



2024 BUDGET ADDRESS

“ANGUILLA’S BLUEPRINT: HARNESSING
TECHNOLOGY, EMPOWERING TOMORROW’S
LEADERS, AND BUILDING THE FUTURE.”

PRESENTED BY
THE HONOURABLE PREMIER
Ellis L. Webster, M.D.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE
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Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance and Health
Dr. Ellis L. Webster

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1 INTRODUCTION

Madam Speaker, distinguished Members of the House of Assembly, esteemed members of the gallery, the Clerk and staff of the House, Specially Invited Guests, dedicated Public Servants, vigilant Members of the Media, and the good people of Anguilla, I extend to you all a heartfelt and warm good day. May the coming year bless each one of us with good health, safety, joy, and prosperity.

As we forge ahead into 2024, we embrace a renewed vision and mission. It is with great pride that I present this year's Budget, under the theme, “*Anguilla’s Blueprint: Harnessing Technology, Empowering Tomorrow’s Leaders, and Building the Future*”. This theme encapsulates our drive towards integrating technology into the fabric of our society; our commitment to nurturing and empowering our young minds who will lead us into tomorrow, and our firm resolve to build sustainable infrastructures that will serve as pillars of our future prosperity.

Madam Speaker this 2024 Budget heralds’ significant levels of investment in our physical infrastructure which will enhance the productive capacity of Anguilla. In the spirit of forthrightness and with the clarity that our situation demands, let us address the long-standing issue of our airport development. We stand at a juncture where our actions today will define our tomorrow. There's an evocative African saying that states, "The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second-best time is now." This proverb encapsulates the essence of time and its relationship with action. For decades we have espoused the centrality of airport development in Anguilla as an essential prerequisite to sustainable

growth. However, this year's budget marks a turning point, a departure from decades of inaction in this regard. The redevelopment of our airport is a symbol of our commitment to turning promises into reality, a commitment to unlocking the full potential of our tourism sector, and a step towards the economic transformation of Anguilla. But the investment does not cease there, this budget promises road upgrades, the continued development of the Albena Lake Hodge Comprehensive School and other investments in critical physical infrastructure.

But Madam Speaker, as we delve into the nuances of infrastructure investment within the context of building sustainable societies, it is crucial to recognise that this concept extends far beyond the traditional scope of bricks and mortar, or as we say in Anguilla, blocks and steel. Infrastructure, in its broadest and most transformative sense, encompasses a vast array of elements that are foundational to the growth and prosperity of our island home. Firstly, physical infrastructure is not only our buildings and roads, but also our telecommunications networks, power grids, and water systems, and the very airport we are ambitiously redeveloping. These tangible assets are essential for facilitating economic activity, connecting communities, and enhancing the quality of life of our people.

However, equally important is our social infrastructure. These are the schools where we educate our young leaders, the healthcare facilities where we care for our people, and the cultural institutions that preserve and promote our heritage. These institutions are the foundation of our society, nurturing our greatest resource, our people. We must also consider the digital infrastructure, which has become increasingly critical in a technology-driven world as well as our environmental infrastructure, which includes our efforts in sustainable energy, and water management. These components are key to ensuring that our development is sustainable, preserving Anguilla for future generations.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, when we talk about “building our future” we are referring to investments in all forms of infrastructure, we are talking about a holistic approach to development. Developing robust infrastructure that supports a sustainable and resilient Anguilla.

Madam Speaker, as we embark on a new era for Anguilla, our budget reflects a clear set of priorities. Central is our investment in our young leaders, upon whose shoulders the future of Anguilla rests. Our investment in their education, in sports, and in creating opportunities for them to excel is not just an investment in individuals, it is an investment in our Anguillian legacy. There remains great wisdom in paying heed to the scriptures. The book of Proverbs 22:6 teaches us, "Train up a child in the way

he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Guided by this wisdom we are focusing on policies and programmes that will have a profound impact on nurturing our youth. As we empower our youth, we lay a solid foundation for a future Anguilla that is *resilient, inclusive and responsible*.

Madam Speaker, a key area of focus in 2024 and beyond must be the prioritisation of digital technology and systems. We recognise that digital technology is a critical driver of efficiency and as such we have allocated resources towards the enhancement of our digital infrastructure. We are digitalising public services to improve accessibility and efficiency, streamlining processes, reducing bureaucratic red tape, and simply put, improving services to our people.

By leveraging technology, we can enhance the visitor experience, streamline operations, and strengthen our competitive edge in the global tourism market. Furthermore, by investing in the training and development of our youth, we ensure a pipeline of talented individuals who will contribute to the growth and prosperity of our island. Together, we can shape Anguilla into a destination of choice, renowned for its commitment to responsible tourism and its dedication to the well-being of our people and our planet.

Moreover, we are focusing on enhancing digital literacy and skills among our populace. To harness the full potential of technology our people must be adequately trained and empowered. We are investing in education and TVET programmes to equip our youth and workforce with the necessary digital skills.

Our focus on improving the business climate takes two complementary focuses of nurturing local enterprises and attracting foreign investment. We recognise the critical need to reduce energy costs, and this budget priorities the creation of an environment conducive to affordable alternative energy sources, aligning with global sustainability goals. In parallel, we reaffirm our commitment to enhancing food production through strategic investments in the blue and green economy, ensuring food security and environmental sustainability.

In summary, Madam Speaker, this budget is a blueprint for a brighter future for Anguilla. It encapsulates our aspirations for a technologically advanced and resilient society. We look forward with optimism, ready to embrace the opportunities and tackle the challenges that lie ahead on our journey towards a prosperous Anguilla for all.

2 ECONOMIC AND FISCAL REVIEW

2.1 2023 REVIEW OF THE ECONOMY

Madam Speaker, despite the lingering effects from a string of severe and abrupt setbacks, the Anguillian economy demonstrated remarkable progress in 2023. On a global front, there were actions and announcements that helped to regularise activities, such as, supply chain disruptions and delivery times being largely normalised to pre-COVID levels; major central banks around the world tightening monetary policy resulting in a deceleration of inflation; and the World Health Organization announcing that COVID-19 is no longer a global health emergency. Thankfully, our health system coped through the crisis, and we have strengthened our health infrastructure, protocols and policy environment to manage infections and hospitalisations, and be responsive to future occurrences.

Madam Speaker, please allow me to briefly summarise economic performance in 2023 and the forecast for 2024. In line with predictions for global growth, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank^{[14](#)} (ECCB) expects real GDP to have increased by 9.61 per cent in 2023, with further growth of 6.95 per cent predicted for 2024. Madam Speaker, Anguilla's economy is primarily driven by tourism services and recovery is almost complete. Rebounding tourism has complemented several other industries affecting real activity positively. For example, alongside the uptick in Hotels and Restaurants, Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities sustained robust performance in 2023 thriving on higher demand for services like rental of equipment, vehicles and villas associated with rising visitor arrivals and continuous construction works. This industry accounted for 13.09 per cent of real economic activity. Madam Speaker, activity in Construction remains buoyant as many hotel plants are being renovated and residential development continues to grow. In real terms, this industry represented 8.93 percent of economic activity.

