



**MESSAGE FROM  
HIS EXCELLENCY CHARLES A. SAVARIN, DAH  
PRESIDENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 36<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF DOMINICA'S INDEPENDENCE  
ON 3<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER 2014**

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My fellow citizens, residents and visitors to our fair Isle,

It is indeed a pleasure for me to address a message to you for a second time on the occasion of the observance of the Anniversary of our Independence. Thirty-six (36) years ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1978, as a manifestation of our will and desire to take charge of our own affairs and to be masters of our own destiny, we declared our Independence from Britain. We were at the time faced with many challenges. We were nevertheless, determined that if we did not confront these challenges and seek to undertake our own development, no one would do it for us. In all of the circumstances, we have done well as a people and a nation, and must give thanks to Almighty God for bringing us thus far. We must be proud that within less than one (1) year of our Independence, we were able to stand up as a people in defense of our freedom, our democracy, our values and our commitment to Constitutional Governance and the Rule of Law. Principles which we continue to hold dear and enjoy to this day.

This 36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence is an opportune time for sober reflection on where we were thirty-six years ago in terms of our social, cultural and economic development; and where we are today; and to look to the future with optimism as we seek to build on our accomplishments.

We have greatly improved on our social and physical infrastructure. Our social programs in education, healthcare and care for the very young and the elderly are a model which stands out as a beacon of a caring society.

The major challenge to our economic development has been and continues to be the high cost of electricity. We have therefore committed ourselves as a people to the development of our renewable energy resources. Of the many sources of renewable energy available to us, such as hydro, wind, solar, OTEC, etc., geothermal has been established as the most abundant and reliable source of energy with a potential not only to satisfy local demand, but to supply significant amounts of electricity to our neighboring islands, more particularly Guadeloupe and Martinique.

My fellow citizens, residents, we should be proud of these accomplishments as they represent our meeting and even surpassing the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs). The challenge for us now is to embrace the post 2015 development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the perfecting of our democracy, our institutions, our economic strategies for growth, and for improving the quality of life for all.

The theme for our 36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence, "Our Nation Our Responsibility," is meant to serve as a reminder that Dominica belongs to all of us and each one of us has a responsibility for the continued development of our nation. We must therefore participate fully as citizens that is: as parents, guardians, teachers, social workers, religious and political leaders, friends and communities, in activities geared towards nation building, whether we are living at home or abroad.

Among the challenges that we face are the debilitating effects of non-communicable diseases. The health of the nation is an important determinant of economic growth and prosperity. We must therefore take personal responsibility for our overall health, in body, mind and spirit, by paying particular attention to our lifestyle including the foods we eat and the drinks that we consume during this festive season and beyond.

We must not forget the new challenges that we face today particularly in the areas of crime and violence, terrorism, the global economic and financial crisis, climate change, dengue, chikungunia and the deadly Ebola disease; all of which seek to erode our social order, threaten not only our health and well-being, but our very lives.

At this time of year we welcome in a very special way the several visitors from our neighboring islands and other more distant countries, more particularly our brothers and sisters living in the Diaspora, who are visiting with friends and looking forward to enjoying our rich cultural heritage. We must never forget the efforts of our forefathers and past leaders who paved the way for our development and made it possible for us to realize these 36 years of political independence. We should also remember with gratitude those development partners who are assisting us in building our nation.

On this memorable occasion of the attainment of 36 years of nationhood, I extend warmest greetings and congratulations on behalf of my wife and myself to all citizens of our beloved country wherever they may be and to all those who reside among us.

May the Good Lord bless us with an enjoyable and peaceful 36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence.