

## **Working together to enhance national pride**

**Message From Her Excellency Mrs. Susan Dougan, OBE**

**Governor-General's Deputy**

**to mark the 36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

Fellow Vincentians, I am pleased to address you on our Nation's thirty-sixth Anniversary of Independence on this the 27<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2015. Independence is symbolic because it reminds us of the importance of our sovereignty and the successes of working together in a truly democratic society.

Independence reminds us of the struggles of generations of outstanding Vincentians from all walks of life, whose contribution allows us to enjoy a peaceful, stable society. Further, Independence is also a time for reflection as we renew our efforts to revitalize our small island. In the past, our small size has not prevented us from exercising our democratic rights and freedoms, upholding the rule of law, providing social safety nets for our people, having food security, celebrating the academic achievements/ accomplishments of citizens, and providing the foundation for citizens to function competitively at home and abroad.

Notwithstanding these successes, we should also be cognizant of treating each other with respect, behaving politely, valuing differences of opinion, being courteous and welcoming to visitors to our shores, and joining with our brothers and sisters to build a nation of which we will all be proud. In short, by overcoming divisions in the past and working selflessly together on common goals for our national development.

It is, however, clear that several ills are beginning to erode the fabric of our society, including disrespect for authority and property, negative messages disseminated through talk radio and social media, intolerance, ill-discipline, rising criminal activities and disregard for the symbols of our identity, for example, our national anthem, flag and pledge.

We, therefore, must now ask ourselves what are we contributing individually and collectively to produce a model nation? One in which future generations will work and live in harmony, and are

given the support, motivation and tools to achieve to their maximum potential. Are we striving for the common good by putting aside petty grievances and moving forward with dignity, being proud of working hard and smart, while seizing the opportunities for social and economic development?

It is important to build our country by uplifting those aspects which are symbolic and truly Vincentian. Let us be inspired by those who have used little to achieve much, by demonstrating our entrepreneurial spirit and resilience evident through innovations by our small business owners and farmers. Let us strive for peace and tranquility in our nation, while being acutely aware of the struggles of humanity in the Middle East, the devastation caused by the recent hurricane to our Caribbean neighbours, and the economic turmoil facing some countries in Europe. Let us value self, family and nation by working for the common good and being our brothers' keepers.

Fellow Vincentians, we have to work assiduously and collectively to protect and support local industry. We are blessed with a plethora of agricultural resources which we can use to get into manufacturing enterprises. Stop the wanton littering of our beaches, rivers and immediate environment, eliminate the scourge of violence and criminal activities, nurture the young, be role models for those of working age, care for the elderly, treasure national symbols and embrace healthy lifestyles.

It is only when the words of our national pledge resonate with all of us, that we will truly continue working together to enhance national pride.

On this our thirty-sixth Anniversary of Independence, I wish everyone a wonderful Independence Day.

May God bless us all!