



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Second Session of the Tenth Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT

***Senate and House of Representatives
(Ceremonial State Opening of the Second Session of the Tenth Parliament)***

Monday, 19th November, 2018

*Joint Sitting of the Senate and House of Representatives
Ceremonial State Opening of the Second Session of the Tenth Parliament
Held at the Parliament Building, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
On Monday, 19th November, 2018 @ 10:00 a.m.*

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PRESENT

Senate

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Senator the Honourable Chester A. A. Humphrey | - | Mr. President (In the Chair) |
| Senator the Honourable Judd Cadet | - | Member |
| Senator the Honourable Norland Cox | - | Minister for Youth Development, Sports, Culture and the Arts |
| Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway | - | Minister of State w/rf Disaster Management and Information |
| Senator the Honourable Kim George | - | Member |
| Senator the Honourable Ron Livingston Redhead | - | Member |
| Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie | - | Deputy President |
| Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis | - | Member |

ABSENT

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Senator the Honourable Simon Stiehl | - | Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment, Forestry, Fisheries, Disaster Management and Information (Excuse tendered) |
| Senator the Honourable Kerryne James | - | Member |
| Senator the Honourable Glynis Roberts | - | Member (Excuse tendered) |
| Senator the Honourable Dr. Dunstan Campbell | - | Member (Excuse tendered) |

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PRESENT

House of Representatives

- | | |
|--|---|
| Honourable Michael Pierre, MP, JP, MBE | - Mr. Speaker (In the Chair) |
| Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, PC, MP, JP
(St. George North-West) | - Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Public Administration, Home Affairs, Information and Communications Technology, Finance, Planning, Economic Development and Physical Development |
| Honourable Gregory Bowen, MP
(St. George South-East) | - Minister for Infrastructure Development, Public Utilities, Energy, Transport and Implementation |
| Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, MP
(St. Mark) | - Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation |
| Honourable Peter David, MP
(Town of St. George) | - Minister for Foreign Affairs and Labour |
| Honourable Alvin Da Breo, MP
(St. John) | - Minister wrf Forestry and Fisheries |
| Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford, MP
(St. Andrew North-West) | - Minister for Agriculture and Lands |
| Honourable Oliver Joseph, MP
(St. David) | - Minister for Trade, Industry, Co-operatives and CARICOM Affairs |
| Honourable Kate Lewis, MP
(St. Andrew North-East) | - Minister wrf Youth Development |
| Honourable Pamela Moses
(St. Patrick East) | Minister wrf Tertiary Education, Skills Development and Education Outreach |
| Honourable Kindra Maturine-Stewart, MP
(Carriacou and Petite Martinique) | - Minister for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs, Local Government and Legal Affairs |
| Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP
(St. Andrew South-East) | - Minister for Education, Human Resource Development and Religious Affairs |
| Honourable Nickolas Steele, MP
(St. George South) | - Minister for Health, Social Security and International Business |
| Honourable Delma Thomas, MP
(St. Andrew North-West) | - Minister for Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment |

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Honourable Anthony Boatswain, MP
(St. Patrick West)

- Deputy Speaker

Honourable Tobias Clement, MP
(St. George North-East)

- Member

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Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated.

Ag. Clerk: **WHEREAS** it is provided by subsection (1) of Section 51 of the Constitution of Grenada that each Session of Parliament shall be held at such place within Grenada, as the Governor-General may by Proclamation appoint;

AND WHEREAS, historically, the Parliament Chamber at York House in the Town of St. George was appointed as the place where each Session of Parliament was to be held;

AND WHEREAS due to the passage of Hurricane Ivan through Grenada on the 7th day of September, 2004, the Parliament Chamber, at York House, was rendered unsuitable for the continuation of the First Session of the Seventh Parliament;

AND WHEREAS by Proclamation dated 28th day of October, 2004, the Bell Lecture Hall, on the Campus of the St. George's University situated at True Blue in the Parish of St. George was duly appointed, as the place where the First Session of the Seventh Parliament would be formed, thenceforth held;

