



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**REMARKS BY**

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**DURING THE  
BLACK CHILDREN'S BOOK CHALLENGE: AUTHOR'S PAVILION  
"MEK WI READ TOGETHER"**

**ON**

**READ ACROSS JAMAICA DAY**

**3<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2022**

**VIRTUAL**

**Distinguished Ladies of the Jamaica Alumnae Chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, authors, students, guests, good morning.**

It gives me great pleasure to join you at this Author's Pavilion on Read Across Jamaica Day.

Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate the Jamaica Chapter of the Delta Sorority for having successfully collected over 700 children's books by black authors, for distribution to children in small schools and rural communities across the country. This contribution is truly significant not only in its reach but in its focus on presenting stories and characters that Jamaican children can identify with, as well as be inspired and uplifted by.

As Jamaica, and the world, seeks to recover from the scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are cognizant of the severe learning loss experienced especially at the primary and secondary levels. Indeed, the pandemic has exacerbated challenges that have been with us for many years, including the quality of education, education infrastructure and access to internet connectivity. Initiatives such as these that serve to reinforce cognitive development and well-being now take on renewed significance as we contend with the devastating impact on our most precious resources – our children.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Stimulating the interest of children and youth in the habit of reading, as well as motivating them to develop their literacy skills is essential. In addition to reading comprehension, it promotes creativity,

broadens vocabulary and assists in the development of good communication skills. Importantly, it also stimulates and develops innovative and critical thinking. By reading books, children may be introduced to other worlds and taught to understand and appreciate other cultures and language styles.

As a parent, I know that reading to your child from an early age enhances the bond between parent and child and encourages the desire to read and learn. In addition, investing time in reading with children as the theme suggests – whether as parents, guardians, teachers, or in this case, authors – and having them read to you contribute to building their self-confidence.

As our National Hero, the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey, once wrote:

**“If you haven’t confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life. With confidence, you have won even before you have started.”**

The act of reading with a child is a principal step in creating a space where mistakes are welcomed at an early stage of development, resulting in a willingness to receive correction and allowing them to learn from their errors. This will ultimately contribute to their confidence to undertake even greater challenges throughout life and enable them to reach their full potential.

This is essential not only for black children, but for our black boys in particular. In Jamaica, there is a challenge with low enrolment rates among our boys and so it is important to bolster our efforts to keep

them engaged. The perception of reading and academic activity should be promoted as one that will put them on the path to success, as opposed to negative lifestyles to which they may be exposed, with a view to moulding our boys into well-rounded individuals. Indeed, developing these fundamental skills creates a strong foundation that will help them to overcome the stereotypes and obstacles often faced by people of colour and minority groups across the world.

In closing, I wish to congratulate the Delta Sigma Theta Jamaica Alumnae Chapter on a very successful event. I am hopeful that, through our continued collective efforts, great progress will be achieved in improving literacy rates among young children in Jamaica and ensuring that no child is left behind.

Thank you.