180th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN THE WEST INDIES:

THE CASE OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

by

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INTRODUCTION

On July 31, 2012, on the eve of the 174th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the former "British" West Indies, I submitted to the Parliament of St. Vincent and the Grenadines a written statement entitled: "The End of Slavery in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Our Commemoration in 2012". On August 01, 2018, our Caribbean marks the 180th anniversary of slavery's abolition which formally occurred on August 01, 1838.

It is opportune, in advance of the next sitting of Parliament in August 2018, that I again deliver to our Parliament another statement in commemoration of slavery's termination in the "British" West Indies, with special reference to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This statement incorporates, as an Appendix,

a shortened and edited version of the original statement of which I made on July 31, 2012, to Parliament.

This 2018 parliamentary statement is prefaced by an "Essential Discourse" which summarises some salient facts and reflections about slavery's end in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, their relevance to our country's present and future development, and the general push for reparations by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and activists globally. I advise that this Statement to Parliament be also read in conjunction with three other essays authored by me entitled respectively: (i) "Preliminary Notes on the Quantification of Reparations from the British for Lands Stolen, for Genocide and Forcible Deportation of the Garifuna People, and for Enslavement of Africans in St. Vincent and the Grenadines"; (ii) "A Review Essay of Hilary Beckles' Black Debt: Reparations for Caribbean Slavery and Genocide"; and (iii) "Road Map for Reparations for Native Genocide and Slavery in the Caribbean". These three essays are contained in my book entitled: The Case for Reparatory Justice (Strategy Forum Inc,

SVG, 2014) which was published to coincide with the apt elaboration of the central theme of "Recognition, Justice and Development", launched on December 10, 2014, at the United Nations, regarding the International Decade for People of African Descent.

AN ESSENTIAL DISCOURSE: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

(i) Preliminary

A global struggle has been gathering pace to remember the historical condition of people of African descent and to act on that remembrance in the contemporary circumstances in the interest of the very people themselves. This regional and global struggle is linked inextricably to efforts nationally to uplift the quality of people's lives and living and to enhance production and reproduction, so necessary and desirable for our people's further all-round advancement and ennoblement.

Essential to that process of remembrance and activism, so as to avoid any desecration of our future, are the facts of slavery and its legacy of underdevelopment. At the same time, "memory" is not to induce us to live in the past from some distorted perch of our contemporary condition; "memory" is to be harnessed, to be utilized, to propel us forward from our contemporary limitations, to extend the boundaries of what is possible, and to build a better world for ourselves and our civilisation despite the extant challenges and contradictions. We are thus enjoined to combine both faith and reason, to marry divine inspiration and our people's creative imagination, to work hard and smart in our own interest, to be in solidarity with each other, and to be linked externally with our friends and allies in pursuit of our further development.

In our developmental quest, we acknowledge as a truism that our Caribbean civilisation is a creolised whole, a veritable symphony of cohesion, despite occasional

dissonance, which is grounded and shaped in the material contradictions or contestations between different classes or socio-economic groupings. In this metaphoric symphony, our Caribbean civilisation is constituted as the songs of the indigenous people (Callinago, Garifuna, Amerindian), the rhythm of Africa, the melody of Europe, the chords of Asia, and the homegrown lyrics of the Caribbean itself. From the resulting ethnic admixture of people drawn from different lands and cultures, shaped by the "fever" of our history and our contemporary condition, in a particular landscape and seascape, a more or less homogenous society has emerged with a core of tried and tested values of an uplifting universal humanity but possessed of Caribbean particularities.

In 2013, several of us in political leadership in the region persuaded the Heads of Government Conference of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to advance an agenda and programmatic platform for reparations for native genocide and African slavery. The Conference of Heads

decided to establish a Caribbean Reparations Commission (CRC) and urged the setting up of national reparations bodies in each member-state of CARICOM. A Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on Reparations was put in place under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister of Barbados to provide leadership, guidance, and direction for the CRC and to report to Conference on an ongoing basis.

Since then the CRC and the national reparations entities have been carrying out educational work on the subject, though not with the intensity and spread required of such a venture. The University of the West Indies, especially its Caribbean Reparations Research Centre, has been conducting appropriate research on the subject of reparations in specific areas touching and concerning the historical, economic, cultural, health, educational, legal, and political. Two regional reparations conferences have been held ___ one in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the other in Antigua and Barbuda.

International gatherings in North America and Europe have been addressed by leading personalities from the CRC. The former Prime Minister of Barbados, Freundel Stuart, on behalf of CARICOM, wrote to then British Prime Minister, David Cameron, on the subject, requesting among other things, a structured conversation on reparations; Cameron's response equivocated on reparations and expressed a preference for a partnership on development; according to him, he preferred to look to the future, not the past. Clearly, Prime Minister Cameron failed and/or refused to appreciate that the colonial past, with African enslavement as its centre-piece prior to 1838, but following upon native genocide, constitutes, in the aggregate, a deleterious legacy of underdevelopment. That legacy is required to be repaired; it is very much the present, not the past. A structured partnership between Europe and the Caribbean, beyond optional European assistance, is required for that repairing, for reparations.

It is in that context that the CRC has elaborated a ten-point plan on reparations which has been endorsed by CARICOM. This plan is in need of further refinement. It is high time, too, that the political and legal initiatives on reparatory justice be robustly pursued. The 180th anniversary of the abolition of slavery is an appropriate occasion to reignite the push for reparations, the case for which is unanswerably strong.

I advise that the legal, political and diplomatic struggle for reparations be lodged within the following frameworks internationally:

(i) International Law, including several relevant Conventions to which CARICOM member-countries, Britain, France, and Holland are State parties;

(ii) International Declarations touching and concerning native genocide and the enslavement of Africans;

(iii) The United Nations' Resolution 68/237 of December 23, 2013, proclaiming the International Decade for People of African Descent, which commenced on January 01, 2015, and ends on December 31, 2024, inclusive of the theme, "People of African Descent: Recognition, Justice, and Development";

(iv) The Sustainable Development Goals which were elaborated by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 for practicable attainment by September 2030;

(v) The Ten-Point Strategic Programme on Reparations fashioned by the CRC, and endorsed by CARICOM.

