

NIA

National Integrity Action

NIA MEMBER INDUCTION CEREMONY AT THE JAMAICA PEGASUS HOTEL, KINGSTON,
JAMAICA

MARCH 15, 2015

REMARKS BY PROFESSOR TREVOR MUNROE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL INTEGRITY
ACTION; HONOURARY VISITING PROFESSOR, SIR ARTHUR LEWIS INSTITUTE (SALISES), UWI
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May I join our Chairman for this afternoon, Richard, in extending a warm welcome to each and every one of you here present; Sunday afternoon is not the best time for a meeting and you must have made a special effort to be here and therefore you deserve a very special welcome:

to Jose Ugaz , our distinguished and honoured guest;

to partners, friends and volunteers of NIA;

BUT MOST OF ALL TO THE PERSONS FOR WHOM THIS CEREMONY IS BEING HELD – THE NEW MEMBERS OF NIA.

I daresay, today is a milestone, **a milestone for each of you, a milestone for NIA and, ultimately, a milestone for Jamaica.**

A milestone for each new member because today you take an important step in your life; you make a solemn commitment; you are saying in the words of the INTEGRITY PLEDGE on the membership card you shall receive:

‘I will not pay bribes; I will not seek bribes; I will work with others to campaign against corruption...’ You are entering a new stage in taking up a serious challenge to our people and, I dare say, to peoples everywhere. In the words of our GG, Jamaica’s Head of State, ‘Combatting corruption is never easy where the erosion of values and positive attitudes has created a fertile ground for criminal activity. It is not a stroll in the park it is long tedious, tiring struggle through the mud.....’ But there is perhaps no struggle more important to Jamaica today than this struggle to build integrity and therefore this is a milestone for you

Your becoming members is also a milestone for NIA. Hitherto we have been an advocacy organization, campaigning against corruption, seeking new laws and building public awareness and this afternoon we shall take reintroduce to some of those ads over the years. Our people have appreciated us for our work so far. A Don Anderson national survey done on our 3rd anniversary, in November 2014, found that 23% of Jamaicans rated NIA as doing ‘ a good or very good job’ and 59% found us ‘doing an average job’.

But we need to do better; the Jamaican people are demanding more. Not least of all, because of our work, 77% say they want to join an anti-corruption organization, well above the global average. To respond to this desire and to build on our success so far, we took the decision to open ourselves to membership, to those willing to join the struggle for accountability and the effort to build integrity. You new members, your applications which have been approved, are the first fruits of this decision and we therefore extend a special welcome to you

We also hope and expect that this step today, when the historians write about these years, shall mark a milestone for Jamaica in building a social movement for integrity. NIA alone cannot be that movement but we are and need to be among the pioneers, the core of that movement, a movement which needs to include diverse bodies – church, community, student bodies,

professional associations, private sector benefactors, public officials, and indeed, politicians of integrity. Only in this way we shall be able to engage the 77% and make the progress our country needs and our people deserve.

As we welcome you today we let you know that you have new rights and duties as an NIA member: to receive full information on and participate in the activities of the organization. For example tomorrow NIA and UTECH are staging an anti-corruption event at the UTECH. We expect that you shall attend and contribute.

Very importantly we shall, as far as our resources allow, be putting on training programs, for example, in communication techniques, in how you may better carry the message of accountability, of transparency and integrity in relation to the issues of the day, in social auditing, in how to monitor the spending of taxpayers money, to commend the authorities where appropriate, to criticize constructively, where necessary.

And let us not forget, you have an obligation to pay your membership dues – times are tough, we well appreciate but NIA has a big challenge which we shall have to meet more successfully in days to come. That challenge is to build our membership base and our funding support amongst all sections of the Jamaican people, from all walks of life. We have to complement the support from our international partners with more significant financial contributions from the Jamaican people. Your ideas and initiatives in this regard shall be most welcome

Let me conclude by pointing to one of the most encouraging aspects of this induction: 75% of new members are under 30 and 80% are female! Of course we are happy for the older heads and the men who are joining us today and we need more of them. But the fact that so many who are young and female are coming forward, despite the burdens and challenges facing our youth and

our women is a cause for much hope, not just for NIA but for all Jamaica, and for the international movement.

Just a few days ago, on March 9, in addressing the Anti-corruption Conference put on by the OCG with support from NIA, GG, Sir Patrick Allen stated:

‘I believe that when Jamaica’s leaders and followers unite in unrelenting action against corruption, they will hasten the attainment of our objective of social transformation and economic development and a fair, equitable and just society.’

I share that belief and welcome you most warmly to NIA and look forward to your contribution to that unrelenting action and to building that national unity.