



**Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica**

**MESSAGE BY**

**HONOURABLE ROOSEVELT SKERRIT**

**PRIME MINISTER OF**

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA**

**On the occasion of the**

**38<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence**

**November 3, 2016**

It is now thirty-eight years since Dominica obtained political independence from Great Britain.

As we look back over those years, evidence abounds that we have toiled, faced many challenges, overcome many obstacles and never given up our vision of a truly free people building a beautiful country that is unique and distinctly our own.

Today, wherever you may be in the world, you can proudly say to yourself and to friends and associates, that you are Dominican, one of many strong and resilient people who time and time again, have shown the capacity to overcome adversity by transforming it to opportunity.

The celebration of Independence triggers a homecoming of relatives and friends on a scale that is not seen anywhere else in the Caribbean. That homecoming, which has also attracted many visitors, is not only to reconnect with loved ones, but is akin to a pilgrimage intended to re-live and experience the very spirit and essence of what it means to be Dominican.

The creole music, song, dance, cuisine and all the other cultural expressions which set us apart and define us as Dominicans, are all woven into what for all of us, is the celebration of Independence.

I wish to extend to each of you, a warm and friendly welcome to Dominica. This is one of the happiest times on the calendar of events for which we are gaining an enviable reputation. I share the regret of those among you who, for various reasons, are not here to celebrate with us this year, as we showcase our rich culture and pageantry to the world.

There is an all pervasive joy and excitement in the air as we celebrate under the theme “Strengthening Our Commitment to Nation Building.” This theme flows out of the challenge we now face in rebuilding our country following the widespread destruction and loss of life due to the devastating storm Erika in August last year.

It is my dearest wish that the joy and excitement that is now widespread, will overflow into zeal for working together at the community and national levels on the many projects, to rebuild sections of our collapsed roads, our destroyed bridges and feeder roads, and to restore all our affected businesses to viability and profitability.

I wish to single out an essential requirement for any desire to be responsive to our theme, whether you are a Dominican resident here or overseas. I speak to the important matter of first building positive relationships and to be more caring toward each other. It is so true that a house divided against itself cannot stand. So let us strive to set aside the negatives and through loving and caring, strengthen our relationships within our families.

This attitude will infect our communities and spur us on to collective action for the benefit of Dominica.

My friends! My entire family joins me in wishing you a happy and pleasantly memorable independence. The forces of law and order have done all that is possible to ensure your safety and security during this festive period. This does not mean you should let down your guard. Remember, the sun always rises in the morning, and so must you.

We need you, with a strengthened commitment to build Dominica.

May God bless you!