Meanwhile, the preparatory research (historical, economic, diplomatic, legal) has to be ongoing. So, too, the educational work among our people of a general and targeted nature on the subject of reparatory justice with especial reference to the repairing of the legacy of underdevelopment which in the

Caribbean is the material consequence of native genocide and slavery. Required also, is the organisation of the Caribbean people, at home and in the diaspora, in alliance with supportive friends and solidarity partners globally, especially in Africa, Europe, and North America, in a united front, around the issue of reparations.

The means or mechanisms to be utilised in the struggle for reparatory justice are focused on the following: (i) Political representation in various regional and global fora; (ii) activist diplomacy without let-up; and (iii) legal redress, including at the International Court of Justice.

On the occasion of the 180th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, the governments and peoples of the Caribbean Community are being urged to reinvigorate the quest for reparatory justice.

(ii) A Sketch of the Demography of Slavery in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Organised slavery took root in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the immediate aftermath of the assumption of suzerainty by Britain in 1763 following the Treaty of Paris, concluded between France and Britain, at the end of the Seven Years War.

Between 1764 and 1807, when the trade in slaves in British ships and to British colonies was terminated, the actual number of enslaved Africans who disembarked in St. Vincent and the Grenadines number 55,562. The Slave Trade Database established by Emory University, in conjunction with other partners, records that 62,176 enslaved Africans embarked on the ships bound for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Table I provide the details.

TABLE 1

Summary of Embarked/Disembarked Slaves –
St. Vincent and the Grenadines as Principal Place of Landing

YEAR	EMBARKED	DISEMBARKED
1764 – 1765	205	167
1766 – 1770	3,108	2,509
1771 – 1775	10,872	9,219
1776 – 1780	564	517
1781 – 1785	4,372	3,893
1786 – 1790	11,711	10,532
1791 – 1795	14,426	13,652
1796 – 1800	7,743	6,820
1801 – 1805	7,062	6,375
1806 – 1808	2,113	1,878
Totals	**62,176**	**55,562**

The British government decided at slavery's end to pay compensation to the slave-owners for the freed slaves on the basis of the slaves owned in 1832. In that year the number of registered slaves stood at 22,997. During slavery, mortality among slaves was high and reproduction rates were low; thus, population declines occurred over the years of slavery, and moreso after the end of the slave trade itself in 1807.

The slave-owners were paid £592,509 for their 22,997 slaves in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The compensation formula was follows: £31 per "field slave", which category accounted for 69 percent of the total slave population; "non-field slaves" (13 percent of the slave population) were valued for compensation at £30 per slave", "children under 6 years" amounted to 13 percent of the slave population and were valued for compensation at £11 each; and "the Aged and Infirm" slaves (5 percent of the slave population) fetched for their owners, £3 each. The aggregate compensation to the slave-owners for the slaves in St. Vincent and the Grenadines amounts in today's value, to £491.18 million or over EC $2 billion. [Professor Draper and his research team at the University College of London has estimated that the slave-owners' compensation has to be multiplied by a factor of 829 to arrive at the equivalent value today].

Of course, the slaves themselves received no monetary compensation, no lands, no education and training, no

financial assistance. All this, and more, constitute the origin and continuing legacy of underdevelopment.

(iii) Lands: From the Indigenous People to the Europeans

St. Vincent admeasures 133 square miles or 85,120 acres of land; the Grenadines islands admeasure 17 square miles or 10,880 acres of land. Before British conquest and settlement all land in St. Vincent and the Grenadines was held in common by the indigenous people. In 1764, Britain declared, in law, that all the land in St. Vincent and the Grenadines belonged to the British Crown. The British land grab thus began in earnest.

By January 1777, the British Colonial Surveyor, Mr. Byers, reported on the general state and disposition of lands in St. Vincent as show in Table II.

TABLE II

General State and Disposition of Lands in St. Vincent, As Described by Mr. Byers, in His Survey made in January, 1773

		Acres
1.	Lands sold at Public Sale by the Commissioners, leased, and appropriated for public uses	20,392
2.	Lands "granted" by British to friendly Caribs	1,210
3.	Lands "granted" to Lt. General Monckton	4,000
4.	Lands "Granted" to the Caribs by Treaty in 1773	27,628
5.	Cultivate lands undisposed of	9,777
6.	"Impracticable" (uncultivatable) Land	21,079
	Total **Note**: The Carib lands in 4 above were by 1805 all seized by the British; by 1805 the Caribs (Garifuna) were legally prohibited from owning lands.	**84,286**

In that very year, 1777, there were 34,906 acres of lands divided in Estates. Another 30,000 acres were in uncultivable forests, owned largely by the British Crown.

By 1827, 110 plantations, occupying 44,798 acres of land in St. Vincent and the Grenadines had been established. Large numbers of the owners were absentee planters; in fact, in 1848, only 12 of a total of 100 proprietors were resident in St. Vincent. One hundred years later, this pattern of land ownership of about 100

or so plantations had been consolidated. Indeed, along the way, the concentration of lands in fewer hands became evident: In 1882, some two-thirds of the arable land (22 estates) were owned by D.K. Porter and Company; a further 16 estates were owned by three other plantocrats.

A limited land settlement programme instituted by the colonial government between the late 19th century (after the Royal Commission of 1897) and the decade or so after the 1935 anti-colonial uprising, settled a relatively small acreage of lands to landless persons: The post-1897 land settlement was mainly in the Three Rivers-South Rivers-Park Hill areas; the post-1935 land settlement occurred in 1946 on 4,004 acres of land at Richmond Vale and Wallilabou.

It was not until the period in the mid-1970s that the dismantling of the plantation system in agriculture commenced in earnest, largely on account of the

exhaustion and inefficiencies of the plantation economy, the requisites of modern capitalism and competitive international trade, the rise of trade unionism and mass democratic politics, and the demise of the sugar and arrowroot industries, coupled with the rise of the banana industry. Today, the bulk of agricultural commodities is produced on small land-holdings owned by a multiplicity of small farmers. The plantations were either sub-divided and sold-off to individual farmers or were acquired by successive governments and distributed through land reform programmes to farmers and farm workers.

