

Contact a Land Surveyor
– **Speech for the 75th Anniversary Function for the**
Land Surveyors Association of Jamaica¹

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Ladies and Gentlemen it is a pleasure and honour for me to share with you in your celebration of this important milestone in the history of your organization – your 75th Anniversary. That your organization has survived for so long and has continuing impact in our society is a testimony to the resilience, purposefulness, and professional expertise of the members and leaders of the Land Surveyors Association of Jamaica (LSAJ) over these years.

The members of your Association provide services for one of the most important and sometimes contentious social and economic asset, **land**. You are the ones whose measurements and objective information related to surveying, mapping and cartography help to decide the size and configuration of a parcel of land that is owned by an individual or group of persons, a company, an organization or the state. Here I must pause to say that I read with great interest your article in the Outlook Sunday Magazine of October 26, 2003 entitled, **Contact a land surveyor**. One item which attracted my attention was – **to avoid building on the wrong lot**. A very good friend of mine died heartbroken because someone with whom he entrusted his life savings unintentionally built a house for him on the wrong lot and he could not negotiate a settlement with the owner.

We live in a time when success resulting from hard work, perseverance and excellence is becoming rare. Therefore as a nation we not only want to join with you in your celebration but more importantly to hope that the positive components of your formula for success during the past seventy five (75) years be replicated in other organizations. We live in a world in which we are searching hard for positive role models and world class best practices and your work and worth over the years can help us in this search. It is within this spirit that I join in congratulating you on the occasion of your 75th Anniversary.

In Jamaica and worldwide the issue of **leadership** dominates the agenda of concerns about solutions to the myriad of social and economic problems that we face. The need for transformational leadership in this scenario is critical and the contributions of professional associations such as yours, the LSAJ, in providing this kind of leadership is of paramount importance to the development of our country. Let me indicate a few features of this type of leadership and how they relate to the LSAJ.

The first important feature of transformational leadership is having a clear strategic vision. The vision of the LSAJ which has emerged since your inception in 1928 is summed up in the first object of your association, indicated in the Outlook Sunday Magazine, October 26, 2003,

¹ This presentation was given at the occasion of the 75th Anniversary Function for the Land Surveyors Association of Jamaica, Pegasus Hotel, Kingston, Jamaica, October 31, 2003

“To support and protect the character status and interest of the profession of the land surveyors practising in Jamaica”². This vision speaks to the protection and promotion of professional actions and behaviour by members of the association.

In an era when there are frequent reported allegations of fraud, corruption and extortion it is important that your members keep this vision in clear focus as a guide for their actions. They should also keep uppermost in their minds two other important features of transformational leadership, namely the demonstration of competence starting with personal mastery and the practice of ethical behaviours.

Here it is important to make reference to two things. First another object of your association which is **“to promote honourable practice, to repress malpractice ...amongst land surveyors in Jamaica”** reported in the Outlook Sunday Magazine, op cit. The second is your efforts to address the professional training and certification of your members and the promotion of international standards. The latter point is important because all professionals including members of the LSAJ must be painfully aware of the fact that we live in an internationally competitive business environment so your skills and competencies must meet world-class standards. Here we should pause to acknowledge the role of the University of the West Indies in the early years and the sterling contributions of the University of Technology in the area of professional training for your members.

There is another important point about your efforts for professional training and certification on which I wish to comment. It is this. We should strive for increased access, and equity, increased numbers of qualified professionals while promoting world-class standards of quality and productivity. Hence the LSAJ should have as a primary objective a significant change in the part of the history of your profession reported in the Daily Gleaner of October 28, 1998, in which there was a sole examiner and that two commissioned surveyors between them sat the examination in excess of thirty times. The LSAJ should also seek to increase the number qualified professionals and the number of females who are commissioned land surveyors.

Jamaica needs professional associations such as the LSAJ to be exemplars of these critical features of transformational leadership – strategic vision, personal mastery, demonstration of competence and ethical behaviours. The hope is that this situation in the LSAJ would be a microcosm of what we yearn for in all aspects of life in our country.

As you look towards the future and try to create a renewed vision for your organization I would like to implore you to ensure that your activities reflect a consideration of the social problems in our society. In fact you have no choice because today social problems dominate the world agenda and hence the local agenda. This is one of the realities of globalization. To anchor this situation firmly in your minds let me draw a picture of this scenario internationally, regionally and locally.

