



Discours de l'ambassadeur de France pour le 14 juillet 2017

Version prononcée

We are celebrating today la Prise de la Bastille, the storming of the Bastille prison, on the 14th July 1789, 228 years ago. From then on the French Revolution leads to the establishment of the Republic and its well-known motto Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

Today we commemorate also in France and in Europe the souvenir of the First World War between 1914 and 1918. In 1917, 100 years ago, the American troops were sent in France to combat alongside its oldest ally. It is the reason why today the President of the United States of America is in Paris to honor beside the French people their memories. During this horrific war, the Canadians and the British were engaged.

Among the British forces, the West Indies Battalion was sent to France. The West Indies Regiment was a special unit of volunteers from the British West Indies. They played a crucial part in World War I especially in Palestine and Jordan but also served in France and Flanders. Jamaica contributed more than 10 000 men, two third of the Regiment. In a telegram to the governor of Jamaica, General Allenby stated that "All ranks behaved with great gallantry under fire". Among them served the future Premier of Jamaica, Norman Manley, who was even awarded the Military Medal.

I want today to solemnly recall their memories and pay tribute to their invaluable engagement on the battlefield far from their home country.

In France we have had during the last 6 months our election story telling. I know that our democratic process was scrutinized. The raise of populism in various parts of the world, the fate of the European Union, the uncertainty of our future where we have to reconcile economic growth and ecological responsibility, the security challenges that we are facing with the terrorist threat, have been for all a deep matter of concern. Let me remind here the terrible terrorist attack of Nice one year ago. Hopefully the result of the French presidential election sent a clear message of confidence and strength to ourselves and to the world, confidence in our collective capacity to face these challenges in particular within an reenergized European Union, strength in the genius of our people that went through so many challenges in its own history.

As some of you were with us at our last Europe Day held by ambassador Wasilewska, you will recall that in 2017 we celebrate the EU 60 anniversary. EU has been engaged for more than 40 years in Jamaica and is by far the main grant contributor in this country. We are working together with our partners to work out the next EU/ACP agreement.

Against this background today we inaugurate with the Most Honorable Prime Minister and you Madam Minister the new premises of the French Chancellery. This is a vivid proof of our constant commitment to nourish a fruitful and mutually benefiting relationship with Jamaica, its Government and its people. In one word, France has chosen to "REMAIN".

Beyond our diplomatic and political activities, my action plan has 3 priorities in Jamaica: economic diplomacy, cultural and educational exchanges, regional integration.

Economic diplomacy : Kingston Freeport Terminal Limited, KFTL, took over the operation of the Kingston container terminal one year ago. Subsidiary of the French Line CMA CGM, KFTL is aiming at becoming #1 in the Caribbean region for the connection between container carrier vessels.

KFTL is currently implementing an ambitious upgrade plan of the port, which includes the deepening and the enlargement of the nautical access (already completed at 85 % by Jan de Nul a Belgian company), the reinforcement of the infrastructure done by VINCI. EGIS is monitoring the advancement of the work. This 450 M USD project is about half completed as we speak today. Recently the Prime Minister made an extensive visit of the public works that are engaged in the port.

KFTL is also operating the container terminal of course. For that purpose KFTL has hired almost 200 new employees. They have been delivering so far some outstanding performance, ranking themselves among the top 5 worldwide on many occasions since the handover. In French we would say "chapeau". In Jamaican "Big Up".

SOGET is implementing a PCS in all the ports and the airports across Jamaica.

In the wake of the commitment taken by Jamaica at the Paris summit on climate change, about to be ratified by Jamaica, the French firm NEOEN will start the construction of the biggest solar farm in the Caribbean, in Westmoreland, 37 megawatts with a possible extension to 50. In the same vein De Profundis is in contact with the national aeronautic authority to propose a very innovative way of doing AC in the Norman Manley airport by extracting the gradient of temperature from the deep sea ocean.

VINCI is a well-known multinational company. Present in Jamaica for more than 15 years in water treatment and in sewage, VINCI is actively working on the project of a new treatment plant in Rio Cobre to mitigate the annual penury in Kingston and Saint Andrew area during the dry season.

After the completion of the PJ Patterson Highway, BOUYGUES intends to deepen its partnership with Jamaica, along with VINCI Highway concession. To that goal they have tabled a comprehensive approach aimed at finishing Highway 2000 to Mandeville, according to their exclusive right registered in the current contract. I know the good memories that the presence of Bouygues left here. I'm confident that the innovative way of financing and doing that they are offering could pave the way for new investments of this kind.

From all these examples I would like to go over a few common points in the way the French companies operate in Jamaica and more broadly in other countries : balanced partnership, win-win agreement, transfer of know-how by working intensively with sub-contractors, hiring significantly local employees and staff, working with the local communities, mingling with the local business community here with the JCC, the PSOJ and the JMA. TOTAL and RUBIS are other good examples of that corporate responsibility and collaboration. As well as Teleperformance in the BPO sector based in Montego Bay. Teleperformance employs 2000 collaborators without a single presence of a French national.

The trade in goods and services between France and Jamaica in 2016 has raised by 60 % reaching 22 M EUR, our best result since 2009. Along with the ripple effect of the port, the French companies seem to have taken advantage of the recovery of the Jamaican market.

