



Message From
Her Excellency Sylvanie Burton, D.AH.,
President of the Commonwealth of Dominica
On the Occasion of the 46th Anniversary of Dominica's Independence
3rd November, 2024
Theme: "Péyi Nou, Kado Nou" - "Our Country, Our Gift."

My fellow citizens, residents and visitors, I address you with immense pride and gratitude as together we celebrate the 46th Anniversary of our Independence under the theme "Péyi Nou, Kado Nou" - "Our country, Our Gift." On this our National Day and the Forty-sixth Anniversary of the attainment of our Independence, my husband and family join me in extending heartfelt congratulations and further extend best wishes of peace, prosperity and unity to Dominicans both here and in the diaspora.

In 1876, when only the Kalinago people occupied this beautiful land, Mr. William Palgrave wrote of Dominica; I quote: -

"In the wild grandeur of its towering mountains, some of which rise to five thousand feet above the level of the sea: in the majesty of its almost impenetrable forests, in the gorgeousness of its vegetation, the abruptness of its precipices, the calm of its lakes, the violence of its torrents, the sublimity of its waterfalls, it stands without a rival, not in the West Indies only, but I should think throughout the whole island catalogue of the Atlantic and Pacific combined". This quote, my fellow Dominicans, encapsulates the theme under which we celebrate our National Day this year and it also recreates an image of what we have come to know, love and appreciate of our beloved country.

This year's theme, "Péyi Nou, Kado Nou" - "Our Country, Our Gift" resonates deeply within us, urging us to reflect on the remarkable blessings we enjoy and the responsibilities we share as stewards of this island we call home. Dominica is a land of stunning natural beauty – our lush rainforests, majestic mountains and pristine rivers are not just backdrops to our lives, they are an integral part of our identity. Each breathtaking view serves as a constant reminder of the priceless gift that God and our ancestors have entrusted to us. It is our duty therefore, to cherish and protect this precious gift to ensure that it thrives for generations to come. However, beyond our physical landscape, God has blessed us with many other gifts; the warmth of our people, the richness of our culture and the resilience of our spirit.

Over the last year, as a nation we celebrated with six new centenarians. Yet another gift with which Dominica has been blessed; is the longevity of its people. I take this opportunity to again congratulate each one of our treasures.

Also, In August of this year, we as a Nation celebrated with pride the outstanding achievement of a true Dominican gift, Mrs. Thea Lafond- Gadson for winning a gold medal in the Women's Triple Jump at the 2024 Paris Olympics making this Dominica's first Olympic Gold medal. On Independence Day, I will bestow onto Mrs. Lafond-Gadson, our country's highest award, "**The Dominica Award of Honour**". Let us never forget how we appreciated the hard work and dedication that led to the win by Thea. I implore each of us, therefore to emulate these qualities as we strive collectively to further develop our beloved country.

Today, I invite each of you to reflect on the many accomplishments of our nation over the last forty-six years. We indeed, have a lot to be grateful for and as we look to the future, let us advocate for the well-being of each citizen, ensuring that no one is left behind in our quest for further development. Several projects and major initiatives are underway, which we expect to improve our economy and boost our livelihoods and as such we must harness our collective potential including the youth, for they are indeed the future leaders and innovators of Dominica.

We are still in the hurricane season, and while we thank our Heavenly Father for sparing us from the ravages of storms and hurricanes so far this season, we remember and keep in our prayers the residents of our sister islands of Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Petite Martinique, Carriacou and Jamaica; we also remember the residents of South Florida who were battered severely by Hurricane Milton. We pray that the good Lord will continue to protect us from all future natural disasters. Climate Change is real. We cannot prevent climatic disasters however we can each make an effort to take every action possible to mitigate against these disasters.

Let us continue to honor our heritage, celebrate our country, our people, and our natural beauty as together we join hands and hearts to commit to building a more resilient and sustainable future for all Dominicans.

May the Good Lord bless and favor us with an enjoyable, memorable and peaceful 46th Anniversary of Independence.