AND WHEREAS by Proclamation, dated 2nd day of March, 2005, the Trade Centre, situated at Morne Rouge, in the Parish of St. George was duly appointed, as the place where the Second Session of the Seventh Parliament was to be held, and was duly appointed, as such for each subsequent Session of Parliament;

AND WHEREASB by Proclamation dated 27th day of April, 2018, the Trade Centre was duly appointed, as the place where the First Session of the Tenth Parliament was held;

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AND WHEREAS the Parliament Building, at Mt. Wheldale, in the Town of St. George's was constructed during the period 2013 – 2018, and is now suitable as the place for Sessions of Parliament to be held;

NOW the Governor-General, Dame Cecile La Grenade, Dame Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael it is further provided by subsection (2) of Section (51) of the Constitution of Grenada, that there shall be a Session of Parliament once, at least, in every year, so that a period of six (6) months shall not intervene between the last Sitting of Parliament, in one Session, and the first Sitting in the next Session;

NOW THEREFORE I, Cecile La Grenade, Dame Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Governor-General in and over Grenada, Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Governor-General in and over Grenada, do hereby appoint the Trade Centre at Morne Rouge, in the Parish of St. George, at the place where the First Session of the Tenth Parliament shall be held at 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon, on Friday, 27th day of April, 2018, as the time at which the said Session shall begin. And Members of the said Parliament and all other of Her Majesty's Officers and loving Subjects in Grenada, and all others, whom it may concern, are hereby required to take due notice hereof and give their ready obedience accordingly.

Given under my hand and the public seal of Grenada this 19th day of April, 2018, in the 66th year of the reign of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second.
God Save the Queen.

Honourable Members, consequent upon the General Elections on March 13th, 2018 and in accordance with subsections (28) and (34) of the Constitution of Grenada, it has become necessary to elect a President and Deputy President of the Senate, also

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a Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives for the Tenth Parliament of Grenada.

Honourable Senators, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3 of the Senate, I now invite nominations for the Office of President of the Senate. Senator Stiell.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. Clerk, Honourable Members, I beg to nominate Senator Chester Humphrey, as President of the Senate.

Ag. Clerk: Members, there is a nomination for Senator the Honourable Chester Humphrey. Is there a seconder to the Motion?

Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: Mr. Clerk, we wish to associate ourselves with the sentiments of the Motion.

Ag. Clerk: Thank you very much. There is a seconder, and are there any other nominations? If there be no other nominations, I now declare Senator the Honourable Chester Arlington Arthur Humphrey to be the President to be the President elect of the Senate. **(Applause)** Senator, would you please come forward to take your Oath of Affirmation.

Sen. the Hon. Chester Humphrey: I, Chester Arlington Arthur Humphrey do solemnly swear that I shall faithfully execute the office of President, without fear or favour, affection or ill-will and that in the execution of the functions of that Office, I will honour, uphold and preserve the Constitution of Grenada. Thank you.

Ag. Clerk: Honourable Senators, pursuant to Standing Orders No. (4) of the Senate, I now invite the nominations for the Office of Deputy President of the Senate.

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Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. Clerk, Honourable Members, Mr. President, I beg to nominate Senator Christopher De Allie to be Deputy President of the Senate. This would be in abstention. He is travelling, at present, but this would be the nomination for Deputy President.

Ag. Clerk: Thank you, Senator Stiell. Is there a seconder?

Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: Mr. Clerk, I beg to second the nomination.

Ag. Clerk: Honourable Senator Christopher De Allie, Deputy President elect of the Senate. Honourable Members of the House of Representatives pursuant to Standing Order No. (3) of the House of Representatives, I now invite nominations for the Office of Speaker of the House of Representatives. Honourable Minister Bowen.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. Clerk, I beg to nominate Mr. Michael Pierre, as Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Ag. Clerk: Honourable Members, Mr. Michael Pierre has been selected to be nominated to be the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: Mr. Clerk, I rise to second the nomination of our Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Ag. Clerk: Thank you very much, Minister Pierre. Mr. Pierre has been nominated to the post of Speaker of the House of Representatives. I now invite Mr. Pierre. Are there any further nominations? There be no further nomination, I now invite Mr. Michael Pierre to be the Speaker of the House elect.

