

Ending the Poverty Alleviation Programme is mean and insensitive, says Lillian Boyce

Former Minister of Health and Human Services Mrs. Lillian Boyce says the decision by Governor Gordon Wetherell and the Interim Government to end the Poverty Alleviation and Citizens Empowerment (PACE) Programme is mean, insensitive and cold-hearted.

“To terminate a poverty eradication programme in the middle of a recession when so many people in the Turks and Caicos Islands are already suffering badly, is undoubtedly one of the most cold-hearted, mean and uncaring things that could be done to the people of this country,” said Boyce, who conceptualised the PACE Programme while she was Minister of Education, and administered it while she was Minister of Health and Human Services.

“I’m really going to stand up for the people of this country on this issue, because it is now becoming quite clear and obvious for all to see, that the Governor and the British Government do not care about the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands, and that they want to cut, chop and drop everything that was built or developed in recent years,” she said.

“It is also evident that the British Government came to the Turks and Caicos Islands with a political agenda, but that they didn’t have any realistic plan to deal with the issues in this country. They continue to inflict hardships on the population day after day, to the extent where the tide of public opinion is shifting dramatically against them. You can’t just continue sending home people and imposing more taxes in these tough economic times and expect that our people to do or say nothing about it. How do you expect people to survive in this country? The Governor, the British Government and the Interim Government really need to have a heart and stop destroying the social fabric of this country,” Boyce added.

Boyce said there are several pockets of poverty throughout the Turks and Caicos Islands and the PACE programme was the life-line for many families. Saying she was sad and disappointed that the PACE workers were displaced, Boyce commended them for the excellent job they did to make life better for many poor families country-wide.

Meantime, Boyce said she feels so strongly about the PACE programme being shut down that she will start her own Poverty Alleviation programme to help poor people throughout the Turks and Caicos Islands.

“The poverty alleviation programme must not be allowed to die, because the livelihood of too many persons will be affected. Somebody has to start looking out for the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands, especially in these tough economic

times, because when people cannot feed their families and pay their bills, this can lead to whole set of serious social problems that this country cannot afford," she added.

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