

Independence Message 2010

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Dominicans have been called upon to rally to the theme for this year's Independence celebrations 'Creating Opportunities, Empowering Communities'.

While some civic minded nationals may do just that, at the same time, we need to honestly ask ourselves whether opportunities are being created for all Dominicans and which communities are really being empowered through the creation of such opportunities, real or imagined.

In this context, the Dominica Freedom Party is reminded of the line in our National Anthem which states "All for each and each for all" and shares the view that the theme chosen for this year's Independence would have been more apt and inclusive had it read 'Creating Opportunities for all to empower Communities'.

Be that as it may, as we enter into our thirty second year of Independence, it is even more important for us to reflect on what we have achieved and the challenges which we continue to face at every level of national development. This includes the moral, physical, social, economic, religious and political which cannot be mutually exclusive if we are to build and develop a nation of which we can be justly proud. However, to build that nation, we need to be so inspired that we can all be galvanized into action knowing that at the end of the day, ALL OF US will benefit. since nation building cannot and should not be exclusive.

Consequently, if Dominicans have to take on the mantle of nation building, individually and collectively, the opportunities created must enable all of us to become truly empowered to make ourselves independent, not only economically, but independent of mind, and free thinking. The question is, however, can this be achieved in our current environment? Is this easier said than done? Because while on the surface we are being called upon to put our shoulders to the will and garner all our resources to move our country forward, there seems to be a certain lack of conviction that we all are genuinely being given the opportunities for self-empowerment.

Getting a country up and running does not only require a call to action and by making large sums of money available to persons and communities in such a way that we keep them poor and powerless so that they continue to be dependent on our charity. If we genuinely want to empower communities, we must do it in a way that they become independent of our charity, that they become self-reliant, so that they can sustain their own development without our help.

These are the real opportunities that we want to be created so that we as a people can be fully empowered to make decisions that are not compromised, decisions that are transparent and which can take all of us forward, secure in the belief that we will not be victimized for our beliefs.

Empowering communities is not an overnight process. It takes years of individuals working together with a common vision towards a common goal. So as we celebrate this year's anniversary of Independence, the wish of the Dominica Freedom Party is for the creation of opportunities for all of us so that we can be empowered individually to make our communities and our country strong, self-reliant and truly independent.

I take this opportunity to wish all Dominicans an incident-free Independence!