

Commonwealth of the Bahamas

Independence Message 2014

The Rt. Hon. Perry Christie

Prime Minister of the Bahamas

on the 41st Anniversary of Independence

10 July 2014

It is with great pride and honour that I congratulate Bahamian people everywhere on the occasion of the country's 41st Independence Anniversary.

As we celebrate this milestone in our country's history, we must reflect on our past journey to appreciate what we have been able to achieve. It is also a time when we must look forward to a new era with new opportunities and embrace the opportunities that are sure to come as we proceed with the development of this nation. As our country matures, we must be more cognisant of the responsibilities that we bear and ensure that every aspect of who we are as a people is recognised and appreciated.

As such, I have declared 2014 as the Year of Culture with a view to celebrate our cultural identity, which defines us as a people. We have chosen to celebrate this our 41st under the theme, "Celebrating our culture: A commitment to peace," This gesture is intended to symbolise the significance of our cultural identity and give rise to highlighting those icons who would have been instrumental in personifying the ethos of Bahamianism.

Our cultural legacy is a direct result of the many contributions made by a plethora of personalities who interpreted their understanding of Bahamian culture via their writings, music, storytelling, art and dance. We must, therefore, find opportunities to honour those whose lifelong journey was, and is to express their understanding of our culture, using their talents as a vehicle to transmit their message. This is important because culture is the bedrock of a people's identity.

As we commemorate our culture during our 41st anniversary, we should focus attention on all of anniversary those individuals and institutions that have made major contributions to our country as it relates to culture. We should find ways to highlight their achievements and pave new paths for others to follow.

We express our deepest gratitude and appreciation for all of those cultural icons for their contributions to our country and hope that their legacy will continue to live on.

May we have a peaceful and joyous 41st Anniversary and may God continue to bless our beautiful Bahamas.