive. Jamaicans have lost confidence in the future of our country and its leadership. They feel unsafe for their families and themselves; they feel economically deprived and insecure; they feel under-appreciated, taken advantage of, and hopeless.

This government is failing the people, but help is on the way, my fellow Jamaicans. Better is possible, and better must come!

TIME COME AND WE CHOOSE CHANGE!





NEW CONSTITUTION:

CHANGE.





NEW CONSTITUTION: AT THE CORE OF CHANGE

Cdes, last year, Jamaica embarked upon a formal process of constitutional reform, and formed a committee. The people were excluded from the design of the process, and did not trust it.

The PNP is very clear on our positions, on points of principle. Our representatives on the committee did not sign the report of the committee, because we do not agree with some of its recommendations. I will share some of these with you.

First, the reformed constitution will establish the role of a President to replace the Governor General. We have no problem with that! The President plays a critical role in appointments to sensitive positions of the State, and must be perceived as independent of partisan politics. The President must enjoy the trust and confidence of the society as a whole.

Therefore, if there is no consensus between the Government and the Opposition on who the President will be, the PNP does not support the appointment being made by a simple majority vote of both Houses of Parliament. That, effectively, is what the majority on the committee have recommended. That approach would effectively mean that a Prime Minister can choose the President who he or she wants; someone who favours their political party. That would compromise the independence, trust and confidence that the President should enjoy. No way! That is not in the best interests of Jamaica.

We also insist that an impeachment procedure be included in the reformed Constitution, to hold delinquent parliamentarians to account. The two parties were originally committed to this. I tabled the Impeachment Bill in Parliament in April 2021, but the Government has chosen to ignore it for 1,237 days!

Accountability is not a priority for them, as it is for the PNP. The JLP has flip-flopped, and impeachment is excluded from the report.

We also support full decolonization now, not a piecemeal approach. No more foreign king as our head of state; and no more inaccessible final court on the other side of the world that decides our laws in the name of a foreign king. We want a final court that is accessible to our people, so that they can get justice.

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) is doing this for the people of Barbados, Guyana, Belize, Dominica and St. Lucia, and those countries are doing well. Time Come for the Jamaican people to have the fundamental right of access to high-quality justice at the highest level.

Those are some of the key reasons why the PNP did not sign that report. The PNP is very committed to constitutional reform. When we form government, we will restart the process, but in an inclusive way.

We will invite the people to participate in a meaningful conversation about how we can enrich Jamaica's democracy by making our leaders more accountable to the people, how we can make the processes of government more transparent to the people, and how we can empower the people through a more participatory model of local government.





CHANGE MEANS ACCOUNTABILITY: LOCALLY & NATIONALLY

We are committed to completing the local government reforms which we embarked on when we were last in government. We will implement the commitments made in our Local Government Election Manifesto to empower our municipalities to deliver high-quality government and services to the people.

Jamaicans are tired of the impunity of those who hold political power. Public officials must be held accountable! There must be transparency and openness in the conduct of national affairs, and reasonable protection of privacy in personal affairs.

I am very concerned about the insidious abuse of the Data Protection Act by State officials to restrict disclosure of potentially damning information in which there is strong and legitimate public interest.

First it was to hide the details about years of waste of taxpayers' money to make massive rental payments for an unoccupied building to the private owner. Then it was to hide information about salaries being paid both to the former DPP whose extension was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and to person appointed to act as DPP pending a permanent appointment.

There is no accountability for non-performance in this JLP Administration. Government negligently allows critical boards and tribunals to grind to a halt because of failure to make appointments when the terms of the Boards expire. The Early Childhood Commission, the Access to Information Appeals Tribunal, and even the Public Service Commission itself, are all examples of the Government falling asleep on the job. And Ministers desperately try to pass the buck when a passenger falls sick and dies at our largest airport without any prompt medical response or ambulance to take him to hospital in time to save his life.

Corruption is rampant at the highest levels. You will remember during my budget presentation when they tried to prevent me from saying some critical things about governance, even shutting down the sitting of Parliament. I went on the street and said what I had to say, and I will say it here again:

"...The failure to disclose the identity of the so-called "illicit six" MPs who are under investigation by the Integrity Commission for illicit enrichment remains a festering sore, only made worse by the Prime Minister's gag order on Cabinet Ministers speaking publicly on these matters."