Localised shocks affecting performance in 2023 did not persist for extended periods. Nationally, business delivery was disrupted on two occasions. First, a subsea fibre break in February 2023 caused degradation of telecommunication services for just over two days before services returned to normal levels. In October 2023, Anguilla was issued a watch and warning for Hurricane Tammy, but its centre tracked east of the island, and we were spared the brunt of the winds. However, rain and thunderstorms impacted the island and the electricity generation plant sustained damages resulting in

an island-wide power outage that took several days for full restoration. We commend the response and recovery teams for their work in both instances.

Improved access to Anguilla has been a focus of this administration and to this end, the state of the art Blowing Point Ferry Terminal was officially opened in January 2023. The seaport is Anguilla's main port of entry, and the terminal's design and development are intended to enhance the island's tourism product and elevate the traveller's experience. This administration's dedication to promoting international connectivity, economic growth and stability, and linking traffic forecasts to airport infrastructural requirements were demonstrated by the unveiling of the Clayton J Lloyd International Airport Master Plan, which is now being implemented. In 2024, construction is expected to contribute significantly to growth related to the airport redevelopment and several tourism-related projects. It is anticipated that home and private building activities would increase in tandem with the growing availability of credit. The promising future of construction and growing connectivity, facilitated by upgraded air and seaport infrastructure are integral to driving Anguillian economic growth in the medium- and long-term.

Madam Speaker, global living standards declined in 2022 and 2023 as costs rose disproportionately to incomes. The major factors influencing observed prices in Anguilla were rising costs of commodities, higher oil prices and changes in fiscal policy. These inflationary pressures affecting our island have led to average consumer prices^[2] in September 2023 being 1.20 per cent higher than the same period last year and 9.30 per cent higher than the same period in 2021 over 2022.

To sum up Madam Speaker, the economic performance of 2023 and the prospects for 2024 should enthruse residents and potential investors. Current conditions in the global environment and large pipeline capital investment projects present a positive economic outlook that is cautiously optimistic.

^[1] Estimates updated in October 2023.

^[2] Measured by the change in the Anguilla Consumer Price Index for September 2023 over September 2022 and September 2021.

2.2 2023 FISCAL REVIEW

Madam Speaker, I will now provide a brief synopsis on the 2023 fiscals, for revenue, expenditure and debt.

The estimated year-end outturn for recurrent revenue in 2023 is EC\$399.13 million compared to a proposed estimate of EC\$288.23 million. As at November 31, 2023, the actual collections were EC\$376.12 million. This stellar performance has been attributed to various revenue accounts exceeding approved estimates.

In relation to Taxes on payroll and the workforce, the budgeted amount for 2023 was EC\$18.5 million with a projected outturn of EC\$20.04 million. Taxes on Goods and Services continues to perform above estimate. For 2023, the proposed estimate was EC\$90.66 million and it is anticipated to exceed this estimate by EC\$60.61 million by December 31, 2023. Domain Name Registration has performed significantly above the budget estimate of EC\$24 million, with projected outturn of EC\$77.18 million.

Madam Speaker, the expected recurrent expenditure performance for 2023 is EC\$234.965 million. There were two supplementary appropriations to increase the approved estimate for recurrent expenditure from EC\$245.93million to EC\$253.75 million, an overall increase of approximately EC\$7 million. Supplemented funds were committed to inter alia, urgent and essential expenditure including medical treatment overseas, public assistance and areas in education. The increased expenditure envelope also expanded financial support to the Water Corporation to ensure that they met their operational costs as well as capital expenditure related to the Albenia Lake Hodge Comprehensive School.

Personal Emoluments was estimated at EC\$95.92 million and is expected to perform below at EC\$89.75 million. Furthermore, Goods and Services was budgeted at EC\$57.88 million, however, it is projected to come in under the budget with EC\$52.12m. Grants and Contributions was budgeted at EC\$47.95 million, this is projected to incur total expenditure of EC\$53.99 million due to increases via supplementary appropriations; this increase in expenditure is due mainly to electricity costs related to the Water Corporation.

Projected capital receipts for 2023 total EC\$ 1.37 million with capital expenditure for 2023 is expected to be EC\$ 24.15 million. The capital balance, reflecting capital receipts, is projected to be a deficit of EC\$22.78 million.

The Government's overall fiscal position before amortisation, a sum of the recurrent and capital balances for 2023, is estimated to be EC\$141.39 million, against a budget estimate of EC\$ 26.4 million.

Madam Speaker, the downward trend in public debt continued in fiscal year 2023. Preliminary estimates show that total public debt, which comprise Central Government, Government Guaranteed and Non-Guaranteed debt of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), is projected at **EC\$371.92 million (24.76 per cent of GDP)** at end of year 2023, a decrease of **EC\$37.94 million** over the 2022 total public debt stock of **EC\$409.86 million (33.52 per cent of GDP)**. At the end of 2023 Central Government debt stock is projected at **EC\$358.19**, an estimated decrease of **EC\$35.36 million** over the 2022 debt stock of **EC\$393.55 million**. Government guaranteed debt stock is projected at **EC\$0.56 million**, an estimated decrease of **EC\$1.24 million** over the 2022 debt stock of **EC\$1.80 million**. Non-Guaranteed SOEs debt stock is projected at **EC\$13.17 million**, an estimated decrease of **EC\$1.35 million** over the 2022 debt stock of **EC\$14.52 million**. Accounting for the change in Central Government, Government Guaranteed and Non-Guaranteed debt stock is that for fiscal year 2023, projected scheduled amortisation is expected to exceed disbursements.

Of the outstanding projected debt stock for end of year 2023, Central Government debt stock projections account for **96.31 per cent** of the portfolio; Government guaranteed SOE debt stock projections, **0.15 per cent**, comprising loans for the Anguilla Development Board. The Non-Guaranteed SOE debt stock projections account for the remaining **3.54 per cent**, a Public Private Partnerships for the Water Corporation of Anguilla. Domestic debt accounts for **58.90 per cent (EC\$219.05m)** of the portfolio and external debt the remaining **41.10 per cent (EC\$152.84m)**.

Madam Speaker, during the fiscal year 2023, there was no new debt contracted and my government has no intentions of borrowing over the medium term. Disbursements for the fiscal year 2023 is projected at approximately **EC\$915k**, which is the undisbursed balance on the Anguilla Community College (ACC) Project Loan, contracted from Caribbean Development Bank in 2014. Projections show that the undisbursed balance should be utilise before year-end. Owing to the improved financial performance during the year, the existing lines of credit through the ECCB Cash Advance Facility and

the Overdraft Facility with the National Commercial Bank of Anguilla Ltd. (NCBA) were not utilized. This has been the trend for the past two years. There was no new borrowing or disbursements associated with Government Guaranteed and Non-Guaranteed SOEs debt.

Madam Speaker, the cost of servicing Central Government debt is projected to move from **EC\$50.69 million** (amortization – **EC\$36.27 million** and interest payments – **EC\$14.42 million**) in 2023 to **EC\$53.87 million** (amortization – **EC\$38.25 million** and interest payments – **EC\$15.62 million**) in 2024. This represents an increase of **6.27 per cent** or **EC\$3.18 million** due primarily to the expiration of the grace period on one of the CDB loans contracted in 2018 and the increase in cost of debt, specifically the variable interest rate on the external debt that is refixed every three months.

