

Independence Message 2008

By Governor General

His Excellency, the Most Hon. Sir Kenneth O. Hall, ON, OJ

6 August 2008

This year, Jamaicans at home and abroad, recognising our emergence as a nation-state in 1962, will celebrate the 46th year of our Independence with several church services and numerous festive events.

We are a proud people who place great value on our political independence. In these 46 years, successive governments have made significant strides in the creation of a democratic society in which we value highly the worth of each citizen, while maintaining honourable relations with other nations in this region and around the world.

However, even as we celebrate these achievements and set an agenda for economic progress, let us not forget the new challenges that we face today, particularly in the areas of crime and violence.

We must also accept that the world has undergone dramatic changes and in response to the challenges of the new millennium, we must adopt new methodologies and new approaches to address the issues we face today. Lawlessness, which continues to erode the social order and undermine the economic strides we are making, must be urgently addressed and eliminated.

Let us, however, not forget the positives in our society that give us hope. Despite our small size, we have achieved high international standards in many areas. Our products are gaining world recognition as national brands. The positive aspects of our music receive world-wide acclaim. Our athletes, who are off to Beijing, China for the Summer Olympics, are among the best in the world. I am sure their performance at those games will make all Jamaicans proud.

The time has come for parents and teachers to focus on this generation of young people, who must be helped to discover who they are and to understand the vital stake that they have in providing the future leadership of this society. We must therefore, give them a greater understanding of the significance of Independence and inspire them with a vision of the great possibilities that lie ahead.

I extend to you all, God's richest blessings, as we celebrate Jamaica on this Independence Day 2008.