

Jovenel Moise , leader of the “banana” Republic

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In the first hundred days of Trump presidency, there is a palpable shift in American politics. “America, the beautiful” is slowly becoming “America, the mean”. The party, in power, long known for its aristocratic doctrine of rich over poor, race purity over diversity and strict traditional values over individual freedom, could quickly reopen old human wounds that the conscience of the more liberal-minded majority of the American people has managed to heal over the years.

While there is fierce opposition to the new policy of restrictive immigration, health with wealth, fright with military might, it is also possible that this new, nationalistic agenda may fuel the hidden racist tendencies of a large number of American legislators at the behest of their constituents. Obviously, such a gloomy scenario will create a new America that will no longer be compassionate to the plight of the poor within its own borders, even much less to the continuous flow of political and economic refugees from Haiti, now being stopped and caged on the Mexican border to the tune of 25,000 to 30,000 adults and children. It is therefore a wake-up call for all proud Haitians to seriously begin the long-awaited reconstruction of their home turf . In the face of such smoldering, man-made human calamity, it is now time for Haitians all over the world to rise up and carry proudly the unifying torch of patriotism.

The recent election of Jovenel Moise is now a foregone conclusion. Constitutionally, he is de facto the President of Haiti. As such, we should now consolidate all our technical and intellectual resources to jumpstart the country's economic engine. It is time that we shift our energy from a disruptive force to a more productive tide of country building. Let's adopt a policy of reconciliation, inclusion and forgiveness for the sake of a new and prosperous Haiti. To finally achieve political stability, we should renounce to the quick bellicose impulse that compels us to use "vengeance", "reprisals" and violence to solve our differences. Let's instead embrace a new culture of collaboration and tolerance. For the love of country and irrespective of party affiliations, we should support the newly-elected President and guide him toward a path of peace and prosperity.

The world is now tired of our continuing story of corruption, sudden coups, institutionalized bribery, decrepit physical infrastructures and non-functional institutions. We have for so long been labeled “the pariahs” of the world prompting some Republican hatemongers in the social media to add us to the list of “unwanted” immigrants. Even our international benefactors have shown no clear interest in this most recent election and do not expect much of our latest change of government. To the rest of the world, we are still a "banana" Republic because all previous shifts of government have resulted in the same recurring rollercoaster of subpar governance, divisive and disruptive public protests, a set of self-inflicted roadblocks to progress. It is nothing more than "business as usual". No one

expects us to ever set free from this unending life of obstinate survival adopting mendacity as a normalized economic model.

This time, we should use a page from the history book of our sister African nation, Rwanda , a nation with the exact same sullied political past of secret jungle armies, repressive regimes, genocidal acts, intimidation and political “power grab”. Now, Rwanda is considered a world competitive market nation. It took the conscience of an activist, a truly sincere patriot and activist Paul Kagame, named President of Rwanda in 2001 to turn the country around. Just like Haiti, Rwanda's abject poverty earned the country the dubious distinction of an economy that was one of the worst in East Africa. Now, it is the fastest growing society in Africa with GDP growth of 9% from 2001 to 2014. This surprising recovery was the result of a confluence of factors that began with his vision as a leader. Paul Kagame who believed in exploring the most sacred natural treasure of any poor country, the bountiful harvest of its fertile land . He truly believed that behind every impoverished landscape in Africa lies the richness of its agricultural potential. Like Jovenel Moise, he was a believer in the importance of cultivating the land. He transformed the low-grade Rwandan coffee into an exportable, super premium grade coffee. While agriculture provides the impetus for Rwandans to become the "Switzerland of Africa", there is also the collective will of the people of Rwanda, including rebels, opposition leaders and expatriates to stop fighting each other and start building a common road to prosperity.

In Haiti, the obstacles that have impeded our advance to the road to success are the same with those that have plagued most countries with stunted economic growth and fractured society like Rwanda. In a show of solidarity and national reconciliation, we should now bury all the past political hatchets and help Jovenel Moise harness the hidden treasures of our land. Following the Rwanda roadmap, we should help him erect the 3 main economic pillars of a quick recovery;

1. **GOVERNANCE.** He should first simplify and modernize government by strict adherence to his constitutional power and not be swayed by special-interest groups that traditionally monopolize economic power at the detriment of a largely uninformed electorate. Corruption, on whatever form, should be denounced. Transparency should be the new law of the land.
2. **INFRASTRUCTURE.** Both physical and institutional infrastructures are essential to achieve sustainable country's development and ultimate economic viability.
3. **HUMAN RESOURCES.** The key to Haiti's immediate success is the full integration of its powerful “Expatriate” communities at large. It is time that we extend the welcoming mat to those searching for a better life outside our borders. After 60 years of a “brain drain”, it is time to entice the return of our shiniest and brightest professionals, technical experts, our cooks , drivers, housekeepers, hotel employees, scientists , all ready to begin the journey back to the homeland. Let's make “dual citizenship” a reality not only to ease the tense, nostalgic pull of our long time expatriates, but to pave the way for more than 750,000 young siblings, born in their adoptive countries. This new generation of Haitian

“millennials” constitute our greatest source of international consultants, ambassadors and promoters of our Haitian culture throughout the world..

Those pillars require us to pause for a moment and realize that for the past several years, we have only been successful in creating strong men with strong egos. It may be time to let our President, Jovenel Moise, a relatively young, agro-industry leader help us erect these strong pillars upon which we can finally re-emerge as the new “Success story” of the Caribbean region.