

Most Gracious Speech To Both Houses of Parliament



By
His Excellency
The Governor-General

ON FRIDAY, THE FIFTEENTH OF OCTOBER, 2010

2010 THRONE SPEECH
DELIVERED TO THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
BY HIS EXCELLENCY SIR CARLYLE GLEAN SNR.
ON THE OCCASION OF THE THIRD SESSION OF
THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT
OCTOBER 15, 2010

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, Members of Parliament

On the occasion of the commencement of the Third Session of the eighth Parliament, my Government wishes to record that its journey to restore integrity; renew hope and build a brighter future for all Grenadians have begun to bear fruits.

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, Members of Parliament, Grenadians at home and abroad have begun to feel proud when their country's name is called in the international arena. We have restored the good name and image of our country. We have placed our country on a sound financial and economic footing. We have lifted the bar of our educational system and we are positioning the agricultural sector to become globally competitive, whilst at the same time ensuring food security for our nation.

My Government has invested significantly in our youths and is well on the way to ensuring that they are pivotal in the growth and development of our country. My Government

continues to focus on primary health care and improvement to the health infrastructure. No sector has been left out in our thrust to provide for the elderly, the women, the farmers and fisher-folks, our cultural artists, our public officers, security personnel, teachers and the general populace.

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, and Members of Parliament, notwithstanding these significant accomplishments the road ahead continues to be challenging as we contend with the deepest recession that our world has experienced within the last seventy five years. Grenada has not been immune to the effects of this recession which has been felt in our most productive sectors.

Indeed, during the last two years our resolve has been tested. However, like many times before we have once again demonstrated our resilience and determination as a people. With the grace and blessings of God, we continue our march towards our goal of a better Grenada for all.

Economic Management

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

My Government convenes the Third Session of the eighth Parliament at a time when many developing countries are struggling to reverse rising unemployment, increasing debts, persistent deficits and slow economic growth. In the process, expenditure is being cut, grants are diminishing and direct assistance is unavailable to developing countries.

In such an environment, my Government will continue to pursue a programme of sound economic management that will allow us to meet our basic ongoing obligations. We will reduce waste and improve the efficiency of revenue mobilization whilst at the same time create opportunities for employment creation, small and medium business development, entrepreneurship, poverty reduction and growth.

My Government will continue the programme of public sector reform and restructuring so that we can position the country for the post crisis period. We will continue to refocus our priorities on the transformative sectors so as to lay the foundation for sustained growth.

We believe that sustained economic growth, poverty reduction and employment creation will come primarily from the following sectors:

- Agriculture and Agribusiness
- Construction
- Information and Communications Technology
- Tourism
- Energy Development (Renewable and Non-renewable)
- Health and Education Services

Accordingly, my Government has developed a management framework to promote these sectors. My Government will further develop a Medium Term Economic Strategy Paper covering the period 2011 to 2013. Cognizance will be given in the preparation of the Strategy Paper to the existing National

Strategic Development Plan. Additionally a robust Public Sector Investment Plan will be formulated and the necessary resource requirements aggressively sought for its implementation.

My Government will continue the tax reform initiatives that commenced in 2010 and will seek to stabilize the fiscal policy regime. Efforts at revenue enhancement and mobilization as well as expenditure control will be continued.

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

My Government once more reaffirms its commitment to the principle of inclusiveness and partnership in national development. These principles underpin my Government's approach to governance. However, more importantly, the challenge of survival demands that all Grenadians must work collectively together to surmount all obstacles. We must as a country increase our level of productivity and make timely sacrifices during this critical period.

Tourism

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

The tourism sector continues to demonstrate considerable resilience. Despite the general decline in tourist travel to the region, reduced personal expenditure, increased competition, lower investment in tourism plants, and increases in air fares, the sector perseveres.

My Government will continue to position the sector to maximize opportunities when they arise.

We will concentrate on developing and diversifying the tourism product. To this end, my Government will develop policy guidelines for the commercialization of some tourism sites with priority being given to the local private sector. This is to ensure that all tourism sites are properly managed and developed.

During the year, my Government will undertake a major rebranding of Grenada as a destination. Additionally, our strategic marketing focus will be aimed at attracting visitors from Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, USA, the United Kingdom, France and Europe generally.

Other areas of high priority will be dive, wedding and honeymoon, cultural entertainment, sports tourism and the incorporation of tourism studies in the school's curriculum. Importantly, we will continue our considerable investment in airlift to support the development of the sector.

