

Independence Message 2003

By His Excellency Sir Daniel Williams, GCMG, QC

Governor General

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Citizens and friends of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, we review our plans and goals from time to time in life. Traditionally, anniversaries are the usual occasions for such stocktaking and reviews.

Our twenty-ninth (29th) Anniversary of the Independence of Grenada is an appropriate time for us to take stock of ourselves as a nation, to review our past, take cognizance of our present situation and to have regard to the future. Our past is well documented. We traversed from Colonialism to Independence.

As we recall many independent countries that have been in existence for several hundreds of years, we should consider our twenty-nine years as very new in the arena of Independence.

We started our Independence with some turbulence and somewhat in the dark. Many of us might recall that in the celebration of our first Independence, electricity failed and left the nation in the dark.

During our years of Independence we have had some good and some difficult years. These ups and downs should not be too surprising because progress is usually accompanied by upsets and difficulties.

Sometimes we even forget that we only have twenty-nine years of Independence and we ungraciously try to compare ourselves with countries that have their Independence for several hundreds of years.

We sometimes ignore that all those countries have had their own rough periods. Many of them much more turbulent than Grenada. For example, the English had beheaded their king and the Americans had their civil war.

When we take into account the size, population and the natural and human resources of our country, I will not hesitate to state that nationally, regionally and internationally, we have done reasonably well, but we must acknowledge we could have done better. We will not become a more prosperous nation accidentally. We have to plan and administer those plans correctly.

It is in this context that the theme for this year's celebration "Promoting Economic Growth through Private Investment and Human Development" is so relevant. Private investment suggests that individuals and private corporations will take initiatives to invest for the economic growth of the country, rather than depending on Government for providing nearly all the required goods and services.

It is generally accepted that when people are self-employed or they are part owners in the firm or company, they take more interest in the business, than when they are working as public servants. I must emphasise the point of human development. Everyone benefits when a talented person is involved in an endeavour.

There is no substitute for ability. The people who make great progress for themselves and contribute to their countries and the world, are the people who are truly accomplished.

The countries that are highly developed have a background of highly educated and skilled inhabitants. There are countries with vast natural resources and are yet poorly developed; there are countries with very scant natural resources, which are rich and enjoy high standards of living. The success or failure of countries is dependent on the development of their human resources.

We should all aim at continually developing ourselves. We should not think of development as limited to children in schools and students at universities. Continuing to develop ourselves as

individuals is like good maintenance, always looking attractive. The challenges of the world are many and exciting.

If people continue to develop themselves they will be better able to face the challenges of tomorrow. The theme for this year's Independence celebration is prudent in that it is suggesting the foundation for a better tomorrow.

We should all endeavour to make this world a better place; but we must admit our limitations because the future we do not know. That future is in the hands of God. Therefore whatever we do for ourselves and others, we must always keep in mind that ultimately, we are sustained by the mercy and grace of God.

I have great confidence in the future of Grenada because I know of many brilliant and God-fearing youths who will be the successors of their adults.

I take this opportunity to wish all the citizens and friends of Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique, a happy Independence Day and a future of abundant success and happiness.