Wait comrades, I need to rewrite this part. It is no longer six; it has gone to eight. So let me say that again - "...The failure to disclose the identity of the so-called "illicit eight" MPs who are under investigation by the Integrity Commission for illicit enrichment remains a festering sore, only made worse by the Prime Minister's gag order on Cabinet Ministers speaking publicly on these matters."

Comrades, I had to hurry up and say it the second time, because by the time we finish here today it could become twelve, the way how the number of Labourite "illicits" a multiplylike gremlins!

And now we have another Integrity Commission report on the Prime Minister, sent to Parliament but still not tabled for the public to see, with little bits of it being selectively leaked to JLP-allied media houses. We will put a stop to such shenanigans! We will change the law so that all Integrity Commission reports must be published on Parliament's website within 24 hours being sent to Parliament, and all Jamaicans can read the reports.

Time Come to change these things. Accountability and transparency matter. That is change. When the PNP forms government, our job is to create an environment in which all Jamaicans can thrive and achieve their version of the Jamaican Dream.





AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Every Jamaican must feel cared-for and enabled. We must invest and build an efficient and caring public service, with shorter wait times, giving value for the taxes you pay. We want a Jamaica where our people don't pray to migrate to foreign, because "ah yah so nice". People deserve much more than is happening now.

We want garbage moved from our gates; street lights that work; sewage in pipes underground and not running in the streets; clean piped water in our homes; roads that don't mash up the vehicle's front-end; public health facilities that treat people with dignity and provide good and affordable health care; schools that give every child a strong basic education so they can go on to pursue whatever career they choose; and we want to feel safe in your homes and communities.

While there is no magic wand to do everything at once, the PNP in government will prioritise the things that the people are crying out for every day. And we will ensure that public resources are not scraped away in corruption for friends and cronies, but are only used for the benefit of the people.