The end of the last of the "colonial market preferences" occurred at the onset of the 21st century with the termination of the market preferences for bananas in the British market. There thus arises an imperative to re-orient the economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in a modern, globalized world, which first entered the vortex of mercantile capitalism in the late 18th century as a

primary producer of agricultural commodities for export in special circumstances. Since then industrial capital and finance capital have metamorphosed into a global monopoly capitalism into which the Caribbean, including St. Vincent and the Grenadines, has become enmeshed. Trade liberalization and the revolution in information technology are two critical hand-maidens of monopoly capitalism, with offerings of challenges and opportunities.

(iv) The Quest to Build a Modern, Competitive, Many-Sided, Post-Colonial Economy which is at once National, Regional and Global

(a) The Issue

Shortly after the election of the Unity Labour Party (ULP) government in March 2001, I presented, in structured form, our party's strategic quest to build a modern, competitive, many-sided post-colonial economy which is at once national, regional, and global. I emphasized

then, as I have done repeatedly since, that each of the words of this strategic formulation is pregnant with real meaning. The words “modern” and “competitive” conjure up the application of science and technology, education and training, appropriate managerial techniques and a coherent, progressive frame for the social organisation of labour, to produce goods and services, in sufficient quantities, at competitive prices and quality for the national, regional, and global market place. “Many-sided” simply means a viable diversification of saleable goods and services. The construct “post-colonial”, in this context, is profoundly economic in that it acknowledges that colonial-era preferences for our commodities are no longer available in an epoch of trade liberalisation and globalisation, save and except in any narrowly-circumscribed negotiated trade compact compatible with regional integration and the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

This basic strategic framework recognizes that life, living, production, and reproduction in the "post-colonial" world, demand that all countries, but especially small ones like St. Vincent and the Grenadines, bring people to them to sell their goods and services and to develop simultaneously a sound base for the export of goods and services overseas. Our people must thus work hard and smart in the targeted areas of the production of goods and services for the competitive market. No country owes us a living even though our friends and allies may assist us on our developmental path. Reparations, however, are a European obligation to the Caribbean on account of Europe's genocide against the indigenous people and the enslavement of Africans in the Caribbean which are at the centre of the legacy of underdevelopment currently.

To us in the ULP, it is axiomatic that given the extant condition of our country's small size, its relative scarcity of material resources, its historical legacy of underdevelopment, and its contemporary challenges

arising from climate change, it is necessary and desirable that a carefully calibrated and flexible regional and foreign policy be pursued to fit our national interests within the context of settled international precepts and law, and bilateral and multi-lateral solidarity across nations globally.

The articulated strategic economic quest and the requisite regional and foreign policy emerge from the nature of our country's condition, and, in turn, shape its very development. In the national social and political economy, initiatives are taken in accord with the priorities of the people and their democratically-elected representatives in the context of the country's material possibilities and limitations. All-round development depends on pushing always the boundaries of our country's possibilities, reducing its limitations as far as is humanly practicable, seeking to have these limitations transformed into possibilities and strengths, and

working, in solidarity, with other countries to enlarge, and realize, the extent of our possibilities.

(b) Relevant Economic History

Between 1763, when Britain first assumed suzerainty over our country, and the mid-1990s of an independent St. Vincent and the Grenadines, our national economy was based principally, at various times, on one of four major export commodities: Sugar, arrowroot, cotton, and bananas. Each of these agricultural products was cocooned, in its production and/or marketing, by domestic production supports and/or external market subsidies or preferences. None of these commodities singly or in combination with each other and conjoined with minor crops (coconuts, plantains, ground provisions, fruits, vegetables, cocoa, coffee, cassava, tobacco) or livestock (cattle, goats, sheep, pigs) or artisanal fishing, generated for, and allocated to, the people enough surplus to put the country on a self-

sustaining trajectory. The surplus created during slavery and in the post-emancipation was appropriated by the colonial power and the planter-merchant elite.

Indeed, poverty, extreme hardship, and more, prevailed in those 240 years or so between 1763 and the 1990s; and only during slavery was there full employment, but in unspeakable harsh conditions of life. There has never been in St. Vincent and the Grenadines under "labour freedom" ___ the years since the emancipation of slaves in 1838 ___ a full or complete solution to the enduring problem of the limited absorptive capacity of the economy for labour. Thus, full employment in the circumstances of a free society is yet to be achieved in St. Vincent and the Grenadines! But civic and political freedom, though accompanied by unemployment, is a condition absolutely to be always preferred to slavery or an overrule of colonialism and the planter-merchant elites! And it must be admitted that since internal self-government in 1969, there has been considerable socio-economic development

in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the lifting markedly of our people's condition of life and living.

Indeed, even when one finds a partial solution to significant unemployment as the ULP government did between 2001 and 2012, (as the Census data show), and subsequently, the alterations in the internal composition of the population has affected adversely the country's capacity to tackle unemployment decisively. Thus, although some 6,000 new jobs were created between 2001 and 2012, in a context of a more or less constant population size, the unemployment rate remained basically the same as in 2001 because of an increase in the actual working population occasioned by the fact that older persons (over 55-year olds) remained in job or acquired new jobs or became self-employed. The internal composition of the population altered because of the one-third increase in the numbers of persons over 60 years of age. This is a new circumstance with huge socio-economic challenges.

The collapse of the sugar industry in 1880 ushered in over the next 75 or so years, up to 1956, a period in which no single crop was able to sustain economic dominance: There was an oscillation between sugar, arrowroot and cotton at various points, in concert with "minor crops". Indeed, during the Second World War (1939 – 1945), ground provisions were ascendant, particularly in the regional market. In 1956, bananas for the first time emerged as the major export commodity and remained so until towards the end of the 20th century when the market preferences for Caribbean bananas in the British market were almost completely dismantled consequent upon Britain's entry into the European Union Single Market on January 01, 1993, and the "free market" challenges by the USA and Ecuador before the WTO thereafter.

