

Independence Message 2010

By Prime Minister

The Rt. Hon. Hubert A. Ingraham

10 July 2010

Fellow Citizens of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas:

Once again, Bahamians across the world gather to commemorate the anniversary of our national independence. Various activities are planned for our capital city and on each of our Family Islands. Our diplomatic, consular and tourism offices abroad are also commemorating this milestone.

Bahamians everywhere are happy to share in this occasion with those visiting with us in The Bahamas as well as those friends and guests celebrating with us in other countries far and near.

Our celebrations are tempered by what has become a prolonged global economic downturn. However, we are a resilient people, resourceful and creative in times of hardship. We are heartened by the promise of the beginning of recovery and we look forward to improved economic times in the months ahead.

This year, we mark the anniversary of the birth of an independent Bahamas through the eyes of our youth. They are not simply, the future. They also have the imagination and talents The Bahamas needs to face our current challenges and seize the promise of tomorrow.

It is my fervent hope that by focusing on young people during this year's celebrations we will help to deepen their pride in our history and their commitment to community service.

I believe that through an appreciation of our history and through their contributions to our civic life, they will experience a deepening gratitude for the privilege they have of living in a free and democratic country.

Our young people should know that The Bahamas is a fortunate country, where the rights of citizens are recognized and protected in law. They can be proud too of the social and cultural freedoms they enjoy, including the freedom of speech and expression and of religion and of movement.

The past 37 years of independence has been the unfolding story of our continuing journey to make our country better for all Bahamians, but most especially for our young people. We have done this through the expansion of education and training opportunities and health services, as well as through the development of sport and athletic facilities.

In our recent landmark Self-Starter's programme we are cultivating innovation and a new generation of Bahamian entrepreneurs among our nation's youth.

I relish the opportunity of our independence celebrations, to thank those who serve our country in the private sector, in hundreds of churches and civic organizations, and in all of the public institutions and agencies of our state.

I remember and thank all those who cannot be at home with us: those who serve in our embassies, high commissions, consulates, maritime and tourism offices. In a special way, I remember our students who are studying abroad.

I also recognize and thank our many international friends who during the past 37 years have supported us in our nation building endeavours and who celebrate the anniversary of our independence with us.

To our young people, I send a special message: We are proud of you. We need your dreams and your energies. You have a rich culture and come from a multitalented and resourceful people.

Draw on your personal strengths and the collective wisdom of our country in order to meet whatever the challenges life may bring your way.

Despite our national challenges, I remain hopeful and optimistic. This is due in no small part to my confidence in our young people, whom I am privileged to meet as I travel throughout The Bahamas and the international community.

Fellow Bahamians, wherever you may be -- in New Providence, in the Family Islands or in other lands -- I wish you a happy and safe Independence Day. I also pray God's blessings upon our nation and upon each and every one of us.

Once again, Happy Independence!