



Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Stephen Vasciannie, says the Government attaches great significance to the country's relationship with the United States of America (USA).

"Our long-standing ties with the USA are reflected not only in the presence of many Jamaicans in this country...it is reflected in our shared values, our commitment to human rights and personal dignity, to fairness and democratic government," he said.

The Ambassador was delivering the opening remarks at a Jamaica 50 Lecture, at the Silver Spring Civic Centre, in Maryland, last week.

He also pointed out that Jamaica and the United States have joined efforts to improve security and to reduce crime.

"The relationship remains strong and of benefit to our respective countries," Mr. Vasciannie said.

As it relates to human rights, which both countries promote aggressively, the Ambassador told the audience that Reporters Without Borders had recently ranked Jamaica 13th in the world for freedom of expression, the highest ranking of a developing country, and the highest ranking for a country in the western hemisphere.

The Ambassador explained that the Jamaica 50 Lecture series are designed by the embassy to disseminate information about the achievements of Jamaicans since independence and to encourage analysis of the challenges and opportunities.

These lectures, he added, are also intended to promote links within the Diaspora and to encourage solidarity among Jamaicans living at home and abroad.

Minister of National Security, Hon. Peter Bunting and Minister of Justice, Senator the Hon. Mark Golding, were the featured lecturers.

Senator Golding presented on 'Justice and Human Rights Issues since Independence', while Mr. Bunting spoke on 'National Security in Jamaica since Independence'.

The event was sponsored by Jamaica National Building Society (JNBS), which was represented by General Manager, Earl Jarrett.