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Mr. Michael Pierre: I, Michael Pierre, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So help me God.

I, Michael Pierre do swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of Speaker, without fear of favour, affection or ill-will, and that in the execution of the functions of that Office, I will honour, uphold and preserve the Constitution of Grenada. So help me God.

Ag. Clerk: I now beg for a nomination for the post of Deputy Speaker of the House. Honourable Minister Bowen.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, I beg to nominate the Honourable Anthony Boatswain to be Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Ag. Clerk: Mr. Anthony Boatswain has been nominated, as the Deputy Speaker in the House of Representatives. Is there a seconder?

Hon. Alvin Da Breo: Mr. Clerk, Honourable Members, I second the Motion of Honourable Anthony Boatswain, as Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Ag. Clerk: Are there any other nominations? If not, I now declare that Honourable Anthony Boatswain to be the Deputy Speaker of the House. I now invite Honourable Anthony Boatswain to take his Oath of Office.

(Laughter)

Hon. Anthony Boatswain: I, Anthony Boatswain, do swear that I would faithfully execute the Office of Deputy Speaker, without fear or favour, affection or ill-will

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and that in the execution of the functions of that office I will honour, uphold and preserve the Constitution of Grenada so help me God. **(Applause)**

Ag. Clerk: I now invite Members of the Senate to come forward to take the Oath of Allegiance; so I now invite Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell.

(The Swearing in of the Members of the Senate and House of Representatives being performed)

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: I, Simon Stiell, do swear that I will faithfully bear true alliance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Senator the Honourable Judd Cadet.

(Applause)

Sen. the Hon. Judd Cadet: I, Judd Cadet, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Senator the Honourable Norland Cox.

(Applause)

Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox: I, Norland Cox, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

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Ag. Clerk Assistant: Senator the Honourable Winston Garraway.

(Applause)

Sen. the Hon. Winston Garraway: I, Winston Garraway, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Senator the Honourable Kim George.

(Applause)

Sen. the Hon. Kim George: I, Kim George, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second. Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

Ag. Clerk Assistant. Senator the Honourable Catisha Williams.

(Applause)

Sen. the Hon. Catisha Williams: I, Catisha Williams, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second her Heirs and successors according to law so help me God.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Senator the Honourable Ron Redhead.

(Applause)

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Sen. the Hon. Ron Redhead: I, Ron Livingston Redhead do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Senator the Honourable Glynis Roberts.

(Applause)

Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: I, Glynis Roberts do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Senator the Honourable Dunstan Campbell.

(Applause)

Sen. the Hon. Dunstan Campbell: I, Dunstan Campbell, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Senator the Honourable Christopher De Allie, Senator the Honourable Monde Andre Lewis.

Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis: I, Mondy André Lewis, do solemnly affirm that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. **(Applause)**

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Senator the Honourable Kerryne James.

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(Applause)

Sen. the Hon. Kerryne James: I, Kerryne James, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

Clerk: I now invite Members of the House of Representatives and I now invite Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell to take his oath. ***(Applause)***

Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell: I, Keith Claudius Mitchell, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Gregory Bowen.

Hon. Clarence Gregory Bowen: I, Clarence Gregory Bowen, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

(Applause)

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Clarice Modeste-Curwen.

Hon. Clarice Modeste Curwen: I Clarice Modeste-Curwen do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

(Applause)

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Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Alvin Da Breo.

Hon. Alvin Da Breo: I, Alvin Martin Da Breo, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Peter David.

Hon. Peter David: I, Peter David, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God. **(Applause)**

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford.