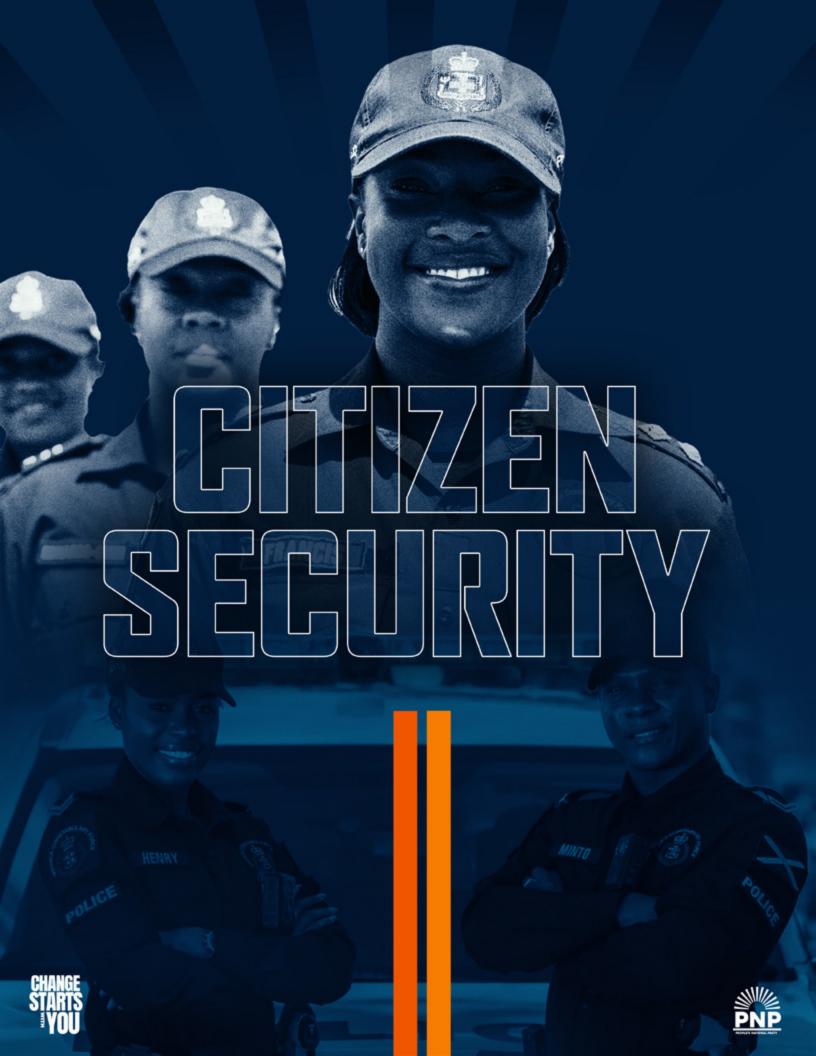
PNP'S CHANGE AGENDA

My fellow Jamaicans, the PNP will apply a mix of CHANGE policies to put things right. We are ready to move forward on a new path.

The PNP's talent pool is deep and wide, with the right mix of experience, skill, expertise, energy, and commitment to transform Jamaica! We are ready to take the bold steps necessary to make Jamaicans' lives better, and we have a plan.







CITIZEN SECURITY

Jamaica has one of the highest murder rates in the world, and our first priority will be strengthening and enabling communities for safety and security.

The PNP's vision for citizen security is built on a foundation of community partnership and empowerment. We are committed to an optimal blend of effective law enforcement with community-driven solutions, to create a safer Jamaica.

Our strategy targets the root causes of crime, to deliver results that sustainably reduce violence. A balanced approach to crime reduction is at the core of our strategy. Our approach recognizes that public safety is best achieved when enforcement and prevention are working in harmony.

Unlike this Government, we have a plan. They shut down Unite for Change and the Peace Management Initiative, and crime shot through the roof. We will not neglect the need for community engagement and outsource it to the private sector.

We will partner with the private sector, churches and civil society to roll out a national programme of effective, holistic and sustainable community programmes. And we will not ignore the reality that our prison system needs an overhaul, so it rehabilitates inmates rather than producing more hardened criminals.

Our portfolio teams for Citizens Security, Education, Social Transformation, Culture and Sports have been taking a joined-up approach, working together.

We will invest heavily to increase the number of Social Workers in communities, tasked with addressing core social problems like school absenteeism, teenage parenting and student hunger.

We will ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable children, elderly and infirm Jamaicans are responded to by the State. Therapeutic counselling will be integrated into intervention programmes, to combat the culture of violence and trauma.





We will provide at-risk youths with viable alternatives to criminal activity, investing in remedial education, job training and youth development programmes. The next PNP government will

revisit and revamp the Social Development Commission, originated by the Rt Excellent Norman Manley, to once again become a catalyst for sustainable community development.

We envision community-based training programmes in construction skills, coding and software development, dramatic performance, art, music, design, filmmaking, sound engineering and sport. This will engage more young people in productive tasks and provide lawful alternative pathways for youths to make a good living. This integrated approach will lay the groundwork for sustainable peace and progress in our communities.

We will pass legislation to allow targeted detentions under court supervision for known producers of violence on whom there is credible intelligence. This will enable effective cases to be built, leading to successful prosecutions.

Our proactive, interventionist social policy will also help to support our economic policy, and I will now turn to that.







ECONOMIC DIVERSITY & STABILITY





ECONOMIC DIVERSITY & STABILITY

My fellow Jamaicans, we are at a crossroads in our nation's economic history. The country faces two distinct economic choices. Jamaica under the current Government will continue down the path where only a few benefit, and most Jamaicans face hard times, frustration and hopelessness.

We remain committed to macroeconomic stability and prudent fiscal management, to ensure debt sustainability. Never forget that the last PNP Administration did the heavy lifting to enable Jamaica to reduce its debt to GDP ratio by half in just 10 years. But while that is necessary, it is clearly not sufficient. Our national sacrifices and fiscal success must deliver real improvement in the lives of our people. Everybody must benefit. No one should be left behind.

We will build out our vision of Jamaica becoming a global maritime and aviation logistics hub. Jamaica must capitalise on our unique geographical position, adjacent to the Panama Canal and at the heart of international trade routes.

We will build-out clusters of logistics-related activities to increase quality, well-paying jobs and expand the economy, driving further investment in logistics-related industries. Our aim is to transform Jamaica into a premier trade and logistics hub, the gateway to the Americas and a cornerstone of growth in regional and hemispheric trade.