Agriculture and Agribusiness

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

Building on our 9.3% increase in agricultural output last year, my Government will continue to aggressively promote

the agricultural sector as one of the lead sectors for economic growth, employment generation and poverty reduction.

My Government's main focus will be to significantly increase food production in order to enhance our food security and agricultural export earnings in an environmentally sustainable manner. In order to achieve this goal, significant emphasis will be placed on the continued provision of quality planting materials, the implementation of a focused programme targeting special farmers to increase production in root crops, especially yams, dasheen, tannia, sweet potato and cassava and a programme targeting special farmers to increase the acreage in fruit orchards.

In the area of fish production, my Government will work with all fishermen, organizations and fish exporters to improve the marketability of fish products on the domestic and export markets.

We have made considerable advancement in the area of agro-processing with the coming on stream of Baron Foods, Winfresh and the impending Cocoa processing plant at Diamond, St. Mark. My Government will continue to improve the enabling environment for agro-processing. We will also provide support and increase contributions to research and development in nutmeg and other spices.

Youth Empowerment

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

My Government will continue to focus on the empowerment of our young people during the year 2011. The major focus will be centered on the strengthening of the Grenada Youth Upliftment Programme. Critical activities will include:

- The Small Business Programme
- Grenada Youth Education and Training Programme
- Leadership and Service Programme
- Youth Rehabilitation

Sports

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

It is widely acknowledged that sports play an integral role in youth and national development. My Government is committed to the implementation of the National Sports Policy which was developed after extensive consultation with key stakeholders. Emphasis will be in the following areas:

- Infrastructural development
- Reward and incentive package for athletes

In recognition of our outstanding athletes, employees and administrators, we will hold a national recognition and awards ceremony.

Culture

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

My Government is moving to finalize a national cultural policy and to implement a diversified cultural calendar for the year 2010. This calendar includes the Grenada Independence festival (GIF), a National Pan festival, the Spice Island festival of words and the Camerhogne celebration of Grenadian folk culture. Work on the National Film Commission and the repositioning of the Grenada's Cultural Foundation has already started. Similarly, new Intellectual Property Legislation and an Act to establish a permanent Body to run carnival will be pursued.

New initiatives in the education curriculum will usher in the teaching of new cultural art forms in our schools. My Government's recognition of Indian arrival day and the new emphasis being placed on our Emancipation celebrations are consistent with my Government's policy to recognize and appreciate our historical and cultural legacy.

ICT

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

Given the convergence of Information and Communications Technology, these functions were consolidated within the Prime Minister's Ministry. In recognition of the strategic

importance of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), my Government is in the process of preparing a new plan to guide its development. The primary objective is to increase the use of ICT's at all levels of Government, the private sector and within our communities.

My Government will continue to improve the level of internet penetration and is working with providers to set up hotspots in strategic areas around the country. We are making Grenada IPV4 ready. Our ICT center of excellence will be fully operational and we will continue to source funding for enhancing broadband capacity. The ICT sector will play a strategic role in the transformation of our economy.

Works, Physical Development and Utilities

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

Given the importance of the construction sector to national development, my Government will concentrate on the revitalization of the construction sector. The Ministry of Works and the Project Implementation and Management Unit will be strengthened to enable the speedy implementation of all major capital projects and improvement in our physical planning and development.

With regard to the area of Physical Development efforts will be directed toward the following:-

- Establishment of a “New Development” Regulation
- Update of the present Physical Planning & Development Control Act
- Establishment of conservation guidelines for the Town of St. George's
- Completion of Local Area Plan for the Town of Sauteurs and its environs

My Government will provide increased investment in public sector infrastructure development. Major projects to be implemented include the building of agricultural feeder roads, the completion of the refurbishment of the St George's Market Square, the completion of civil and structural engineering designs and contract documents for the construction of approximately 14km of roads between Duquesne and Sauteurs as well as between Morne Fendue and Pointzfield Bridge, the South St. George Flood Control Study, the Halls of Justice, the Grenville Market Square, the St. John's River Flood Mitigation Project, the Parliament Building, the Lowthers Lane Government Office Complex, the Simon Cultural Complex and the refurbishment of the Hospital. Work will continue on the Gouyave Fisheries Complex.

My Government will continue to work with all investors and stakeholders in the implementation of private sector funded development projects.