Hon. Yolande Bain Horsford: I, Yolande Bain-Horsford do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God. **(Applause)**

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Oliver Thomas Joseph.

Hon. Oliver Thomas Joseph: I, Oliver Thomas Joseph, do swear, that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

(Applause)

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Kate Lewis.

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Hon. Kate Lewis: I, Kate Lewis, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

(Applause)

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Pamela Moses.

Hon. Pamela Moses: I, Pamela Moses, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, the Second. Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

(Applause)

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Emmalin Pierre.

Hon. Emmalin Pierre: I, Emmalin Pierre, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

(Applause)

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Nickolas Steele.

Hon. Nikolas Steele: I, Nikolas Steele, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God.

(Applause)

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Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Kindra Maturine-Stewart.

Hon. Kindra Maturine-Stewart: I, Kindra Maturine-Stewart do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God. **(Applause)**

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Delma Thomas.

Hon. Delma Thomas: I, Delma Thomas, do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law. So Help Me God. **(Applause)**

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Anthony Boatswain.

Hon. Anthony Boatswain: I Anthony Boatswain do swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second her heirs and successors according to law so help me God. **(Applause)**

Ag. Clerk Assistant: Honourable Tobias Clement.

Hon. Tobias Clement: I, Tobias Clement, do affirm that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to Law.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, please stand. Let us pray. Let us all join, together, and say the Lord's Prayer.

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(Prayers were said).

Mr. President: Is it your wish, Honourable Members, that the Houses do now adjourn, during pleasure, to await the arrival of Her Excellency, the Governor-General? If so, please say “aye.” Pray be seated. The Houses do now adjourn during pleasure.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, the Houses now stand adjourned to await Her Excellency, the Governor-General.

(The Houses await the arrival of Her Excellency, the Governor-General).

Sergeant-at-Arms: All rise.

(The Governor-General arrives)

(A fanfare of trumpets is sounded)

Her Excellency, Dame Dr. Cecile La Grenade: Pray be seated.

Sergeant-at-Arms: All sit.

Her Excellency, Dame Dr. Cecile La Grenade: Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of Parliament, our Nation embarks on this First Session of the Tenth Parliament with a deep sense of gratitude to Almighty God for His immeasurable blessings bestowed upon the beautiful Tri-island State and People. We are, exceedingly, grateful for all that we have achieved, together, in recent years, and we look to the future, with optimism, secure in the knowledge that, as long as we continue to work together, we can achieve much more.

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Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, on March the 13th, the people of this Nation were called on, to once again exercise their democratic right to chart the course of this Nation for the next five (5) years. The result was an overwhelming mandate given to my Government to continue along the trajectory of growth and opportunities that we have seen in the last five (5) years. This is a responsibility that my Government cannot and will not take lightly.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government is faced with the urgent task of meeting expectations now to reassure them that they have made the right choice. For this reason, the task of completing projects currently on stream will be tackled with renewed vigour and urgency.

My Government also strives to secure new initiatives that will create more and varied employment opportunities especially for our young people even while we work to ensure that our elderly and vulnerable are appropriately cared for supported and respected.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government commences this new term with sites set firmly on reinforcing the more solemn foundation on which our democracy can stand.

My Government has always demonstrated its commitment to the principles of democracy social justice and the rule of law. A visible symbol of that commitment is our Parliament building it is against this backdrop that one of my Government's first major actions will be to open our new Parliament building, which was constructed with the generous assistance of the Governments of the United Arab Emirates and Mexico.

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My Government anticipates that within the next month, this goal will be realised and Parliament will be held in its rightful home. Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that going into this new period of Governance Grenada's economy is in a much stronger position that it was five years ago thanks to the sacrifices and resolve of our people and the support of our development partners. Macro-economic stability has for the most part been restored and our economy has experienced significant growth in each of the last five years.

