

**Message from the Hon. Mia Mottley, Q.C., M.P., Opposition Leader of
Barbados on the 47th Anniversary of Independence
November 30, 2013**

Citizens, Residents, Friends and Well-wishers;

As we celebrate our 47th year of nationhood and look towards the 50th year of our Independence, I ask you to pause and consider where Barbados will be 50 years after the Broken Trident was hoisted over a new nation and her expectant people on that rainy night back in 1966.

Have we achieved the hopes and dreams of those who had the courage to lead us on this journey? Are we better off as a nation and a people than we were in 1966? Where do we want to be in the next three years, twenty-five and then fifty years after that?

I believe we have made considerable strides both as a nation and as a people. We have taken our place in the family of nations and stood up for what we believe in. We have provided sound and trusted leadership in our region. Barbadians have contributed at the highest levels to medicine, information technology, education, the law, sport and entertainment right across the world – just to name a few areas.

The social and economic circumstances of Barbadians are scarcely recognizable to what obtained for the vast majority in 1966. We have moved from an agricultural society to a service economy with a highly educated workforce that for the most part is better off than our parents were.

But as we approach the fiftieth year of controlling our own destiny and managing our own affairs we need to ask ourselves some tough questions.

Are we happy about the way our island now works?

Are our traditional values of thrift, hard work and neighbourliness still relevant, appreciated or practised?

Are we satisfied with the type of service that we give to each other and to visitors to our shores?

As a people have we truly grasped the opportunities provided by free education?

Are we giving our people the opportunity to take their ideas and bring them to fruition on merit without having to know someone to “call a shot for you”?

Have we become complacent about our progress as a country?

After 47 years of Independence we find ourselves in an unaccustomed position, facing the uncomfortable possibility of losing control of the decisions that will affect all of us today and our children tomorrow.

While there is no doubt that it is the Executive, the Cabinet of the country, that must take the key decisions to stabilise our national condition of economic decline and that as individuals there is nothing we can do to change this outcome, we can as individuals still make a huge impact on our daily lives and those of others by renewing our commitment to giving a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay; by treating others as we would wish to be treated; by recognizing that the world does not owe us a living and we must give value for money, with a smile, if we are to contribute to our own recovery.

Perhaps the greatest service we can pay our country over the next three years is to restore the Barbadian ethos of hard work, responsibility and the desire for our children to be better off than we are.

For the first time since 1966 there is the real possibility that our children and grandchildren will be unable to improve on our circumstances.

We must draw from the past to give hope to the future. It will not happen by willing it to happen. It will happen if each and every one of us makes a conscious decision to play our part and join the Movement for Barbados.

Last weekend, I addressed over three hundred Barbadians in Orlando Florida as they celebrated Independence. The pride in the room for Barbadiana was overwhelming as it was when I visited Barbadians in New York a few months ago.

Let us reach out to our brothers and sisters in the Diaspora who remain committed and concerned, and want to work with us at home in any way they can to make our lives better and to make our country stronger.

Together, we shall rekindle the pride, love, and determination for preserving the best of things Barbadian.

Today we celebrate our 47th birthday as a nation.

It is my hope that we do so with joy, peace and a better understanding of where we have come from and that we each give some thought to where we are going and ask ourselves how we can make a difference. Our nation may be 47 years young but our people have hundreds of years of experience in resilience and resourcefulness. They are needed now more than ever.

I hope you will join me in this wish for our country as we look forward to celebrating our 50th anniversary of independence.

Happy Independence Barbados! God bless each and every one of you. God bless Barbados.