

Message from the Leader of the Opposition Mr Mark Golding, MP for Labour Day 2026

Fellow Jamaicans,

Each year we come together on Labour Day to honour the dignity of work, the resilience of our people, and the enduring spirit that has always defined us as Jamaican people.

Labour Day is deeply rooted in our history. It takes us back to 1938, when ordinary men and women across Jamaica rose up against injustice, demanding fair wages, better working conditions, and dignity as Jamaicans. Those events transformed our country, strengthened the voice of the working class, giving impetus to political organization, and setting Jamaica on the path toward self-government and political independence.

Over the years, Labour Day has evolved into a day both of remembrance and of putting words into action. It is a reminder that when we invest our time, our effort, and our care into our communities, we are ultimately investing in ourselves. The community of action for the land that sustains us, strengthens the very foundation on which our nation stands. In more practical terms, it is about stepping out in our communities, rolling up our sleeves, and putting in some voluntary work to make things around us a bit better.

This year, the theme for Labour Day is **“One People, One Purpose – In All Things, Jamaica Wins.”**

That theme is a powerful reminder that our greatest achievements as a nation have always come when we stand together, united in purpose, committed to progress, and determined to build a better future for all, with no-one being left behind.

Across this land today, Jamaicans will gather to clean, to paint, to build, to repair, and generally to uplift their surroundings. In doing so, we demonstrate that nation-building is not the responsibility of the State alone. It is the shared duty and mission of all of us.

As we commemorate Labour Day, we must also speak honestly about the present moment. Across our country, too many hardworking Jamaicans are feeling the strain. Many families still have not

recovered from last October's terrible hurricane. Many are still living under leaky blue tarpaulins, and each shower of rain is a torment for them. With wars and international aggression far and near, the rising cost of living is a heavy burden on families. Many workers are struggling to make ends meet. Young people, educated and ambitious, are searching for meaningful opportunities to thrive at home rather than abroad, but are too often left disappointed.

Labour Day demands reflection and action. We must ask ourselves this important question: Are we doing enough to ensure that work truly provides dignity, stability, and a pathway to a better life?

As Leader of the Opposition, I stand with the Jamaican workers. I acknowledge your efforts, your sacrifices, and your contributions to this nation. Whether you are a nurse keeping our healthcare system running, a teacher shaping our future, a police officer serving and protecting us all, a farmer feeding the nation, a factory worker on the production line, a hotel worker helping to build Brand Jamaica, a taxi driver, a market or street vendor or other small business owner, you are the backbone of this country. Your voices must be heard more clearly in shaping our national priorities. We will continue to advocate for policies that inspire a more equitable society and build the social cohesion that sustains national development.

Labour Day reminds us that in Jamaica progress has never come from silence, complacency or inaction. It has always come from engagement, from dialogue, and from action driven by the collective will of the people.

Today, as we take part in community projects across this land, let us remember that our small acts of community service reflect a much larger truth. If history has taught us anything from 1938 to today, it is that when Jamaicans stand together, we can overcome any challenge.

When we work together, when we care for each other, when we respect the value of each other's contributions, and when we act with collective purpose, we strengthen our communities and we build a greater nation.

The journey ahead is not easy and will require great effort, integrity, and unity. So on this Labour Day 2026, let us recommit ourselves to that shared purpose. Let us embrace the spirit of **“One**

People, One Purpose,” knowing that when we act together in the interest of our country, **in all things, Jamaica wins.**

Happy Labour Day.

May God continue to bless you, and may God bless Jamaica, land we love.