



MESSAGE BY

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE LESLIE CAMPBELL

MINISTER OF STATE

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE

DIASPORA DAY, 2021

June 16, 2021

I join with you in observing Diaspora Day for the first time in my capacity as Minister with responsibility for Diaspora Affairs. It is my distinct honour and privilege to pay tribute to the estimated three (3) million strong Jamaican Diaspora members dispersed across the globe and wonderfully represented on every continent. I extend best wishes to you and your families and sincerely hope that you will have an opportunity soon, to visit Jamaica to experience the joys and many offerings of our beautiful and beloved island home.

As part of the efforts to deepen our engagement with the Diaspora in a holistic manner, the Government of Jamaica continues to implement new mechanisms designed to further strengthen its relationship with the Diaspora. In the recent past, these have included the provision of incentives for Returning Residents; hosting Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conferences; recognizing Diasporans through the Governor-General's Achievement Awards; and the establishment of structures to streamline Diaspora Philanthropy. These initiatives will continue in earnest as they have proved to be very effective over time.

These efforts will be given a fillip by the passage and implementation of the National Diaspora Policy, which will support the further harnessing of the full potential of the skills and expertise of Jamaicans overseas in the pursuit of Jamaica's sustainable development.

In addition to these avenues for engagement, last year, we successfully established the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC) and the Global Jamaica Diaspora Youth Council (GJDYC) which were deliverables of the 8th Biennial Diaspora Conference held in June 2019.

We value the voices and role of our young people in shaping the sustainable development of Jamaica. We are extremely proud of the activities of the Youth Council which has undertaken countless activities in the past 18 months in the midst of the global pandemic. We applaud their efforts to use

their platform constructively and welcome their enthusiasm and passion to voice concerns and present proposals for the growth, development and sustainability of Jamaica.

During the height of the pandemic, members of the Diaspora responded to the call to action to assist those in the community who were severely impacted and desperately in need of food, medication, accommodation and emotional support. The generous response of the Diaspora was a welcome source of relief. Similarly, the overwhelmingly positive response to the “One Device for Every Child” campaign initiated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, has been a lifeline to students as they adjusted to online platforms for learning.

We also commend you for continuing to support your families back home, to the extent that remittances actually increased during the pandemic, defying forecasts by international financial institutions of a global decline. This speaks volumes to the depth of your commitment to your families and to Jamaica. We invite the Diaspora to remain engaged as the future is bright and full of promise.

On this Diaspora Day, we salute you, the members of our Diaspora, who continue to be good ambassadors for Jamaica and partners in pursuit of sustainable development for Jamaica, Land We Love!

Happy Diaspora Day!