Our fiscal and debt situations have also improved significantly and unemployment rates have declined dramatically although we recognise that this rate is still too high. My Government has implemented a solid fiscal framework to ensure adherence to fiscal discipline going forward and reforms have been enacted that will help to promote higher economic growth and generate more employment.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, though satisfied, we promise not to become complacent. We have achieved a lot in the last five (5) years, but we cannot afford to sit on our laurels. We still have much work to do in order to fully consolidate our economic gains and build a sustainable future for all.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, consistent with the promises made to the Grenadian people, my Government's main focus for this Session of Parliament will be to continue the transformation of this society to secure the welfare of our people, to efficiently manage our economy, to ensure the creation of jobs and the reduction in unemployment, to promote economic growth and social progress.

Continuing the transformation of our society, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government understands that if a democracy is to function effectively, people must be placed at the centre of the decision-making and development process. Further, my

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Government believes that development comes with change and that change must be accepted by the people before it can be realised.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, in the last five (5) years, my Government has especially seen this to be true. The Nation has witnessed the introduction of the Social Compact formed between my Government, the Trade Union Movement, the Business Community, the Churches, Civil Society and the Non-Government Organisations. The commitment made by my Government to ensure that every Sector is represented at the table is rooted in the belief that every one's voice must be heard and not only during the period of Elections.

In that vein, my Government is reaching out to the present membership of the Social Partners to broaden and strengthen the framework that has served this country so well in the last few years, so that every Sector has an expanded seat at the Table including Community, Youth and Student Groups.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, in the absence of a formal Parliamentary Opposition, my Government is, again, inviting the largest Opposition Political Organisation to join the partnership and take their rightful place at the table, so as to give full and formal effect to the voices of over twenty thousand (20,000) brothers and sisters of this Nation.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, the economic successes of the last five (5) years were built on the foundation of the Social Partnership that we forged. Its expansion can only all go well for the optimal development of this beautiful country.

My Government appreciates that while it might won all the seats in Parliament and while there is no formal Opposition it must and will respect the rule of Law, defend democracy and promote good governance and accountability while fully respecting the right of the citizenry to express divergent views. **(Applause)**

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Securing the Welfare

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government firmly appreciates that every society is complex with a dynamic grouping of citizens and Government has a responsibility to offer protection to each of those groups equally.

My Government, therefore, believes that appropriate Healthcare Education and Housing are equivalent to liberty, justice and equality in that they are not commodities for sale or special privileges only afforded to some. **(Applause)** Indeed, these are all rights to which every Grenadian boy and girl, man and woman are entitled. As a consequence, every decision my Government takes must be geared towards protecting and enhancing these rights.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, a healthier and more educated people is dependent, not only on service delivery, but also on the appropriate use of such services and the overall changes in behaviour that might otherwise undermine the very goal it sets out to achieve, making services available to those without access is important and necessary for poverty irradiation. But, my Government understands that better livelihoods and improved quality of life can only be realised, when Government services are reliably delivered, widely accessible, effectively and appropriately administered and utilized.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, in the area of Education, my Government will continue to reform the Education and Training Curriculum to better address the development objectives of my Government, as well as the growing needs of the Private Sector. Emphasis will be placed on securing better outcomes in Science Technology, English and Math. Investment in these areas is compulsory in order to build a globally competitive citizenry and reduce unemployment here at home.

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My Government will continue to build the capacity of Schools Professions through training and other opportunities for Educators and Ministry staff. In terms of Physical Infrastructure, a number of schools are targeted to receive major renovation and rehabilitation work, which enhance the quality of educational opportunities and better aid the learning and teaching environment of our students and teachers.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government will continue to invest in strengthening Social Safety Net-Programmes to protect the poor and most vulnerable groups in our society such, as children the elderly and the disabled. We will also support reforms to highlight gender equality and social inclusion in order to expand access to basic services.

Given that the lack of appropriate housing continues to affect the wellbeing of vulnerable families, my Government continues to urgently address this critical need. I am pleased to report that the second phase of the Chinese Low income Housing Programme has commenced in several areas around the country through the generous support of the Government of the People's Republic of China.

