

Independence Day Message 2017

From Governor-General

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

6 August 2017

My fellow Jamaicans, at home and abroad, and friends of Jamaica. Lady Allen and I join with you as we celebrate our fifty-fifth year as an independent nation.

Local and world events during the past twelve months have reminded us of the need to value the traditions and legacies of our past.

We should use this time of reflection and celebration to draw strength from those circumstances which we have overcome.

Though not perfect, our democracy and the freedoms we enjoy have been a standard for many countries across the world to emulate.

We have developed a reputation for free and fair elections, a highly respected judicial system, and a vibrant press and media which together, keep us informed, entertained, and influential.

It is no wonder that despite the problems which exist, there is a spirit of hopefulness and optimism which keeps us in a positive frame of mind.

I encourage us to preserve this sense of togetherness, and to embrace even more fully the traditions of volunteerism and the 'duty of care' which have served us so well in the past.

We appreciate all the economic advances driven by our captains of industry and our workers in the public sector and in businesses, large, medium and small.

But it is the quality of relationships within families, between neighbours and across communities which will provide the surest route to the peace, goodwill, safety and security for which we all yearn.

It is the investment of time and care for our children and adolescents which will reap rich dividends in the process.

These millennials hold the key to our collective future. We must therefore empower them to increase their self-confidence, their energy, their capacity for innovation and above all their promotion of the values of discipline, good order and personal responsibility.

When we do so, all of us, young and old, can face the future with optimism and with hope.

I wish for you a time of joyous celebration blended with sober contemplation of our journey thus far, and above all, a commitment to making the coming years even better than the past.

Happy Independence and may God bless you and Jamaica land we love.