Madam speaker, my government continues to build reserves and has recorded **EC\$179.80m** at the December date. An addition of **EC\$119.23m** when compared to **EC\$60.57m** at the end of fiscal year 2022.

Madam Speaker as you are aware, the Government of Anguilla is required to maintain public debt levels within three stipulated borrowing limits as outlined in the Framework for Fiscal Sustainability and Development (FFSD). The borrowing limits include the net debt and debt service ratios, which should not exceed 80 per cent and 10 per cent of recurrent revenue respectively, and liquid assets that should be sufficient to cover 90 days or 25 per cent of recurrent expenditure. At end of 2023, preliminary projections show that the Government will comply with two of the borrowing limits. Madam Speaker, allow me to pause so everyone can digest that. This year we have attained compliance with an additional borrowing ratio. At the end of 2023, preliminary analysis shows that even though GoA will remain in breach of only one of the ratios, with significant improvements in the FFSD ratios:

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- i. net debt ratio is projected at **48.81 per cent** compared to **100.30 per cent** at the end of 2022- a significant improvement which now brings us into compliance;
- ii. the debt service ratio at **13.32 per cent** compared to **14.95 per cent** at the end of 2022; and
- iii. liquid assets at **70.86 per cent** (approximately **255 days**) compared to **26.65 per cent** (approximately **96 days**) at the end of 2022- building resilience, Madam Speaker.

The debt-to-GDP ratio, the measure recognised by our regional neighbours and partners, is projected at **24.76 per cent** compared to **33.52 per cent** at the end of 2022. This ratio is **35.24 percentage points** below the ECCU target benchmark of 60 per cent.

Madam Speaker, our debt continues a downward trajectory and is projected to remain on a sustainable path. My government recognises the significance of managing public debt to keep it at credible and sustainable levels. Projections from the MTEFP indicate that nominal debt is projected to decline over the medium to long term. Even though our debt servicing cost, specifically principal repayments at EC\$38.25 million, is projected to increase in 2024 and slightly increasing over the projected period, it remains manageable.

3 2024 BUDGET: ANGUILLA'S BLUEPRINT

Madam Speaker, as we present this year's budget, we are dedicated to fostering a holistic and progressive approach in various key areas that are fundamental to the growth and wellbeing of our people.

3.1 Building a Safer Anguilla: Strategic Investments in Safety, Crime Prevention and Community Security

Madam Speaker, a priority area is to address the challenges that threaten the peace and stability of our beloved island. In recent times, we have witnessed a distressing uptick in gun violence, a trend that undermines the tranquillity and safety of our communities. To combat this, our government is committed to significantly enhancing the capabilities of the Royal Anguilla Police Force.

In this year's budget, we are allocating substantial resources to strengthen our police force. We plan to increase the number of constables and sergeants in the Royal Anguilla Police Force, thereby augmenting our frontline defence against crime. This expansion will enable more effective patrolling, quicker response times, and a greater presence in our communities, sending a clear message that we are resolute in maintaining law and order.

Moreover, our strategy goes beyond increasing manpower. We recognise the critical role of technology in modern policing. Therefore, funds are earmarked in our capital budget for the deployment of

advanced CCTV systems across key locations in Anguilla. These state-of-the-art surveillance tools will serve as an indispensable asset in crime prevention and investigation, providing our police force with enhanced capabilities to monitor activities, gather evidence, and swiftly respond to any criminal incidents.

In addition to manpower and technology, we are also investing in training and development programmes for our police officers. This will ensure that they are not only well-equipped but also highly skilled in dealing with the complexities of modern policing, especially in addressing gun-related crimes. Our aim is to create a police force that is not only robust in numbers but exemplary in professionalism and effectiveness.

Parallel to enhancing our police force, the Anguilla Fire and Rescue Service (AFRS) remains a cornerstone in our commitment to public safety. We are increasing resources to expand their staff complement, improving resources to meet regulatory requirements and ensure redundancy. In 2024, the AFRS will also advance towards becoming a regional leader in emergency response training. They have pioneered innovation with the construction of an Aircraft Rescue and Fire-Fighting Training Mock-Up, a first of its kind in the Caribbean, attracting interest from several neighbouring islands. In collaboration with Ministry of Infrastructure and the Department of Education, the AFRS is seeking to develop a curriculum, further solidifying our position in emergency response excellence.

These initiatives are integral components of our broader strategy to reinforce our security infrastructure. They represent our unwavering commitment to safeguarding our island, ensuring that Anguilla remains a sanctuary of peace for all who call it home and those who visit our shores. In undertaking these actions, we reassert our dedication to maintaining order and peace and preserving the tranquil essence of our island for present and future generations.

In parallel, through Attorney-General's Chamber (AGC) we are advancing key legislative reforms, particularly in areas of social justice and public safety. These key reforms include:

1. Firearms Legislation Reform: To address the critical issue of gun violence, we are undertaking comprehensive reforms to the existing firearms legislation. This initiative aims to enhance public safety and reduce gun-related crimes.

2. Administration of Justice (Special Provisions) Bill: This omnibus bill will include special measures for protecting vulnerable victims and witnesses, ensuring that our justice system is both fair and responsive to the needs of those most at risk.

3. Enactment of Electronic Evidence Act: Recognising the growing importance of digital evidence in legal proceedings, this legislation will establish clear guidelines and standards for the admissibility and handling of electronic evidence. This act is a significant step towards modernising our legal framework in the digital age.

4. Decriminalisation of Small Quantities of Cannabis: Advancing the move towards progressive drug policy, the continued decriminalisation of the possession of small quantities reduces the burden on our legal system, aligning with contemporary social justice perspectives.

Our commitment to these reforms underlines our resolve in fostering a just, safe, and equitable society.

3.2 Enhancing Governance: Strategic Reforms for a Progressive Anguilla

Aligned with our Government's vision of empowering and sculpting the future in an ever-evolving professional landscape, Public Administration is committed to an agenda of progressive transformation. Our focus is steadfastly set on enhancing, modernising, and future-proofing the mechanisms that form the backbone of our public service. This endeavour is not just about meeting the immediate needs of our customers; it's about sculpting visionary leaders who can navigate and shape an increasingly dynamic world.

We are embarking on a collaborative journey with the Anguilla Community College to curate and administer a comprehensive leadership and management training programme. This programme is tailored specifically for the top and middle managers of the Anguilla Public Service, aiming to imbue them with the skills and insights needed to lead effectively in today's complex environment.

Understanding the critical role of administrative staff in the smooth functioning of public service, we are reintroducing the Civil Service-Learning platform, a UK-based educational resource. This, along with a selection of other carefully chosen short courses, will cater to the evolving training needs of

our administrative personnel. These educational interventions are designed based on detailed training needs assessments, ensuring they are both relevant and impactful.