As early as 1989, I had foreseen the banana market problem; indeed, I wrote about it in a monograph prior to

the 1989 general elections. Prime Ministers John Compton and James Mitchell of St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines respectively denounced me as a "prophet of doom and gloom" and assured everyone that "it would be alright in the morning". Thus, precious time was lost by the then political leaderships in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in not launching an education revolution, re-orienting the economy, and building supportive infrastructure such as a jet airport and an international airport. In short, they did not address sufficiently or at all, the necessary and desirable bases for the building of a modern, competitive, many-sided, post-colonial economy. They dithered; they found refuge in a mere management of things, and sought not transformation or the laying of a credible base for transformation of the economy and production. Up to today, those lodged in the former paradigms still look forward to the past with no gaze at the future.

Between 1880 and 1956, St. Vincent and the Grenadines experienced massive emigration; so, too, in the 1960s to 1980s; and migrants' remittances from abroad have provided much relief. The inter-censal data between 1991 and 2012 showed a slow-down in migration overseas, even though remittances still range between a moderately favorable 5 percent to 7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

From the 1980s onwards, the illegal cultivation and export of marijuana added to the strengthening of the informal economy, and have improved the material living of many persons, particularly in the rural areas.

The lessons from our country's economic history point to the salience of the strategic economic quest to build a modern, competitive, many-sided, post-colonial economy.

(c) Challenges to the Strategic Economic Quest

By 2008, an array of challenges emerged to the strategic economic quest, namely: The virtual complete dismantling of the market preferences for bananas in the United Kingdom; the worst global economic depression for 80 years which severely battered these island economies; and the sharp rise in oil prices on the world market in July 2008 to US $148 per barrel, up from under US $30 in 2001.

In the midst of all this, the regional financial giant CL Financial of Trinidad and Tobago fell apart and in its wake the insurance behemoths, CLICO and BAICO, collapsed occasioning liabilities in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (and the countries of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union – ECCU) of 17 percent of GDP; the ravages of climate change impacted the Caribbean, causing in St. Vincent and the Grenadines damage and loss of some EC $700 million or about 17 percent of GDP;

the weakening of indigenous banks in the ECCU (capital inadequacy, liquidity problems, non-performing loans, problematic risk and credit management) took its toll; and external political and economic instability had adverse knock-on effects on our economy and those of the region.

The aggregate of these fundament external challenges occasioned deleterious effects on the fiscal and debt situation of central governments in the ECCU at precisely the time when they needed to build economic and social resilience, and to reform their economies. In the case of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the government had to build a jet airport on Canouan and an international airport on St. Vincent, expend millions of dollars on the Education Revolution and the social sector, spend huge sums of money on re-orienting the economy, and expend monies on a reclassification exercise in the public service to assist in delivering better public management and administration. We have managed this economic crisis

better than most; the records show it. We insisted then, and still do now, that austerity is for St. Vincent and the Grenadines a wrong and dangerous idea. Our fiscal policy has been grounded on prudence and enterprise.

Despite the awesome challenges, St. Vincent and the Grenadines was able between 2008 and 2010 to contain economic contraction to 5 percent of GDP; by 2015, economic output had returned to pre-2008 levels. Since 2011, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has experienced annually low-to-modest economic growth as it transitions to self-sustaining development grounded in an increasingly service-oriented economy though with a diversified commodity production in agriculture, animal husbandry, manufacturing, and fisheries. At the same time, the country has executed major capital projects (including the Argyle International Airport); strengthened markedly the social sector, including education, health, poverty reduction, and social security; and maintained and enhanced law, order, and good governance. Through

an admixture of prudence, enterprise, and debt relief, the fiscal situation has been stable and the public sector, debt level manageable at 72 percent of GDP.

(d) Constructing the Pillars of the Strategy

On the ground, by 2018, we witness the pillars of the strategic economic quest being constructed for now and the future:

1. The practical elaboration, consolidation, and expansion of the many-sided Education Revolution;

2. The completion and operation of the jet airport and the international airport;

3. The active pursuance of renewable energy (geothermal, solar, hydro);

4. The expansion of the tourism sector (hotel construction and/or expansion at Canouan, Union Island, Mayreau, PSV, Bequia, Mustique, Buccament, Peters' Hope, Mt. Wynne, and other areas on St. Vincent); also, developments in cruise and yacht tourism;

5. Further developments in agriculture especially arrowroot, cocoa, coffee, coconuts, ground provisions, fruit and vegetables; and livestock improvement;

6. Fisheries development: Infrastructure and management developments at Kingstown, Owia, and Bequia Fisheries Centres; the proposed multi-million dollar Rainforest Seafoods Packaging plant at Calliaqua; and the proposed purchase of three trawlers through the state-owned inputs Warehouse Company;

7. Medical Training: Four off-shore medical schools in St. Vincent and Grenadines with over 1,200 students, and expanding;

8. The proposed Medical Cannabis industry;

9. The imminent build-out of a job-focussed Call Centre;

10. The practical elaboration of transformative capital projects by the government:

    (i) The imminent opening of two Polyclinics (Mespo and Buccament) and the Modern Medical Complex) Georgetown, following the refurbishment of MCMH and the build-out of the huge collaboration with the World Pediatric Project; the Stubbs Polyclinic, and the rebuilt Mental Health Centre;

(ii) The on-going real plans for the City at Arnos Vale, including the anchor project of the Acute referral Hospital;

(iii) The actual, on-going plans for the Modern Port towards the Western end of Kingstown;

(iv) A multi-million dollar road repair and reconstruction programme;

(v) A reforestation programme;

(vi) The expansion of the Housing Development programme; and

(vii) A bundle of physical infrastructure projects designed to make St. Vincent and the Grenadines more resilient to the adverse effects of climate change.

11. Building cultural industries;

12. The strengthening of citizen security, including beefing up the Police Force and Coast Guard;

13. The enhancing of the managerial and public administrative systems in the state administration; and

14. Building a more efficacious regional and foreign policy aligned to our economic interests.

Meanwhile, there is a series of ongoing targeted socio-economic interventions to improve people's lives, living, and production.