Terrorism, crime and violence, are international phenomena. Poverty and unemployment are rampant especially in developing countries. Business enterprises in both developed and

² Outlook Sunday Magazine, October 26, 2003

developing countries are restructuring, merging and downsizing in order to survive and be competitive and this has contributed to less jobs.

In the publication, World Economic Indicators by the World Bank, 2002, the following statements draw attention to social issues in the world:

At the millennium Summit in September 2000, the states of the United Nations reaffirmed their commitment to working toward a world in which sustaining development and eliminating poverty would have the highest priority. The goals focus the efforts of the world community on achieving significant, measurable improvements in people's lives.

The millennium development goals call for reducing the proportion of people living on less than (US) \$1 a day to half the 1990 level by 2015 – from 29% of all people in low and middle – income economies to 14.5%.³

Discussions and negotiations related to trade and market access are becoming increasingly focused on the reality that economic, social and political issues are closely intertwined. Two sets of statements that draw attention to this relationship are as follows:

First , Mr. Adolfo A. Franco, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, testifying October 21, 2003 before the House Committee on International Relations ***told lawmakers that USAID promotes Bush's policy objectives in the hemisphere by concentrating "on democracy and anti-corruption initiatives, trade-led economic growth, counter narcotics programs that provide alternatives to rural farmers and social-sector reform to encourage governments to invest additional resources in basic education and health."***⁴

The second is from David Jessop in the Article, ***Clear Messages for the Caribbean*** in the Sunday Observer, October, 26, 2003 in which he was discussing fundamental problems related to trade negotiations between the US and Central American Free trade Area and the implications for the FTAA. In this article he made the comment that:

"Many of those involved in Agriculture in Central America are subsistence farmers. This makes farm trade liberalization both a social and political issue"⁵.

In Jamaica crime and violence and unemployment are considered to be significant problems that we face. How can we address these social problems successfully? What is the role of private enterprises and non- government organizations in sustaining development and eliminating poverty and other pressing social problems in a developing country such as

³ World Development Indicators; the World Bank, 2002

⁴ Speech by Adolfo A. Franco, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, testifying October 21, 2003 before the House Committee on International Relations; Distributed by the Bureau of International Information, Programmes as State Report;<http://usinfo.state.gov>

⁵ Jessop, David in the Article, ***Clear Messages for the Caribbean*** in the Sunday Observer, October 26, 2003

Jamaica? How can an organization such as the Land Surveyors Association of Jamaica be part of this process for dealing effectively with social development?

A significant and fundamental step in finding the answers to these questions my friends lie in a new type partnership between the major social partners: private sector, government trade unions and civil society. In particular business enterprises and professional associations such as yours need to engage in a new type of CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Let us therefore share a few thoughts on this new type of **Corporate Social Responsibility, (CSR)**. When put in this context CSR is more than philanthropy or handing out a cheque periodically. It means human action even when there is no publicity and especially in the absence of Public Relations. We have to have the faith that the cumulative effect of good work in human and social development today will eventually be the breaking news of tomorrow. It is a sustained consideration of the TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE APPROACH. This approach is a combined consideration of **adding economic value through productive engagement of people, protecting the human rights of people, and creating a safe and healthy environment in which people can work, play, prosper and enjoy life.**

An article titled *Developing Corporate Social Responsibility in the UK*, October 17, 2003 points to the urgency of tackling social problems and the key role that companies can play. The article further points out that both large and small companies are finding that there are real business benefits from being socially responsible.⁶

Companies which take these issues seriously not only achieve benefits to society; they can also enhance their reputation, improve competitiveness and strengthen their risk management. These benefits do not happen just as a matter of course. Businesses find they need to plan, manage and measure what they do. The very best results usually occur when the involvement has natural links with the company's core business⁷.

Two essential features of CSR are structured SOCIAL DIALOGUE and a sustained mechanism of SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP. In Jamaica we must put these two features at the top of our national agenda. In pursuing these two important national agenda items we should seek to tackle all three aspects of the triple bottom-line approach. This in national terms points to a focus on economic and social development and the protection of individuals and the environment in which they live and work. Within this framework national priorities that form the agenda for Social Dialogue and National Social Partnership should include education and training, prevention and management of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, economic growth, job creation and employment, productivity for competitiveness, drastic reduction of crime and

⁶ Developing Corporate Social Responsibility in the UK: About CSR;
<http://www.societyandbusiness.gov.uk/about/index.html> ; October 17, 2003

⁷ Developing Corporate Social Responsibility in the UK; How Businesses
benefit <http://www.societyandbusiness.gov.uk/about/index.html> October 17, 2003

violence,, inner-city development and transformation, social protection of workers, and a healthy workplace and general living environment in the society.⁸

I have placed education and training at the top of the list because education and training are important for maximizing the value added contribution of our human resources to economic development and competitiveness in small nation states like Jamaica. One important role of education is to provide the knowledge workers, the cutting edge research and the entrepreneurial skills that we need to survive and prosper against the uneven spread of the benefits of globalization especially to developing countries like Jamaica. In particular education and training are necessary for securing jobs and maximizing the benefits to Jamaica in existing and emerging areas such as tourism and hospitality, insurance, banking, information and communication technologies, manufacturing, music, the visual and performing arts and sports.

