



PRESIDENT'S WELCOME
THE PRIVATE SECTOR HALL OF FAME
INDUCTION OF THE HON. CHRISTOPHER BLACKWELL OJ
OCTOBER 26, 2009

Master of Ceremonies, Hon. Prime Minister Bruce Golding and Mrs. Golding, Hon. Olivia (Babsy) Grange, our distinguished honouree, Hon. Chris Blackwell, past Hall of Fame Awardees, Past Presidents and Officers of the PSOJ, PSOJ members, ladies and gentlemen.

I am delighted to welcome you all this evening to the seventeenth staging of the Private Sector Hall of Fame awards, at which we recognise those amongst us in the business community, who, by their example, demonstrate that industry and entrepreneurship are the key to economic and social development in our beloved country.

Tonight, we honour The Honourable Christopher Blackwell, an iconic figure in the spheres of music and eco-tourism, and I am confident that before the night is through, we will all be inspired by the vision and signal achievements of this quintessential entrepreneur, whom we shall induct into the Private Sector Hall of Fame.

I have to confess to there having been some amount of trepidation on the part of the organisers, that Chris might show up this evening in his trademark jeans, tee shirt, and flip-flops. Those of you who know me well will recognise that I am not myself renowned for my own standards of "Haute Couture." I freely admit though, that I lack the gravitas which Chris possesses in abundance and which allows him to get away with that trademark casual style. I nevertheless did suggest, in order to minimise his possible discomfiture, that I should perhaps dress in a similarly casual style. Sandra Glasgow, who everyone in the know recognises "runs tings" at the PSOJ, very quickly and unequivocally made it clear to me that to take such a course might perhaps be more than my life is worth; and discretion being the better part of valour, you see me dressed as I am before you this evening. Chris, the only concession I was able to make for this evening's function was in avoiding a haircut, which a number of my colleagues have suggested to me is long overdue. In the final analysis though, Chris has confounded our

fears and presents this evening a figure of veritable sartorial elegance.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is beyond question that we are living through the toughest and most daunting economic time any of us would have experienced – and we can only hope that none of us in this room will ever experience another period in our history quite like this.

It is in these uncertain times, that the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation are most evident. Researchers have posited that stimulating entrepreneurship is one of the mechanisms that can help to overcome recessions by reallocating resources in such a way that promising new ventures can replace obsolete economic activities. The reports of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor over the last several years, have pointed to the fact that Jamaicans are among the most entrepreneurial in the world, measured not only by the level of entrepreneurial activity, but also by the attitudes and aspirations of our people to chart their own futures and create wealth for themselves. We see this every day, at all levels of our society.

Our failure to mobilise that entrepreneurial culture in the mindsets of the majority of our people and to capitalise on the latent entrepreneurial attitudes and aspirations, I believe, is rooted in the absence of the structural underpinnings that are

recognised as important in building a truly entrepreneurial society. Building this kind of society requires the active contribution of all of us - a Government that is willing to act courageously in implementing the structural reforms that will provide the impetus for entrepreneurial activity; an education and training system that provides high quality preparation; enquiring minds in the media that can help to tell the stories of those who have succeeded and demonstrate role modelship, and a citizenry that recognises their own sense of responsibility in charting their futures and taking advantage of the opportunities that present themselves for wealth creation and community building.

The PSOJ recently rededicated its old tag line from the 1980's "Free Enterprise.... Watch Jamaica Grow". This mantra, we believe must be at the heart of our Government's economic policies and as members of the private sector, we too must demonstrate the wisdom of this approach by embedding entrepreneurship in the consciousness of our young people and encouraging... and mentoring them in starting new businesses. We must ensure that we are well positioned to reap the benefits that will undoubtedly flow when our economic situation improves. We must invest our resources in reviving our agricultural sector; we must boldly develop and grow our foreign exchange earning sectors. Those of us in the financial sector must demonstrate even more clearly and forcefully, our own commitment to the development of small businesses by providing innovative and

timely financial products and services. It is this sector that holds the key to our future as an economy and we ignore at our peril the potential that exists in this sector to stimulate economic growth.

The PSOJ considers the focus on Micro, Small and medium size business as central to the achievement of accelerated and sustained growth rates and in this regard, I am pleased to be able to advise our wider membership this evening, that at a meeting on October 22nd, the Council of the PSOJ approved and adopted a policy document entitled "PSOJ Economic Policy Framework," This document is meant to clearly and concisely outline the PSOJ's economic policy framework to its members, other private sector groups, its counterparties in the public sector and the wider public. The document will be disseminated to the membership in the course of this week and I would encourage you all to review the framework and provide us with your feedback.

The induction of our honouree into the Hall of Fame this evening acknowledges the ambition, determination and inventiveness of this giant of an entrepreneur who over the past 50 years has succeeded in starting and building internationally competitive businesses and in so doing has helped to place Jamaica on the map in no uncertain way. His companies have made invaluable contributions to local communities by providing high quality

employment, products and services and by creating new and innovative markets both at home and abroad. His creativity and the contribution he has made to the lives of countless Jamaicans have not gone unheralded and we are pleased to add our voices to those who have heretofore recognised his immense contributions.

As I contemplated Chris's many successes and his approach to business, I was reminded of that very creative advertisement for Apple computers, appropriately titled "Think Different" that goes like this:

"Here's to the crazy ones
The misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the
round pegs in square holes
The ones who see things differently.
They're not fond of rules
And they have no respect for the status quo
You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify
or vilify them
But the only thing you can't do is ignore them
Because they change things
They push the human race forward
And while some may see them as the "crazy ones"
We see genius

Because the people who are crazy enough to think
that they can change the world
Are the ones that do.”

Chris, it is our immense pleasure to welcome you into the Private
Sector Hall of Fame.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, and have a wonderful evening!

Joseph M. Matalon
PRESIDENT
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