(e) Summation

It is realized that in the construction of a modern, competitive, many-sided post-colonial economy, there will

inevitably be unevenness in the combined development of the economy. Ongoing correctives would thus be made to the strategic implementation of the process and the details therein, as the circumstances admit. Always, the people's interest will be paramount as is emphasised in our government's people-centred vision. This strategic economic quest is being built at the same time as cross-cutting developments are occurring in the spheres of political democracy and transparency, social equity and pronounced poverty reduction, and in the further enhancement of the bases and manifestations of our Caribbean civilisation, and its Vincentian component.

Undoubtedly, my government has on offer a compelling developmental narrative for the present and the future, building sensibly and practically on its monumental achievements, thus far!

The simple truth is that there is no other credible alternative path elaborated or available but that which is

articulated, in theory and practice, by the ULP administration. Our case is thus re-stated for our people's continued support.

FINAL COMMENT

On the occasion of the 180th anniversary of the abolition of slavery, I urge three inter-related bundles of activities centred on: (1) Memory/remembrance of our past to ensure that we live better today and in the tomorrows; (2) Re-invigorate the push for reparations for native genocide and slavery in a concerted effort to repair the awful legacy of underdevelopment arising from these crimes against humanity; and (3) Work strenuously (hard and smart) to implement the practical policies and programmes embedded in our quest to build, in our people's interest, a modern, competitive, many-sided, post-colonial economy which is at once National, Regional, and Global.

APPENDIX 1

The End of Slavery in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Our Commemoration in 2012 (Statement to Parliament on July 31, 2012) [EDITED VERSION]

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Act for the Abolition of Slavery in the British Empire, of which St. Vincent and the Grenadines was part, was passed in the British Parliament in 1833. Emancipation Day was proclaimed to be August 01, 1834. An "apprenticeship" period followed; the slaves, who were transported through the horrendous Middle Passage from Africa, were finally and legally freed on August 1, 1838 ____ 174 years ago.

In the year 1763, Britain assumed suzerainty over St. Vincent (renamed St. Vincent and the Grenadines since independence on October 27, 1979) in a general carve-up of the West Indies by the major European powers under the Treaty of Paris. Effective European settlement commenced henceforth. Save and except for a few years between the late 1770s and early

1780s when France had a temporary, tenuous colonial hold on St. Vincent, Britain remained the colonising power until our country attained internal self-government in 1969 and constitutional independence in 1979.

When Britain took colonial control in 1763, the population of St. Vincent consisted of approximately 10,000 (ten thousand) Callinago and Garifuna, 1,380 French settlers and some 2,700 African slaves. The French were settled mainly on the western side of St. Vincent in occupation of under 2,000 acres of land: There were 114 parcels of land under the French which the British later converted into leaseholds, three of which were between 100 and 135 acres each; the other 111 parcels of land were under 100 acres each. All other lands, close to 100,000 acres, were held in common by the Callinago and Garifuna people. Upon colonising St. Vincent, the British swiftly declared in 1764 that all the lands belonged to the British crown. Over the next 36 years, up to 1800, the British systematically deprived the Callinago and Garifuna people of their lands; the indigenous people (the Callinago) and the

Garifuna (the descendents of persons of mixed blood Callinago and African) were pushed to the worst and most inhospitable parcels of land in the north-east of St. Vincent amounting to 238 acres.

The African component of the Garifuna people came from shipwrecked Africans in the late 17th century, runaway African slaves from Barbados, some African slaves who came by way of Martinique and Guadeloupe, and recent African slave arrivals under the British.

LATE COLONIAL SETTLEMENT OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

St. Vincent was settled much later than most of the other Caribbean territories because of the inhospitable terrain, the fierce defence of their patrimony by the Callinago and Garifuna people, and their opposition to slavery. It is this much later settlement which accounted for the fact that African slavery as the dominant mode of socio-economic organisation emerged in St. Vincent only after the Callinago

and Garifuna (collectively called “Caribs” by the colonisers) were subdued and defeated in 1797 following the death of their Chief, Joseph Chatoyer, our National Hero. Colonies such as Jamaica, Barbados, St. Kitts, Cuba, and Hispaniola had long been settled by mercantile capitalism from Europe, utilising African slave labour on plantations. Slavery as a mode of production internal to St. Vincent, predominantly on sugar-cane plantations, with capitalist exchange relations externally, emerged fully after 1800. In 1807 the slave trade came to an end; and slavery’s abolition arrived in 1834.

Some relevant sugar production data are as follows: 35 tons in 1788; 1,930 tons in 1770; and 2,049 tons in 1779, by far the most of which were exported. By 1807, sugar production had risen to 11,209 tons and steadied at 11,270 tons in 1814. Between 1820 and 1828, sugar production fluctuated in a range from 10,834 to 14,403 tons, the peak of 1828. The cataclysmic volcanic eruption of 1812, hurricanes of 1819 and 1830, and the vagaries of the international trade in sugar would have adversely affected sugar production.

The number of slaves increased correspondingly between 1763 and 1812 (1,300 in 1763; 5,000 slaves in 1798; and 24,920 in 1812) with the emergence and consolidation of sugar production. A decline in the number of slaves occurred closer to the date of emancipation: thus 22,997 slaves in 1832, and 18,794 in 1833, the last year before slavery ended. Joseph Spinelli explains the fall in numbers in his study, Land Use and Population in St. Vincent 1763 – 1960 (Ph.D Dissertation, University of Florida, 1973), thus:

> "*The attrition in numbers of slaves was the result of the high mortality of an aging, predominantly male population without sufficient reproduction to compensate for deaths and periodic manumission of the elderly and infirm from the slave registers. It is evident from St. Vincent's court records of manumissions that the estate owners anticipated freedom for the black population and hastened the transition by releasing their less productive charges."*

The bulk of the slaves were to be found in the Parishes of Charlotte and St. George on the eastern side of St. Vincent. The distribution by Parish for the year 1833 was as follows: Charlotte, 6,729 slaves; St. George, 4,994; St. Andrew, 1538; St. Patrick, 2,654; St. David, 1,519; and Bequia, 2,360.

