

THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY  
TO THE REMARKS OF THE  
NEWLY APPOINTED AMBASSADOR  
OF JAMAICA  
AUDREY PATRICE MARKS  
UPON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF  
HER LETTER OF CREDENCE

Madam Ambassador:

It is with great pleasure that I accept your Letter of Credence, which establishes you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Jamaica and I acknowledge receipt of the Letter of Recall of your predecessor, Ambassador Anthony Johnson, who was exceptional in representing Jamaica in the United States. I extend a warm welcome to you and your family, and I look forward to working closely with you to deepen the already close relations between our countries.

For the past forty-eight years, Jamaica and the United States have shared a long history of friendship, based on a mutual commitment to democracy, prosperity, and security in the Caribbean region. Our countries have enjoyed a fruitful and cooperative relationship across a broad range of issues, including trade, investment, and energy security. The hallmark of our close collaboration has been our joint efforts to counter

the growing threat posed by narcotics and weapons trafficking to the security of our citizens and our economies.

Beyond the common interest of our governments, our people share an unbreakable bond and close family ties. Jamaica's dynamic culture has deeply enriched the fabric of American society. An estimated 1.5 million Americans of Jamaican descent live in the United States and are integral parts of our country's history and tradition, and many are among our most distinguished leaders across many disciplines. Over 10,000 American citizens, including dual nationals, live in Jamaica today. Visitors from the United States account for 64 percent of Jamaica's tourism market.

Over the years, we have come to know Jamaica as a leader in the Caribbean. I congratulate Jamaica on the practical approach that it has taken to address its energy security challenges - a strong example to countries in the region and beyond. Jamaica demonstrated leadership in this area when it expanded access to Ethanol 10 blend to most gas stations on the island, reducing its dependence on traditional fuel. Following the devastating earthquake in Haiti, Jamaica played an important role - working with its Caribbean neighbors to ensure an efficient regional response.

The United States and Jamaica continue to cooperate on many shared priorities - securing our borders, eliminating gangs and violence, curbing drug trafficking, and promoting economic growth. Jamaica is an important trading partner for the United States and a major market for U.S. goods. The United States is helping Jamaica to improve tax collection, fight the spread of HIV-AIDS, and promote the development of bio-fuels in Jamaica.

Today, the United States has 106 Peace Corps volunteers working in the environment, health, and youth sectors throughout Jamaica.

We are also collaborating on energy and climate issues under the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas, as well as the U.S.-Brazil Biofuels Partnership, where Brazil and the United States are helping Jamaica develop its biofuels capacity and implement its ethanol blending program.

With the May launch of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, we recognized that our nations' security interests are deeply intertwined. Along with other partners in the Caribbean, we pledged to work together to reduce illicit trafficking in the Caribbean, to advance public safety and security, and to promote social justice by addressing the important issues of crime prevention, justice sector reform, and corruption. As a member of the Caribbean-U.S. Joint Working Group, Jamaica played a key role in developing this initiative. As the Jamaican government seeks to uphold the rule of law, the United States supports its efforts to ensure public safety and to combat drug trafficking and other criminal activity.

Madam Ambassador, I look forward to working with you to advance our common agenda and deepen the strong and abiding friendship of our countries. It is a pleasure to welcome you to Washington.