

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

A St Lucia Perspective

In my presentations over the years on democracy and governance, I have advocated the basic philosophy of participatory democracy. Unfortunately, this is an area of democratic government and governance which is not fully practiced, even in more developed countries, where political party affiliation takes precedence over the national good for political gain. I contend that in our small island economy, with limited resources, we can not afford to neglect and reject the human resources available to us notwithstanding declared or perceived political affiliations.

In the Caribbean, we have inherited a political electoral and governmental system which has been translated into a syndrome of government and governance based upon a “winner takes all” philosophy. This has led to an unfortunate alienation of many well qualified individuals and dedicated nationals in nation building. It is commendable that the newly elected Prime Minister of St Lucia, with an impressive mandate from the electorate, has expressed his desire to call upon the diverse human resources of the country, from different persuasions to contribute to national development.

This mobilization would be the expression of Participatory Democracy where it embraces St Lucians at home and overseas under the umbrella of peace and development for all the people. In this context, we must not forget the role of the Diaspora, some of whom are serving within the World Bank and other regional and international institutions and those who are serving as advisors and consultants to overseas governments in many different areas. Let us invite them to participate, together with our private and public sector establishments to serve our country. In this context, there are many modalities and best practices available to us for consideration.

Together we can make a difference through the philosophy of Participatory Democracy – a human synergy for national development.

Dr. Edsel Edmunds

Former Ambassador of St Lucia to the UN, OAS and USA

The Edmunds Group International

www.edseledmunds.weebly.com