

# **Independence Message 2006**

**By Governor General**

**His Excellency, the Most Hon. Kenneth Hall, ON, OJ**

**6 August 2006**

Jamaicans at home and abroad . In the 44 years since Jamaica achieved its independence, successive governments and the people of this country have been striving steadily to fulfill the mission articulated in this year's celebration theme, "Together With Dedication. We Build Our Nation."

Building on the freedoms of emancipation, our founding fathers secured the right to self-government, which is one of the fundamental liberties of a people. Through hardships, they dedicated themselves to shaping a vision of hope and creating institutions that give voice to our people. As a result of their struggles, we have been able to effect the transition from existing in a colonial society to forging an independent nation.

More than four decades later, Jamaicans continue to build on the foundations that were laid in the 1960s. We have weathered many storms and crises, with fortitude, in pursuit of our goal to establish an open society, in which every man, woman and child has a stake. We must continue to increase the opportunity to fashion a future in which we can all enjoy a better quality of life and achieve our individual potential. Critical to our continued development as a nation is the ability of our people to demonstrate productive and nurturing values and attitudes, as we seek to:

- Educate our children about their rights and responsibilities.
- Protect the environment in which we live, so that it can sustain our development initiatives.
- Reduce the incidence of crime and violence.
- Create a just society in which we protect both the constitutional right to self-determination and the safety of each individual citizen.
- Establish equitable systems of governance that meet international best practices, as well as to,.
- Harness our collective talents to strengthen our institutions and our communities.

Therefore, as we celebrate our independence this year, and take time out to enjoy all aspects of our cultural expression, like our founding fathers, we must recommit ourselves to the vision for independence; and accept that, each one of us needs to contribute to the building process. The new century has ushered in unprecedented technological, social and economic change around the world. We are also at the dawn of a new era in our country, and we are obligated to reach new levels of excellence in our quest for good governance. In so doing, we continue our efforts to create a world-class society that can proudly hold its own in the harsh and competitive global environment.

I, therefore, call on all Jamaicans to work together for. justice, peace and love. Let us reach out to each other; contribute to the equitable distribution of resources in our society; and grasp the opportunity to serve - our family, our community and our country.

If we can achieve these goals. then, bolstered by our own resilience, we will be able to make the theme, "Together With Dedication. We Build Our Nation" a meaningful reality.