The heart of our public service reform lies in the prompt and effective reimplementation of the Performance Management and Development Review (PMDR). The implementation of this system was strategically delayed to refine its impact. It is more than just a performance appraisal tool; it is a vital lever for instilling a culture of continuous improvement, accountability, and excellence within our public service. I urge that this process be expedited to revitalise the PMDR framework to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that every taxpayer dollar contributes to the Anguilla's prosperity. By advancing this work, we will build a robust, agile, and future-ready public service that truly delivers value for money to our taxpayers.

Integral to the concept of a high-performing public service is the notion of equitable pay. To this end, Public Administration, in partnership with the Deputy Governor's Office, will engage a professional consultant to conduct a comprehensive compensation review across all service sectors. This review will focus on rectifying any disparities in job classifications, and remuneration, thereby ensuring fairness and consistency in salaries and allowances.

In our unwavering pursuit of excellence, these initiatives mark significant steps towards a public service that is not only efficient and effective but also adaptable and forward-looking. They are a testament to our commitment to nurturing a governance framework that is responsive, equitable, and geared towards the sustainable development of Anguilla.

Madam Speaker, as we journey towards a pinnacle of good governance, the House of Assembly Services Department remains a beacon of support to this Assembly's vital functions. These include legislative processes, comprehensive scrutiny, and the representation of the public's voice. In this coming year, this support deepens in actualising a transformative reform agenda – an agenda that is essential in elevating the effectiveness and responsiveness of our Assembly to unprecedented heights.

Central to this is the support provided to the Administration Committee in fully operationalising the Code of Conduct and Register of Interests for Members of the Assembly. This task is more than a procedural necessity; it is the foundation of ethical governance. By ensuring that every member adheres to the highest standards of conduct and transparency about their interests, we can fortify the public's trust and confidence in their representatives. Ensuring integrity is maintained and aligned with

the values and expectations of our people. A governance model that is both ethical and reflective of the aspirations of our people.

Moreover, consideration will be given to implementing the recommendations from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures Assessment Report and the Governance, Organisation, and Administrative Review of the House of Assembly. These recommendations enhance the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of our Assembly. Methodical implementation of these recommendations will allow us to refine our legislative processes, bolster our organisational structure, and align our administrative practices with the highest international standards for democratic legislatures. These reforms will redefine the Assembly's role as a fundamental pillar of our democracy.

3.3 Strengthening the Foundations: Strategic Advances in Land Management, Immigration, Labour Affairs, and Physical Planning

At the heart of our blueprint is a bold step towards economic justice – the establishment of a national minimum wage. This historic move, set at EC\$16.20 or US\$6.00 effective January 1, 2024, is more than just a figure. It represents over 30 years of aspirations, now becoming a reality for every worker in Anguilla.

Our approach is multifaceted. The Ministry of Home Affairs, in collaboration with the Department of Labour and the Attorney General's Office, has enacted crucial Work Permit Regulations alongside the Labour Relations Act 2018. These steps will lay the foundations for a fair and equitable workplace. In 2024, our focus will intensify. The Department of Labour will strengthen its compliance functions to oversee the implementation of the Minimum Wage and we are providing more resources here. We are not just talking about policies; we are talking about people's lives, their dignity, and their rights at work.

Turning to Immigration, we are embracing technology to revolutionise our services. The planned upgrades to the OTRCIS are not just about efficiency, they are about making Anguilla more welcoming and accessible in this globalised world. Furthermore, the formalisation of the Remote Workers Programme (also known as the Digital Nomads programme) reflects our commitment to

adapt and thrive in the digital age. Furthermore, our commitment to national security and economic efficiency is underscored through the collaboration between our customs and immigration departments. In 2024, we are moving towards the implementation of Advanced Cargo Information (ACIS) and Advanced Passenger Information (APIS) systems, a pivotal step in modernising our trade and security processes. These systems will not only streamline cargo and passenger processing but also enhance our border security, ensuring a more effective and seamless flow of goods and people.

In the realm of Physical Planning, we envision a future where technology and governance coexist seamlessly. In 2024, the integration of GIS and drone technology, coupled with robust policy frameworks, will not only aid in development but also ensure that we are prepared for the challenges of climate change. Our blueprint is about proactive, resilient, and sustainable development.

The Department of Lands & Surveys is forging forward in its digital transformation agenda. The integration of high-resolution imagery and AI in land management is not just about data; it's about shaping a future where every decision is informed, inclusive, and forward-looking. At the end of 2023, the department was able to successfully complete the acquisition of new imagery at 5cm resolution for the entire island via the use of specialised UAV mapping technology, as well as 360-degree HD video imagery of all the streets and paths. These data will be available to other Government agencies in early 2024. Combining these data with software such as ArcGIS, Government can accelerate storm surge modelling, flooding analysis, climate resilience through identification of housing and infrastructure at risk, environment and natural resource management, improved land use, and more efficient land registration. The department will also continue with its forward-looking mission in launching the Land Information System that will streamline the ease of doing business at the department through enhanced public facing web applications. As we mark the 50th Anniversary of a Registered System for land in Anguilla in 2024, let us also celebrate the journey we have embarked upon – a journey towards a future that is equitable, technologically advanced, and above all, humane.

3.4 Charting a Sustainable Future: Embracing Blue-Green Economies, Food Security and Renewable Energy

We remain resolute in our belief that with the right investment and global partnerships, Anguilla can be a world leader in best practices for developing a low carbon green and blue economy. In 2023, Anguilla joined the United Kingdom's Blue Belt programme, and the United Kingdom Government has committed in writing to a programme of support to assist Anguilla in the ongoing work to further develop the blue economy. This work will continue in 2024 and includes:

- legislative change to strengthen governance, management and enforcement,
- sargassum monitoring and analysis,
- development of a sustainable fishery,
- examination of the processes leading to coastal erosion,
- enhanced regulation of marine protected areas and
- marine spatial planning to ensure the responsible use of our ocean resources for sustaining livelihoods, economic development, transportation and environmental protection.

The sea and coast of Anguilla are not merely geographical features; they are the lifeblood of our island's prosperity. Work will continue towards the goal of having Anguilla's fishery certified as being sustainable to increase opportunities for export to new markets. Furthermore, the Blue Anguilla Policy (2022) sets forth a path to sustainably develop our marine space, anchored in effective governance, particularly in the maritime shipping sector. This sector, vital for connectivity, tourism, youth development, culture, and trade, will see the Anguilla Maritime Administration and Shipping Registry Unit in 2024 focusing on the Anguilla Strategy for the International Maritime Organization Instruments Implementation Code. This strategy is about fostering greater integration, cooperation, and coordination, thereby strengthening our maritime regulatory framework and exploring the untapped potential of Anguilla's blue economy.

As we step into a future where sustainable energy is not just a choice but a necessity, our government is committed to leading the charge in implementing renewable energy solutions. Recognising the critical importance of reducing our carbon footprint and preserving our planet for future generations, we have embarked on a comprehensive journey to transform our energy landscape. This involves a multifaceted approach, embracing innovative technologies, fostering collaborations with key stakeholders, and prioritising investments in renewable energy sources.

The Ministry of Infrastructure's intention to expand the Government's fleet by incorporating electric vehicles is a strategic move that resonates deeply with our Renewable Energy Programme. This represents a significant stride towards sustainable mobility, aligning seamlessly with our broader environmental objectives.

