



MON-STRAT 2030

See the Vision!
Work the Plan!

The Workforce for Montserrat

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Work the Plan!

Our roots are deep and strong else we would not have weathered the storms and disasters with such fortitude and responsibility and we would not still be standing.

Ours is a story and a history that can inspire the world.

Ours is an island that can lead in our region.

We did it before. We can do it again.

Our aspirations are high, because they must be. Some are non-negotiable of necessity, lest we descend into inconstancy, negativity and mediocrity.

Our resolve is undiminished and must remain so; we will do whatever it takes to keep on keeping on and to ensure that Montserrat thrives.

We did it before. We shall do it again.

The only way Montserrat can have any hope of surviving, never mind thriving, is if we become a productive people. Full. Stop. There is no other way. FACT.

Montserrat has to provide goods and services that people will pay us for.

Until and unless we are able to provide goods and services that people will pay us for, we will not, we cannot, have a successful economy. DfID and EU monies will not do that. They are Financial Aid and charitable donations intended to aid survival; they are not investment capital that will support our thriving. Financial aid and charitable donations do not encourage, support or facilitate a successful economy. We need only take the most cursory glance around the world and we will see.

Furthermore, it is not possible to have any meaningful conversation about productivity unless we are, above all, talking about population strengthening. It is not possible to build a thriving economy on any foundation other than productivity, and productivity requires People.

Productivity requires People, Money and Ideas. It is only People who invest Money and develop Ideas.

People bring Ideas

Ideas + Money = Productivity

People x Ideas + Money = Productivity = Economic growth

The Vision:

10 Years

12 000 People

**\$250 000 000 in annual
government revenue**

The Vision is clear. Crystal clear.

A Montserrat that is a Community of Excellence

A Montserrat that is Safe and Healthy, Educated and Connected, Creative and Productive

A Montserrat that is vibrant and active, productive and prosperous, a community of people bubbling with ideas and energy, living gratifying lives, grabbing opportunities and entertaining their prospects

A Montserrat whose inclusivity, culture and wealth are nourished and enriched by its Caribbean, continental and global constituents.

A Montserrat that is esteemed within our region and renowned throughout the world.

What The Vision is going to need:

Courageous, competent and bold, informed leadership

The ideas and energies of every person

A top-notch education system

Health care that is focused on prevention and cure

Clear and appropriate policies of support

The highest standards

Innovative ways to generate revenue

Order and Organisation

What Montserrat most needs right now is A WORKFORCE whose only focus – personal and professional – is raising Montserrat up from the ashes and elevating it so that its people can live well and thrive.

What Montserrat most needs now is not another government by political party, but A WORKFORCE – a squad, a human resources crew – to roll up its sleeves, lace up its boots and get to work on A PLAN of action – a smart, well-thought out, time-sensitive, Montserrat-right strategy.

What Montserrat must vote into office is a government comprised of people who are competent, courageous and committed to doing the work not just getting the perks.

Some Necessary Inputs and Desirable Outcomes:

Order and Organisation

Wealth Creation

Access and Opportunity

Health Protection

Educational Achievement

Economic Expansion

Cultural Revitalisation

Environmental Positivity

Social Reconnection

Internal Administration

International Representation

The Plan:

Our work begins with the fundamentals; with setting the most straightforward, comprehensible and easily-accomplished goals; goals that bring visible and measurable benefit quickly and efficiently.

These first accomplishments will prepare the foundations for the larger, longer-term achievements that must follow and that will require a more complex approach.

In every instance, the relationships, connections and commonalities between and among all sectors will be a major consideration so as to ensure consistent, coordinated, cohesive best outcomes and results.

Some initial steps:

1. Agree on, articulate clearly and relentlessly promote a vision for a Montserrat that is successful and productive in the areas we select and as a centre of excellence in the same.

2. Relentlessly and with clear and precise intention, encourage, support and facilitate the development of a culture of entrepreneurialism, integrity and mutualism in our public and private sectors and our educational and cultural institutions.

3. Invite Montserratians to come home. To live. To work on single or multi-year contracts. To work as technology commuters. To set up businesses that provide goods and services that people – especially people outside of Montserrat – will come and pay for, or pay for from wherever it is that they live. To play. To retire. Facilitate this i.e. make it easy.

4. Invite selected expertise from the rest of the world to come to Montserrat. To live. To work as technology commuters. To work on single or multi-year contracts. To set up businesses that provide goods and services that people – especially people outside of Montserrat – will come and pay for, or pay for from wherever it is that they live. Facilitate this. Insist on succession planning that focuses on Montserratians.

4. Enact the legislation and institute the policies that will facilitate Montserrat's advance towards The Vision; continuously promote the benefits and the strategies and monitor both the activities of the agents and the perspectives of the beneficiaries to ensure the satisfactory fulfilment of the policies and the lasting approval of all.

