

# **Independence Message 2001**

**By Prime Minister Dr. the Hon. Keith Mitchell**

**7 February 2001**

Fellow Grenadians. In celebrating our 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence, it is important for us, individually and collectively, to acknowledge that the development of our people has taken on new dimensions in this new millennium.

The attainment of Independence in 1974 was achieved because our forefathers recognized that the time had come for Grenada to determine its own destiny. It was time for Grenada to make its own decisions regarding trading partners, foreign policy and other important external pursuits, as well as the internal developments taking place domestically.

We needed recognition as an independent nation by such international bodies as the United Nations. We, as a people, needed our own identity.

This has been an evolutionary process and we recognize that the quest for Independence never really ends. It is an ongoing process that is determined by our own decisions, as well as influences emanating from far beyond our shores.

Today, as we celebrate the anniversary of our Independence, it is fitting that we reflect on how we respond to the changes taking place in the world. We need to ensure that we do not sacrifice our Independence as we seek to come to terms with the international forces of trade liberalisation and globalisation that grip the world today.

I am convinced, fellow Grenadians, that our identity as a Nation and our ongoing quest to maintain and enhance our Independence are contingent on the empowerment of our people.

In other words, the quality of the development of our human resources will determine our future. And, in this millennium, in order for our people to develop we need knowledge. We need to harness that knowledge through training, and accept the fact that information and communication technologies are opening doors to untold opportunities for you.

By declaring the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Knowledge Enhancement Decade, it was my intention to raise awareness among Grenadians, at home and abroad, of the need to utilise advancements in technology to prepare ourselves for the challenges ahead.

I believe this is beginning to happen. Indeed, I am very encouraged by the achievements of some of our young people in their academic and athletic endeavours.

Moreover, the diversification of our economy has exposed thousands of Grenadians to new career horizons through jobs in the areas of telecommunications, information technology, financial services and manufacturing.

Technology has also enabled some of our farmers and many of our business entrepreneurs to improve productivity and expand operations.

However, we have only just begun. There is much more to be accomplished to ensure that every single family throughout Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique has the opportunity to utilise technology to improve living standards.

I therefore encourage all Grenadians, at home and abroad, to embrace the theme of our 27th anniversary of Independence – National development through the integration of information and communication technologies and human resource training.

Let us all commit ourselves to national development by accepting the fact that information and communication technologies must become an integral part of our lives – in our homes, in our work places, during our recreational activities, in our schools, on our farms, in our institutions and all other areas.

I urge you to take advantage of training opportunities in our schools and our communities. Make a sacrifice and acquire a household computer. Open your families to the world of knowledge. Government, for its part, is taking measures to do what it can to support your efforts in this regard.

Training is the key. In this regard, Government has provided many training opportunities for our citizens, including public officers, to ensure our Country will thrive in the global community. These opportunities will expand during the coming year through various Government programmes and projects.

Fellow Grenadians, as we begin yet another year as an Independent Nation, I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Government of Grenada, to extend best wishes for joyous and safe Independence celebrations at home and abroad. With God's grace we will continue to progress as "one people, one family." Thank you.