

President of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan has applauded Jamaica on its achievements in the arenas of politics and democracy over the last 50 years, noting that the country and its people are an example of strength, resilience and durability.

“Jamaica is a fine example of how a people can turn handicaps into opportunities and challenges into narratives of success,” he said at a special joint meeting of the Houses of Parliament on Thursday (August 2), in commemoration of Jamaica's 50th Anniversary of Independence.

He said that Jamaica and its people have always been a source of hope to the developing world, and the black race, in particular. “Having come along so far, and so gloriously, and to this point in your 50 years of Independence, you can only move forward with greater expectation and successes,” he said.

President Jonathan noted that over the years, especially since Independence in 1962, Jamaica has built and nurtured very strong democratic norms as the foundation of inclusive nationhood.

He said he is happy that despite the struggles and hardships, most black people of the world, today, live in countries where democratic governments are in control, just like in Jamaica. “Today, the destiny of the black person is in the hands of the black person,” he remarked.

He however noted that despite this very important achievement, the black race still had much to achieve. “The truth is that the black race is still at war against poverty, diseases, ethnic conflicts, and underdevelopment. These must be addressed,” he said.

In this regard, he said there is a need for Nigeria and Jamaica, and indeed the rest of the world, to work together to reduce the level of “those artificial forces that have kept the majority of our people from progressing”.

“As Jamaica moves ahead, Nigeria stands with her and her people, and will continue to work with her,” Dr. Jonathan assured. He further noted that Jamaica has always been a reliable partner in progress among the developing nations, especially those of African descent.

The President congratulated the government and the people of Jamaica on their 50th year of Independence, stating that “we in homeland Africa rejoice with you and bring special greetings to you on this memorable occasion.”

The President and First Lady, Dame Patience, are in the island on a two-day state visit to mark Jamaica’s Jubilee celebrations.

The special Parliamentary sitting was attended by Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen; Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller; Leader of the Opposition, Andrew Holness; Former Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Howard Cooke; Former Prime Minister, the Most Hon. P.J. Patterson; Ministers of Government; Members of Parliament and Senators who have served since 1962; and members of the diplomatic corps.