

VALUES & ATTITUDES

“CONTINUING THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE”

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1996

JAMAICA CONFERENCE CENTRE

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Today marks two years since I convened the first National Consultation for promoting better Values and Attitudes.

Even then, it was already clear to me that the erosion of moral and ethical principles, the marked deterioration in acceptable standards of behaviour together with the escalation of criminal violence, disregard for the rights of others at the workplace or in the communities where we live render economic growth and social development much more difficult.

Unfortunately, there were many who saw my concerns through the narrow lens of partisan politics. There were also the cynics who hold the view that ^{it} is better to harp always on our problems than make any attempt to find a solution.

Fortunately, there is that band of patriotic well thinking Jamaicans whose commitment to nation building made them natural allies in the campaign for better values and attitudes.

These include so many of our popular artists who are now writing conscious lyrics and encouraging the youth with positive vibrations. I want to commend them. At the same time, there has been an increase in number of well thought out initiatives from the church, service clubs, educational institutions and community organizations.

The “Pals Initiative” Programme which is aimed particularly at our young student population is now well established. It is complemented by the “Howdy & Tenky” Programme.

However, nowhere was this growing awareness of the importance of the National Campaign evident than in the 6 regional workshops in which I participated.

From these deliberations came some well thought out recommendations, several of which have since been implemented.

These include:

1. Reintroduction of the National Youth Service
2. Establishment of Family Centres
3. Introduction of a dedicated School Bus System
4. A re-examination of National Symbols
5. Legislation to facilitate forfeiture of assets accruing from drug dealings.
6. Introduction of new laws to deal with sexual offenders

7. A national committee and non-partisan social committees for allocation of Government Land.
8. A new system for the award of public contracts.
9. Local Government Reform
10. Pride Programme
11. Integrated Community Development Programme

From the inception, it was evident that this programme could only move forward on the basis of a renewed social agenda which would open the door of opportunity for personal and national development.

It has to be an agenda which would involve the state, the voluntary community and the people, especially the one million young people in a social partnership to bring out the abundance of talent

which resides in each and every one of the Jamaican people.

Hence the launch of the Social Agenda last November was an important milestone bringing with it the re-organisation of the SDC as the primary instrument for implementing and coordinating social programmes in the communities.

All our social institutions were a casualty of the Structural Adjustment Programmes which began in the 80's. Even the multilateral lending agencies now admit that this was a colossal mistake.

The ending of our borrowing relationships with the IMF, and the cessation of structural adjustment loans enable us to take our own sovereign adjustment loans and enable us to take our own sovereign decisions. But, we cannot make up for years of accumulated neglect overnight.

The social investment fund represents a major shift of lending policies. It is a triumph for our repeated advocacy and insistence that economic policies cannot succeed without enlightened social programmes.

I have spoken about one million people.. The greatest asset we possess, a reserve greater than the record 475 million dollars we now have in foreign exchange reserves.

To some of us, our youth is a major problem. I prefer to see this as our greatest challenge and opportunity. Our young people have achieved the highest standards in the world in a number of fields. In the field of cricket our West Indies Cricket team is world famous. In the field of athletics, our male and female athletes continue to surprise and amaze the world generation.

In the field of popular culture, we Jamaicans, an island of 2 ½ million people and in particular, the one million young people of this country are the only people in the world outside of North America and Europe who have created during this century, a popular culture and music which has impacted on the entire world.

What this goes to show that although we have problems we also have formidable assets.

We have to make opportunities available for development of our one million so that the level of excellence we have achieved in sports and music can be transferred to the economy. The level of ingenuity for which our people is famous, not only in music and sports, but in manufacturing in the modern service sectors - financial, information systems and other services, in food processing, in new and innovative areas in tourism, in the field of education, scientific research and development.

This is the perspective we must bring to our Social Agenda and the National Industrial Policy.

None of our social programmes can be achieving by the efforts of the Government along^e.

Apart from the fact that the Government has limited resources, the process of development can only be lasting if the people themselves play an active part in the development process. It is clearly the duty of Government to give the lead to this process and we intend to do everything in our power to discharge our responsibilities. In its very nature, for a Social Agenda to have lasting results, it must be based on a Social Partnership. This is an imperative for the Nation.

