

**Message from the Hon. Mia Mottley, Q.C., M.P., Leader of the Opposition
of Barbados on the 51st Anniversary of Independence**

November 30, 2017

My Fellow Barbadians;

We have been at the crease for fifty years as a nation, which is but the blink of an eye in terms of nationhood. We acknowledge that our journey as a people started long before our Independence. But, as we embark on our second half-century it is time to take fresh guard so that our descendants who will celebrate our centenary in 2066 do so in a much better place than that which we find ourselves today.

51 years on from that rainy night in November 1966 the hopes and energy of a new nation have been replaced regrettably by doubt and a lack of confidence in the present generation that life can be better and more fulfilling. It therefore behooves us to draw on our innermost strength and on the experience and wisdom of generations past to make that link to the generation of today and tomorrow that we are a better people than our present circumstances suggest.

Many Barbadians are deeply anxious about the future. They know that all is not well. They are looking to their leaders to chart a clear path onwards. They know that we cannot simply wish our problems away.

The next decade will be critical in determining how and what future generations will celebrate on our centenary. It is never too late to be what you might have been, but we must act, and do so with the confidence that success can be ours once more with preparation, hard work and the lessons learnt from our past mistakes. It will take courage, compassion and communication, but as I said at a public engagement last week. “We can and we shall.”

Do not let anyone tell you otherwise. You do not have to accept excuses, broken promises nor failure. Every Barbadian deserves more and better than that. What those of us who stand together under the banner of the Barbados Labour Party offer is fairness, equal opportunity, accountability and prosperity.

On every journey there is always more than one way to reach your destination. What I can tell you today is that your journey with us will be one of certainty, consultation and a common goal that brings everyone on board. We know what our destination is. We have plotted the route and we know what it will take to get there.

We cannot be stubbornly blind to our challenges. Neither can we be antagonistic to those who offer solutions that are not pleasing to us or indeed that do not accord with our views.

There will be none of the cul-de-sacs, one-way streets and endless roundabouts that have been inflicted on you over the last decade. For sure there will be some hills to climb and they will be some sharp corners to negotiate, but my team has the skill, the resourcefulness, the experience and the commitment and the caring to keep us on the road and moving towards our goal.

For us Independence is really more than waving a flag and stirring up a national sentiment. It is about making Bajans confident of our future. It is about showing that we have it within ourselves to attain and expect excellence in all that we do. I have a deep and abiding faith my friends in the ability of every Barbadian to contribute to the success of our nation once given the opportunity to do so.

I therefore invite you, when the time comes, to join us as we embark on the next decade towards our first century as a nation. Together we can shape the future and improve on the present. In the words of our national anthem, so appropriately written:

“Upward and onward we shall go,

Inspired, exulting, free,

And greater will our nation grow

In strength and unity.”

I wish Barbadians everywhere a Happy Independence from the Barbados Labour Party family and on behalf of my own family. Let us celebrate secure in the knowledge that a better future awaits us and that we will be diligent in our duty to those of future generations, whom many of us will never meet, just as those who went before us have done for us.

This is our country and may God Bless it always.

Thank You!