Health

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

My Government will accelerate its commitment to the provision of better health care for everyone in the year 2011. Critical initiatives will include the upgrading of the operations of the Accident and Emergency Departments at the main hospitals, ensuring the adequacy of medical supplies at these hospitals and community health centers, strengthening of community services, retrofitting of existing hospital facilities at St. George's and the recommencement of work on phase two (II) of the hospital project. The construction of the Gouyave Health Centre and renovations to other health facilities will also be priorities for my Government.

Special emphasis will be placed on enhancing the human resource capacity of the Ministry through greater access to training and improved performance management.

Environment and Trade

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

My Government recognizes the inextricable link among the issues of biodiversity conservation, climate change and the country's sustainable socio-economic development. As such, our immediate focus will be to facilitate the formulation, management and implementation of the National Biodiversity

Strategy, the Climate Change Strategy and associated action plans over the next three-year planning period.

My Government will actively pursue the creation of institutional and commercial arrangements that will assist Grenada in maximizing the benefits of negotiated market access for its domestic producers of goods and services. We will move to invigorate and transform the Economic Partnership Agreement Unit into a genuine centre responsible for the accessing and dissemination of development resources; resources especially designed for the removal of bottlenecks in the domestic production and enabling spaces that would result in the movement to markets of greater and more varied volumes of indigenous goods and services.

My Government will continue to advocate and defend, within the bounds of legal and institutional propriety, the trade and commercial interests of the State, while simultaneously utilizing the Marketing and National Importing Board to positively impact the cost of living and the quality of life of our farming communities.

Energy

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

Access to adequate, affordable and reliable energy sources is a prerequisite for sustainable development.

As a priority, my Government has developed a National Energy Policy in full consultation with the major stakeholders. This policy sets out a clear path to transition Grenada to the use of renewable energy and to maximize energy efficiency.

We are currently drafting legislation to regulate the use of geothermal energy and are negotiating a resource agreement with GRENLEC. During the year 2011, it is anticipated that several exploratory wells will be drilled in the Mt. St. Catherine region to confirm the presence of usable geothermal energy.

In addition, we are seeking grant funding for a major wind energy project in Carriacou, with the potential to displace up to 70% of the current diesel used for electricity generation. We are also seeking grant funding for the installation of solar photovoltaic systems on the roofs of the homes of approximately 200 low-income households. This initiative will provide a clean alternative source of energy and reduce the monthly electricity bill for these households.

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

Grenada is going green and we will soon be able to claim that virtually all of our electrical energy is derived from renewable sources. We are fulfilling our moral responsibility to reduce our Greenhouse Gas emissions even though they are miniscule on a global scale.

My Government continues to work hard to resolve existing legal issues surrounding our potential hydro carbon resources. Foreign interest in exploration remains high and we are determined to exploit these resources in an environmentally and socially conscious manner as expeditiously as possible.

Housing

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

My Government remains committed to the provision of safe and affordable housing and to improve the standard of living of our people. Decent housing is essential for normal family life and as such housing solutions will be provided to citizens in need. Work will continue on the low income housing project funded by the People's Republic of China whilst preparatory work will be negotiated for phase two (II). Additionally, my Government will engage other private developers to ensure that the housing needs of the populace are met.

Lands

My Government will embark on a Land Regularization Programme in specific areas having high incidences of informal residents or persons occupying land without proper

documentation. My Government will continue with the Remapping exercise for Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique as well as implementing plans to ensure that the requisite skills are in place to enable effective land management.

Community Development

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, in 2011, my Government's emphasis will be on Community Development approaches which seeks to enhance people's well being and overall development. Emphasis will be placed on access to enhanced community facilities, amenities and services by strengthening the socio-economic fabric of communities in every Parish throughout the State. We will foster and promote the spirit of Volunteerism through the Community Builders Brigades, drawing on our people's goodwill and initiatives. Cabinet has already approved a Policy to guide the management, operations and maintenance of Government owned and sponsored Community Centres to ensure that these facilities serve the needs of all our citizens in communities where they live.

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

Active engagement with the global community is the hallmark of Grenada's foreign policy. This is strategic and prudent as my Government seeks to mobilize the resources necessary to achieve our social and economic development goals.

In 2011, my Government will continue its engagement with the international community in pursuit of investment and resources for our country's development. The Technical Co-operation Unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be strengthened as well as our overseas Missions to ensure that the capacity necessary to fulfill our objectives is available.

As a follow up to our 2010 preparatory Diaspora Meeting, my Government in 2011 will establish Bureaus and technical committees in various Diaspora locations in addition to the strengthening of the local office.

