



MINISTRY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
& FOREIGN TRADE

INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE 2026

MESSAGE BY:

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE KAMINA JOHNSON SMITH, JP
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

My Jamaican family,

Happy Independence Day.

It is with a great sense of national pride that I extend warm greetings as we commemorate the 64th Anniversary of Jamaica's Independence, under the national theme, "United in Celebrating Resilience". This important milestone invites us to reflect on our nation's journey - paying tribute to the enduring legacy of our forebears who overcame innumerable adversities, and renewing our collective commitment to surmounting modern challenges and building an even better Jamaica.

Since gaining independence, we have been resolute in our unique expression of nationhood – our sovereignty, identity and culture, and our foreign policy. The Foreign Ministry has been at the heart of Jamaica's engagement within the community of nations, and critical to playing our part in advancing the welfare of the global community. My team and I at the Ministry are also always extremely proud of, and delighted to engage with, Jamaicans in every corner of the world.

Indeed, the Jamaican Diaspora is an integral part of our nation. Your indomitable spirit, your patriotism and your perseverance inspire and drive your invaluable contributions to national development. We also salute you as cultural ambassadors and promoters of the unmistakable positive vibrations and values for which Jamaicans are known and which we pass down throughout generations.

The Government of Jamaica recognises and deeply values our Diaspora, and we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to strengthening Diaspora engagement and fostering strategic collaboration in support of national development. Your expertise, partnership, and advocacy are indispensable assets as we work collectively to build a more resilient and prosperous Jamaica.

We celebrate this anniversary with immense pride, knowing that we have overcome several challenges as a nation, and that we are making great strides to overcome modern ones. Our progress on improving national security, for instance, illustrates the strength of our resolve.

Hurricane Melissa is one of our country's greatest challenges ever. Even against Melissa, we persevered with our unbreakable spirit. Even as we acknowledge imperfections, we celebrate the fact that alongside the Government, the private sector, non-profit/voluntary groups and charities, and individuals at home and abroad ensured that relief was delivered and services were restored quickly and effectively. I once again express sincere appreciation on behalf of the Government of Jamaica to the Diaspora and friends of Jamaica for your generous assistance.

There remains much to be done. The Government is working to ensure that the Jamaica we rebuild is even more resilient. There is much that Jamaica has already shared with the world. The Government's vision is for Jamaica to share the blueprint for resilience-building for all small-island developing states, and the Diaspora will continue to play an integral role. I therefore take this opportunity to thank all the participants at the record-breaking 11th Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference held last month. We look forward to building on our excellent engagement as we collaborate to shape Jamaica's future.

So let us remain steadfast in our shared national pride and our resolve to advance our people. May we continue to draw strength from the enduring truth that we are not defined by our challenges, but by how we rise above them. United in purpose and building with resilience, let us move forward together as we build a more resilient, more inclusive, and more prosperous Jamaica.

May Almighty God continue to strengthen the bonds of our Diaspora, and may He continue to bless our beloved Jamaica, land we love.

Happy Emanci-pendence!