

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE JAMAICA BANKERS ASSOCIATION AT THE
MANCHESTER BUSINESS SCHOOL WORLDWIDE
PRESENTATION OF GRADUATES CEREMONY
– SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2010 AT THE WYNDHAM
KINGSTON HOTEL**

(PREAMBLE)

Good Evening to you all!

I am indeed pleased to have the privilege of sharing this very special occasion with you, the distinguished ladies and gentlemen of the Graduating Class of 2010 and your very proud tutors, family members and friends. Therefore, let me take this opportunity to officially extend heartiest congratulations to all of you on this momentous occasion – your being officially presented as recipients of a Masters in Business Administration from the internationally acclaimed Manchester Business School Worldwide. Well done! What a remarkable achievement!

I can only imagine the sense of accomplishment which you must now be feeling. It is certainly a just reward for having taken the decision to pursue this course of studies and to remain focused in spite of the distractions and temptations. You are to be

commended for having persevered to the end, despite the challenges - personal and otherwise, the sacrifices, the frustration, the tears, the anger. Even if you had doubts before, I am sure you can now say "It was worth it! It was a great investment!"

Graduates, what will you do with this higher level of education? In the words of the famous twentieth century Irish poet and dramatist William Butler Yeats:

**"Education is not filling a pail
but the lighting of a fire."**

With your new knowledge and ability to think analytically and "out of the box", I challenge all of you to be action oriented, to go "light a fire" which will lead to our beloved country Jamaica moving further along the path of growth and development.

Where does your passion lie? Which fire will you light? The fire that leads to economic growth, or the fire which leads to a significant reduction in the level of crime and violence in our society; the fire of an improved education system or the fire of significant job creation; the fire of sustainable entrepreneurship or the fire which provides greater opportunities for the growing number of 'at - risk youth' and unattached youth to become employable. Distinguished Graduates, the important fact is that

you must 'light a fire' that is positive, wholesome, beneficial and far-reaching! This is what Jamaica needs at this time!

On another level, I will also urge you to reflect on how we relate to each other as a people, as Jamaicans of different walks of life and different socio-economic backgrounds but citizens of Jamaica, land we love. The late John A. Hannah, a former President of the institution now known to us as Michigan State University, declared that:

**“Higher education must lead the march
back to the fundamentals of human relationships,
to the old discovery that is ever new,
that man does not live by bread alone.”**

You, ladies and gentlemen, must find or create opportunities which teach your brothers and sisters to work together harmoniously and to live peacefully with each other. If you are able to achieve that, then you would have contributed indirectly to higher levels of productivity at the workplace, and to employees enjoying both job, as well as, personal satisfaction. With happy employees, there would be fewer opportunities for conflicts in their personal lives and in work-related situations, but more opportunities for cooperation and improved interpersonal relationships.

Research has shown that in recent years one of the most important developments has been the increased importance of interpersonal skills in almost every type of work setting. For many employers, interpersonal skills represent an important category of transferable skills a worker is expected to bring to the job. Let us remember that technical ability only is usually not enough to achieve career success. Studies indicate that many people who have difficulty in obtaining or holding a job, possess the needed technical competence but lack interpersonal competence. Graduates, I implore you to be part of the process that will help our fellow Jamaicans to relate better to each other, be supportive and simply respect the dignity of human life.

How many of us can relate to the level of intolerance that creeps into various aspects of our work experience and our personal life? We find it difficult to agree to disagree. We have no time to hear another's viewpoint or belief. Often times we learn of men and women who were injured or who lost their lives because of another's intolerance or impatience. However, Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, reminds us that:

**“It is the mark of an educated mind
to be able to entertain a thought
without accepting it.”**

Education helps us to exercise tolerance and patience, to listen with an open mind and, as was said earlier, with respect. Graduates, lead the way...be examples of how differing views can be accommodated in a dialogue without fear, without violence being meted out or without disrespect being shown.

In closing I would like to exhort this group of 58 men and women who now join a group of over 500 graduates of Manchester Business School Worldwide Caribbean Centre to heed the words of South African Statesman and 1993 Nobel Peace Prize winner Nelson Mandela:

**“Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use
to change the world.”**

This is one weapon which I would strongly encourage you to use unceasingly, from this moment onwards to make Jamaica, and consequently the world a better place. The world awaits you and all that you have to offer!

Thank you.

**MINNA ISRAEL (MS.)
PRESIDENT
JAMAICA BANKERS ASSOCIATION**

September 14, 2010