As the nineteenth century unfolded in the post-emancipation years, the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines was further augmented by "liberated" Africans, then by Portuguese indentured servants from Madeira, and a little later by indentured labourers from India. These three categories of arrivants numbered roughly 5,000 in the aggregate. Their descendants along with the off-spring of the Callinago/Garifuna, the Anglo-Saxons, and Africans, and in their various creolised admixtures, make up today, alongside twentieth century migrants especially from the Middle East, the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines which is still predominantly of African descent.

THE END OF SLAVERY

The "Act for the Abolition of Slavery" freed the slave children under six years of age from August 01, 1834. This Act had originally stipulated an apprenticeship period of six years for slaves classified as praedials (field hands), and four years for non-praedials (domestics, trades persons, and other non-field workers). However, the two-year differential between field slaves and non-field slaves was eventually dropped, and "the apprenticeship" for all ended on August 1, 1838.

Different sources provide varying numbers of slaves. The aforementioned comparative numbers for the various time-periods are sourced from The Estate Book. The authoritative figure for the Apprentice Population as at August 01, 1834, was 22,250, as provided by the House of Commons: British Sessional Papers, 1835, volume 50. At page 685 thereof it is detailed that there were the following slaves:

Praedial Attached	: 14,797
Praedial Unattached	: 512
Non-Praedial	: 2,793
Children under the age of six years	: 2,959
Aged, diseased or otherwise non-effective	: 1,189
Total	: 22,250

This figure closely approximates the number (22,997 slaves) for which there was the last year, before emancipation, of formal slave registration, 1832.

Consequent upon the passage of the "Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies" in the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland in 1833, there was passed in St. Vincent on April 02, 1834, a similar titled Act, namely: "An Act for the Abolition of Slavery in St. Vincent and its Dependencies, in consideration of Compensation, and for promoting the Industry and good conduct of the Manumitted Slaves". This act contained several preambles and 68 sections

detailing the legislative and administrative arrangements for apprenticeship and emancipation. On September 09, 1835, the Lieutenant-Governor in St. Vincent, George Tyler, assented to a Bill passed on July 09, 1835, by both the Assembly and the Council, which repealed and amended certain provisions of the earlier Act of April 02, 1834. This later Act, containing 14 Sections, was entitled "An Act to repeal certain Clauses, and to alter and amend an Act intituled 'An Act for the Abolition of Slavery in the Island of St. Vincent and its Dependencies, in consideration of Compensation, and for promoting the Industry and good conduct of the manumitted Slaves'."

APPRENTICESHIP PERIOD

The four-year "apprenticeship" period, 1834 to 1838, is one demanding much more research since it signaled the commencement of an evolutionary struggle towards legal emancipation and, importantly, the shaping of post-emancipation society. One fascinating book of relevance to St. Vincent and the Grenadines in this regard is Professor

Roderick A. Mc Donald's edited volume published in 2001 by the UWI Press and entitled, Between Slavery and Freedom: Special Magistrate John Anderson's Journal of St. Vincent during the Apprenticeship. John Anderson served as Special Magistrate in St. Vincent from January 1836 until his death in September 21, 1839, at Colonarie House. He was one of the Special Magistrates appointed to oversee the Apprenticeship period.

In the Introductory Essay to his edited volume, Professor Mc Donald tells us:

> "*The Apprenticeship years did not ease the transition from slavery to freedom; instead, they ushered in a period of turmoil with which neither the British government's legislation nor its personnel could cope satisfactorily."*

Anderson's Journal makes clear the jostling, struggles, contradictions, advances, setbacks, and compromises of the

various contending forces in the society over a range of socio-economic matters by the praedials, non-praedials, free coloureds, creoles, Africans, the white planter-merchant class, the indigenous people, and the colonial officials.

Anderson, a pro-planter and colonial official, jaundiced in his views against black people, "Caribs", and workers, nevertheless had an observant eye for the forces at work.

Professor Mc Donald summarises all this, thus:

> *"Three factors — labour assignment, colour, and ethnicity — divided the apprentices. Anderson described the cleavages between praedials and non-praedials, blacks and coloureds, and Creoles and Africans, respectively: these categories, of course, overlapped considerably, since non-praedials, for example, were more likely to be coloured, and were almost invariably Creole. Moreover, in differentiating the terms of apprenticeship between*

agricultural and non-agricultural workers, the Emancipation Act had reinforced a division between field hands and domestics that dated from slavery, and through which some domestics from the group traditionally viewed by the planters and by themselves as an elite, apparently claimed superiority and derived status. Anderson documented a tendency among non-praedials to emulate free coloureds while distancing themselves from the praedial apprentices, which he suggested became more pronounced as the Apprenticeship neared its conclusion. Meanwhile he showed how domestics began to negotiate their relationship to their white employers by challenging the relations of power in ways that would have been much more problematic a few years earlier during slavery."

Most fascinating, perhaps, is the role and function of the bulk of the workers, "praedials" or field-hands. Roderick A. Mc Donald advises us:

"*The praedials' strategies to achieve independence can be discerned in attitudes concerning the work required of them for their former owners, as well as their refusal to apprentice their children, and their determination to secure rights, and devote free time, to their homes, villages and provision grounds they had occupied since slavery, but over which the planters retained titled. During the Apprenticeship, therefore, praedials concentrated on constructing the society they wanted to occupy in freedom: they wanted to minimize their involvement in the plantation system and base their post-emancipation world on the social and economic systems they had constructed in slavery. The houses, gardens and grounds where, as slaves, they had developed an independent economy, now became the focus of a small-holding peasant economy that apprentices hoped would guarantee their autonomy when full freedom came. Anderson's chronicle gives ample*

evidence of the praedials' strenuous efforts to secure the land and property they considered theirs, and to work there after meeting their forty-five hours per week obligation as apprentices. Legal title to this property, however, remained with the planters, whose attempts to thwart the apprentices' aspirations when freedom came, by making continued occupation of houses and grounds conditional on the workers' willingness to remain at work on the estate, would be contested for years after. Anderson, however, detected and documented the early manifestations of this conflict. He also chronicled the blossoming of social life among praedials as the apprentices exercised the new-found control over free time to indulge their interests in family, community, religion, recreation and leisure, assigning these pursuits priority over demands on their labour that they considered unjustified, or opportunities for work in a system they despised."

