# Let’s talk Recovery. Sensible recovery. Sustainable recovery

Trinidad and Tobago has now been under coronavirus manners since April and what would have been The Big Upset is now just a new norm. How sexy does that make 2020? Notwithstanding the immediate pain however, how poised are we really if we intend to our committments to Sustainable Development Goals agenda? <– –> it is easy to get sidetracked, especially when the distraction has dimensions like COVID 19.

Even as we speak the world’s biggest nations are under duress to maintain buoyant economies, growth still nothing but a mirage. The smaller countries are not doing well either, facing, seeking to surmount a raft of problems, many of which aren’t their making. On top of all this the shift in climactic conditions is accelerating - not predictably, to a much warmer regime. Overall the situation and bodes poorly for the SDG Agenda which only 11 months ago was a global priority.

So what’s the best course of action? Depends on one’s perspective. In trying to survive this time the individual may opt to secure the ‘home’ that is take care of health family and security. And nothing is wrong with that but at country or administrative level, where government - allow me to correct that, a good governments’ mandate is to upkeep and or to provide framework, there should be no compromise for sustainability. Recovery is crucia yes but we simply should not accept overtures, initiatives even partnerships that promise great near term rewards but is iffy on Usage, Take, Borrowing and Spend. Indeed any course of action that carries negative quality of life implications for the unborn must be subject to rigid examination.

Timing then is a factor. COVID19 some say, has inadvertently provided a window of opportunity to reset the way things work. It’s now almost November. Where is Trinidad and Tobago as pertains the targets set for ‘Transformation’? We recall that in April just as the pandemic was blooming Trinidad and Tobago submitted its first Voluntary National Report to the UN Council. While it was probably not the best indicator of a developing country eager to divorce itself from the old way the fact that a VNR was attempted and completed boded well for T&T.

But with a new normal in the collective face the national community may want to critically examine what we do and how we go about development as economic recovery looks set to go ‘wild wild west’. Is it really though? What are the ideas or programmes that government has produced recently that fly in the face of producing triple bottom-line benefits[[1]](#footnote-20)? Before we try to answer let’s agree that the pandemic has driven a wedge between plans that existed before April 2020 and government’s ability to deliver after October same year.

If so then there really is no published plan of action except perhaps their willingness to borrow for recurring expenditure, to borrow to service debt and generally their optiminsn that they can jury-rig mechanisms to attract foreign investment: These would be those ubiquitous Public Private Partnerships one hears about - for mega projects. May include generous tax breaks for ordinary investments as can occur in Tourism, Manufacturing and Entertainment. May include gifts of sorts for those who would do business in agronomy, ICTs and Education in general.

The thing is, as there is no resolution as yet to the coronavirus problem, it would be foolhardy for our - any government in fact to make big steps in any particular direction - except towards sustainable development. That, as experience has shown is best achieved with baby steps, and taken only after due consideration for what others have learnt, are doing, have done. Trinidad and Tobago is relatively lucky in that it is part of a unique geography, the Caribbean archipelago. Ours is an area where many feels drawn to, which enhances its value. Ergo, it may be that the revaluation of this geography will prove and provide the means for economic Recovery after these pandemic times.

1. A triple bottom line initiative is one where tangible benefits accrue to the community or Social sector, the Environment and the Economy. A pragmatic triple bottomline approach is a to achieve true sustainable devlopment. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)