

Launch of the Ten-Year Development Plan for the Turks and Caicos Islands
Remarks on Budget and Development Planning
By Hon. Floyd B. Hall, Minister of Finance
Providenciales, October 27, 2005

HE Mahala Wynns, Acting Governor, Other Members of Executive Council, Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Department, Members of the Ten Year Development Plan Steering Committee, Members of the Press, Members of the Clergy, Ladies and Gentlemen, Boy and Girls

Greetings

Good morning to one and all! I am very pleased to bring remarks on the occasion of the launch of the Ten Year National Development Plan for the Turks and Caicos Islands. I agree with my colleague the Honourable Chief Minister – today is indeed another historic day for this country under our Administration. It is a day when all of us – Belongers and residents - alike can be proud.

The launch of the planning process provides an opportunity for us who love these Islands to set aside any differences we have to embark upon a common endeavour to develop a national Vision and related objectives and projects and programs to ensure the sustainable development of our country for the enjoyment of this and future generations.

It is a time of renewal and recommitment.

It is also a time when we can reflect on our inter-dependence with other nations in the Region and further a field. We only have to look at the impact of recent Hurricanes to see how inter-dependent we are as peoples of the

World. Activities in one country have implications for other countries. As part of planning process we also need to reflect on the importance of our environment and biodiversity for the entire survival of this planet.

The Development Plan

As the Minister of Finance, it was not very hard to convince me to approve the funding for the implementation of the new National Development Plan. In fact, in my first Budget Address on September 23, 2003 I outlined our Administration's commitment to preparing a national development plan. Some of the requirements I outline for the new development plan remain relevant today.

I stated then and I reiterate today:

“The new planning process will allow Ministers and technical officials to gather from the communities, views concerning key development issues and project solutions to address them. The outcome of these series of meetings will be reflected in a new short term planning document which will provide the basis for a new participatory budgeting process whereby communities will have more say in determining which projects and issues are addressed in future budgets.”

Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very pleased that the planning methodology for the National Development Plan will embrace the principles I outlined in my first Budget Address. I therefore commend the planning process to each and every one of you and urge you to seek more information

about it and participate through the many avenues that will be available so that that your views will help to shape the final Plan.

Planning and the Budget Process

I now would like to devote a few remarks to the important linkages between planning and the budget process.

The Turks and Caicos Islands have a long history of planning. In the last twenty years or so we have made a number of attempts at planning. Over the years our relations with the United Kingdom has included some form of coordination and planning. This long-standing planning relation has evolved, along with our increasing economic independence, from grant-in-aid, to the Policy Matrix of the 1990s, to the Country Policy Program and to the recent Strategic Country Policy. The country has prepared several Development Plans, the most recent one being for the 1987 to 1997 period. We all can recall the Mokoro Report of the late 1980s. During 1999 a Poverty Assessment Report was prepared with assistance from the Caribbean Development Bank. More recently we have developed a number of sector plans for areas as diverse as HIV/AIDS, Drugs, Disaster Preparedness, Health Sector Visioning and the Tourism Development to name a few.

One common feature of the aforementioned attempts at planning is the fact that they were not prepared within a comprehensive national resource context. Issues regarding co-ordination and integration, cross-consistency, institutional and implementation and human capacity were also not adequately addressed. The absence of these critical elements of planning

virtually hobbled the implementation of these plans. This resulted in frustration of the persons who participated in their preparation. This experience is not unique to the Turks and Caicos Islands. In fact a number of plans within the regions have failed for similar reasons.

This is why when conceptualizing the new development plan we promoted a collaborative approach between the Department of Planning and the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics to ensure a direct link with the Ministry of Finance and by extension the budget process.

The Ministry of Finance is keen to ensure that adequate resources will be available to ensure implementation of the priorities that emerge from the planning process. This is why we have invested in modern financial management systems and improved statistical capacity. These investments will provide timely information to enhance the planning process. The objectives of the Ten-Year development plan will therefore be underpinned by a clear resource framework; and will be implemented through a series of rolling three-year Medium Term Economic and Social Planning Framework.

The Medium Term Economic and Social Planning Framework will be one of several deliverables of the planning exercise. It will provide a flexible framework for the country to channel resources into addressing current development challenges and emerging issues to ensure consistency with the long term development vision and related objectives. Accordingly, it will elaborate and order development priorities for the 2-3 year planning period and will be linked to the Public Sector Investment Program and recurrent expenditure programs. It will also inform departmental work plans and

identify approaches for key economic and social priorities and targets to be monitored and achieved. I also envisaged that the planning process would discuss options to formalise development partnership between the public and private sector. For example: a Council of Economic Advisers could be institutionalised with membership from both sectors.

Previous speakers have outlined the participatory methodology that will be employed to prepare the new Development Plan. I reiterate that it is the people's plan. This notwithstanding, we have already engaged KAIRI Consultants from Trinidad and Tobago to provide technical assistance to the planning process based on their Regional experience and past work in these Islands.

Consistent with the objective of the Ministry of Finance to ensure that adequate resources are available to implement the recommendations of the new Plan you will be pleased to know that some of the important tasks the Consultants will perform include:

1. Prepare outline budgetary frameworks, in particular revenue projections and debt and reserve targets; prioritise and list critical programs and projects interventions for key sectors proposing indicative budgets and commencement years.
2. Evaluate and specify the skills and human resources requirement needed in the medium-term and looking towards the long-term objectives of the Plan, make recommendations for skill requirements in upcoming years

3. Establish indicative medium-term targets for growth, investment, and employment creation and outline the measures and approaches needed to achieve these targets.

Conclusion

Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, as I have said on many occasions we are an output oriented Government. Today's launch of the Ten Year Development Plan is an achievement of a major commitment we made to the People of these Islands. The ideas I have elaborated to ensure adequate linkages between the planning and budget process will ensure its implementation - thereby overcoming one of the critical shortcomings of past attempts at planning. I wish the lead departments, committees and Consultants well as they undertake this important work. As the Minister of Finance, I am committed to doing all that is necessary to ensure the success of this endeavour commenced today. I look forward to being actively involved in the planning process so that my views can also be heard. I urge all of you to embrace this opportunity to shape the future of these Islands.

Thank you. May God bless the endeavour we have set for ourselves.