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**The PJ Patterson Centre for  
Africa-Caribbean Advocacy**

**OFFICE OF THE STATESMAN IN RESIDENCE**

The Most Honourable P.J. Patterson, ON, OCC, OE, QC

***Safeguarding Food Security and Ensuring Nutrition  
In Africa and the Caribbean Amid Increasing Global Challenges***

**Message in Commemoration of Africa Day, May 25, 2022**

**By Most Hon. P.J. Patterson ON, OCC, OE, QC**

**Statesman in Residence**

**The P.J. Patterson Centre for Africa-Caribbean Advocacy**

Africa Day is a significant observance for Africans and people of African descent globally. It is also an important calendar event of the African Union and countless Pan-African organisations internationally. The commemoration is a celebration of the achievements of African countries and people and a reminder of the struggle for liberation from slavery, colonialism and imperialism. Africa Day provides the platform to celebrate the unparalleled history, cultural affluence, diversity and dynamism of continental Africans and those in the Diaspora. Significantly, it is also about recognising African potential and propelling African people forward to confront and overcome current and future challenges and to maximise their economic potential and capabilities.

Africa Day therefore, is not only an occasion for reflection, but a moment to summon resolute internationally-coordinated action by Africans at home and abroad to complete the liberation process by playing a leading role in creating a just political, social and economic international order.

The Caribbean has a duty to history to continue our pivotal role in global advocacy on behalf of Africa and all people and civilisations of African ancestry. Marcus Garvey's universal message of Black pride and human equality profoundly influenced the thinking and activism of many giants of African decolonisation including Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Namdi Azikwe of Nigeria and Nelson Mandela of South Africa. Pan-Africanist George Padmore provided great inspiration and support to the Independence freedom fighters of Western Africa.

Caribbean leaders spoke volumes in international fora and through trade embargoes against racist South Africa, while our cricketers and musicians were unequivocal in asserting our region's collective abhorrence of racism, racial segregation and oppression.



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***Africa Day/2***

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On Africa Day, we recall other tangible African liberation actions by Caribbean nations including the provision of passports for global travel to exiled icons of the anti-apartheid movement.

These actions are integral to the Caribbean's time-honoured defence of people's inalienable right to freedom, self-determination, national sovereignty and social and economic justice, even as powerful global forces now pose new and frightening threats to these sacred tenets of human rights. History will judge harshly those whose actions of selfishness and barbarism now imperil freedom and portend hunger and starvation not only in Africa, but globally, from severe food supply chain disruptions and the decimation of countries and lands that are bread baskets of the world.

It is against this background that the senseless and brutal war in Ukraine strikes at the heart, not only of the Ukrainian people, but at the very physical survival of millions of people in Africa, the Caribbean and elsewhere in the world who depend on both Ukraine and Russia for critical food and other essential supplies.

This year's Africa Day theme, "The Year of Nutrition" calls for the prioritising of Africa's human capital by focusing on food security, building resilience and capacity, and improving education and knowledge.

Africa's population, estimated at 1.25 billion in 2018 and said to be growing at a rapid rate of 2.5 per cent per year, coupled with intense urbanisation, signals that quick and decisive action is needed to ensure that the continent's most vulnerable groups are protected. Their social and economic empowerment by having access to nutritious food, safe potable water, effective health care and decent work and entrepreneurial opportunities, is a matter of great urgency.

In the context of the severely adverse social and economic impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the need for immediate, significant and coordinated action to avert a catastrophic humanitarian disaster from hunger and other basic needs in Africa and communities of people of African descent elsewhere in the world, is more than compelling.

***Africa Day/3***



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We must escalate to priority number one, the progress of our people to achieve a well-nourished, healthy population status and to unlock the common aspirations adopted for the African Union's *Agenda 2063* that seeks to transform Africa into a global social and economic powerhouse of the future.

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There is an immediate need for the already identified strategy of prioritising partnerships and mutual accountability platforms for harmonised action in the pursuit of African human capital development. The scaling up and implementation of sustainable climate-smart agricultural production is an imperative that can no longer be delayed for Africa or the Caribbean.

The Caribbean must and will remain an integral partner in the development of Africa's human capital and its overall social and economic advancement. The Caribbean is important in not only building strong government-to-government cooperation, but importantly, in mobilising private sector partnerships and unleashing individual entrepreneurial opportunities for the benefit of both regions. The Caribbean and Africa are united by blood, history as well as by a common vision and hope for a future where our people will enjoy standards of living comparable to or better than anywhere in the developed world.

On this, the 59<sup>th</sup> year of celebrating the movement of Africa towards greater unity, independence and the social and economic development of Africans on the continent and in the diaspora, the P.J. Patterson Centre for Africa-Caribbean Advocacy encourages and salutes the commitment to *The Year of Nutrition*. We use this opportunity too, to reaffirm our own commitment to the cause of food security and ensuring nutrition among Africans everywhere.

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