

Presentation to NEC of December 4, 2016

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Distinguished Comrades, it is with great humility and pride that I today formally accept the position of General Secretary of the People's National Party.

I do not for one moment dare to underestimate the challenges that confront our great party and nation, and today I commit to doing justice to the confidence reposed in me.

Comrades, the challenges clearly exist and the great examples must be followed. But as we restore our noble institution to strength and power, we must do so conscious of our movements roots, our established principles and the strong foundation upon which we must continue to build.

I intend to lead a Secretariat based on the principles of fairness, impartiality and professionalism - principles I have practiced during my tenure as Deputy General Secretary.

The vision I have for our Party is one predicated on what I describe as the 3 Ps. People, Processes and Policies.

People - our leadership at all levels of the Party must reflect and be able to relate to the population we serve and must do so with humility and dignity.

Processes - the way we do things as a Party must be consistent with 21st century best practices.

Policies - our policies and programs must always aim to uplift the quality of life for the majority of the Jamaican people and must reflect the principles of social justice, equality of opportunity and the building of an egalitarian society.

Importantly, as a Party we must reaffirm what we stand for as a political movement. We must situate our ideology within the context of our current realities, without compromising our core values.

This is critical as party members must be able to clearly articulate our shared vision and convince the population to invest their hopes and aspirations in the Party and to trust us with the awesome responsibility of handling state power.

The PNP has traditionally been the party of ideas, and we need to reassert ourselves as such, by strengthening the group structures so that members can play a more meaningful role in creating the progressive policies and programmes we know can move the country forward.

We must define, internalise and practice the values that characterise someone who is a member of the Party. Values based on integrity, probity and accountability.

I also see it as part of my duty to ensure that our Party holds the present government to account, so that they will not undo the good that has been done and roll back the gains that our country has made. We will be strident but not obstructionist. We will not just oppose, but we

will propose solutions that can move the country forward. We must be vigilant and vigorous in our opposition, all the while asserting ourselves as a competent and confident government in waiting.

There is much, much work to be done, I readily acknowledge; an abundance of organizing to be undertaken; great and sustained recruitment drive to embark upon. But as we pursue the goal of modernizing a 78 year old movement into one for the 21st century, we must never disrespect the efforts and initiatives of those who have preceded us by claiming that we are starting from scratch

Commencing this week, we will be meeting with a number of constituencies that we currently hold, but based on the November 28 Local Government results, we would have lost. Our first priority must be to reinforce what we currently have, while ensuring that there is a functioning political organisation in the divisions and constituencies that we don't have. Early in the new year, we will outline in greater detail our organisational priorities.

Earlier this year, the Appraisal Committee completed a report on the February 25 election loss. I am committed to ensuring that the recommendations of the Committee are implemented and will meet this week with the Implementation Commission to continue the work.

In my eyes, the philosophy of the half-full glass must hold a signal place as we proceed along our journey. That philosophy not only speaks to a meaningful show of respect, an openness to new thinking, a platform from which to look forward with hope; but also it speaks to the setting of an atmosphere of togetherness and collegiality on which our efforts as Comrades must be anchored.

I thank you again for the confidence reposed in me.

There is work to be done.

The trumpet has sounded.

Let us arise, and together in the spirit of Norman Washington Manley's great vision, answer the call to duty.

Thank you all once again for affording me the opportunity to serve, through the People's National Party, Jamaica land we love.