

Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, says the Government is committed to strengthening international co-operation, even as it continues to work towards national development.

“Guided by our commitment to multilateralism as the cornerstone for peace and development, we will continue to engage with all countries, to explore opportunities for foreign direct investment, tourism growth, expanded trade and technical and cultural co-operation,” she said.

The Prime Minister was addressing members of the Diplomatic Corps at Jamaica House, on February 5, as part of activities to observe Diplomatic Week.

Mrs. Simpson Miller noted that Jamaica’s foreign policy has always been characterised by mutual respect and territorial integrity.

“In our external affairs, Jamaica has forged, enhanced and advanced cordial and fruitful relations with our traditional partners as well as with emerging economies,” she said.

“We are a sovereign nation that seeks to expand opportunity for our people and foster respectful relations with any State that wishes to partner with us in our quest for growth and development, with job creation,” the Prime Minister added.

Mrs. Simpson Miller said that Jamaica will continue to strengthen its ties with traditional partners in the East and West, as well as in North America and Europe, even as it explores opportunities in the Latin American region.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister said the country also remains committed to multilateral engagement and action on a number of globally relevant issues, such as: global warming; achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; and controlling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, “which continue to have a destabilising negative impact on societies like ours.”

On the matter of human rights, the Prime Minister informed that of particular concern is the issue of the rights of children.

“Here in Jamaica, we are addressing the matter through legislation; improved management of, and service delivery to those in the care of the State; and initiatives to encourage greater parental responsibility,” she said.

Diplomatic Week 2013 is being celebrated from February 3 to February 8. The week's activities began with a Service of Thanksgiving at the Swallowfield Chapel, in Kingston, on Sunday, February 3, while on Monday, February 4, Jamaica's cultural heritage was highlighted at a special cultural evening, held at the Courtleigh Auditorium in New Kingston.

On Wednesday, February 6, the diplomats will be addressed by Ministers of Finance and Planning; National Security; Science, Technology, Energy and Mining – Dr. the Hon. Peter Phillips, Hon. Peter Bunting, and Hon. Phillip Paulwell, respectively.

The highlight of the week will be the black tie reception and diplomatic dinner hosted by their Excellencies, Sir Patrick Allen and Lady Allen on Thursday, February 7, at King's House.

The week culminates on Friday, February 8, with a tour of the National Gallery in downtown Kingston and an excursion to Maiden Cay, a small uninhabited island located off the coast of Port Royal.