We need to create a more balanced, resilient economy in an era of growing food insecurity. Look out for our transformation of agriculture and the blue economy to drive rural development. We must invest in farm roads, cold storage facilities, irrigation systems, deepening the use of technology, marketing support and expanded access to affordable loan finance for farmers.

We will forge collaborative relationships with the large private sector players in poultry, agro-processing, milk and livestock production, to improve and increase their already significant contribution. We will partner with CASE and other research institutions to develop productivity-boosting projects, and improve planting stock, animal genetics and farming systems, animal husbandry and agronomy.

We will boost our own research facilities at Bodles, Orange River and Montpellier. Experts in each sector will provide the blue-print required by our farmers to grow the sector, so as to ensure food security for our nation.









ENERGISING CHANGE

Energy is fundamental to the economic development of our country. Remember their 2016 promise of big power plants and big energy companies to lower light bills in Jamaica? Well, they are nowhere to be seen.

This JLP government has failed to bring on board any new renewable capacity. We are tired of the promises from the Government year after year. We will get it done. We have done it before, and we will do it again. And the price of electricity is too high! We will get it down.

We will invest in regularising electricity usage in communities where throw-ups are the norm, with the State underwriting most of the cost of rewiring, inspection and certification, and providing solar capacity pooled into community micro-grids to reduce household electricity bills among newly regularised customers.

The current JPSCo Licence is coming to an end, so we have an opportunity, indeed a duty, to ensure that a more responsive and forward-looking approach to customers' needs and the resilience of the country's transmission and distribution system is taken.











INFRASTRUCTURE

DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL

CHANGE means enabling families to own land and afford proper housing. Land and housing are fundamental development priorities. In celebration of our first female Prime Minister, we will bring forth the PORTIA initiative, which is the Programme for Orderly Renewal and Transformation of Infrastructure in all Areas.

This programme will drive policies that 'Sista P' stood for - improving infrastructure in old housing schemes; tearing down zinc fences in communities and replacing them with concrete walls, completing the infrastructure and land titling for existing land tenure regularisation schemes, and rolling our new ones to bring hope and decent living conditions in areas of social neglect.

Our beloved Sista P will smile as the next PNP government improves sidewalks for persons with disabilities, provides housing assistance to needy citizens, and beautifies communities where our people live.

The next PNP government will also make lands available to the NHT for qualified contributors, so that they can build their own homes. From day-one we are going to restore the core mandate of the NHT. We will stop the extraction of funds from the NHT. We will return to providing affordable houses for our people.

We plan a comprehensive review of all laws relating to housing to find ways to make housing more affordable for all Jamaicans. These initiatives are all about balancing books and people's lives, something that Sista P always spoke about and believed in.

Jamaica must emerge from an economy characterised by low growth, low wages, low technology and low productivity, and to do that we must CHOOSE CHANGE.







INCLUSIVE EDUCATION





INCLUSIVE EDUCTION

Investing in human development is the key to this, and when it comes to education, the PNP's conviction remains the same. Education remains at the top of our priority list.

We are committed to building an education system that is inclusive, equitable, and excellent. Bold steps and real investment are needed to ensure that every child, from the earliest years through to tertiary education, has the opportunity to succeed.

We have the plan, and we are ready. Today, I reaffirm the PNP's commitment to excellence in education. Our approach to early childhood education will provide performance-based incentives for Early Childhood facilities. At the primary and secondary levels, we will implement a comprehensive programme that provides targeted support at each level of the curriculum.

Expanding access to Tertiary Education is a critical part of the mix. I have long advocated for the removal of guarantors for student loans, a policy that the government has eventually adopted. This was a significant step forward. We are in full support, because we put the interests of the Jamaican people first.

As the Party of ideas and implementation, we will take this a step further. We believe education must not be a burden of debt but a bridge to a better future. We will make student loans more borrower-friendly. Graduates will only begin to repay their loans once they are employed.

Monthly payments will be capped at an affordable percentage of monthly income of graduates. In times between jobs, payment will be deferred and tacked onto the back end of the loan period, without penalties. This will remove the fear and reluctance among young people to borrow to invest in their education, and it 'free up' young professionals to build their careers.

