

ADDRESS

BY

PRIME MINISTER

**MOST HON PJ PATTERSON
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF HALF
MOON RESORT, MONTEGO BAY**

SEPTEMBER 30, 2004

Salutations.

- The Governor General and I came from Western Jamaica
- 1934 Bridge
- 1954 when property opened its doors.

Firm conviction that our island's tourism industry had tremendous potential to contribute to the economic development of this beautiful island.

UWI Libraries

My confidence in the tourism industry and in the Half Moon Resort has been justified in no uncertain terms, as evidenced, over the past fifty years, by the success of both the industry and this wonderful five-star resort to which I unrepentantly admit that I feel a personal attachment.

Successful investors insist on profitable returns – but when the investment is also a source of enjoyment, there is a double benefit.

Dedication and sincere commitment of the Stewart family, who have never wavered in their support for Jamaica, and whose confidence in this country has consistently been reflected in expansion and improvement.

No one ^e rejoices more wholeheartedly in the continuing success of Half Moon because it has been well earned and truly deserving.

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Today, Half Moon justifiably enjoys a world wide reputation as a supreme vacation resort, as confirmed by the number of international awards it has won and the continuing high occupancy levels it enjoys year-round. Its contribution to our economy is significant.

What is it that separates Half Moon from the other successful resorts that make up our flourishing tourism industry? Our entire island boasts some of the world's most breathtaking scenery, the most beautiful land and seascapes – mountains, rivers, waterfalls, flora and fauna; a unique and vibrant culture. But, as is so true of our entire tourism industry, from personal experience I can attest to the

fact that it is the people, who make up the team of hard-working and dedicated staff here, who give Half Moon the unique quality that has created this classic resort.

The quality of guest satisfaction and impeccable service here is the standard by which other resorts are judged.

Led by Heinz Simonitsch
"The Kaiser"

Over the years, Half Moon has always been at the cutting edge, anticipating the changing trends in vacation planning and in the needs and expectations of guests. This has led to the development of a variety of facilities that satisfies the needs of a variety of guests both for business and vacation.

- Acquisition of Colony Hotel completed in 1979
- Your recent investment of over US\$8 million reflects your commitment to maintaining Half Moon's status as the most complete Caribbean resort.

Over the years, in good times and not-so-good times, Half Moon was always willing to step to the plate:

Richard Whitfield -
The New Manager¹¹
"Innovative but tenacious."

- Royal Visits
- G17
- CARICOM and other international conferences

To me, it is therefore a truly just reward that Half Moon is hosting so many of the major regional conferences, even as it is growing its business with incentive groups and attracting more weddings, anniversaries and family reunions.

I know we enjoy our reputation for welcoming visitors, but we could have done without the visit of a recent very unwelcome guest by the name of Hurricane Ivan.

Hurricane Ivan has caused severe damage, regrettably including loss of life, as well as damage to property, particularly to housing, and has caused heavy damage to our agricultural sector. It will take a serious effort on our part to recover, even assuming international assistance. And such an effort will

require that we effectively mobilize our human and financial resources and physical assets.

Your recovery from the demolition of Gilbert resulted in a better property and equipped you to cope with Ivan.

It is truly noteworthy that throughout the hurricane and afterwards, our telecommunications system was never disrupted, enabling continuous communication with the rest of the world and across the island. Similarly, investments in the upgrading of our airports and seaports enabled rapid restoration of these vital services that signalled to the world that we were open for business.

While Hurricane Ivan managed to do physical damage, what is very clear is **that what Ivan did not, could not do, was break our spirit.** As a nation, we came through, united, in a way that I find most heartening, to overcome the difficulties created by the Hurricane.

Up to the end of July this year, just before Ivan, tourism was enjoying tremendous growth of 9.8% in stop-over visitors.

I am determined that we return to that momentum in the shortest possible time.

UWI Libraries

Plans for expansion of the tourism sector are continuing apace. The ground-breaking ceremony for the Ibero Star resort to be constructed at Rose Hall was postponed after Ivan, but only for a very short time. The last permit for that construction project was received on Friday last week and I will be breaking ground on the site before *October ends*.

Cruise shipping is going full speed ahead and we were welcoming cruise ships and thousands of passengers in

both Montego Bay and Ocho Rios only a few days after Ivan passed.

The tourism partners are working most effectively as a team, pushing the recovery process as quickly as possible to take up where we left off before Ivan arrived. Representatives of the JHTA and the Jamaica Tourist Board have been in New York this week meeting with the media and a number of initiatives are being undertaken to assure all tourism interests overseas that our tourism product is alive and well.

This evening, as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Half Moon, I warmly congratulate everyone involved in this wonderful success story.

Jamaica is truly fortunate to have individuals prepared to create institutions that work for the good of its shareholders, its managers, its staff and for the society in which it operates. Jamaica is truly fortunate that because of properties such as Half Moon, we boast a premium tourism industry that has made our

island one of world's best vacation destinations.

Half Moon's sound business practices and responsiveness to the needs of your clients, employees and business associates, set an excellent example for all enterprises, not only those in tourism.

I sincerely extend my thanks and good wishes to Half Moon on this special occasion and wish you many more years, of vibrant, successful

partnership with Jamaica's tourism industry.

Thank you for proving that when we work as one team, ^{striving} ~~working~~ toward a common goal, we can ~~create~~ ^{bring} prosperity for Jamaica and its people. ^{unique}

build a ^{lasting} partnership between those who have adopted the country as though it were their homeland and those of us who are natives of this beautiful and blessed island which ensures to our mutual benefit and ²² advantage, ~~as~~ ⁱⁿ creating thereby