

Independence Message 2015

By Governor-General

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

6 August 2015

Fellow Jamaicans,

Once again, whether we are at home or in various regions across the world, we unite to commemorate that first hoisting of our proud Black, Green and Gold.

For those of us who witnessed that moment, that surge of patriotic pride and joy is forever etched in our hearts.

Today, as we celebrate our 53rd anniversary, we recapture that spirit so aptly reflected in our theme: “**Proud and Free...Jamaica 53!**” We celebrate our people: the strides we have made nationally and internationally, the vision for our growth and our wellbeing, as well as the challenges which must impel us to forge sustainable solutions. We cherish our brand as a people who are creative and resilient. Once we are united in our struggles and objectives, our dreams and aspirations; with divine guidance there will be no difficulty which we cannot overcome.

Each of us, however, has a duty to build the bright and prosperous Jamaica of which we dream and so I encourage you today to:

- Urgently join forces against the crime and violence which stalk our land. Believe that we shall prevail and overcome! Let us end the culture of silence and help bring perpetrators to justice.
- Embrace positive values which will strengthen our nation and our families and communities in particular. Let us redouble our efforts to transform the lives of our people and so end the downward drift of our youth, in particular, to gangs, drugs and guns.
- Curtail the corruption which undermines our development and threatens social stability.
- End the spate of murder and violent abuse of our children. Let us believe together, that we can make them safe and secure in our homes, streets and communities

where they, the nation's future, will flourish. Every member of every community must assume this responsibility **right now**.

- Use our roads wisely and prevent the carnage from continuing. And as an earnest for the future, let us have no fatalities over this holiday period with everyone obeying the rules of the road.
- Let us not take the beauty of our island for granted. Our pristine beaches, unique topography, exotic flora and fauna and the very origin of the name "Jamaica", are at risk. We have a responsibility to protect our environment.

In this, we are encouraged by another global recognition: the declaration of our Blue and John Crow Mountains as a **UNESCO world heritage site**. This is a treasure, among others, which we must preserve for future generations.

Let us be strengthened by our heritage, the values, principles and religious freedom on which our nation is built.

Our history chronicles our people's achievements in various fields including tourism, agriculture, science, culture, entertainment and sports. There is much to remind us of our capacity to achieve excellence! We need to activate the fervour and passion which have fueled our achievements, and remain motivated by the sacrifices of our ancestors whose dream was for this little 'rock' to become one of the greatest nations on earth.

Let us believe that no matter how impossible the dream may appear, we can achieve it.

May our Eternal Father grant us the wisdom, courage, patience and grace to join hands and hearts all across our country to be **Proud and Free...Jamaica 53!**