

**THE MOST HONOURABLE ANDREW HOLNESS, ON, MP
PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA**

ADDRESS TO THE NATION – JAMAICA 58

On the Occasion of

INDEPENDENCE DAY 2020

A NEW JAMAICA IS EMERGING

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My Fellow Jamaicans, we celebrate the 58th anniversary of our nation's Independence in the throes of a pandemic. Together, we have done well in managing the crisis, through the hard work of thousands of frontline workers and the support and cooperation of most Jamaicans.

We cannot afford to become complacent now. We are still at risk. Therefore, we must continue to strictly observe all the infection prevention and control measures, including the wearing of masks, washing hands, and social distancing.

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There is no doubt that the pandemic has had a severe impact on our lives and livelihoods; however, we are starting to see some “green shoots”. Our collective efforts in fiscal, monetary and structural reforms, reducing debt, increasing foreign exchange reserves, restoring macroeconomic stability as well as our fiscal overall performance have put us in a much better position to enable us to recover stronger.

As a Government, despite COVID-19; we remain committed to making this, the Decade of Growth for Jamaica to anchor our peace, prosperity and resilience.

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A new Jamaica is emerging, filled with hope and optimism.

We have made significant investments to strategically upgrade our civil defence and national security assets, incorporating technology to create a safer Jamaica.

We have delivered a record 20,000 housing solutions; to improve the living conditions of our people.

We have diversified our energy mix and increased our investment in renewables.

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We have increased youth engagement through the HOPE programme and expansion of the HEART/NSTA Trust.

We have spent a record amount in welfare protection and strengthening of our social safety net to protect our most vulnerable citizens.

We have made unprecedented improvements in our roads, bridges, water and other infrastructure.

We have bolstered our public health infrastructure and improved our service delivery, which enabled us to successfully manage the pandemic and other health threats.

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While we are proud of these achievements; there is much more to be done.

We have long held a dream and vision of a new Jamaica, a land of peace and love.

In order to make this vision a reality; we must translate it into actionable plans and policies. Then, most importantly, we must execute so that we can deliver on the dreams of our people.

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As we contemplate our emancipation and independence; the key question is how do we use our freedom and independence to improve the lives of **all** Jamaicans?

We must acknowledge that even though we are free and independent; this comes with responsibility and accountability. There is no reward without work and there is no success without sacrifice. Like the laws of nature, these are the immutable laws of progress.

The challenge before us is to give true meaning to our political independence by achieving economic independence and prosperity. This prosperity must be shared so that every Jamaican who is willing to work is justly

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rewarded. The true realization of a prosperous society is the realization of a socially just society that is fair, orderly and equitable society.

The test of our progress as a society is not only that we increase the abundance of those who have; it is whether we are also providing opportunities for those who have not.

Let us also remember that prosperity is not a destination, it is a direction on a journey. It unfolds each day. Let us join hands and hearts in working each day to ensure the emergence of a new Jamaica, a Jamaica that is the place of choice to live, work, do business, raise families and retire in paradise.

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As we celebrate our independence; we remain **“Resilient and Strong. Let’s Celebrate, Jamaica 58”**.

We are recovering stronger together.

God bless Jamaica, land we love.