



Message by

Senator the Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith

Minister of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade

In Commemoration of

Nelson Mandela International Day

18th July 2018

Jamaica joins the rest of the international community in commemorating ***Nelson Mandela International Day***, in honour of Nelson Rolihlahla 'Madiba' Mandela, an iconic figure whose life and legacy have left an indomitable mark, capturing the hearts and imagination of people all over the world across generations. This year's celebration is even more special as it is the centenary of Mandela's birth. The celebration gives us the opportunity to reiterate a commitment to heed his call to "*make of the world a better place*".

Nelson Mandela was a man of great resilience and, as we reflect on the immense contributions that he has made in the areas of peace, human rights and justice, to the benefit of the international community, we each have the opportunity to commit to "**Be the Legacy**", to act as a source of inspiration,

and to commit to actions that will have a positive and enduring impact on the lives of the persons within our community.

As President of post-apartheid South Africa, Nelson Mandela, with astute political skills, charted a new beginning for his country, overcoming decades of institutionalised discrimination, deep political divisions, inequality and disregard for human rights. His courage, farsightedness and fair-mindedness coupled with a forgiving spirit are amply demonstrated in his decision to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Commission's creation was a crucial part of the reconstruction process towards the unification of a segregated South Africa. It was Mandela's belief that reconciliation was the best route to confront South Africa's cruel past and to chart a future of hope for the country.

Pre-independent Jamaica was the first territory to declare a trade embargo against South Africa, and post-independent Jamaica remained at the helm of the international campaign against apartheid. Jamaica consistently and explicitly opposed the inhumane and racist regime in South Africa and supported all United Nations' decisions condemning its policies and demanding change. Mr. Mandela was our inspiration in our unwavering commitment to the fight for equal rights and justice. We are proud of our legacy and contribution to the ending of that brutal apartheid regime and freedom for Nelson Mandela.

As Jamaicans we can only be inspired by Nelson Mandela's legacy, which speaks to the best that humanity has to offer. Although he was South African, we in Jamaica also claim him as one of our own. Let us recall the tremendous value of his gifts to the world: his humility, his ability to forgive, his ability to overcome bitterness and hate, and his willingness to work with his enemies to achieve peace, prosperity and justice in his beloved nation.

Nelson Mandela's achievements and attributes have been tremendously inspiring for all of us and represent a great legacy for our young people. We must now all heed his call to action in the global fight against poverty and social injustice. As we celebrate Nelson Mandela Day on his centenary anniversary, let us all recommit to "Be the legacy" and to be the driver of change.