In parallel, the Ministry of Sustainability, Innovation, and the Environment has been actively engaging with key stakeholders to advance the Government's renewable energy agenda. Collaborations have been established with pivotal entities like the Public Utilities Commission, the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Anguilla Electricity Company Ltd, Caribbean Development Bank, Rocky Mountain Institute, and the OECS Commission. Following the successful recruitment for the new Anguilla Renewable Energy Advisory Service in the Department of Natural Resources, the Ministry is now set to intensify its efforts.

Contemporaneously, the Public Utilities Commission is preparing itself via staff trainings and attending regional and international energy conferences and workshops so that it can effectively and efficiently administer regulatory frameworks to address grid integration challenges, energy storage solutions, and community engagement in renewable projects.

Madam Speaker, all arms are moving towards a common goal. We hope to strike the right balance between fostering innovation and ensuring environmental protection as this is crucial for the success of renewable energy initiatives. Our focus will be on achieving energy security, reducing energy costs, and enhancing energy access, while also addressing critical issues related to policy, legislation, and compliance. This comprehensive approach underscores our commitment to a sustainable energy future, integrating innovative transportation solutions with broader energy initiatives.

Having made significant investment in 2023 in the procurement of shade houses, ground cover and water tanks for distribution to farmers as well as development of facilities and services to support animal farmers in particular, the Ministry of SIE will continue its efforts in 2024 to revolutionise the agriculture sector. With an anticipated further capital investment of EC\$1.16 million, the Ministry will roll out support measures to more farmers with the provision of shade houses for climate amelioration, water tanks to assist with access to potable water, fodder production for livestock and operationalisation of the hatchery and abattoir. Additionally, support measures for fishers will also be implemented. These include the provision of public Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), biodegradable

wire to encourage sustainability and capacity building for fishers. A fish stock assessment will also be conducted on selected fisheries as a key step in the certification process for the local fishery.

The Ministry is acutely aware of the existential threats associated with climate change, the challenges of coral reef degradation, beach erosion and pollution and recognises the interconnectedness between healthy ecosystems and sustainable livelihoods. As such, it remains committed to harnessing the potential of the blue and green economy for the benefit of the people of Anguilla while ensuring that equal attention is given to environmental management and sustainability. A renewed focus will be placed on establishing the policy, regulatory and legislative frameworks necessary for improved environmental management and protection. In particular, the Ministry of SIE will advance efforts to ensure that climate change considerations are mainstreamed in policy development across all sectors. Additionally, with the imminent completion of the new fisheries boat, increased monitoring of near-shore activities and the marine environment will be realised.

3.5 Digitalisation of public services

Madam Speaker, “harnessing technology” is a key theme of this budget address as well as our focus for 2024. The Department of Information Technology and E-Government Services will be a key part of the agenda to transform the landscape of our public services through digitisation. Key to this transformation is the expansion of our internal technological capacities. The Department will undertake various system upgrades, ensuring that our technological infrastructure is not only current but also forward-looking, capable of meeting both present and future demands.

A crucial aspect of this initiative is the enhancement of the ASYCUDA system. This improvement will streamline our customs procedures, fostering a more efficient trade environment. In parallel, the Royal Anguilla Police Force will see advancements in digital forensics, a move that will bolster our law enforcement capabilities in this increasingly digital age.

In alignment with "Anguilla's Blueprint," the Inland Revenue Department is transforming tax administration through deepening use of the Multi Tax Solution (MTS). This initiative, underpinned by significant investments in IT and digital payment infrastructure, is designed to optimise the efficiency of tax collection processes, including payment of the Goods and Services Tax and Universal Social Levy. Ensuring a more streamlined, transparent tax payment experience.

Our approach to development is holistic, as evidenced by the comprehensive restructuring of vehicle and driver licensing and fee systems. By integrating technology across the Inland Revenue Department and the Ministry of Infrastructure, we will introduce advanced, efficient methods for fee collection. This strategy is not only about improving revenue collection but also about ensuring our systems are in harmony with our broader national objectives.

The General Post Office continues to focus on becoming a natural home for the delivery of face-to-face government services and ensuring that customers can interact with government online. Priority continues to be given towards the further upgrading of the ICT of the General Post Office to modernise as well as improve efficiency, accountability and performance. Customers continue to steadily embrace the online payment platform. Other web-based and mobile applications are currently being developed to support this platform and to meet customers' needs better in 2024. Also, the recently launched new website for the General Post Office is linked to the Online Payment platform and offers customers the ability to complete and submit service application forms electronically. In addition, three self-service digital kiosks have been installed in the customer lobby and will be fully launched/ operational in January 2024. Innovative strides, Madam Speaker. These interactive kiosks will enhance the customer experience, reduce waiting times in queues, streamline processes, and help to improve postal efficiency by allowing customers to prepare declarations for outgoing postal items as well as access other mobile applications.

In summary, these budget allocations to digitalise public services represent our dedication to improving efficiency, responsiveness, and the overall effectiveness of service delivery to our people.

3.6 Supporting Business and Protecting Consumers

Madam Speaker, we remain committed to supporting businesses whilst protecting consumers. As we near the completion of recruitment, the Consumer Protection Unit will commence operations in 2024. An immediate priority will be the implementation of price control measures on essential goods, ensuring affordability for our people. The Consumer Protection Unit will not only engage in vigilant price monitoring but will rigorously enforce compliance with established price margins by suppliers. This critical step is not just about safeguarding consumer interests, it is a declaration of our unwavering commitment to maintaining market fairness and integrity.

Madam Speaker, to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, economic growth, and job creation, we continue to support local businesses engaged in light manufacturing. Licensed manufacturing businesses are encouraged to apply for a manufacturing certificate through my Ministry to benefit from GST zero-rated supply on the importation of raw materials and equipment essential for manufacturing. Additionally, the Ministry will deepen our collaboration with the Anguilla Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Anguilla Youth Business Foundation. This partnership aims to create a robust business development framework that not only encourages growth but also enhances the prospects for business success, contributing to a vibrant and sustainable economic environment.

To align with Anguilla's development vision, my Ministry will revamp its investment model and framework to attract investments that resonate with our strategic objectives. This will include a comprehensive analysis of investment types, financing mechanisms, and incentive support, coupled with rigorous due diligence processes. Our aim is to ensure that investors are well-suited to Anguilla's context, enhancing our global reputation as a trusted and viable jurisdiction for business. Moreover, we will focus on measuring the value of investments, ensuring they yield long-term benefits for Anguilla's people, including assessing social covenants and the overall economic impact of investment projects.

3.7 Bridging Futures: Technology-Driven Education and Social Empowerment in Anguilla

Madam Speaker, as we embark on the transformative journey of 2024, we are allocating more funds to education, which includes new resources in operationalising our Education Management Information System (EMIS) and enhancing our TVET programmes (approx. \$400k), a clear indicator of our unwavering commitment to foster a technologically advanced and inclusive educational system. This coming year marks a pivotal moment with the rollout of the EMIS. EMIS is not merely a technological advancement; it represents a paradigm shift in our educational framework. It's designed to ensure seamless management and strategic oversight of the education sector, providing educators, students, and policymakers with real-time access to vital educational data and resources. In essence, EMIS is our tool to guarantee that learning continues unfettered, irrespective of any physical disruptions.

