

Remarks
by the Director General of the OECS Dr. Didacus Jules
on 38th Anniversary of Independence of Antigua & Barbuda

Embracing Our National Pride is the theme of this 38th Anniversary of Independence of Antigua & Barbuda and as has become our custom we join with the Government and People to celebrate this milestone. In the life of nations thirty-eight years is relative infancy but under our historical circumstances – from our long journey of adversity – we have evolved a maturity that is greater than our years.

That is why the theme selected by the Government of Antigua & Barbuda – Embracing Our National Pride – is so pertinent. Among the OECS Member States, Antigua & Barbuda reflects one of the most multi-national demographics. It is at the cross roads of the integration of Caribbean peoples including a substantial Hispanic presence. All contributing as proud citizens; all cohabiting as productive residents; and as its Coat of Arms asserts “*each endeavoring; all achieving*”.

The independence theme under which we commemorate is one that challenges us to reflect deeply on the journey thus far. On the global front we see a progressive retreat from globalization and multilateralism and a regression to old entrenchments of ignorance, bigotry, and the redefinition of nationalism dressed in ideologies of bigotry and prejudice. Our Caribbean thankfully has since the post Colonial period worked hard to define an inclusive nationalism that asserts that geographic smallness is no measure of our human capability; that our creole identity (whether wrapped in English,

French or Spanish dressing) is not the sign of the mongrel but the assertion of the new truly global person.

The national pride of each OECS Member State must be embraced by all of us so that we can weave from the many strands, a rope of regional identity that is far stronger than its individual threads.

So as we embrace that strand of OUR national pride that is Antiguan and Barbudian, I offer for your reflection the words of Prof. Errol Miller who said:

“We Caribbean people are a remarkable people. We are African without tribes, European without class; Indian without caste and Chinese without dynasty”.

Happy Antigua & Barbuda Independence to us all!