

GREETINGS FOR JAMAICAN DIASPORA HEALTH FORUM RECEPTION

Salutations

Ladies and gentlemen it is exciting and satisfying to be here with you this evening.

First let me bring you greetings from Mr Earl Jarett Chairman of the Jamaican Diaspora Foundation of which the Jamaica Diaspora Institute is the operating arm. He had planned to be with you but because a delayed flight he is not present. Let me assure you that he will be here for the Forum beginning tomorrow.

My journey with you to stage this forum began many months ago with teleconferences. Each teleconference was for many hours on a Sunday. After the first meeting I knew we were going to have a dynamic and successful Health Forum . What were the indicators of this? The first was that each person had her or his own views about what should the purpose , the theme, the title, and the major discussion topics for the Forum . Secondly the passion and energy was high. It demonstrated the view that the Jamaican Diaspora has about 3million persons , each being a leader. I quickly resorted to the role of listener and mediator. So after first set of teleconferences, on October 7 , 2013, I sent out a draft which accommodated different viewpoints. With a draft now in hand the tension gradually subsided. What was needed now was a ***primus inter pares*** – a leader among equals. So that was how Kingsley Gilliam became firmly in charge. And you all know by now that when Mr Kingsley Gilliam makes a commitment to deliver something it is going to happen. In practical terms this means that he is going to keep at you constantly. I had personal experience of this. I got long calls while on the road , in the evenings and Sundays. I was very happy that during some of these calls his wife and daughter needed him urgently.

The next set of key success factors was Sunnybrook International bolstering the process by contributing key human resources and facilities for hosting the Forum and the sponsorship support from Nursing Homemakers Inc, Jamaica National and Nicey's Food Mart.

Most importantly key members of the Diaspora Interest groups for Healthcare and leaders of health missions to Jamaica, foundations and individuals in the major Diaspora locations Canada, USA, and the UK; the Minister and Ministry of Health , Jamaica customs, The Minister of State and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Jamaican High Commission and Consulate in Canada, the Jamaican Diaspora Foundation and its operating arm the Jamaica Diaspora Institute , representatives from the Medical Council, Nursing Council and the KPH and UHWI have all made key inputs for this forum to happen.

After all the planning and anxieties, here we are tonight at the launch of this important health forum.

This forum is a very important event in a series of important events to move the support of the diaspora and friends of Jamaica for healthcare in Jamaica to a new level. It is an important follow up to the Health Forum in Minnesota in 2010 , the Diaspora Healthcare fact finding mission in 2011, and the recommendations and actions for healthcare from the 5th Biennial conference in 2013.

So on behalf of the Jamaica Diaspora Institute who performed the roles of facilitator, technical and professional adviser, mediator and counsellor for all these events I greet you all tonight with great expectations for a successful forum over the next two days.

Professor Neville Ying

Executive Director

Jamaica Diaspora Institute