Teachers are the backbone of the education system, and we must show that we truly value them and do whatever is necessary to persuade them to stay. A student loan forgiveness programme will be provided for our teachers, based on their years of service in the system.

What we have in mind is that one year of payments on their student loan will be forgiven for every year they remain employed in the public education system.





Making necessary investments in Vocational Training is also critical for Jamaica to move up the value chain. This starts at the secondary level.

Every secondary school will offer a cluster of vocational offerings, and will be equipped with state-of-the-art vocational labs. These labs will provide hands-on training in critical skills during the day for our students, and will be open to adults in the evenings, promoting lifelong learning and skills development.

We also need to incentivize businesses to invest in training. Here is our plan. We propose that HEART matches, dollar for dollar, the amount that a business spends on training. This will incentivize and expand business training programmes, even beyond current employees.

We see a dynamic partnership between the State and the Private Sector to transform national productivity, rapidly developing our capacity to absorb investments that create well-paying, high value-added jobs for our people.







RESTORING WELLNESS





RESTORING WELLNESS

It cannot be denied that to have a strong and productive economy, we must have a healthy population.

Every Jamaican has joined in the sacrifices to reduce the country's debt. Our people ought to be repaid with a health sector that treats every Jamaican with dignity, not burdened with long waiting times, people sleeping on floors or chairs because no beds are available to admit them to hospital when they are sick, and heavy charges for outsourced diagnostic tests that cost an arm and a leg because the equipment in the public health system is not being maintained.

Millions of dollars are being spent on marketing a broken health system to make everything look fine and dandy. Popularity is being prioritised over the health of our people.

Under this Government, the Cornwall Regional Hospital is barely functioning. The latest pricetag we heard for its refurbishing was \$22 billion dollars, when 2\$ billion was originally to be spent, but no-one has been held accountable under the current regime. It is scandalous, and is putting additional pressure on the rest of the health system to try to cover for this major facility being out of action for so long.

We choose CHANGE, and here is what we will do:

- We know that prevention is much better, less costly and always faster than cure. We will focus on primary care to detect and treat diabetes, high blood pressure and other chronic diseases, and screen for early detection and treatment of cancer. The goal is to treat patients well before they get so sick that they need to be admitted to hospital.
- We will reform procurement and inventory management in the health sector, to ensure value for money and give healthcare workers the necessary tools to do their jobs properly.
- We will train teams of biomedical engineers to repair and maintain broken X-ray and ultrasound machines, CAT scans and ventilators and keep them in working order, so that patients have access to them when they need it most.
- We will expand urgent care services, to reduce overcrowding and long waiting times in emergency departments.
- It is a disgraceful blot on this Government's record that maternal and child death rates are higher today than they were in 1995. Jamaica is going backwards under this Government. Mothers and babies are dying.

What happen, Andrew – how come you're not hearing the dead babies now? The PNP will prioritise the procurement of Intensive care units, providing critical care for mothers, babies and the general population.





THE WORD IS LOVE... OUR PEOPLE, OUR POWER, OUR FUTURE!

My fellow Jamaicans, I have provided you with an understanding of the direction we plan to take Jamaica forward. Effective governance built on integrity, and honest communication with the Jamaican people, are principles that will guide a Mark Golding-led PNP government.

We have the team, a team that is sharply focused on providing efficient and caring public service to make Jamaicans feel more hopeful, empowered and facilitated. Our policy mix will engender positive values and attitudes, a greater sense of purpose, and a caring 'livity' amongst all our people.

We are on the pathway of CHANGE, to build a society where every well-thinking Jamaican gets an opportunity to improve their quality of life. That is our mission, and I draw inspiration from our most transformational leader, Michael "Joshua" Manley... who told us "if the moral

purpose of this mission is to remain intact it must be approached in humility and supported by prayer".

It is all up to us now, my comrades! Walk every hill and valley, nook and cranny, street and lane. Bring in the ninety and nine, and then go for the missing one. Listen to the people's voices! And let them hear the trumpet sounding the mighty refrain, from Negril Point to Morant Point and back...

TIME COME AND WE CHOOSE CHANGE!







86TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CHOOSE CHANGE

SEPTEMBER 15 • 2024

