

**Message from the Hon. Mia Mottley, Q.C., M.P., Leader of the Opposition
of Barbados on the 50th Anniversary of Independence**

November 30, 2016

My fellow Barbadians, happy Independence to each of you on this our golden anniversary.

We are conscious that the ability to determine our sovereignty rested on the platform that we were given in 1951, when all Barbadians over 21 years old were given the right to vote; and thereafter when we received the right to manage our own internal affairs with the introduction of Ministerial Government. These fundamental achievements in our democratic life provided a solid platform to become an independent nation.

We have made considerable strides both as a nation and as a people since that rainy night back in 1966 when the Broken Trident was hoisted over a new expectant nation.

In the last 50 years 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.

We have provided sound and trusted leadership in our region contributing at the highest levels in several spheres of endeavour.

Indeed, in the years leading to this anniversary the Barbados brand became known, in essence, for the core values that have defined us as a reliable partner in the international community; a moderate, responsible small state guided by the norms of democratic governance; respect for the rule of law; human rights and fundamental freedoms and a functioning Court System; a country characterised by political stability; sound administrative and financial management; strong institutions; an efficient bureaucracy; an absence of corruption; well-developed physical infrastructure; progressive social and economic policies which emphasise the development of our people; and a thriving social partnership with stable relations between Government, Business and Labour.

In short, the Barbados brand came to stand for a safe, friendly, fair, high-quality environment in which to live, do business or visit.

You are concerned that too many things seem to be going wrong and not enough effective effort is seemingly being exerted to fix them.

I say to you, fear not!

Tomorrow begins the first day in our journey towards the next 50 years, and we suggest all Barbadians pause and ask ourselves some tough questions:

- *Are we happy about the way our island now works?*
- *Do we have confidence in our future?*
- *Can we see the benefits of the sacrifices asked of us?*
- *Do we think more can be done to improve our country?*
- *Are we willing to take control and chart our destiny?*

My friends, how we manage our affairs going forward from here will largely influence our progress as a country in the next few years will set the foundation for the next 50 years.

The mission of restoring confidence in our country cannot be achieved through the efforts of any one class, sector or political party. It requires the efforts of us all. The answers to our challenges are not easy fellow Barbadians BUT they are not impossible if we are willing to work on hard enough and in the right ways.

On behalf of myself and my colleagues in the Barbados Labour Party we want to wish you a happy Independence Day with a pledge that we are focused and ready to get Barbados working again for all Barbadians.