We are also championing technological integration in primary education through the INSPIRE Project. This comprehensive initiative is revolutionising our educational infrastructure, encompassing everything from upgraded electrical and wireless capabilities to the provision of individual Lenovo devices for teachers and students. These devices are equipped with Google Classroom, LMS, and innovative software like ALEKS, are more than learning tools; they are bridges to an interconnected and digital educational experience. We are proud to announce that INSPIRE is now fully operational in two of our primary schools and is set to expand further in 2024. A key addition to INSPIRE is the Digital Citizenship component, equipping our students with the knowledge and responsibility needed for safe and effective technology use.

In recognition of the transformative power of technology, we are also elevating our Technological & Vocational Education & Training (TVET) programme. With increased funding, the Ministry of Social Development and Education will be developing national occupational standards that are critical for shaping our national qualifications and curricula. These standards are more than educational guidelines; they are blueprints for professional excellence and a driving force for robust recruitment and job creation in technical fields.

Our commitment to advancement extends to the Department of Library Services. With an increased budget, we are transforming our libraries into digital knowledge hubs, enhancing their e-book collections and implementing state-of-the-art electronic platforms. As technology progresses, so must our libraries, maintaining their relevance and accessibility in the digital era.

The Department of Social Development is not left behind in this technological leap. The development of a Management Information System (MIS) for Social Protection services will continue, striving for best-in-class services. This robust MIS is designed to strengthen our institutional capacity, ensuring more equitable distribution of resources and efficient management of social protection programmes. It's a tool for enhanced accountability, transparency, and intra-governmental coordination, especially in response to socio-economic shocks.

In our pursuit of social rehabilitation, the Department of Probation will introduce Electronic Monitoring (EM) for offenders on Probation and Parole. Electronic monitoring involves devices that are continuously attached to the offender as they move about the community tracking their

whereabouts 24 hours a day. This technology is a critical component in our justice system, providing structure and support to offenders while ensuring public safety. EM is a testament to our innovative approach in delivering social services.

Advancing youth development through investment in sporting infrastructure and programmes is one of the Government of Anguilla's key priority areas. Moreover, we are deeply invested in the physical and mental development of our youth. The upcoming year will witness the completion of a modern basketball court in Blowing Point and the development of a technically advanced Track & Field facility in The Valley. These developments, coupled with increased funding for our Youth Employability programs, underscore our dedication to nurturing the next generation of leaders.

We stand resolute in our mission to empower our youth and prepare them for a future that is not only technologically advanced but also rich in opportunities and innovation. This budget is more than an allocation of funds; it's an investment in our island's most valuable asset – our people.

3.8 Resilient and Efficient Infrastructure: The Cornerstone of Sustainable Development

Madam Speaker, earlier in my address I spoke to the need to invest in our physical infrastructure to improve our productivity capacity and spur economic growth. Madam Speaker, this budget will herald significant investments in capital expenditure, and we are ensuring we get value for money in every dollar spent.

In a world that is constantly evolving, our airports and seaports, the gateways connecting us to the global community, are paramount. Our comprehensive Airport Development Plan is a leap towards expanding our air transport infrastructure as we build the future. Significant enhancements at the Clayton J. Lloyd International Airport, from upgrading terminal facilities to improving runway infrastructure are investments in our island's economic prosperity. Similarly, our commitment to the development of the Road Bay Port Facility will streamline operations, improving the efficiency of trade and commerce.

In constructing the future road network, the Department of Infrastructure is not just laying asphalt; it is forging pathways to long-term economic growth. We are reducing our reliance on local limestone and bitumen materials by increasing the stock of concrete roads. The planning and design of key roads, such as AR Lake Dr and Raphael T Lake Rd, among others, continues an extensive roads paving program. We are building safe, efficient, resilient, and sustainable roads that meet and exceed the expectations of our people. Our commitment to maintaining road assets to satisfactory levels and adopting a forward-looking approach, extends the life of our asphalt road surfaces, ensuring a road network that is safe, efficient, resilient, and sustainable.

Under the mantra of 'Build it Back Better,' the Ministry of Infrastructure is embarking on a mission to improve and construct buildings that are fit-for-purpose, resilient, and cost-efficient. Beyond 2024, the Ministry anticipates launching projects to enhance the Government's office accommodations, including the construction of multi-storey buildings capable of housing multiple departments. This investment in capital infrastructure is more than erecting buildings, it is about enhancing service efficiency for our people.

3.9 Prudent Fiscal Management for Sustainable Growth

As we embark on a path of prudent fiscal management and sustainable economic growth, our government has formulated a fiscal strategy that underscores our commitment to stability, efficiency, and innovation. This strategy is designed to enhance our island's financial health through three pivotal areas increasing the efficiency of revenue generation, improving expenditure efficiency, and managing contingent liabilities. Each of these areas plays a critical role in fortifying our economic resilience, ensuring that we not only meet our current fiscal needs but also lay a robust foundation for future prosperity.

Let me first discuss an important facet of our fiscal policy, particularly considering the increased revenues from our highly valuable .ai domain name registrations. It is indeed a moment of pride and potential for our island, but it also calls for a moment of introspection and caution.

While we have witnessed a significant increase in our revenue streams from these registrations, it is imperative that we approach this windfall with prudence and foresight. Our goal is not just to enjoy the immediate benefits but to secure a stable and prosperous future for every Anguillian.

In the spirit of responsible governance, we must ensure that these additional funds are judiciously allocated to meet our expenditure needs including an ambitious capital expenditure programme. This includes vital projects such as the development of our airport, a cornerstone in boosting our connectivity and economic resilience. However, it is crucial to remember that our financial planning cannot solely rely on the revenues from the .ai domain name registrations.

We must acknowledge that these revenue streams, while robust, are not under the direct control of our government. The digital landscape is ever-changing, and what seems like a perennial source today can rapidly evolve tomorrow. Therefore, basing our tax policy and long-term financial planning on such variables would be ill-advised.

Our approach must be balanced – leveraging this opportunity to enhance our infrastructure and services while maintaining a diversified and sustainable revenue base. This will ensure that we do not find ourselves in a precarious position should the dynamics of the digital domain market shift. Let us use these funds wisely, investing in our people and our island, all while maintaining a cautious eye on the ever-changing economic landscape. Our responsibility is to ensure that the prosperity we enjoy today can be sustained and passed on to future generations.

With the aforementioned considered, I would like to now turn to the cornerstone of our strategy, which rests on the design and implementation of a tax system that not only generates sufficient revenues to meet the fiscal needs of the government but also encapsulates the ideals of equity, growth, and sustainability. In the latter half of 2022, we embarked on significant tax reforms, which included the implementation of a broad-based Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the repeal of several narrower based taxes. These reforms have proven effective, with the GST meeting performance expectations and enhancing the resilience of our revenue base.

