



Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica

MESSAGE BY

HONOURABLE ROOSEVELT SKERRIT

PRIME MINISTER OF

THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA

On the occasion of the

36th Anniversary of Independence

Monday, November 3, 2014

Fellow Dominicans, residents, visitors and friends,

The celebration of our national independence presents the opportunity to highlight and showcase the many attributes that define our character as Dominicans. It is an occasion to recapture and project our folklore, our song, dance, music, dress cuisine and many of the other traditions that make us unique. But it is also a time to pause, to reflect on the progress we have made, to assess where we are, where we want to get to and determine how we can get there, remaining united, peaceful and strong.

Our theme for this year`s celebration “ Our Nation, Our Responsibility”, calls us temporarily to draw away from the fun and merrymaking and to take account of whether we have been faithful in discharging our responsibilities to ourselves, our families, our communities and to our country.

As Prime Minister and leader of the Dominica Labour Party, a party pledged to create opportunities for all Dominicans, and to lift up the weak and vulnerable who, if left on their own would fall through the cracks, we have used all the resources and talent at our disposal to live up to that pledge. But we will not rest, for there is still a lot to be accomplished.

One of the characteristics of a truly independent nation, is to be found in the recognition it gives to citizens who have blazed a trail of excellence and who have made profound sacrifice in service to the country and to the global community. This year, in addition to the traditional presentation of meritorious awards, our independence celebration is being punctuated with two flagship events honouring three Dominicans who have indelibly left their mark on this country. The renaming of the Melville Hall airport the Douglas – Charles airport, and the naming of the highway from Pond Casse to Melville Hall the Nicholas Joseph Orville Liverpool highway, not only adds one more chapter to the Dominica Story, but also represents the writing of Dominican history from a local perspective.

The two, Roosevelt Douglas and Pierre Charles, fought for and gave their lives in trying to create a new and free Dominica, free of the shackles of colonialism and at a time when the world was split into two ideological camps, allowing little wriggle room for small states like Dominica. Dr. Nicholas Liverpool, through his achievements in academia and the Law, has been one of the stalwarts in the development and modernization of Caribbean jurisprudence. He has discharged his responsibilities as law professor, Dean of the Faculty of Law of the University of the West Indies, legal consultant and ambassador, with distinction. Their names and their works will now be immortalized in the pages of our history. Let us move forward with our celebrations guided by the examples of discipline, commitment to service and loyalty to Dominica exhibited by these three gentlemen.

To those of you visiting and those reconnecting with family and friends, I extend a warm and fraternal welcome. To you all, let us celebrate our thirty sixth (36th) independence anniversary with a sense of responsibility, remembering that the sun will rise tomorrow when we continue the task of taking up our individual and collective responsibilities in building our nation.

May god bless Dominica.