ONE – The Montserrat We Want

We fully recognise that it will never be possible to recreate the Montserrat that used to be and we acknowledge that while there was an abundance of the truly wonderful, there were also much that was far from perfect in the Montserrat we used to know. We are not intending to go back to the past, yet, the Montserrat we want is, in many ways, the one we once knew and loved.

We want a Montserrat that maintains the best of what we used to be, captures the best of what's available for us now and blends them strategically and with purpose to create the best Montserrat that could possibly be.

Montserrat has always been tranquil, peaceful, friendly, safe and communal. It has changed much but it has not lost that unique quality. We have always been connected to the world and yet quite distinct and we want to stay that way. The Montserrat we want is a Montserrat that is whole again, lively and sparkling, pulsing with life and energy, forward thinking and ever conscious of our history but not restrained or restricted by it.

If we are to have this, we must replace some things that we lost, reactivate some things that bubble beneath the surface and build some brand new things. Some of these are:

- We need our people back; we need new blood as well as native genes. Increasing our population is an economic, social and cultural imperative.
- With utmost urgency, we must reignite our culture of national self-reliance and re-establish our important cultural traditions.
- We must ensure that our people live well, in housing that is worthy and fitting. Ensuring ownership, control and the best use of Montserrat's new lands is critical to our development strategy.
- We can provide a much greater portion of our basic food and drink needs, and we shall.
- We and our visitors and guests must be able to leave from and return to Montserrat with much greater ease than currently. It is possible.
- The institutions we lost must be rebuilt and those that have survived must be revived and reinforced.
- Our culture of concern for others must be revived so that our youth are fortified for life and our elders properly cared for as they come to the ends of theirs.

- Our guests and visitors must be hosted with the traditional Montserratian compassion and kindness even as we hold ourselves, and them, to the very highest standards of social and professional conduct.

Safe and Healthy

Preserving Montserrat's reputation for being one of the safest places on the earth is paramount. That reputation must, of course, be rooted in fact, in reality; it must be low crime figures that tell the tale. Whatever has to be done to accomplish that will be done, no ifs, ands or buts.

Keeping Montserrat safe is mostly about preventing wrongdoing in general, in the first place. Then, it is about responding appropriately to wrongdoing and doing that in such a way that discouragement for would-be criminals is unequivocal and strong and recidivism is reduced overall.

Keeping Montserrat safe also means ensuring that our borders and coastlines are impermeable to the scourges that are afflicting some of our closest neighbours – drug-trafficking, trafficking in humans and gun-running, for example. A safe Montserrat cannot be a harbour for human-trafficking of any sort. We must be crystal clear and relentless about destroying even the vaguest signs of gang activity, which is, among other things, always companion to the above.

One area of major vulnerability is our lands and borders south of Belham River Valley. The official stance seems to be that these lands are some combination of uninhabitable and unmanageable, a backwater, a junkyard and dumping ground, not given much thought. The very air South of Belham has an odour of abandonment which counterproductive and unhealthy. It has a profoundly negative effect on our communal psyche. We must reclaim every inch of our land. There can be no “uninhabited” areas, no abandoned places on this little island.

We cannot be healthy if we live in a dirty environment but we can be healthy even if we don't have a first-rate hospital. As a matter of fact, we in Montserrat need to make very special efforts to be healthy precisely because the hospital we have is so inadequate and because maintaining the highest possible quality of life is important to us. We need to be as healthy as we could possibly be. We have a country to rebuild and restore.

Some of the things we will need to do to keep Montserrat Safe and Healthy are these:

- The very first thing we must do is spruce up our place; clean it up, pretty it up, fix it up. Clean and tidy is beautiful and healthy. That we can do. Easily.

- Maintain the clean and tidy environment. Stop dropping trash all over the place
- Keep our houses, streets, rivers and seas clean
- Re-use, Re-purpose, Re-cycle
- Stop using plastic and Styrofoam and if we ever do,
- Dispose of them properly
- Improve our garbage disposal processes
- Set standards to restrict the sale of junk-foods and highly-processed foods
- Grow more of the foods that we eat
- Grow our foods organically and reduce the use of pesticides
- Eat what we farm and fish
- Exercise regularly and often
- Take up a sport and practise it regularly and often
- Get regular physical and dental check-ups
- Use our seat belts
- Be kind to ourselves and to one another

Connected and Informed

Connectivity is a 21st Century buzzword. It is an important concept but not a new one. It has never been possible for a country – or a person – to be economically successful without being well-connected to others and if we are to restore Montserrat we shall need to be economically successful, which means we absolutely must be better connected to the rest of the world than we currently are.

Connectivity these days means ease of movement of people, services, goods and information. Our small size does not correspond to a lesser need.

Connectivity for Montserrat requires in the first instance, vastly improved telephone and internet connections. To say that good internet and telephone service are essential for business, educational achievement, health care, diaspora connections, and for every single sector of business and commerce is to state the obvious. If the low-grade, inadequate telecommunications service with which Montserrat is constantly struggling is not improved, Montserrat will be unable to make any significant economic advancement, given the way the world works nowadays. It really is that simple. If we don't fix it, and fast, we shall certainly continue to fall further and further behind the rest of the world.

