

“THE (HIGH) COST of DEVELOPMENT”

- In days of yore, when school children sang, “Rule Britannia – Britannia rule the waves, Brittons never-never-never shall be slaves”, while the Union Jack over the ramparts of Fort George-fluttered in the breeze, when our colonial masters governed with an unrelenting hand. There were however, some instances of foresight, when our Education Curricula included reading, comprehension and dictation as elementary primary school subjects.
- Today, in our post-colonial experience from 1974 onwards, these basic intellectual groundings were discarded, as our political “leaders” preferred to focus on providing vote getting-low paying jobs and on: “materialism” to win election rather than the upgrading of our human capital, towards genuine empowerment and the eradication of mental slavery, which are indispensable prerequisites of true independence, economic development and high productivity-leading to prosperity.
- In this regard, most – if not all our CBI projects are the building of very large hotels (concrete and steel) funded by selling our Grenadian passports (to foreigners)- who for one reason or another, require a second country as an escape route from their native land, which entails also “giving away” our precious possession – **our land**. It should be noted however, that the CBI funds generated, are lodged into what is described as the Transformational Fund, but with no visible positive transformation of Grenada since its inception in 2013.
- Regrettably, all of those large hotels projects are approved by politicians, without going through the required process for granting building permits required by the revised Building Construction Act of 2016 which begins by (including) consultation with the community for the unbiased professional preparation of an (EIA) Environmental Impact Assessment report to guide and inform the successful execution of the project, well in advance of the design and the sod turning ceremony.
- The most outstanding feature of these projects is their location. The so called CBI foreign investor is given free reign in selecting the site for his/her hotel, as there appears to be no local consultation or input as to where these huge projects are to be constructed, with no consideration for the social

repercussion – if any, to the community which such projects could generate, and in fact – has become the bete noire of these developments.

- This recurring practice is the present contention in the siting of the La Sagesse hotel-now under construction, the Kwana Bay-abortive hotel on Grand Anse beach-now in the International Court for Disputes resolution, the mega development at the Mt. Hartman Grenada Dove site, and at present the controversy in the siting and scale (415 acres of land) for the development of a 500 room hotel – estimated to cost US\$2.5 billion dollars at Levera, St. Patrick –another (natural) eco-tourism site which like other such sites, has evolved over centuries into an eco-system that contributes in no small measure to the area, “which defines the attitude or mood of the place where communities live and move and have being”, as experienced in our environmentally friendly boutique hotels like Spice Island Resort, Dodgy Dock, Coyaba Resort, and Calabash, which are the type of development that harmonies with our small island land-mass with unique offerings of an experience with a high end heritage tourism component.
- The above scenario brings to the fore the refusal by successive governments to establish a **NATIONAL PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN** and Zoning Regime for Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, with the involvement of the general public and special interest groups, who have been clamouring for this initiative since independence in 1974, as a *sine qua non* in 21st century progressive physical development policy.
- What we have at present is a foreigner dictating to our politicians - who should be looking after the interest of we the people who elected them, but as practised-without the input of the general public especially – with the community to be affected, in what is perceived to be the wreckless and short sighted development of Grenada, and brings to mind the story (an allegory), as described in the colonial “Royal Readers” or was it the “West Indian Reader” - where the farmer, who was fortunate to have a goose that laid a golden egg every day, became possessed with greed and reasoned that if he killed the goose, he would have all the golden eggs at once, instead of one each day.
- Ravaging our pristine natural environment, our historic sites and cultural heritage, our scenic vistas and unique eco-systems in Pure Grenada to build a hotel to enrich foreigners on the backs of poor Grenadians- is like killing

the goose that laid the golden egg. Grenada is 33 miles long and 12 miles wide – encompassing a small land mass of 133 sq miles, with a population of about 100,000 people – it therefore boggles the mind as to who would really benefit from this “humongous” development in Levera St. Patrick’s, after a 3 year period of construction, which would eventually provide 600 low paying jobs (maids and cleaners-hewers of wood and carriers of water) to the parishioners, or is it the nucleus of a selective and privileged foreign enclave within “Pure Grenada”?

- Now that the Caribbean Court of Appeal has given the ruling that the Grenada Land Action (GLA) can challenge the government and the Physical Development Authority (PDA) in the unlawful granting of Building permits to the LaSagesse, Mt. Hartman and Levera projects, it would be very interesting to see the ultimate future of these unlawful developments while construction continues, without a **“STOP ORDER”** from the PDA. It also appears that the Natural and Cultural Heritage Adversary Committee (NCHAC)), whose function is to advise the PDA, where proposed Projects impinges on our natural and cultural heritage – is now ostracized.
- After listening recently to Citizen Kwabena Amen on “the Narrative”, I became convinced that Grenada and possibly the English speaking Caribbean is entering a NEW ERA of **Economic Colonialisation**, due to the high cost of providing low paying jobs for the natives, together with the syphoning of our foreign exchange to the developer’s country of origin, where the construction material together with the technical and managerial skills will be sourced, with very little going into the local economy - while we become 2nd class citizens in our own country – if **REPARATION** is not vigorously pursued.
- In this regard Professor Hillary Beckles – Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and Chairman of the Caricom Reparation Committee’s recent publication titled: **“How Britain Underdeveloped the West Indies”** is a must read, especially for students of West Indian history and our local politicians