

**Remarks**

**By**

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**Given at  
The 6<sup>th</sup> International Youth Symposium  
Organized by UNESCO and the Bob and Rita Marley Foundations  
4 February, 2010  
Kingston, Jamaica**

## Welcome Address to Delegates - 6<sup>th</sup> Africa Unite Symposium

February 4, 2010

Dr. Eleanor Wint and members of the Rita and Bob Marley Foundations;

Dr. Boafo and other representatives from the UNESCO;

Caribbean delegates, other International delegates, delegates from Jamaica, ladies and gentlemen all Good Morning. The Social Development Commission wishes to join in extending a warm welcome to all of you who found it possible to be part of this annual event that is being held to keep the message and vision of the Honourable Robert Nesta Marley alive.

We are most pleased to be associated with this event as the Theme chosen for the 2010 Africa Unite symposium, “Crime Don’t Pay- Unity Brings Prosperity” is in our opinion most appropriate. The theme speaks to an issue – Crime and Violence -that has plagued communities of African originated peoples for too long. It is a fitting theme also as Marley has demonstrated in very practical ways his commitment to peace.

I remember to this day the exact spot where I sat in the jam-packed National Stadium at the One Love peace concert April 22, 1978. At that concert he had our two political leaders at the time the Hon. Edward Seaga – then Leader of the Opposition and the Hon. Michael Manley – then Prime Minister shaking hands. He implored them to actively work for peace amongst their supporters who were continuously at war.

That task is still to be completed 32 years of the concert. Just last year, 2009, over 1600 Jamaicans were murdered. Professor Anthony Harriott, noted Jamaican Criminologist stated at his Professorial inaugural lecture April 24, 2008 that the Commonwealth Caribbean as a sub-region had the highest murder rates in the world. This rate he stated was 3 times the world average. Within this grouping – Trinidad and Tobago , St. Kitts/Nevis, St Vincent, St. Lucia and Jamaica all reported murder rates in 2007 that were above 20 persons murdered for every 100,000 persons in the population. Jamaica in fact had a rate of 60 persons murdered for every 100,000 of the population in 2007. Professor Harriott went on to describe Jamaica as a High Violence society - meaning that our homicide rate has exceeded 20 persons per 100,000 for at least ten consecutive years. He pointed out that our rate has exceeded more than 20/100,000 for more than 20 consecutive years.

We are all aware that the vast majority of the murder victims and those committing the murders are youth in particular male youth. I therefore want to urge you as youth delegates to use the opportunity offered by this symposium to help - as Mr. Marley said “to decide your own destiny” and the destiny of the communities from which you originate.

I am confident that you will come up with workable ideas as to how we can all secure a destiny of life, a destiny of opportunities, a destiny of prosperity, a destiny of love and unity rather than a destiny of crime, violence and poverty.

Once again welcome and remember the words of the Honourable Robert Marley as you deliberate over these two days.

“Life is one big road with lots of signs. So when you riding through the ruts don’t you complicate your mind: FLEE FROM HATE, MISCHIEF AND JEALOUSY! Don’t bury your thoughts put your visions to reality – wake up and live wake up and live”