Mine is a vision in which Government, the voluntary community, the millions in the schools, both students and teachers, the youths on the corner, the people in the community, the private sector will join in a partnership for the development of the Jamaican people.

The challenges that Jamaica faces in the twenty first century are great. There is no doubt that we can meet those challenges if we rely on the creativity of our people, if we invest in the development of their talent and if we work together as a team.

A vast majority of the poor pay utmost respect for the law and reflect due care and consideration for the good and welfare of those around them. Most are models of exemplary behaviour, showing kindness and courtesy to all.

This is not to suggest that you cannot be virtuous only if you are poor.

Indeed, all the consultations have confirmed that we have to tackle the issues of poverty urgently and comprehensively so as to create the most conducive climate for fostering the values and attitudes we all regard as acceptable.

To help in achieving this, we must improve the physical and social conditions in the country, we must also accelerate economic growth, boost production, increase employment and secure way improvements which are based on real productivity gains. That is why we must build on the sound foundations we have laid, at such great sacrifice. Hence my call for a Social Partnership.

It has to involve each and every one of us. But we have to make the start, by bringing together at the negotiating table, the principal players, the Government, the Private Sector, and the Trade Unions,

so that we hammer out a National Understanding as to how best we proceed from here.

It is a difficult undertaking, but it is so crucial that we must overcome the odds, no matter how formidable they now appear.

I hope no one will deliberately seek to derail the process in order to secure partisan political advantage. I have every reason to hope that no one is approaching the exercise with any feeling of obstinacy. We have far too much to lose if we fail.

We all recognize that inflation is a monster, but if we were to bring it to an immediate halt, simply by monetary and fiscal measures alone, it would result in costs that the society could not afford further unemployment, industrial strife, civil unrest and a further

reduction in social services.

So we all will have to give something to get what we all seek. The Government is putting on the table its clear position as to what we can do.

So today we are heartened and encouraged by every sign of progress in our endeavour. As we gather for this continuing dialogue, it is imperative that at the end of the day we agree on where we go from here to ensure the success of our national campaign for better values and attitudes.

Our experience so far reveals the extent to which the success of this campaign is going to demand enforcement of the laws of the land and compliance with regulations at every level.

The environmentalists in our midst are only too familiar with the nightmare that illegal mining and quarrying together with unplanned squatter communities are creating, making planned physical development impossible.

This cannot continue.

It is the responsibility of the state to see that laws are enforced and it is the duty of every citizen to comply.

In the vital area of education and training, we have to face the problem that the environment which exists in many of our learning institutions is far from satisfactory.

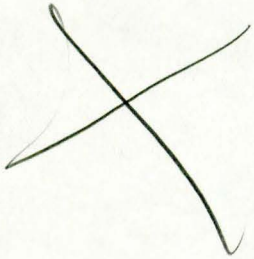
A clean classroom and an orderly school compound are essential to a learning environment in which sound values and attitudes are going to be inculcated.

The arsenal of weapons which is increasingly finding a place in school bags cannot be condoned.

So in your deliberations, please bear in mind that I am anxiously looking forward to the recommendations you will be making as to how the state and the community can together make the enforcement of our laws and compliance with our regulations an integral part of our national culture.

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TODAY MARKS 2 YEARS SINCE I CONVENED THE FIRST NATIONAL CONSULTATION FOR PROMOTING BETTER VALUES AND ATTITUDES.

EVEN THEN IT WAS ALREADY CLEAR TO ME THAT THE EROSION OF MORAL AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES, THE MARKED DETERIORATION IN ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR TOGETHER WITH THE ESCALATION OF ~~G~~ AND CRIMINAL VIOLENCE, DISREGARD FOR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS AT THE WORKPLACE OR IN THE COMMUNITIES WHERE WE LIVE RENDER ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT.

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE WERE MANY WHO SAW MY CONCERNS THROUGH THE NARROW LENS OF PARTISAN POLITICS, ^{There were also} ~~AS WELL AS~~ THE CYNICS WHO HOLD THE VIEW THAT IS BETTER TO HARP ALWAYS ON OUR PROBLEMS THAN MAKE ANY ATTEMPT TO FIND A SOLUTION.