Buoyed by the success of the GST, which has been a key contributor to our revenue stream, we are now poised to make further adjustments to our tax policy. These adjustments are aimed at ensuring efficient tax administration and alleviating the financial burden on taxpayers. This adjustment includes the removal of Property Tax on residential properties, commencing in January. While such initiatives

are anticipated to reduce our annual revenue collections by approximately EC\$3.42 million, we view these changes as necessary steps towards a more equitable tax system.

To counterbalance these revenue reductions and continue enhancing our revenue base, our focus will shift towards improving the efficiency of tax collection. Central to this strategy is the enhancement of voluntary tax compliance rates. This will be achieved through improved taxpayer communication and outreach programs, which are essential in fostering a culture of compliance. Additionally, we will allocate more resources to strengthen the capacity of our revenue collecting agencies, enabling them to effectively pursue robust collection and compliance strategies, especially in collecting revenue arrears.

Through these strategic measures, our aim is to build a tax system that is not only robust and efficient but also fair and conducive to the long-term economic growth.

We aim to rationalise expenditure by increasing the efficiency of expenditure, particularly in infrastructure investments like airports and renewable energy. This includes adopting best practices in project appraisal and monitoring. Improving financial management and procurement practices is also a priority, with a focus on performance-based budgeting and legislative reform for more efficient procurement processes. I expect early in the New Year to bring before this honourable house significant changes to our public financial management legislation to improve accountability and efficacy in use of public funds.

To ensure fiscal sustainability, we are focusing on greater control and oversight of contingent liabilities. The enhancement to our public financial management framework will also ensure we have the teeth to better manage these liabilities. As part of this strategy, we are undertaking essential reforms in the Social Security Fund and the Public Service Pension Fund to bolster their sustainability. This includes the difficult but necessary decision to increase the contribution rates for both the pension fund and social security, effective January 1st, 2024. We recognise that this adjustment may impact the income of contributors, a decision we did not make lightly but we affirm the necessity of this measure. This step is crucial to ensure the longevity of these funds and to prevent a scenario where taxpayers would be required to bear the financial burden. Our commitment is to safeguard the future security and welfare of our people while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Madam Speaker, these strategic initiatives and investments underscore our commitment to building a safer, more progressive, and sustainable Anguilla, ensuring prosperity and wellbeing for all our people.

4 2024 BUDGET: FISCAL SUMMARY

Let me now turn to the crux of the matter today - the numbers that will chart our course for the coming year. Our approach is not just about balancing budgets, but about empowering communities, and ensuring that the benefits of growth and progress filter throughout our island. So, Madam Speaker, bear in mind that these numbers are tools in our mission to build a more prosperous, and inclusive Anguilla.

For the upcoming fiscal year, the Ministry of Finance projects total revenue of \$407 million of which recurrent revenue is \$404 million, including \$ 309.65 million from taxes, and \$ 94.36 million in non-tax revenue.

From Taxes on Income, Profits and Capital Gains, which is the bank deposit levy and the ANGLEC Gross Revenue tax, we anticipate EC\$5.8m. Taxes on Payroll and Workforce, encompassing the Universal Social Levy, is expected to generate revenue of \$EC21.3m. In Taxes on Property, which sees the residential component removed from Property Tax in 2024, we are forecasting a lowered collection of EC\$7.57m. For Taxes on Goods and Services which includes the GST, is expected to yield EC\$ 212. 51 million. Lastly Taxes on International Trade and Transactions, which are primarily customs duties is anticipated to bring in \$EC62.46 million.

The Forecasted revenue from grants are receipts of approximately EC\$2.98m from the European Union in support of the EDF 11 Regional RESEMBID Programme, supporting our ongoing projects in the areas of sustainable energy, marine biodiversity and resilience. We are also happy to confirm the extension to this Programme to September 2025. This, along with the Green Overseas Thematic Programme that sees us collaborating with all the overseas territories in the areas of energy transition, climate change resilience and access to climate finance; signals the end of a long, fruitful and respectful partnership with the European Union. The hope is to advocate for a new and continued partnership with our Caribbean brothers and sisters.

This strong revenue performance is underpinned by continued efforts to improve tax efficiency as well as through leveraging the .AI domain more effectively. By establishing a stronger management framework for that asset, we anticipate generating increased and sustained revenue streams for the Government of Anguilla.

Our recurrent expenditure is estimated at \$278.94 million. This includes \$109.19 million for employee compensation, \$69.78 million for goods and services, \$ 71.84 million for grants, along with allocations for other expenses, subsidies, interest payments, and social benefits. We project a significant recurrent surplus of approximately \$125 million, which will therefore support an expansive capital investment programme.

The total Capital Expenditure is estimated at \$ 104.43 million, which includes \$ 75 million to commence the next phase of Airport Development.

Total Amortisation is anticipated to be \$38.27 million, split between domestic and foreign debts.

The overall balance is expected to be a deficit of \$14.65 million including amortisation. To support our expenditure, we intend to draw down on reserves of approximately \$ 25 million.

The budget allocations for 2024 are detailed as follows:

Ministry of Finance and Health: \$118.62 million (Recurrent: \$118.05, Capital: \$0.56 million), 31% of total budget, 3% change from prior year. Of this total, key areas of new capital expenditure include various activities to support the functioning of the laboratory, operating theatre and Pharmacy at the Princess Alexandra Hospital and other Clinics.

Ministry of Social Development: \$72.83 million (Recurrent: \$65.30, Capital: \$7.53 million), 19% of total budget, -8% change from prior year. Of this total, we have increases in the recurrent allocation going to operationalise the new campus, now known as “Campus Q”. Areas of new expenditure in addition to sporting development includes redevelopment works at the Vivian Vanterpool Primary School and the construction of the Technical Block at ALHCS to support the growth of and development in construction trades, auto mechanics and agriculture.

Ministry of Infrastructure: \$121.63 million (Recurrent: \$33.35 million, Capital: \$88.28 million), 32% of total budget, 181% change from prior year. Of this total, areas of new capital expenditure include the Airport Development and the commencement of works to replace the water distribution network. We also have increased allocations to our AFRS, to ensure we continue to meet regulatory requirements for our airport operations, as well as allocations for consultancy in the Ministry for key areas such as energy and water resource management.

Ministry of Sustainability, Innovation and the Environment: \$18.28 million (Recurrent: \$15.66, Capital: \$2.6 million), 5% of total budget, 5% change from prior year. Of this total, areas of key

expenditure include the continuation of the Anguilla Labour Force Survey and the Household Income and Expenditure Survey both of which support the planning and design of policies and initiatives for employment, education, training and poverty reduction. A key pillar of our strategy is digital transformation. We are also significantly improving the resourcing of our DITES with allocations for new human resources as well as enhanced technology applications. By strengthening DITES, we are not only enhancing our government's digital capabilities but also ensuring that Anguilla remains at the forefront of technological advancement, ready to meet the demands of the future and secure a prosperous, digitally fluent society.

Ministry of Home Affairs: \$14.4 million (Recurrent: \$9.95 million, Capital: \$4.45 million), 4% of total budget, and a 66% change from prior year. Of this total, areas of key expenditure include land acquisition payments to support the implementation of past and future infrastructure projects as well as enhanced resourcing of our labour department to monitor compliance with our enhanced labour laws.

