

Independence Message 2009

By Governor General

His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen, ON, GCMG, CD

6 August 2009

"I Believe in Jamaica"

Fellow Jamaicans at home and abroad, I greet you on the commemoration of the 47th anniversary of our Independence. As we reflect on the past and celebrate, let us remember that the true meaning of Independence must evolve from each Jamaican. It should be determined by our collective dreams and hopes for our nation, and the kind of society we envision for ourselves and successive generations.

I believe that true independence exists when we are not subject to the control of others, when we do not entrust the shaping of our destiny into the hands of others, who would seek to dictate how we govern and conduct our affairs.

In spite of our challenges and setbacks over the past 47 years, we are still a blessed nation, rich in heritage and abundant in resources. We have much for which to give thanks.

There are some in our society who are proud of the achievements of our country since we gained Independence in 1962, while there are others who question whether we are ready to chart our own destiny.

In the past five months as I traveled around Jamaica, I have met Jamaicans who are weary and disillusioned in the struggle to build a good society, while others are indifferent to the things happening around them. On the other hand, I have also met:

- 4-H clubbites in Portland who are learning income-generating skills.
- Entrepreneurs in Westmoreland who are investing in and working hard in their industries.
- Staff members at the St. Elizabeth Infirmary who keep the place spotless despite limited resources, and residents who plant kitchen gardens.
- I have seen the air conditioned Library in Black River where people of all ages and abilities go to improve their internet skills and get unlimited information.

- I have met Young people from the counties of Middlesex and Surrey, who have exciting ideas on how they want to contribute to Jamaica.
- Senior citizens in St Ann who are computer savvy and are participating in Quiz competitions.

These are examples of what is right with Jamaica and should be replicated everywhere.

We need to seize the moment now and have each citizen pledge to participate in the healing, restoration and ultimate prosperity of our country.

I believe we should use our Independence and our natural and human resources to build a quality society where values are upheld and good attitudes prevail.

Today we stand at a crossroad in our national life. There are challenges ahead of us. As we go into another year of self rule, we must believe in Jamaica and that together as one nation under God we can "accomplish what we will."

I believe in Jamaica and I believe it is not too late for us to join hands and heart and herald the 'new era for our country.'

Let us recommit ourselves to the task of doing what we can in our homes and communities and acknowledge that within the challenges that shape our contemporary lives, lie the seeds of opportunity and renewal. I wish for all Jamaicans success, prosperity and peace.

Happy Independence and God bless you.