FORTUNATELY, THERE IS THAT BAND OF PATRIOTIC WELL THINKING

JAMAICANS WHOSE COMMITMENT TO NATION BUILDING MADE THEM
NATURAL ALLIES IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER VALUES AND ATTITUDES.

THESE INCLUDE SO MANY OF OUR POPULAR ARTISTS, WHO ARE NOW
WRITING CONSCIOUS LYRICS AND ENCOURAGING THE YOUTH WITH
POSITIVE VIBRATIONS, I WANT TO COMMEND THEM. AT THE SAME TIME,
^{for her} THERE IS AN INCREASE IN NUMBER OF WELL THOUGHT OUT INITIATIVES
FROM THE CHURCH, SERVICE CLUBS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND
COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS.

THE "PALS INITIATIVE" PROGRAMME WHICH IS AIMED PARTICULARLY AT
OUR YOUNG STUDENT POPULATION IS NOW WELL ESTABLISHED, AND ^{It is} AND
COMPLEMENTED BY THE "HOWDY TENKY" PROGRAMME.

HOWEVER, NOWHERE WAS THIS GROWING AWARENESS OF THE
IMPORTANCE OF THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN EVIDENT THAN IN THE ~~Q~~
(REGIONAL WORKSHOPS IN WHICH I PARTICIPATED.

FROM THESE DELIBERATIONS CAME SOME WELL THOUGHT OUT
^{recommendations} RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE SINCE BEEN IMPLEMENTED. THESE

INCLUDE:

1. REINTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE
2. ESTABLISHMENT OF FAMILY CENTRES
3. INTRODUCTION OF A DEDICATED SCHOOL SYSTEM
4. A RE-EXAMINATION OF NATIONAL SYMBOLS
5. LEGISLATION TO FACILITATE FORFEITURE OF ASSETS ACCRUING FROM DRUG DEALINGS.
6. INTRODUCTION OF NEW LAWS TO DEAL WITH SEXUAL OFFENDERS
7. A NATIONAL COMMITTEE AND NON-PARTISAN SOCIAL COMMITTEES FOR ALLOCATION OF GOVERNMENT LAND
8. A NEW SYSTEM FOR THE AWARD OF PUBLIC CONTRACTS

9. *Local Govt Reform -*

*Pride Programme
Integrated Community Dev't*

FROM THE INCEPTION IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THIS PROGRAMME COULD ONLY MOVE FORWARD ON THE BASIS OF A RENEWED SOCIAL AGENDA WHICH WOULD OPEN THE DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. *U. A. L. H.* AN AGENDA WHICH WOULD INVOLVE THE STATE, THE VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY AND THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE ONE MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE IN A SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP TO BRING OUT THE ABUNDANCE OF TALENT WHICH RESIDES IN EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THE JAMAICAN PEOPLE.

HENCE, THE LAUNCH OF THE SOCIAL AGENDA LAST NOVEMBER WAS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE BRINGING WITH IT THE RE-ORGANISATION OF THE SDC AS THE PRIMARY INSTRUMENT FOR IMPLEMENTING AND COORDINATING SOCIAL PROGRAMMES IN THE COMMUNITIES.

ALL OUR SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS WERE A CASUALTY OF THE STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES WHICH BEGAN IN THE 80'S. EVEN THE MULTILATERAL LENDING AGENCIES NOW ADMIT THAT THIS WAS A COLOSSAL MISTAKE.

THE ENDING OF OUR BORROWING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE IMF, AND THE CESSATION OF STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT LOANS ENABLE US TO TAKE OUR OWN SOVEREIGN DECISIONS. BUT, WE CANNOT MAKE UP FOR YEARS OF ACCUMULATED NEGLECT OVERNIGHT.

THE SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND REPRESENTS A MAJOR SHIFT OF LENDING POLICIES. IT IS A TRIUMPH FOR OUR REPEATED ADVOCACY AND INSISTENCE THAT ECONOMIC POLICIES CANNOT SUCCEED WITHOUT ENLIGHTENED SOCIAL PROGRAMMES.

I HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT ONE MILLION PEOPLE THE GREATEST ASSET WE

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POSSESS, A RESERVE GREATER THAN THE RECORD 460 MILLION DOLLARS
WE NOW HAVE IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES.