As is well-known, slaves were defined as chattels, as property. They were bought and sold as any other commodity; they were truly commodified. In the 1780s in St. Vincent, a healthy male slave was valued at about 50 pounds sterling. Spinelli calculates from the source material that the average value of a Vincentian slave, from 1822 to 1830, was 58 pounds, 6 shillings and 8 pence sterling. Prices were higher for male field slaves than for females or house servants.

COMPENSATION TO SLAVE-OWNERS

At Emancipation, the slave-owners were compensated for their slaves, who themselves received nothing compensatory for their years of slavery. The British government agreed to provide compensation for 22,997 slaves in St. Vincent who were valued by their owners at one million, three hundred and forty one thousand, four hundred and ninety-two pounds sterling or approximately 58 pounds sterling per slave. The Emancipation package to the slave-owners from the British was actually 592,509 pounds sterling, an average of 26

pounds sterling per slave or some 45 percent of their estimated worth, according to their owners. In today's value the compensation received would amount to approximately 491 million pounds sterling or 829 times the value of 1834. Clearly, an unanswerable case exists for Britain to pay St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and other Caribbean countries, appropriate and sufficient reparations as compensation for slavery. Reparations, too, are in order for the genocide committed against the thousands of the Callinago and Garifuna people, the forced deportation of 5,080 of them to Roatan Island, off the coast of Honduras, and the confiscation of their lands. A vigorous and coordinated campaign is required globally for reparations.

THE CAUSES OF SLAVERY'S END

It is now settled in modern Caribbean historiography that while abolitionists in Europe, such as William Wilberforce and others in Britain, contributed significantly to the agitation which partly moved the British Parliament to pass the "Act for

the Abolition of Slavery", it was, as reflected in the title of Richard Hart's celebrated book (two volumes), first published in 1985, the Slaves Who Abolished Slavery. The individual acts of defiance by slaves, including individual acts of violence, slave rebellions across the Caribbean, including the 1831 Christmas Rebellion in Jamaica and the earlier Haitian revolution led by slaves, precipitated slavery's end. The context for slavery's termination, as Eric Williams reminds us in his widely-acclaimed text, Capitalism and Slavery, revolved around the fact that slavery, which had facilitated the development of mercantile capitalism to industrial capitalism, had itself now become a brake on the further expansion of industrial capitalism in the early 19th century, and thus had to go.

Richard Hart instructs on this raft of issues:

> *"Revelling in Britain's liberal image earned by the abolition of the slave trade and slavery, most historians have paid little or no attention to the*

frequent and formidable rebellions and conspiracies of the slaves, or the extent to which these events influenced the British decision --------.

"The focal point around which the political history of the West Indies revolved for upwards of two centuries was the refusal of large numbers of the involuntary migrants from Africa passively to accept their enslavement. European opposition to slavery was aroused and grew over the years not only in response to the class interests of the rising bourgeoisie but also because the slaves in the sugar colonies were continually offering and conspiring to offer violent resistance. The idea, sedulously disseminated, that the enslavement of Africans was part of the natural order of things, was challenged again and again, as much by the casualties among the whites engaged in the trade and employed on the plantations as by the disclosure of the sufferings endured by the blacks."

All over St. Vincent, including the Grenadines, there were numerous individual and collective acts of resistance by slaves to their condition, which acts truly frightened the slave-owners and colonial authorities. Repression did not dull the slaves' resistance; and so-called amelioration only whetted their appetites for freedom.

Eric Williams' detailed documentation of the immense contribution to Britain's capitalist expansion by its slave-based colonies, and sugar plantations, in the West Indies, is available in his Capitalism and Slavery published in 1944. Long before that, however, Karl Marx in Capital (Volume 1, Chapter XXXI) published in 1867 had concluded:

> *"The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of*

black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation.

"The colonial system ripened, like a hothouse, trade and navigation ----. The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement and murder, floated back to the mother country and were turned into capital."

It is this very capital which fuelled the development of industrial capitalism which the slave mode of production in the West Indies and its restrictive exchange relations externally, conspired to retard. The rising bourgeoisie in Europe had little patience with this retardation and were resolved to remove the barriers. The abolitionists' evangelising resonated with this rising and strong bourgeoisie not so much on a moral basis but on economic grounds.

Eric Williams succinctly addressed all this in Capitalism and Slavery:

> "*Whereas before, in the eighteenth century, every important vested interest in England was ___ lined up on the side of monopoly and the colonial system; after 1783, one by one, every one of those interests came out against monopoly and the West Indian slave system. British exports to the world in manufactured goods which could be paid for only in raw materials ___ the cotton of the United States, the cotton, coffee and sugar of Brazil, the sugar of Cuba, the sugar and cotton of India. The expansion of British exports depended on the capacity of Britain to absorb the raw materials as payment. The British West Indian monopoly, prohibiting the importation of non-British plantation sugar for home consumption, stood in the way. Every imported vested interest the cotton manufacturers, ___ the ship owners, the sugar refiners; every important industrial and commercial town London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield,*

the West Riding of Yorkshire, joined in the attack of West Indian slavery and West Indian monopoly. The abolitionists, significantly, concentrated their attack on the industrial centers."

More emphatically Williams wrote:

"*The capitalists had first encouraged West Indian slavery and then helped to destroy it. When British capitalism depended on the West Indies, they ignored slavery or defended it. When British capitalism found the West Indian monopoly a nuisance, they destroyed the West Indian slavery as the first step in the destruction of West Indian monopoly. That slavery to them was relative and not absolute, and depended on latitude and longitude, it proved after 1833 by their attitude to slavery in Cuba, Brazil, and the United States. They taunted their opponents with seeing slavery only where they saw sugar and limiting their observation to the circumference of the hogshead. They refused to frame their tariff on grounds*

of morality, erect a pulpit in every custom house, and make their landing-waiters enforce anti-slavery doctrines."

