

**ADDRESS BY
RT. HON. P.J. PATTERSON, PC, QC, MP
PRIME MINISTER
TO REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON VALUES AND ATTITUDES
FRENCHMAN'S COVE, PORTLAND
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 1994**

I want to begin with a special word of thanks to all those members of the community who have worked so hard to get this venue in shape so that we could hold this meeting here today. It demonstrates what I have always known – that given the right motivation, there is nothing that we Jamaicans cannot do.

This is the third in a series of Consultations which have all been characterized by high levels of attendance and participation. I see that today is no exception. I am confident that the levels of interest and the innovative ideas that will be put forward will equal those of our previous consultations.

I am heartened by the high levels of support and interest which my call for a radical change in the values and attitudes which prevail in our society today.

Every well-thinking Jamaican, is rightfully concerned with the deterioration in moral standards, the materialism, the indiscipline and the discourtesy that permeates our social interaction with each other. Another manifestation of adverse change in our social environment is the increase in crime and violence and the link between these and drug abuse and drug trafficking. We are all concerned about corruption; the emergence of values of instant gratification and consumerism. We are witnessing the breakdown of family structures. The influence of institutions such as the Church and the school is diminishing.

We have defined the symptoms very clearly. The challenge therefore is to find the cure. This is no easy task. This is what these Consultations are about. We must develop a new social order that brings about change in the way we behave; change in what we expect of ourselves and of each other; we must return to the standards and values that ensure personal development and facilitate economic development. The two are inextricably linked.

The problems of unacceptably low standards and values, the increase in crime and materialism is not unique to Jamaica. Other countries around the world are suffering the same problems and are examining their economic and social structures in their own search for solutions to this dilemma.

It falls to the State to establish patterns of conduct and rules of behaviour through appropriate laws and the capacity to enforce them. Respect for, and obedience to, these laws will rest on the degree of their public acceptance.

That is why the participation of citizens in the formulation or revision of our laws is vital – through all our democratic processes. The integrity of our democratic institutions and the deepening of the democratic process are essential to good governance.

Community

I firmly believe that it is at the community level that the process of national development begins. Without strong leadership and participation at the local level, national programmes are in danger of being irrelevant, impractical and difficult, if not impossible to enforce. This is why we place so much emphasis on the improvement of the delivery of social services at the community level.

It is through our social service agencies that we begin to develop a commitment to working together for the benefit of the members of community. The social service agencies of Government must be driven by the expressed needs of the community. The best social programmes are built on ideas which spring from the community and receive support by the Government through the relevant agencies.

We want not only to hear your views, but will take them into account when developing national programmes.

Currently, there are a number of social service agencies but too many of them seem to be duplicating the services that others provide. We have undertaken rationalization of service delivery at the community level in order to increase efficiency and to be more cost-effective.

There will be a participative and integrated approach to social service delivery which is to be implemented through inter-agency collaboration aimed at improving the quality of service to communities. This is to be effected through physical integration of staff and rationalization and integration of the functions of the social service agencies.

The new service delivery process aims at:

- educating and motivating people to self-help
- developing responsible local leadership
- enabling citizens to develop and maintain harmonious relationships.

In order to maximize the use of resources, 31 development zones for community service purposes are to be developed with each parish having at least one Family Centre. For Portland, Buff Bay is the proposed location and for St. Thomas, the proposed location is Springfield.

We will be consulting with community groups to ensure that the new arrangement will have the desired objective.

In a very real way, our efforts at national development, are going to be judged by the impact we make on national culture.

✕ The word culture I use here in the widest sense to imply all the means by which we as a people express ourselves.

Increasingly, for large numbers of our young people sports and popular music are seen as not only leisure time activities but opportunities for bettering themselves economically and socially.

In both areas taking into account our size and population, Jamaica's impact on the world has been nothing short of phenomenal.

As the last Olympics came to an end Juliet Cuthbert and Winthrop Graham had joined Merlene Ottey at the very pinnacle of international athletic success.

✕ The world culture I use here in the widest sense to imply all the means by which we as a people express ourselves.

Even 13 years after his death we are still being reminded that Bob Marley is the best known Jamaican of all times and I don't think Jimmy Cliff is far behind.

It is in these two areas that the energies of our young people are being increasingly deployed. And so we must create the framework to allow for a disciplined and structured development which brings out the best in us.

Recently, in a discussion with some of our artistes, the phenomenon of deejaying as the dominant musical form was discussed. This is a subject which many have used to illustrate the weaknesses of the popular culture. Our young people will need greater access to guitars, violins, trumpets, saxophones and pianos, to reproduce the Monty Alexanders, Ernie Ranglins, the Don Drummonds, the Tommy McCooks, or the Steve Woodhams.

This administration is now at the point where a major initiative in the cultural sphere is about to take off. The Cultural Training Centre will be empowered to fulfill its responsibilities to the nation by providing a wide range of training programmes.

We need not only specialists but large numbers of cultural agents to nurture and develop the vast talent in the island and performing arts. The Schools of Art, Drama, Music and Dance need to design courses that will take into account the special needs of performers and part-time artistes.

The Cultural Development Commission will then be able to specialize in the design and staging of such competitions and exhibitions as to bring the work of our young artistes to the attention of the entire society.

Jamaica's cultural riches should be nurtured and be the complement of a thriving tourist industry. Every citizen of Jamaica and every visitor to our shores should be able to enjoy the best of our cultural efforts.

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The social Development Commission, with its cadre of field officers, will focus on streamlining delivery of services to the community.

Better Values and Attitudes

I have touched on the subjects of local government and plans for new initiatives in cultural development.

"What does this have to do with moral standards, with better values and attitudes?" some ask. The connection is clear. There must be standards of conduct and a common understanding of the values by which the entire society can function. The attitude and behaviour of one individual, one group of citizens can affect, for good or ill, every member of a community and the nation as a whole.

It is up to us to set the standards that we are prepared to accept. During the past ten years or so, we seem to have lost our way. We do not have to accept the indiscipline on our roads, the lack of respect for our national institutions, the "get rich quick" mentality which condones corruption as long as it is in pursuit of material wealth; the crime and violence perpetrated on us by our own fellow Jamaicans. We must have the courage to say "STOP! ENOUGH!" I believe we have now reached that stage. I believe that we can and must begin to re-

organize our social institutions to set acceptable standards. We must each of us accept our individual responsibility for what our nation has become. To refuse to do so is to become a part of the problem.

Conclusion

Today is the beginning of a new phase for the community you represent. This is your opportunity to be part of the new era. In your workshops, you will have the opportunity to put forward ideas and to suggest how best to improve what we have or to re-organize.

This Administration respects your experience and your ability to make a meaningful contribution. We all know that the reward for hard work is more work, so when we have analyzed the suggestions from all our Consultations, we will be back in your communities for the implementation process.

I wish you a stimulating and productive day.