

# **Independence Message 2005**

**By Governor General**

**His Excellency Sir Howard Cooke**

**6 August 2005**

The year since our last Independence celebrations has been one of mixed blessings. We have had three hurricanes with their devastating effects of floods, loss of life and devastation of property. Sadly, we continue to be plagued by rampant violence. Despite these however, the remarkable resilience of our people has been shown

Our progress in the rehabilitation of our infrastructure after the hurricanes might not be as quick as we would have liked but there is much to be thankful for in tourism, bauxite, manufacturing and agriculture where emphasis is now being placed on how Science and Technology can assist us in producing more by-products and crops out of season.

The education of our people continues to be a priority and regularly we hear of the outstanding achievements of our students both here and abroad. Our athletes continue to make their mark in the international sporting arenas. Importantly, our economy showed signs of improvement and the new dynamism throughout the diaspora served as a source of encouragement.

As a people we have held our own in every aspect of life that we are given an opportunity to serve, nationally and internationally.

Those of us who love our country want to see it stand as a proud example to the world in economic, social, moral and spiritual issues. Yes, we have made a mark but much more needs to be done as we recognize and accept that in the evolution of any great country, progress is not always smooth and swift and without disappointments and setbacks.

Therefore, we have to work collectively and unselfishly at correcting those things that militate against our vision for our country and we must not be distracted from our goal.

We cannot afford to give in to the polarizing and paralyzing elements in politics and crime. We need to halt the debilitating effects of materialism, greed, dishonesty and selfishness. We must not sit idly by and allow our country disintegrate into a place where fear destroys our will to produce. The time for positive action is now.

Each of us has a role to play in nation-building and we must bear in mind that choice, not chance determines our destiny.

As such, our vision for our country has to include the identification of the enabling factors needed to create a heightened level of goodwill as well as economic prosperity, social harmony and a respected voice in world peace.

A critical component to our success will be the proper use of our resources. Every effort must be made to identify opportunities for investment and financing and to set the structure for economic advancement. And, as we strive for sustainable growth, all our businesses must seek to be world-class entities.

We cannot achieve the utmost without the presence of intellect, knowledge and understanding to use the resources. This must come from leaders of merit, regardless of age. These leaders must have vision, courage and capacity to create.

In all of this let us not forget that we are stewards of our land and institutions for future generations, so we must give them a foundation that they would be proud to build on. Today, more than ever, I would implore us as we celebrate our forty-third anniversary of Independence to look at ourselves, identify our capacities and unite our forces for good.

I was reminded recently of the words of Norman Washington Manley – “It is out of your own minds, out of your own faith in yourselves, out of your conviction about the future of the country that the spirit of national unity and of patriotism will be built.”

I have confidence that our people will recognize that the possibilities that can be accomplished for our country with this in mind and through goodness, mercy and truth are tremendous.

There is so much beauty in our country. God has indeed blessed this land. Let us allow Him to guide us with His mighty hand so that we can enjoy the bounty He has bestowed on us.

Let us use this period to signify a new beginning for us as we determinedly and confidently continue to build the great Jamaica the architects of our Independence hoped for.

May God bless Jamaica and all our endeavours.