Education and training are also important for developing the important building blocks of Social Capital which are essential for Social Dialogue and Social Partnership. These include positive values and attitudes, trust, cooperation, teamwork, respect for self and others, effective communication, creativity and leadership. If we are frank about it many of us are sometimes skeptical about the importance of a national drive for values and attitudes and the key role of education and training in forming, shaping and transforming negative behaviours to positive actions. But when we are faced with serious issues such as crime and violence, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS then the role of education and training in shaping values and attitudes in our society becomes abundantly clear.

Education and Training should therefore be a key protocol in the national social compact. The recent consensus between the government and the opposition on education is a good start in the right direction leading to where we must get to urgently for a national social compact on priority items for economic growth and competitiveness and social development.

Next there should be a protocol on Crime and Violence. Here we have we have made a good start but we need to work harder and faster on this one because it is like a hydra headed monster seeking to devour us as a nation.

The equally difficult protocols for a national Social Compact that we must tackle are those dealing with economic and labour market issues, exchange rate, interest rate, job creation and employment, wages, salary and social security benefits and productivity for competitiveness.

We almost have to be evangelical about achieving national consensus on the solutions to social and economic problems without being fanatics. Here the area of public or citizen education is critical. Your association, the LSAJ, and other professional associations can and must play a vital role in this process along with the media, the education and training

⁸ Ying, N. (2002;)**The Role of the Private Sector in Social Development in Developing Countries with Specific Reference to Jamaica**; United Nations Expert Group Meeting; Copenhagen, Denmark

institutions and community based organizations. This type of citizen education programme should use a methodology which has two fundamental goals.

The first goal is to make people connect personally with the issues and be a part of the solution. The second goal is the empowerment of people to take solution oriented actions rather than wait on others. The urgent need for effective partnership between the community and the security forces for tackling crime and violence; communities and individuals taking a leadership role in the protection of important assets such our schools, and the proper disposal of garbage; the practice of a healthy lifestyle to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and to be more productive are examples that demonstrate the importance of this methodology.

It is from this type of citizen education and partnership that we can build the foundation for further citizen education and buy in for more complex and important issues such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), Caribbean Single Market & Economy (CSME) and the role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the importance of a National Social Compact which we sometimes take for granted that everyone understands and for which they have a strong commitment. The LSAJ can start to play a key role in this area by including this type of citizen education as part of the mission of your Quarterly Newsletter, **Misclosures**.

The impending events of the FTAA and the CSME, the recent standoff between the security forces and gunmen in CANTERBURY, St James, the protest by residents of Flankers which disrupted our tourist capital Montego Bay, the breakdown in the ministerial meeting of the WTO in Cancun in September, 2003 have a pervasive theme. These events are dramatic and forceful reminders to us that social and economic problems are inextricably linked both in their complexity and urgency and that we have little time to find effective solutions.

Many companies in Jamaica are involved in some aspect of CSR. But we must do more and also do some different and important things. Professional Associations such as the LSAJ must become part of the new CSR movement. The problems we have to tackle as a nation need urgent solutions and the creative and sustained involvement of all of us. We must therefore be willing to experiment rather than wait for the ideal solution. This of course involves risks at the political, corporate and organizational levels. But risk taking and risk management are important aspects of leadership that seeks transformation and change. Hence one of the cardinal principles of effective leadership is to have the moral courage to take cogent action against all odds.

It is within this context that I invite members of the LSAJ to embrace this new type of Corporate Social Responsibility and lead the way towards a new type of social partnership for national development in Jamaica. **Don't pause to ask what you can do, for while you are asking the question there is more to be done and less persons to do what needs to be done.** The moment is now. Let us not miss what might be our last window of opportunity for making a meaningful contribution to progress, prosperity and improved quality of life for our people in Jamaica.

Congratulations again on the occasion of your 75th Anniversary and good luck for the future.

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