

# **Independence Day Message 2016**

**From Governor-General**

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

**6 August 2016**

My fellow Jamaicans, at home and abroad, I greet you warmly as we mark the fifty fourth anniversary of our Independence.

This is a day of celebration and reflection as we look back, but also as we look ahead and commit ourselves to the further advancement of our beloved nation.

This year we are at the half way point, between the start of the millennium and the target year of 2030, for achieving our major development goals.

I therefore use this occasion to encourage you, to draw inspiration from what we have achieved and move in the directions which will accelerate our progress.

We need to accept and believe that there are more positives in our history and our present profile as a people, than the negatives on which we so often focus.

We have provided the international community:

- with creative geniuses like 'Bob' Marley;
- with extraordinary athletes, like McKenley, Quarrie, Fraser-Pryce and Bolt, among others
- with academicians, entrepreneurs, professionals in virtually every field, including engineering ... medicine ... law... and agricultural research ... to name a few.

We also enjoy...

- one of the most respected electoral systems in the world, which demonstrates our capacity for national cooperation, collaboration and cohesion.

The time has come; indeed it is now, that we must channel our extraordinary talents and skills, which are at every level of our society, into the drive for social and economic development; with equity, justice and an increased sense of security.

To this end, let us remember that unity of purpose and a sense of togetherness can be achieved, only when as individuals, we plan, think, speak and act with a sense of responsibility and genuine concern for others.

We must deliberately foster this unity of purpose and togetherness in:

- our family, within our community and in the society at large;
- in our institutions, on the roads, in places of business;
- in our shared spaces; as we protect our children, observe the rules, respect others, show sensitivity and cordiality;
- and, even when we disagree, we are to be guided by what is best for all, rather than for self alone.

It is in this spirit, which made possible many of the achievements of our forebears, that we must be empowered to overcome our challenges and succeed!

One of our twentieth century poets, H D Carberry wrote about our strengths as a people and our potential for greatness:

*“The mould is not yet made, perhaps,*

*That can unite and make the people one*

*But more important than the mould*

*Is the temper of the steel,*

**The spirit of the people.**

*And when that steel is smelted*

*And when that steel is tempered*

*And when that steel is cast*

**O what a people will that people be!”**

We, as a people have been tested, and we, will be tested even more. But the spirit of our people cannot be broken if we come together, if we unite and put the good of the nation first, above selfish ambition.

Lady Allen joins me in wishing *you* a day and a season of enjoyment, of positive energy, and above all, of renewed commitment to make Jamaica the place it was meant to be.

And may the blessings of the Almighty be with us today and always.