Given the need to build our capacity in the area of Foreign Policy, we will continue our drive to recruit qualified persons as well as the enactment of a Foreign Service Order.

Following on the delimitation of boundaries with Trinidad and Tobago, my Government will be pursuing areas of Ocean Management/Governance to maximize our Marine resources. We will also be pursuing delimitations negotiations with Venezuela with whom we share common boundaries.

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, as chair of the forty three member alliance of Small Island States, Grenada will continue to be at the forefront of the struggle for climate

justice and a positive outcome at the UNFCCC summit in Cancun, Mexico in December 2010.

Parliamentary Elections Office

In accordance with the Constitution of Grenada and the Representation of The People Act of 1993 and its amendments of 2006 and 2008, and in the quest for the advancement of democracy, transparency, accountability and security the Parliamentary Elections Office will diligently pursue the implementation of a new voter registration system.

Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

In 2010 my Government undertook a rationalization and restructuring of the Ministry of Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs in order to improve its operational efficiency. The restructured Ministry will complement the implementation of local government both of which will be fully implemented in 2011.

In an effort to expand economic activity in Carriacou, emphasis will be placed on the review and implementation of a number of infrastructural projects. These include the resurfacing and expansion of the Lauriston Airport, the Carriacou Free Port and other agricultural projects. My Government will continue to improve travel by sea through a

negotiated arrangement with the Management and Ownership of the Osprey Lines.

Additionally, my Government is currently examining in collaboration with the government of India a desalination project with the view to ensuring a dependable water supply system to Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Social Development

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, in the coming year, the protection of our nation's children, our elderly citizens and victims of domestic violence and abuse will continue to be of great importance to my Government. As a result, administrative and legislative arrangements will be made to facilitate these processes.

Likewise, we are forging ahead with plans for a Family Court and the juvenile centre for young persons in conflict with the law.

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, the Child Welfare Authority will assume full responsibility for all aspects of Child Protection, including adoption and foster care.

Preparations are being made, for an amendment to the Criminal Code, making Community Service a sentencing option for young first-time offenders, and also for the passing of the Child Justice Bill.

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, my Government takes its responsibility to our elderly citizens very seriously, and will continue to offer support for an improved quality of life for older persons, and to harness their potential to share a meaningful legacy with the rest of the population.

In keeping with my Government's policy of good governance, a Unit has been established to adequately manage all Safety Net payments to vulnerable persons. Work has already started for establishing:

- a Central Registry of all beneficiaries of Safety Net;
- a Cash Transfer Unit; and
- a Social Protection Policy on Safety Nets.

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, my Government will amalgamate all the various Safety Net programmes and target families, rather than individuals. This we believe, will better impact the vulnerable and destitute among us.

Legal Affairs

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

My Government has consistently articulated its intention to enhance our practice of Governance in Grenada. In keeping with this, my Government will continue the review of the Constitution of Grenada. The goal is to ensure our

constitution continues to support the needs and aspirations of our people within a dynamic changing environment.

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, in 2011, Grenada will continue to work within the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court modernization plan. High on the agenda is the establishment of the various divisions of the Court; especially the Criminal Division which should be operational during 2011.

The Director of Public Prosecution's Office will continue to promote the adoption of measures aimed at creating greater efficiency in the prosecution of criminal cases. The emphasis will be on the amendment of various provisions of the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code, with a view to reducing the length of time it takes to dispose of criminal cases. There will be the ongoing computerization of all legal files for more transparency and general efficiency.

Moreover, the restructuring of the operations of Supreme Court Registry will continue. This will include the continued divestment of the responsibility for selected areas namely company and intellectual property and deeds and land registration as well as the strengthening of the civil and criminal registry.

The Legislative Agenda

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

During this session, my Government will pursue an ambitious legislative agenda which will serve to enhance our modernization efforts and increase our operational efficiency. The agenda include:

- Intellectual Property Act
- Legal Profession Act
- Public Service Act
- Child Protection and Adoption
- Status of Children
- Domestic Violence
- Physical Planning and Development Control Act
- Child Justice Bill
- Amendment to the Criminal Code
- Carriacou Local Government Legislation
- Labour Laws including the Minimum Wage Bill
- Professional Engineers and Architects Registration Act
- Foreign Service Order
- Bills relating to the Health Sector

Public Administration

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

Public Sector Modernization is a strategic imperative necessary to improve our levels of efficiency and effectiveness as we strive to provide goods and services to our citizenry. My Government will continue to pursue a series of modernization initiatives including the implementation of new business

processes, improved management systems, the realignment of departments and ministries, the provision of an improved performance environment, the implementation of a new governance code for ministers and senior officers and the training and retraining of public officers and improved customer service.