In November 2016, the French Embassy hosted the 10th edition of Touch of France, a bi annual, cultural and economic event, co-organized with the Club France Jamaica. The 2016 edition was inaugurated by President Jean-Pierre Bel, personal representative of the French President for Latin America and the Caribbean region and the Honorable Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. “Touch of France” was the opportunity for French companies in Jamaica to share their expertise and accentuate the cooperation between France and Jamaica. This event provided a platform for Jamaican companies to strengthen their network especially with French Caribbean Territories. We had a wonderful collaboration with Peter Deiwght and Saint International in the Fashion Show Hot Couture.

Cultural and educational exchanges : Our main event this year in the cultural field has been the setting of the exhibition Jamaica Jamaica ! at the French Philharmonie de Paris from April to August 2017.

Often blurring the lines between distinctions—spiritual or nonreligious, rural or urban, a soundtrack for Rastafarian wisemen or rude boys from the ghetto—Jamaican music is anything but one-dimensional. The *Jamaica, Jamaica!* exhibition seeks to acknowledge this history, reconsidered through the prism of the postcolonial conflicts and encounters that led to a unique and universal movement—a virtual 'sound clash' between Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Lee Perry, King Tubby, Studio One, the Alpha Boys School, Haile Selassie I, Marcus Garvey, etc., through musical styles as varied as burro, revival, mento, ska, rocksteady, reggae, dub and dancehall.

Jamaica, Jamaica! brings together rare memorabilia, photographs, visual art, audio recordings and footage unearthed from private collections and museums in Jamaica, among them the NGJ, the Museum of Music, the Jamaica Institute and the Peter Tosh Museum, the United States and Great Britain. Up to now 36000 visitors have seen the exhibition. We expect 50000 visitors by mid-august.

The Alliance Française of Jamaica continues to be our flag ship to promote the teaching of French as a foreign language and to deliver certifications. The alliance, well known in Jamaica, is currently engaged in a program of consolidation and seeks to extend his collaborations with various partners in Jamaica. A new board has been appointed. A new dynamic is in place. The goodwills would be welcome and the supports well accepted.

Other institutions, as the Jamaican Association of French Teachers, the Department of modern language and literature from UWI, Shortwood Teacher’s college contribute to the promotion of the French language in Jamaica.

Since we are celebrating the 55 anniversary of the Jamaica independence, which coincides with the 55 celebration of our diplomatic relations, the French authorities have decided to enlarge the contingent of young Jamaican students that goes for one year in France as teaching assistants of English in the French High Schools. We usually award 30 scholarships each year. For this 55 anniversary, we have decided to afford 55 scholarships , that were all satisfied. The 55 awardees are with us tonight and will reach their respective High Schools by September in France.

Regional integration : In the Caribbean region we want to promote the relationship with our overseas territories, Martinique and Guadeloupe, Saint Martin and Saint-Barthélemy, French Guyana. I

continue to do my best to promote these relationships in terms of people to people, business to business. Business France, our French Jampro, has an office in Martinique and could contribute to that goal. The President of JAMPRO was in France last September and met the French business community within MEDEF international, equivalent of the PSOJ. I salute the presence of Mrs Sandra Casanova, President of the Logistic Cluster Caribbean with us tonight and the partnership launched with the CMU. We have also this wonderful program of exchange between UWI, Bordeaux Political Science University and Martinique University for master students, that has been prolonged due to the funding in Jamaica of TOTAL that signed an MOU with UWI. This year 12 students were participating.

EU is active in our Caribbean French Territories through its regional fund FEDER. This fund can be today used in conjunction with the EFD for launching common regional project.

Paris 2024 : I know the importance of track and field in Jamaica, having been twice in the Champs in Kingston. Your athletes have already done well in the Diamond Leagues series this year especially in the recent Meeting of Charlety in Paris. I wish them well for the next world cup in London.

As you know Paris is one of the two remaining candidates to welcome the Olympic Games in 2024. The selection committee of the IOC has decided to select both cities for the next two Olympic Games 2024 and 2028. You will see on the screen some films on Paris and the Olympics.

In closing let me thank all the staff of the Embassy, and in particular Philippe, Karlene and Lucie, and also Giorgia, Cornellia and Devon.

Many thanks to the numerous sponsors that have contributed to this Bastille Day : VINCI construction grands projets, KFTL/CMA CGM, TJH/JIO, TOTAL, RUBIS, SOGET, Ian K LEVY Agencies, FIDELITY MOTORS with NISSAN, WRAY and NEPHEW with MOET et CHANDON, HENNESSY, GRAND MARNIER, GRACE TROPICAL RHYTHMS, BEST DRESSED CHICKEN and for the first time this year CHAS RAMSOM with EVIAN, ELLE et VIRE Jamaica, MC3 and VINCI construction Maritime. We are very proud of this franco-jamaican mixed sponsorship.

Thanks also to the singers of the National anthem, to the décoratrice, the designer Mme Sharon THOMAS from 'Eventful Design Co', and many thanks to come to the "Blue Glaze Mento Band" with M. Paul STONE, band leader.

You will allow me a personal note to acknowledge the incredible contribution of my beloved wife, Line, as you all know Line is from Martinique, a Caribbean woman, elegant and strong as they are. She was tonight the Director and the inspiration of this Bastille Day Celebration.

I would like to raise my glass to the continuous friendship and mutual respect in the relationship between Jamaica and France Madame la Ministre.