Homes are currently being constructed for families in Corinth in St. David and the Villa in St. Patrick. Construction will soon commence in Beausejour in St. George, Diamond in St. Mark and Dumfries in Carriacou. My Government also continues to review and improve the administration of Safety Net Programmes such as the Support for Education, Empowerment and Development, the SEED Programme, the House Repair and Needy Assistance Programmes, the Uniform and Transportation Assistance Programme and the Special Projects Programme in order to ensure that we curb abuses within the system.

My Government has been appraised that some who do not merit certain benefits have been able to access them because of weaknesses in the administration of these

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programmes or because they provide false information that the cheques and balances have not been able to flag. **(Applause)**

My Government recognises and accepts responsibility for the weaknesses and abuses in the administration of Safety Net Programmes and it will be resolute in its efforts to ensure that all Social Programmes serve the needs of those they are intended to serve, the most vulnerable among us. **(Applause)** For that reason, my Government has temporarily suspended the Needy Assistance Special Projects and other such programmes for one month to allow for review and revamping, so as to close loopholes and better manage the services to our vulnerable while also protecting the integrity and use of the people's resources.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, when we speak of vulnerable citizens we must never forget our Retirees. Restoring Pensions to Public Officers is a task, which is long overdue, but one which my Government is determined to resolve. **(Applause)** A Memorandum of Understanding has already been signed with the Trade Union Movement (TUC) and the formula for Pension Restoration is being worked out. And, even while we work to resolve the Pension issue, we are cognisant that retired Public Servants continue to pass on without ever seeing the correction of the unjust decision made in 1983 to revoke their rights to a pension.

My Government is pleased to note that while the process of reinstatement is long and arduous, it is now within sight. Meanwhile, Public Servants and other citizens must also have better access to appropriate effective healthcare. In this area of healthcare, my Government has spoken extensively about and made significant progress towards implementing the National Health Insurance. A dedicated Secretariat has been installed and the technical details are being worked out for a full roll-out of this noteworthy endeavour.

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Mr. Government is also committed to ensuring that the country's overall Health Infrastructure is adequate. In that regard, retrofitting and upgrades are being done on health facilities such as the Princess Alice Hospital, Health Facilities in Carriacou and elsewhere around the country.

Second phase of construction of the General Hospital is nearing completion and the facility is expected to be commissioned shortly. We will continue to review staffing and other capacity and management needs at Clinics and Hospitals to aid in better service delivery.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, it is not sufficient to provide more education and better facilities. My Government must also diligently multiply efforts to enhance the overall management of the Health Sector and even further to mount a campaign to emphasise the need for healthier lifestyles across the length and breadth of this Nation, if we are to fully achieve our developmental potential.

As clichéd as the saying is, "A Healthier People is, indeed, a Wealthier People." Just as my Government tries to build a healthier citizenry, it must also build a healthier environment to withstand the economic and social shocks of Climate Change. Of necessity, there must be significant and urgent investment in overhauling and strengthening our Nation's infrastructure. To this end, the ongoing execution of the Ministry's asphalt and concrete Road Maintenance Programme remains a key priority for economic development.

My Government will continue its work on the Agriculture Feeder Roads, with a third phase, which extends the network of roads throughout the interior of the Agriculture Belt. Other major Road Projects include the St. Patrick Road Network Upgrade and the Gouyave Extreme Rainfall Project both of which will improve Primary and Secondary roads.

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Additionally, my Government is committed to completing the St. John's River Flood Mitigation Project, which is a part of the World Bank funded Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project, which targets flood mitigation in the River Road area. Other major infrastructural projects scheduled for 2018 include the lighting of the National Cricket Stadium and the La Sagesse Playing Field, as well as the installation of flood lighting in community Playing Fields and Basketball Courts throughout our Nation.

