



**MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL
HIS EXCELLENCY
THE MOST HON. SIR PATRICK ALLEN ON, GCMG, CD, KSt.J
58th ANNIVERSARY OF JAMAICA'S INDEPENDENCE – 2020**

“Resilient and Strong”

My Fellow Jamaicans at home and in the Diaspora: Greetings!

Today we celebrate the 58th anniversary of our independence and despite the difficult context and restrictions, we have much for which to be thankful. No matter where in the world we are, our hearts still swell with pride, and a deep sense of patriotism whenever we witness the hoisting of **our** flag accompanied by strains of the Anthem.

The commemoration of this milestone in our nation's history, is not just for the customary jubilation and festivities, but it provides an invaluable opportunity for us to reflect and recommit ourselves to the continuous and crucial task of nation-building.

The COVID-19 pandemic which hit our shores in early March has changed our lives and the way we teach, socialize, work, conduct business, worship and even celebrate milestones like our cherished Independence. This however is a time of social, physical, and financial uncertainties, which easily brings to mind the expression of Thomas Paine that says these are *'times that try men's souls'*.

I offer my sincere condolence to those at home and in the Diaspora who have lost family members, and wish a speedy recovery for individuals who have suffered the effects of this virus.

We are grateful for the swift response of the Government, especially the Ministry of Health, and its cadre of health professionals, other health providers, frontline workers, and security personnel, for providing information and resources to tackle this difficult situation so far. I also thank each one of you for exercising your *'duty of care'* in following guidelines issued and assisting each other to get through this challenging time together.

A whole new world awaits us as we prepare to go into our 59th year of Independence. *'How will we forge a future in which no one is disadvantaged, disheartened, or disenfranchised?'* That is the question for all Jamaicans today!

These times require us to re-examine our National Pledge and commit the love and loyalty of our hearts, the wisdom and courage of our minds, to work diligently and creatively, in serving each other and building our nation.

Over the past three months, the mass movement for social justice, racial equality, the removal of offensive statues and iconography, have not escaped us in Jamaica. My Office has had to address this subject! These events have reminded us of the deep divisions that continue to plague many societies, and serve as reminders that we **must** continue to work together to overcome the inequities of our past.

The Emancipation that our forefathers and mothers fought vigorously for, many years ago, must be guarded and celebrated; even as we fight for the oppressed and marginalized, and not settle for anything except the best outcome.

However, today we celebrate the enviable fact that our democracy, even with its limitations, has remained stable for 58 years! We, the people, have successfully voiced and participated in our democracy, and must continue to do so to ensure that all of us can benefit from our status as an Independent Nation.

As we enter this ‘**new normal**’ environment, we must display the **resilience** for which we are known globally! Let us be **strong**; recharge our collective psyche; rally around the symbolic meaning of our National Flag; and remember what it means to be Jamaican!

Despite the challenges, the strength and creativity of **our** people **will** shine through, as we continue to chart our path forward.

Happy Independence. God bless you and bless “*Jamaica, land we love!*”