



Message by
Dr. the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell
Prime Minister, Grenada & Chairman, OECS Authority
OECS Flag Raising Ceremony
On the occasion of
GRENADA'S 48th ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE
February 7, 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic may very well be recorded as one of the most challenging times for governments all over the world. For us in the region, the pandemic has exacerbated the developmental challenges we already face, including the impact of climate change and the need for adaptation.

For us in Grenada, in the midst of this rather daunting pandemic, we are buoyed by the sheer resilience of our people that resonates a quiet determination to overcome all challenges. Therefore, as we celebrate the 48th anniversary of Grenada's independence, it is important to recognise and applaud the resolute strength of our people.

We must also acknowledge our Caribbean brothers and sisters who stand in solidarity with us, on this and many other occasions. The partnerships forged today create the platform from which future collaboration will develop and we look forward to many years of working together to advance our national and sub-regional development goals.

As the current Chairman of the OECS Authority, it is important that I advocate for the continuation of this close relationship among our countries. There is strength in unity, and as we deepen and widen the process of integration, we would grow stronger as a body and increase our visibility on the world stage. We are not yet where we want to or should be, but our small, incremental steps provide hope for the future.

Speaking of hope for the future, I must for a moment focus on the children of the region, who have suffered immeasurably from this pandemic and are likely to continue experiencing its impact many years from now. Our young people have been the hardest hit by this pandemic, their lives totally usurped by the changes which have become our new normal.

The loss of valuable face to face instructional time and being deprived of opportunities for meaningful social interaction will have long-lasting effects on these young, impressionable minds, who we will soon look to, as the leaders of tomorrow. Let us stop and say a silent prayer for our youth and hope that they are able to recover from this immense loss. Let us also, as adults, recommit ourselves to greater displays of empathy and be less judgmental.

My friends, I thank you for joining in the celebration of this momentous occasion – Grenada's 48th anniversary of independence. May we continue to share these bonds of friendship for many years to come.