TO SOME OF US, OUR YOUTH IS A MAJOR PROBLEM, BUT I PREFER TO SEE
THIS AS OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY. OUR YOUNG
PEOPLE HAVE ACHIEVED THE HIGHEST STANDARDS IN THE WORLD IN A
NUMBER OF FIELDS. IN THE FIELD OF CRICKET OUR WEST INDIES CRICKET
TEAM IS WORLD FAMOUS. IN THE FIELD OF ATHLETICS, OUR MALE AND
FEMALE ATHLETES CONTINUE TO SURPRISE AND AMAZE THE WORLD
GENERATION.

IN THE FIELD OF POPULAR CULTURE, WE JAMAICANS AN ISLAND OF 2½
MILLION PEOPLE AND IN PARTICULAR THE ONE MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE OF
THIS COUNTRY ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE IN THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF NORTH
AMERICA AND EUROPE WHO HAVE CREATED A POPULAR CULTURE AND
MUSIC WHICH HAS IMPACTED ON THE ENTIRE WORLD.

WHAT THIS GOES TO SHOW THAT ALTHOUGH WE HAVE PROBLEMS WE
ALSO HAVE FORMIDABLE ASSETS

WE HAVE TO MAKE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF

OUR ONE MILLION SO THAT THE LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE WE^{Have} ACHIEVED IN SPORTS AND IN MUSIC CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO THE ECONOMY. THE LEVEL OF INGENUITY FOR WHICH OUR PEOPLE IS FAMOUS, NOT ONLY IN MUSIC AND SPORTS BUT IN MANUFACTURING IN THE MODERN SERVICE SECTORS - FINANCIAL, INFORMATION SYSTEMS OTHER SERVICES, IN FOOD PROCESSING IN NEW AND INNOVATIVE AREAS IN TOURISM, IN THE FIELD OF FIELD OF EDUCATION, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

THIS IS THE PERSPECTIVE WE MUST BRING TO OUR SOCIAL AGENDA AND THE NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL POLICY.

NONE OF OUR SOCIAL PROGRAMMES CAN BE ACHIEVED BY THE EFFORTS OF THE GOVERNMENT ALONE. APART FROM THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS LIMITED RESOURCES, THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT CAN ONLY BE LASTING IF THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES PLAY AN ACTIVE PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS. IT IS CLEARLY THE DUTY OF GOVERNMENT TO GIVE THE LEAD TO THIS PROCESS AND WE INTEND TO DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO DISCHARGE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES. IN ITS VERY NATURE, FOR A SOCIAL AGENDA TO HAVE LASTING RESULTS, IT MUST BE BASED ON A SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP. THIS IS AN IMPERATIVE FOR THE NATION.

MINE IS A VISION IN WHICH GOVERNMENT, THE VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY, THE MILLIONS IN THE SCHOOLS, BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS, THE YOUTHS ON THE CORNER, THE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY, THE PRIVATE SECTOR WILL JOIN IN A PARTNERSHIP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE JAMAICAN PEOPLE.

THE CHALLENGES THAT JAMAICA FACES IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY ARE GREAT. THERE IS NO DOUBT WE CAN MEET THOSE CHALLENGES IF WE RELY ON THE CREATIVITY OF OUR PEOPLE, IF WE INVEST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR TALENT AND IF WE WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM.

A VAST MAJORITY OF THE POOR PAY UTMOST RESPECT FOR THE LAW AND REFLECT DUE CARE AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THOSE AROUND THEM. MOST ARE MODELS OF EXEMPLARY BEHAVIOUR, SHOWING KINDNESS ^{AND} THE COURTESY TO ALL.

This is not to suggest that you cannot be virtuous only if you are also poor.

Indeed BUT ALL THE CONSULTATIONS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT WE HAVE TO TACKLE THE ISSUES OF POVERTY URGENTLY AND COMPREHENSIVELY SO AS TO CREATE THE MOST CONDUCTIVE CLIMATE FOR FOSTERING THE VALUES AND ATTITUDES WE ALL REGARD AS ACCEPTABLE.