My Government, in partnership with the People's Republic of China is also moving ahead with the announced plans to rehabilitate and upgrade the Maurice Bishop International Airport with respect to its infrastructure, security and services and the provision of adequate accommodation and holding facilities for goods exported and imported.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, as we build and fortify infrastructure, my Government must also give effect to new and existent Policy Frameworks that are designed to protect our people and environment in this area of Climate Change. It is in this regard that my Government has installed a new and dedicated Ministry to oversee the affairs of all activities related to building climate resilience, protecting the marine, coastal and land environment and ensuring that we build our resilience to natural disasters such as hurricanes, which have become a cruel fact of life, especially in our Region.

We know that as Small Island Developing States, we do not always have the resources to do what is necessary to protect our people, livelihood and assets, but my Government will continue to be tireless in this effort to use Grenada's position, as Chair of the Small Islands States Forum, and as a Leader among small States on the issue of Climate Change to access a portion of the billions of dollars that are available, globally, to implement the changes necessary for Grenada's resilience initiatives. Already, we

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have received significant support to aid in the development of our Water Treatment and other facilities.

My Government also intends to secure grants that will create a more resilient and sustainable St. George. My Government echoes its call to the International Community to recognise the Caribbean's vulnerability in the face of Climate Change and to provide the necessary development support and solutions that appropriately relate to our realities, as we strive to protect our environment and our people. Efficient management of our Economy to ensure the creation of jobs and reduce unemployment.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, our efforts to take care of our people and our environment will all be for not if my Government does not continue to effectively manage the economy, as it has done in the last five (5) years. The gains achieved under the Structural Adjustment Programme must be secured, if Grenada is to continue taking care of its affairs.

My Government has repeatedly said that those gains were achieved by the different Sectors working together and by prudent fiscal management and oversight. It is in light of this that my Government will continue to strengthen the legislative framework necessary to ensure that the benefits of the Home Grown Programme are safeguarded for sustainability and are also able to reach every Sector of our population.

My Government will continue to work with the social partners on legislative provisions such as the Fiscal Responsibility and Public Procurement Acts which were implemented by my Government in the last administrative period even while new legislative measures are enacted to further bolster growth and administrative compliance. My Government will continue to work with the leadership of the Public Service in that regard.

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In 2018, the Ministry of Legal Affairs will focus on concluding outstanding matters in fulfilment of Government's Legislative Agenda. High on the agenda will be the Pensions Reform Bill and the National Health Insurance Bill.

Promoting Economic Growth and Social Progress

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government will continue to seek investments and partnerships for the creation of sustainable jobs and opportunities for our people, with the aim of providing employment to those who need jobs and are qualified for them. For this reason, my Government will continue to invest in our Productive Services by providing incentives, especially in areas such as Tourism, Agriculture and Manufacturing.

Within the next year or two, Grenada will see the opening of several prized world-class Hotels and Resort facilities such as the Silver Sands Hotel, the Point at Petite Calivigny, Kempton Qwane Bay, Hideaway Condominiums and others, which will not only significantly boost the tourism sector with increased room stock for stay over visitors but will also provide fulltime and other employment for hundreds of citizens. Moreover, these tourism projects have already committed to linking their services with the Agriculture Sector thus providing improved livelihoods for farmers and fisher folk, who will supply local produce.

New and innovative technologies will be used to revolutionise the way our people have traditionally practiced Agriculture. In so doing, my Government intends to encourage more young people to get involved in the Sector, as an attractive form of income generation and wealth creation.

Strategic investments in the Sector will be pursued to increase Agriculture productivity, enhance Food and Nutrition security, increase employment and income,

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especially in the rural communities, increase foreign exchange earnings and promote Climate Smart Agricultural practices.

A significant body that will work to secure these goals will be the new Climate Smart Agriculture and Rural Enterprises Programme (CSAREP), an initiative derived from the successful Market Access and Rural Enterprise Programme (MAREP). The CSAREP is supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Government of Grenada. Its mission is to implement climate smart practices leading to better livelihoods for farmers and other small businessmen and women in this era of Climate Change.