Portfolio of the Governor: \$37.61 million (Recurrent: \$36.61million, Capital: \$1 million, 10% of total budget, 18% change from prior year. Of this total, key areas of new expenditure include planning for the implementation of advanced surveillance systems and significant increases in the personnel complement of the Royal Anguilla Police Force to support their comprehensive functioning and to fulfil their mandate for security operations. There is also an increased allocation to the Department of Public Administration to conduct the comprehensive review of the public sector including job grading and compensation.

As we move forward, let us bear in mind that the true measure of this budget will not be found in fiscal summaries, but in the tangible improvements it brings to the lives of our people. It is in the classrooms where our children's minds are nurtured, in the robust infrastructure that supports our daily endeavours, and in the strengthened safety nets that protect our most vulnerable.

5 CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker, esteemed members of this House, and the resilient people of Anguilla, today I shared with you a vision that transcends generations and spans the realms of innovation, education and empowerment. "Anguilla's Blueprint: Harnessing Technology, Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders, and Building the Future." This speaks to the heart of this Anguilla Progressive Movement Administration and our commitment to progress, resilience and building a brighter future. I stand

before this honourable house filled with a profound sense of purpose and optimism. I am charged and motivated by my colleagues and diligent public officers, together we are the architects of an Anguilla reimagined.

Madam Speaker, just a few years ago, the Anguilla Progress Movement administration faced the uncharted waters of global challenges and a dismal local forecast of a suspended constitution as closed borders, no reserves and COVID-19 created a storm that would shake the core of any experienced captain. The torrents of the times were successfully navigated by sheer will, resolve, faith, God's grace and an unwavering commitment to see change, chance and opportunity work in the favour of the people of this great land.

Lest we forget Madam Speaker, the horizon was shaded with doubt, overcast by mounting debt and the winds of change fought against the cold front of fiscal mismanagement, failing systems and crumbling infrastructure. Today, we sail on, the worst of the storm behind us, our vessel trimmed by the collective strides we have made as a new day beams over the horizon. Madam Speaker we see revitalized hope and hear the joy in the renewed plans of our people who stand ready to greet a new Anguilla, an Anguilla where the pulse gives life to economic resilience, social inclusivity, and unwavering fiscal responsibility.

With confidence we affirm that in an era defined by rapid technological advancements we will not be left behind. We will lead the movement in the region and become a global model by how we harness the power of innovation to advance our people and pivot our growth and development.

Anguilla's blueprint begins with a concerted effort to embrace technology and the expertise of our people as the catalyst for change. Digital transformation is not just an option it is the driving force. Our commitment to harnessing technology will not only revolutionise our developmental trajectory but will produce empowered youth, the custodians of our tomorrow, ensuring that their future is as bright as their potential. Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."

We have outlined significant investments in our physical and digital infrastructure, education, healthcare, public safety, and environmental sustainability. These investments are not mere expenditures, they are the seeds of future growth and prosperity. By focusing on areas such as airport development, road upgrades, and advancements in digital technology, we are laying down the foundations for a more connected, efficient, and resilient Anguilla.

Our emphasis on education and youth development is particularly crucial. By nurturing our young minds and investing in their future, we are ensuring that Anguilla's tomorrow is in capable hands. We progress to a society where continuous education is not just encouraged but is woven into the fabric of our culture. A culture of learning and development will ensure that our citizens not only remain agile and adaptable in the face of evolving technologies but are also equipped to contribute wherever they choose to spread their wings internationally.

The prudent fiscal management policies we have adopted, especially considering the fluctuating nature of revenue streams like the .ai domain registrations, reflect our understanding of the need for a balanced and sustainable approach to economic growth. By focusing on diversifying our revenue sources and managing expenditures wisely, we are ensuring that Anguilla remains financially stable and resilient in the face of global economic uncertainties.

Moreover, the strategic reforms in public administration, law enforcement, and governance underscore our commitment to building a society that is not only efficient and progressive but also just and equitable. Our legislative initiatives, particularly in areas such as consumer protection, labour laws, and environmental conservation, demonstrate our dedication to protecting and empowering our people.

Madam speaker, we are rewriting the Anguillian story. Though previous years were marked by dark days as the beacon of potential flickered out our people chose to look up and not hang our heads. We faced these adversities head-on, fortified by our faith. It is for this reason that this administration will continue to remain resolute in its pursuit of an Anguilla current and future generations deserve and our forebears dreamed of.

Madam Speaker, our narrative continues to be one of ebbs and flows. It is one of triumph over trials. It is one of smooth sailing once we stay the course and stay on the ship. Our economy, once beleaguered by external shocks and internal challenges, now stands as a testament to our prudent and diligent stewardship. We have embraced our collective responsibility to nurture a society that is inclusive and compassionate. It is in this spirit of unity and shared purpose that we have redefined what it means to be a modern, progressive society.

Our achievements are widespread and deeply felt, reaching into the heart of every community across our cherished island. From the vibrant streets of The Valley to the serene shores of Meads Bay, from the dynamic developments in South Hill to the tranquil vistas of the East. We will see the fruits of progress in every facet of our society: the entrepreneur who has expanded their enterprise, the educator who harnesses technology to inspire young minds, and the aspiring scholar who embarks on their academic journey with the aid of our educational initiatives.

Ending, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all the ministries and departments for their invaluable contributions to the preparation of this budget address. I also want to acknowledge the tireless work and unwavering commitment of the staff in our Ministry of Finance. Their expertise and hard work behind the scenes have been instrumental in bringing both this budget and today's address to fruition. Together, we have worked diligently to create a budget that reflects our collective vision for Anguilla's progress and prosperity. Thank you all for your outstanding dedication and service.

Madam Speaker, the foundation of our progress lies in the strength of our alliances, both at home and with our global partners. I want to express our sincere thanks to Project Inspire for their partnership in providing laptops to children in our primary schools, a crucial step in enhancing educational access and quality. Additionally, heartfelt gratitude is extended to Richard Schulze and his foundation for their continued sponsorship of the school feeding programme, a vital initiative that nourishes the bodies and minds of our young learners. My profound appreciation goes to our international partners, especially the United Kingdom, for their continued support and shared vision for a prosperous Anguilla. The collaborative efforts and the technical and financial assistance we have received are

pivotal in our journey towards economic resilience. Yet, Madam Speaker, it is at this juncture that I reemphasise our call for a deepened partnership. One that not only sustains but also empowers us, fostering resilience and moving us beyond the need for mere assistance to enabling self-reliance and sustained growth. We seek not just a handout, but a hand up, Madam Speaker, to lift ourselves towards greater heights of independence and prosperity.

Madam Speaker, as we forge ahead, our blueprint for a technologically advanced, leader-empowering, and future-building Anguilla becomes ever more vivid. We are charting a course of sustainable growth, a path lit by the brilliance of innovation.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I am imbued with a sense of humble pride and boundless optimism. This administration, with the grace and guidance of the Almighty, will continue to shepherd our island towards a horizon of endless possibilities. We stand united, ready to embrace the changes that beckon, confident in our ability to be the architects of our destiny. Together, we are shaping an Anguilla that is not just reimagined but reborn.

Madam Speaker,, I beg to move.



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