TO HELP IN ACHIEVING THIS WE MUST IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY, WE MUST ALSO ACCELERATE ECONOMIC GROWTH, BOOST PRODUCTION, INCREASE EMPLOYMENT AND SECURE WAGE IMPROVEMENTS WHICH ARE BASED ON REAL PRODUCTIVITY GAINS. THAT IS WHY WE MUST BUILD ON THE SOUND FOUNDATIONS WE HAVE LAID, AT SUCH GREAT SACRIFICE. HENCE MY CALL FOR A SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP. IT HAS TO INVOLVE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US. BUT WE HAVE TO MAKE THE START, BY BRINGING TOGETHER AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE, THE PRINCIPAL PLAYERS, THE GOVERNMENT, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE TRADE UNIONS, SO THAT WE HAMMER OUT AN *at national* UNDERSTANDING AS TO HOW BEST WE PROCEED FROM HERE.

IT IS A DIFFICULT UNDERTAKING, BUT IT IS SO CRUCIAL THAT WE MUST OVERCOME THE ODDS, NO MATTER HOW FORMIDABLE THEY NOW APPEAR.

I HOPE NO ONE WILL DELIBERATELY SEEK TO DERAIL THE PROCESS IN ORDER TO SECURE PARTISAN POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. I HAVE EVERY REASON TO HOPE THAT NO ONE IS APPROACHING THE EXERCISE WITH ANY FEELING OF *destiny* WE HAVE FAR TOO MUCH TO LOOSE IF WE FAIL.

WE ALL RECOGNISE THAT INFLATION IS A MONSTER, BUT IF WE WERE TO

BRING IT TO AN IMMEDIATE HALT, SIMPLY BY MONETARY AND FISCAL MEASURES ALONE, IT WOULD RESULT IN COSTS THAT THE SOCIETY COULD NOT AFFORD/FURTHER^{un} EMPLOYMENT, INDUSTRIAL STRIFE, CIVIL UNREST AND A FURTHER REDUCTION IN SOCIAL SERVICES.

SO WE ALL WILL HAVE TO GIVE SOMETHING TO GET WHAT WE ALL SEEK. THE GOVERNMENT IS PUTTING ON THE TABLE ITS CLEAR POSITION AS TO WHAT WE CAN DO.

SO TODAY WE ARE HEARTENED AND ENCOURAGED BY EVERY SIGN OF PROGRESS IN OUR ENDEAVOUR. AS WE GATHER FOR THIS CONTINUING DIALOGUE, IT IMPERATIVE THAT AT THE END OF THE DAY WE AGREE ON WHERE WE GO FROM HERE TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF OUR NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER VALUES AND ATTITUDES.

OUR EXPERIENCE SO FAR REVEALS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUCCESS OF THIS CAMPAIGN IS GOING TO DEMAND ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS OF THE LAND AND COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS AT EVERY LEVEL.

Zanu Dlamini

THE ENVIRONMENTALISTS IN OUR MIDST ARE ONLY TOO FAMILIAR WITH THE NIGHTMARE THAT ILLEGAL MINING AND QUARRYING TOGETHER WITH

UNPLANNED SQUATTER COMMUNITIES ARE CREATING, MAKING PLANNED PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT IMPOSSIBLE.

THIS CANNOT CONTINUE.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE TO SEE THAT LAWS ARE ENFORCED AND IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY CITIZEN TO COMPLY.

IN THE VITAL AREA OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING WE HAVE TO FACE THE PROBLEM THAT THE ENVIRONMENT WHICH EXISTS IN MANY OF OUR LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IS FAR FROM SATISFACTORY.

A CLEAN CLASSROOM AND A AN ORDERLY SCHOOL COMPOUND ARE ESSENTIAL TO A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH SOUND VALUES AND ATTITUDES ARE GOING TO BE INCULCATED.

THE ARSENAL OF WEAPONS WHICH IS INCREASINGLY FINDING A PLACE IN SCHOOL BAGS CANNOT BE CONDONED.

SO IN YOUR DELIBERATIONS PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT I AM ANXIOUSLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS YOU WILL BE MAKING AS

TO HOW THE STATE AND THE COMMUNITY CAN TOGETHER MAKE THE
ENFORCEMENT OF OUR LAWS AND COMPLIANCE WITH OUR REGULATIONS
AND INTEGRAL PART OF OUR NATIONAL CULTURE .

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