CSAREP will also provide enterprise business support to small businesses with the provision of technical, vocational and skills training programmes which will significantly address the unemployment situation especially in the rural communities.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government understands that these goals are only possible with the appropriate finances to fund them. This is why sound fiscal management of the economy is essential even while we seek other resources.

My Government is, therefore, encouraged by the findings, so far, of its Oil and Gas Exploration Initiative. One well was already discovered with millions of cubic feet of gas that is ready to be exploited, and the experts have said that there are several more wells to be drilled, which potentially have even larger amounts. The Explorers have already signed an agreement with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the purchase of Grenada's gas resources.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government's outlook is one of cautious optimism, as we do not want to make projections too prematurely or quickly. However,

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my Government is cognisant that finding oil and gas is a major game changer for Grenada's economy. **(Applause)**

The development of the Sector will give us the opportunity to rapidly develop the economy, reduce unemployment, fund our Social Programmes and expand entrepreneurship and innovation, especially among our Youth Population.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government's vision is one of growth and progress and our young people are at the centre of that vision. This is why support will continue to be provided through a revamped IMANI Programme and other empowerment programmes targeting the Youth even, as we seek to increase their access to scholarships and training opportunities at home and abroad. My Government is committed to the holistic development of our young people and we are very excited about the prospects under the Ministry of Youth, Sport, Culture and the Arts.

The Ministry, in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, must be commended for its strong support to the organisers of the second inaugural Invitational held last weekend, which saw some of the world's greatest athletes competing on our local stage and inspiring our young people.

Our local athletes are also being given exposure like never before and one by one they are showing that they can excel internationally. Through the broadcast of the Invitational on the ESPN Chanel, our country is also getting unprecedented hemispheric and global coverage and our Tourism product is being superbly promoted, even as it continues to be hailed among the world's best.

Sports/Tourism is, indeed, on the rise in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique and our athletes are showing great promise. My Government takes this opportunity to commend the organisers of the Invitational, as well as the athletes, who

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competed in the event. In that vein, we also congratulate the management and team and especially the Gold and Bronze Medallists, who represented Grenada at the recently held Commonwealth Games in Australia. Our Nation was justifiably proud to witness their performances and their overall representation of Grenada. **(Applause)**

Further encouraged by their dedication, potential and promise, Government will continue its work related to Tourism and Sports Products Enhancement Developing Programmes in Schools and Communities that promote Sports, Culture and the Arts, thus continuing to put Grenada on the map.

We will also continue to build capacity among the professionals, who are called upon to execute these world class initiatives on behalf of our beautiful country.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government is grateful for the support provided in the last five (5) years by the Social Partners and the Grenadian people; that support and unity restored to Grenada to economic growth and social prominence on the international stage. As we forge ahead, as a Nation during this period of Governance, my Government looks forward with renewed optimism to working with the Social Partners to advance our country's development.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government has reaffirmed its priorities for this First Session of the Tenth Parliament. The implementation of the initiatives outlined will be seen throughout the fiscal year.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of Parliament, may God guide you all in your deliberations and render you equal to the sacred trust restored upon you. May God continue to richly bless our beautiful Tri-island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and enfold us all in His boundless love and care. **(Applause)**

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Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Gregory Bowen: Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion put forward by the Prime Minister.

Mr. President: Leader of Government's Business in the Senate.

Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiell: Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, I will like to associate the Senate with the sentiments of the Motion.

Sen. the Hon. Glynis Roberts: Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate ourselves with the sentiments of the Motion.

Mr. President: The Motion be approved.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members of the House of Representatives, the question is that the debate of the Address delivered by the Governor-General, be deferred to a date to be named.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate of Address deferred to a date to be named.

Sergeant-at-Arms: All rise.

(A fanfare of trumpets is sounded)

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Mr. President: Honourable Members, pray be seated. The Houses do stand adjourned **sine die**.

Question put and agreed to. Houses adjourned sine die at 11:55 a.m.