

Independence Message 2015

By His Excellency Charles Savarin, DAH

President of the Commonwealth of Dominica

3 November 2015

Fellow Dominicans

As we celebrate the thirty-seventh year of our attainment of Independence we need to focus our attention on those members of our community who have suffered loss of family members, homes and property in that awful Tropical Storm Erika which inundated us with 13 inches of rain in six (6) hours on 27th August, 2015.

In the midst of all this, we need also to give thanks to Almighty God for life, health and strength and for His abundant love and mercy which he has bestowed on our beloved Nation, recognizing that the impact of Tropical Storm Erika could have been more catastrophic still.

When we look back at our historical sojourn, we should be proud of the progress that we as a people and Nation have made throughout the past 37 years and remember all those who through their contributions, commitment and hard work, have paved the way for a better Dominica.

This year's observance of Independence is celebrated under the theme, "Rebuilding Dominica Together". This theme is very fitting and should serve as an impetus to us to persevere in our recovery and rebuilding efforts.

Our beautiful Nature Isle, Dominica, was ravaged by the passage of Tropical Storm Erika on Thursday, 27th August, causing death and severe infrastructural damage to our road network, airport, housing and agriculture.

Many of our brothers and sisters were displaced by floods and landslides brought about by this storm. Despite these challenges and setbacks caused by this disaster, and the tremendous cost of recovery and reconstruction, we are confident that with our unshakable belief in Almighty God, the strength and resilience of our people and the support of the regional and international communities, we will move on.

Dominica is ours to rebuild and we must come together as one people to rebuild our Nation. We need to put aside all the petty things that divide us, whether it be politics, religion, petty jealousies, historical rivalries or feuds of any kind, and adopt those positive attributes of patriotism, love, hard work, commitment and dedication as we seek to rebuild our country. As you may be aware, the President's Charities Foundation Incorporated, has launched an (Erika) Relief Fund with a start up amount of EC\$27,000.00 from the Foundation's Reserve Fund with a target of raising US\$100,000.00.

A special sub-committee has been charged with the responsibility of managing the effort and to raise the required amount of EC\$270,000.00, by soliciting financial support from partners and business associates locally and overseas. The intention is to help provide medium term relief and comfort to the families, more particularly school children, who reside in two of the worst affected communities on the West Coast, namely Colihaut and Coulibistrie.

The Relief Fund is also intended to provide support to the Operation Youth Quake and the Community Hostels Incorporated, formerly known as the Grotto Home for the Homeless. When the Relief Fund will have received donations and before any disbursements are made, the Sub-committee will dialogue with key community leaders in the two communities concerned, including the Parliamentary Representatives, to determine the best approach to assisting the school children.

My wife and I take this opportunity to express our sympathies with our fellow citizens who were severely affected as a result of the passage of Tropical Storm Erika. It is our sincere hope that the continued recovery efforts will be speedy and effective and that their lives will return to normalcy soon.

May our Government continue to seek God's guidance and wisdom to face the almost indomitable challenges that lie ahead to rebuild our beloved Country.

My wife joins me in wishing everyone an enjoyable 37th Anniversary of Independence.

May God Bless us all.