GENOCIDE, SLAVERY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Substantially, the root of the underdevelopment of St. Vincent and the Grenadines can be traced to the genocide committed against the Callinago/Garifuna, the establishment of slavery and its post-emancipation debilitations, the colonial-imperial project of governance and the consequential warped shaping of our people's socio-political consciousness. To be sure, colonial over-rule facilitated the entry of St. Vincent and the Grenadines into the commerce, science and technology of a global industrial capitalism and its out-growths. It is true, too, that a bundle of liberal democratic institutions (the legislature, the executive, the judiciary, the public service, fundamental rights and the rule of law) were, over time, bequeathed to us. But the global embrace through commerce and technology and the liberal-democratic bequests were

surely attainable, even if not necessarily at the same pace or in the same form, had our nation been allowed to remain on its own autochthonous or home-grown path under a self-governing entity from the very beginning. Comparative experiences indicate that this was most likely to have occurred without the debilitating hubris and incubus of the colonial-imperial project. This matter is far more fundamental than the simple drawing up of a check-list of "good" versus "bad" things about colonialism.

Let us look factually, for example, at the underdevelopment of the areas of St. Vincent and the Grenadines occupied by the descendants of the Callinago and Garifuna people. The British engaged in extraordinary acts of pillage and genocide against the indigenous population: Between 1763 and 1800, they were deprived of almost all of their 100,000 acres of land and pushed into a veritable reservation of inhospitable and largely unproductive lands of 238 aces in the north-east and adjoining north-west of St. Vincent. Further, several thousands of the young, productive men and women were

killed by the British in the on-going genocidal wars against the Callinago/Garifuna and 5,080 of them were forcibly deported to distant lands in Central America. These occurrences are a mere 215 or so years ago! Which people could have easily survived and thrived in the wake of such pillage, genocide, and forced deportations? Is there any wonder that they are among the poorest today in St. Vincent and the Grenadines despite enormous efforts by successive national administrations since the 1950s (government led by Ebenezer Joshua, Milton Cato, James Mitchell and Ralph Gonsalves) to improve their lot?

Similarly, some fifty years of the barbarism of slavery and monumental post-Emancipation neglect and oppression/exploitation of the former slaves and their descendants by British colonialism, had left the majority of the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in a cruel and harsh condition of underdevelopment and poverty. Modern democratic governments and the post-1950s Vincentian society are still trying to come to grips with the

burdens of underdevelopment, without compensating benefits, handed to us by the colonial-imperial project. Thus, the on-going quest for better lives, productive endeavours, a good society, and the further ennoblement of the Vincentian component of our Caribbean civilisation.

EMANCIPATION TO INDEPENDENCE

There are those who incorrectly assert, with only a nodding, stylised acquaintance with the facts of our journey from emancipation to independence (1834 to 1979 and thereafter), that "slavery" still exists in St. Vincent and the Grenadines or that nothing has really changed since the end of slavery for the bulk of labouring people. Clearly, that position is wholly unsustainable when one examines every single index of progress or development whether lodged in the material, social, cultural, legal, political, and ideational spheres of life.

Still, though, the process of our people's emancipation is yet to be completed: Significant poverty levels still exist;

underdevelopment still persists though in altered and less harsh dimensions; the colonial-imperial ideological or ideational hubris still retards a developed, national and people-centered consciousness; the development of our political economy is yet to escape the debilitating embrace of an economic and political imperialism; our cultural parameters are defined substantially by the cultural behemoth of a global empire, despite genuine resistance from several quarters; and the quest for independent political and economic spaces is encumbered by backward forces within our nation, inclusive of the diaspora, and exploitative forces outside our national boundaries.

Successive waves of the socio-democratic struggles of our people since emancipation have sought to advance popular liberation and development in all spheres. The efforts of my government are part and parcel of these ongoing social-democratic struggles and quests.

I affirm unequivocally that the Unity Labour Party (ULP) administrations from 2001 to 2012, and continuing, despite their weaknesses and limitations, have articulated a compelling narrative for home-grown development, in concerted solidarity with nations and peoples overseas, have fashioned appropriate mechanisms to implement this "compelling narrative", and have achieved commendable successes in this regard. Our solid record for further liberation and development in every single area of public policy and human endeavours stands objective scrutiny. But the journey is still incomplete; important tasks are yet to be finished and some have barely started; there are still many burdens and crosses to bear; and many more rivers to cross. But our nation is up to it all; and we in the ULP are fairly well-placed and fairly well-equipped, better by far than any other political party, in communion with the people and other non-state actors, to continue to lead the charge for further progress.

I remind everyone that the ULP's "compelling narrative" consists of a people-centred vision; a social-democratic philosophy adapted to the practical conditions of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and our Caribbean; a comprehensive economic strategy and accompanying bundle of tactics in a quest to construct a modern, competitive, post-colonial economy which is at once national, regional, and global; a socio-cultural rubric for the further ennoblement of our Caribbean civilization and its magnificent Vincentian component; a creative menu of practical policies and detailed programmes touching and concerning every area of public policy and relevant human activities, including the economy, the physical infrastructure and housing, health and education, social security and social development, sports and culture, good governance and citizen security, regional integration and foreign policy.

On this the 178th anniversary since the passage of the "Act for the Abolition of Slavery in Saint Vincent and its Dependencies" in 1834, all of us must redouble our efforts for

further individual and collective liberation and development. Each of us must work most productively and in solidarity with others; each of us must exhibit the virtue of "good neighborliness"; we must seek to raise our national and social consciousness and emancipate ourselves from "mental slavery"; we must own our institutions and our government; we must constitute ourselves as an active, participatory citizenry; we must act out our belief in our self-mastery, confident that no one is better than us even while we acknowledge humbly that we are not better than anyone else, only different; and we must make every effort to control our destinies, in solidarity with our friends and allies. Above all we must know ourselves, our possibilities and limitations. We must be determined to strengthen our possibilities and lessen our limitations as far as is humanly possible. We must turn setbacks into advances, consolidate our advances and make them permanent. In the process, we reaffirm that we are a nation founded upon the belief in the supremacy of God and the freedom and dignity of man!