Ease of connection to others is critical in the disaster-prone neighbourhood in which Montserrat is situated. Our connections help us prepare for, survive and recover from natural disasters whether those be hurricane, earthquake, volcanic eruptions or other.

We can “hold strain” and carry on through the other disaster that has been our depopulation, only because we have some connectivity with our people who are forced to live abroad. Enhanced connectivity would both allow more of our people to come home – to live and to visit – and it would keep us all better informed about and “in touch” with each other. Given that the vast majority of our people live abroad, this is a major consideration.

Given that the vast majority of our people live abroad, improving connectivity for Montserrat has to mean instituting more appropriate arrangements for the movement of people.

The Government of Montserrat owns a 22% share in the single Montserrat-based airline. All other shares in FlyMontserrat are owned by Montserratian citizens and residents or by people who have long-term, significant investments in Montserrat. Government of Montserrat must, immediately and without reservation, begin to fulfil its responsibilities to the citizen shareholders and its fiduciary obligations to the Montserrat Treasury. It must, first and with utmost alacrity, name a person to the board of FlyMontserrat with the instructions most likely to redound to the benefit of the people and government of Montserrat.

Creative and Productive

Undeniably, Montserrat has a rich and proud history of creativity and productivity across every sector. We need only look as far back as the decades of the fifties, sixties, seventies and eighties of the last century to encounter the accomplishments of our people.

During these decades, Montserrat was throbbing, pulsating, bubbling with activity, experimentation and innovation. We were a veritable hub of commerce and industry, of education, media, music, theatre, debate. We were the envy of much of our Caribbean family.

We were good. We were very good. We were among the best shipwrights, playwrights, musicians, poets, carpenters, masons, dancers, designers, fishers, farmers, teachers, nurses, doctors, sailors, politicians, lawyers, leaders, neighbours, people... by any standards.

In the years between 1950 and 1995 the standard of living of our people rose exponentially, and our quality of life elevated as our island grew richer and richer in every sense of the word. Despite the damage done by Hurricane Hugo, we kept rising, because we kept working and innovating and learning. Our efforts bore fruit and we had money in the bank.

We can do that again. We can be that again. We can surpass that, even. We shall.

One of the very first policies we must engage is a private housing development developed by and for Montserratians. This one project would revolutionise our economy beginning immediately, building wealth for Montserratians and providing short-, medium- and long-term employment for many people.

The historic MORECO developments worked well for employees on the lower ends of the scale, but it was a Foreign Direct Investment, the major profit and wealth creation advantages of which were enjoyed not by Montserratians, but by the direct investors of foreign origin.

The times have changed. We can do this different now.

Government owns more than 60% of the Bank of Montserrat. It has the power to encourage Bank of Montserrat to establish a brand new **Private Housing Development Loan Programme** targeting Montserratians abroad who would like to return to Montserrat in the future. The GoM has will support the BoM in doing so, from a policy and legislation perspective.

The Loan Programme will be solely for land purchase and housing development.

Montserrat already has everything it would need to initiate and maintain this programme. The BoM has the money and the expertise, the GoM has the authority and the expertise, the people of Montserrat everywhere have the land, the desire and the expertise.

The Bank of Montserrat would welcome the activity. BoM has made several forays into the Montserratian diaspora, seeking to encourage Montserratians living overseas to take out mortgages to buy land and build homes for retirement or short term rentals with limited success. With Government backing, and with this initiative made formally a part of Montserrat's development strategy, the hesitation and uncertainty would certainly end.

This **Private Housing Development Loan Programme** would be a win-win situation for:

- The people who would sell some of their difficult to divvy-up ancestral land
- The people who would build and own the homes
- The Island where there would be increased high-level accommodation, especially since we do not have a significant hotel presence on island
- Bank of Montserrat which would expand on a lower-risk Loan Portfolio as their percentage of collateralized loans would increase over time
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It would

- Create local jobs for architects, building contractors, tradesmen and tradeswomen and other construction professionals
- Improve the island's tax base
- Allow for better utilisation of our access facilities at airport and seaports
- Improve 'economies of scale' which would help reduce the cost-of-living
- Provide trickle down jobs for gardeners, property managers and house care professionals – people who make their living taking care of other people's homes and buildings
- Make better use of long-unused land on island
- Allow families with large amounts of unutilised ancestral land to monetize part of the currently these assets. This would provide a means of taking care of family members who would prefer to get monetary payout from sale of family land, rather than having the land remain unutilised and subjected to taxation.

This would be a bonanza for the island's economy that would kill several birds with one stone:

- It would ease the way for Montserratians to return home over the next 5, 10, 20 years
- It would engage the human resources for repopulating the island over time
- It would spur business investments
- It would regenerate and revitalize the island's economy from every perspective.

End of **The Vision** Part 1