

Independence Message 2013

By Governor General

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

6 August 2013

My Fellow Jamaicans, at home and in the Diaspora,

We bring the curtains down on our 50th Anniversary celebrations and begin our 51st year at a time when our country is beckoning to us for our re-commitment to rise and build!

This is a call to all of us; none is exempt! Our National Anthem constantly inspires us to believe that we are a country blessed by the Eternal Father.

We must believe that we are uniquely equipped to pursue our bold mission outlined in Vision 2030 of making Jamaica a place where we choose to live, work, raise families and do business.

We are all aware that there is some distance between where we are and where we want to be, but we must not be discouraged. Rather, let us embrace the many challenges which confront Jamaica, as a call to action and encourage each other to serve to the best of our ability, with dignity, honour and integrity!

Today, we remember with pride what Jamaicans have accomplished through their dogged determination to succeed, their creative genius, their perseverance and resilience, and especially in sports, their drive to make Jamaica proud.

We also remember and laud the many Jamaicans overseas who have built up a reputation for sterling contributions to the development of their country of residence.

Here at home, we recognize and commend the many persons from very humble beginnings who have triumphed in their respective fields because of their commitment to hard work, their discipline, their focus on the attainment of their goals and their belief in their God-given potential to achieve their dreams.

They confirm my belief that the large majority of Jamaicans are decent, hard-working, law-abiding citizens and that we have the capacity to transform Jamaica into the country which we

envision. "There is nothing wrong with Jamaica that cannot be fixed by what is right with Jamaica."

In my travels across Jamaica:

- I have met many of our unsung heroes and heroines from all walks of life, who, motivated by the tough economic conditions, sharpen their skills and use their inventiveness to create small businesses which provide jobs for others.
- I have been privileged to meet children and youth whose hunger for education and whose focus on their goals inspire me to persist with my "I Believe" Initiative.
- I have seen people, both young and the more mature, invest of themselves in building up others through the imparting of life skills and the development of their capacity to earn a decent living.
- I have interacted with several of our business persons who are contributing their time, talent and resources to the upliftment of our people.
- I have met others in the media who commit to using their space for the advancement of positive values and attitudes, thus resisting cheap sensationalism.
- I salute those in the entertainment industry who recognize and accept the weight of responsibility to be good role models on and off stage.
- I know strong people in government and politics, the Church, the security forces, civil society and academia, who will not bend their principles, but will render faithful service to God and country, thus demonstrating the independence of their spirit.

These, the warm, caring and hospitable people of Jamaica, are what is right about our country. Together, let us make a significant difference, even reaching our development goals in advance of 2030. Each Jamaican, whether at home or abroad, has the responsibility to help restore our image as a peaceful and productive country. Each of us must accept our responsibility to defend what is good and what is right about us. Edmund Burke, a classical political thinker of the late 18th Century said something which is so relevant to us and our times, and I quote:

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men (and women) to do nothing."

As we celebrate our Independence, let us believe in and build the Jamaica which we are destined to be: "triumphant, proud and free"!

Lady Allen joins me in wishing you a happy Independence. May God bless Jamaica, Land we love!