National Security

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

National security constitutes a competitive edge in today's world. Consistent with my Government's goal of ensuring a safe Grenada for all, our national security services will be enhanced. Government will continue to work to enhance the physical infrastructure for the provision of security services. A comprehensive restructuring of the prison system will be undertaken informed by the recommendations of the Prison Review Committee.

In the area of Disaster Risk Management and Reduction, emphasis will be placed on three major areas, the institutional strengthening of NaDMA, stakeholder cooperation and coordination and community awareness and preparedness. Major emphasis will be placed on mainstreaming disaster management throughout Grenada. It is acknowledged that disaster risk reduction is best achieved when all sectors are involved.

Labour and Social Security

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

In consultation with the Trade Unions and the Private Sector, my Government through the Ministry of Labour will continue to pursue its policy focus in the following areas.

- A review of the Labour Laws
- Improving Occupational Safety and Health
- Implementing a Labour Market Information System
- Examining the possible implementation of Flexi-time
- And the pursuance of the Decent Work Agenda

These initiatives are designed to enhance the industrial relations operating environment in Grenada. They will specifically facilitate legal clarity in our relevant laws, improve information access and flows, increase employment, increase the level of commercial activity and promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity.

Further, my Government is currently conducting the ninth actuarial review of the National Insurance Scheme. The recommendations of the actuaries will be studied and discussed with all stakeholders. These recommendations are expected to improve the benefits paid to contributors, enhance the administrative effectiveness of the scheme and most importantly, ensure the sustainability of the National Insurance Fund.

Education and Human Resource Development

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

Grenada's human resource constitutes a primary national asset which must be developed to maximize our true potential. This is why we will continue our aggressive agenda for educational development.

My Government will continue to pay attention to curriculum refocus so as to align our schools curriculum with the local and regional job market. In keeping with the Millennium Development Goal of Universal Education by 2015, my Government has already agreed to have universal secondary education by 2012 and as such every effort will be made in 2011 to establish additional secondary schools to facilitate the process.

As a consequence, teacher education will continue to be an area of concentration with the continuation of the UWI Online Degree Programmes for Educators, the introduction of Teacher Education Programmes at St. George's University and increased opportunities for professional development at the Ministry and School levels. The year 2011 will also see the introduction of a Mentorship Programme for Principals.

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker, my Government sincerely believes that every teacher in this nation should be endowed with the necessary academic background and teacher training to effectively function in our school system.

In keeping with my Government's declaration of 2010/2011 as the year of facilities improvement in Education, rehabilitation work will commence on thirteen (13) schools. Additionally, Technical education centres in primary schools will be equipped.

In the area of improving students' performance and the provision of support services, my Government will pursue the following:

- The introduction of the high scope curriculum in the remaining pre-schools;
- An Expanded Refocused Curriculum piloted in secondary and primary schools in Anger Management and Personal Development Skills;
- The introduction of a National Competency Based exam in preparation for the elimination of the Common Entrance Examination; and
- Improved provision of services for students with special needs.

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

The year 2010/2011 will be designated by the Ministry of Education as the **“Year of the Teacher”**. The teacher is a very important stakeholder and will therefore be the focus of attention as we recognize their pivotal role in our education and national development processes.

Special attention will be given to the T.A. Marrayshow Community College to ensure that quality tertiary level education is being provided to our students.

My Government will take advantage of all opportunities to provide scholarships to our nationals to enable them to further their studies at Universities and Colleges abroad.

Conclusion

Mr. Deputy President, Mr. Speaker

My Government will continue to pursue strategic policies and programmes that are necessary to achieve our goal of sustainable social and economic development of Grenada. These strategies and programmes are designed to reposition Grenada to engage with the global community and to prepare for economic takeoff. With our leadership, our resolve and commitment we will succeed as a nation.

We will be guided by our unshakeable commitment to the fundamental principles and practices of good governance, transparency, accountability, and respect for the law, honesty and humility. This we continue to underscore is a necessary precondition for our social and economic development.

The task is now, for us to collectively work together in unity to achieve our dreams.

My Government anticipates a fruitful Parliament and look forward to the cooperation of all as we collectively build our nation.

May God bless our Nation.

