



Keynote Address

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School of Business Administration Student Conference

University of Technology, Jamaica

College of Business and Management

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Salutations...

I am extremely delighted and privileged to be here with you today and to have the opportunity to speak to you on this most important occasion. Let me first extend my congratulations to the students of the School of Business Administration at the University of Technology for its 23rd staging of the Student's Conference. Empowering students to be responsible for such a large undertaking is part of the holistic learning environment that is needed to ensure that our young people are equipped to be productive, creative, and collaborative citizens.

Organizing and executing a conference of this magnitude is no small feat. It enables students to hone their skills in planning, time management, conflict resolution, business communication, marketing, logistics, and events management. So, thank you to the lecturers and administrators at UTECH and the School of Business Administration for entrusting students with such an important responsibility. It has no doubt empowered them and goes back to much of what is needed; a practical, hands on approach to learning.

Six decades ago, the Jamaica Institute of Technology came along. The institution started with just over 50 students and offered only four programs and the next year it evolved into the College of Arts, Science and Technology, better known as CAST. Later, in 1995 it emerged as the University of Technology. In those six decades, thousands of students have

matriculated at the Papine based institution creating a wealth of graduates, who have been educated in various disciplines.

UTech's arrival after Jamaica's independence made it one of the first tertiary institutions of its time. It made it possible for young people to achieve advanced knowledge in areas such as Business Administration. The institution started out focusing on technology and technical education and today facilitates matriculation in the College of Business and Management, which now accommodates majors in Banking and Finance, Human Resource Management, General Management, Production and Operations Management, Marketing and Accounting. This is a far cry from the initial four programs that the University offered in the fifties.

With the growth and development of this institution, students have matriculated in disciplines that make it possible to deliver transformational leadership. These same students are the ones that have been entrusted to empower and develop themselves, their followers and their organizations.

This year's theme, "**Transformational Leadership: Creating Sustainable Growth**" is a very relevant one for Jamaica. In all spheres – political, business, social, religious, family – the critical ingredient for an environment that fosters innovation, collaboration, respect, tolerance, creativity, calculated risk-taking, and I could go on – is leadership. But not just leadership that focuses on checking boxes; leadership that:

- works with others to identify areas in need of change;
- creates a vision for change that is both inspirational and aspirational;
and,
- collaborates to execute the change needed to achieve the stated objective.

In other words, leadership that is not transactional, but transformational. Leadership must entail collaborative action with the ambition of generating political, social, or economic growth and development at the most fundamental level.

As our country prepares to celebrate its 56th year of independence it is clear that we have benefitted from transformational leadership and we are on a positive path to achieve sustainable growth.

Looking back at colonial times to us becoming an independent nation, our founding fathers were instrumental in moving a colonial society to nationhood. It is to our benefit that our founding fathers had a vision of a country whose citizens would not be afraid of consequence. Marcus Garvey once said, "Men who are in earnest are not afraid of consequences." Consequently their transformational leadership put us on the road to create sustainable growth and development.

This ideology must be maintained. Continuity must be upheld in government, no matter which side is in power. Credit must be given to

those that came before, and work must be done not to tear down their progress. Instead, prior progress must be built on to ensure continued benefits for the people of Jamaica. Petty politics must also be avoided. "Out of Many One People," the country's motto aptly captures the notion that we all need to work together in order to execute sustainable growth. All of you soon to be graduates working together to bring this conference to fruition is a testament to that concept.

Transformational leadership calls for one to be forthright, to respect your peers, to engage others to work in a manner that motivates them, and to be compassionate enough to acknowledge and apologize when mistakes are made.

In my personal and professional life at various levels, I have had to be bold, thoughtful, passionate, and compassionate in my roles whether within my family, my community and indeed my nation. **[Expand on personal experience, challenges and successes]**. As I serve in various capacities, I always keep in mind what legacy do I want to leave? How will I make a difference in our country? How do we as a people write for ourselves and follow a powerful narrative to carve out for ourselves the best possible future?

Transformational leadership demands that we not be content with the status quo. It demands that we be innovators and creative thinkers. It demands that we do things that have never been done. It demands that

we empower people. It demands that we invest in our human capital. It demands that we work in unison towards a common goal.

Ladies and gentlemen, that common goal is sustainable growth. Growth is not an abstract concept. For too long we have viewed this as a mere idea, as an intangible outcome that may or may not be realized.

The truth is that growth and the accompanying benefits are in fact tangible. When we achieve growth we will see better infrastructure, better standards of living, higher rates of employment, improved quality of life and overall prosperity in various aspects of our lives. It is important for us to change the perception that growth is a macro phenomenon that has no bearing or impact on our individual lives. Once we realize that growth has immediate far reaching benefits on a micro level, and once we exert our energies as individuals towards this objective of growth, the outcome is shared success for all; inclusive growth, sustainable growth.

For many years we have said Jamaica has the potential to grow, Jamaica has the capacity to grow, Jamaica has the human capital to grow, but have we taken note of the fact that that potential of which we speak, that capacity that human capital, all of it resides inside of each of us?

A simple decision to be more productive at your workplace, to start a small business, to invest in your homeland, to generate new ideas and to act on them, these are all ways in which we contribute to the growth we seek.

Transformational leaders must not only articulate big ideas that will create the path to sustainable growth and prosperity for all; they must inspire people to come to the realization that they are the change we have been waiting for.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of inspiring and empowering people to be the creators of growth. Empowerment is that small seed we plant that tells us that we have the audacity to accomplish great things and that we have the tools to do so.

Importantly, as I have noted, growth will come through empowerment as well as efficiency, productivity, innovation and consistency. It is imperative that we do so conscious of the fact that as a country we have been displaying transformational leadership while working towards certain goals that will foster an environment of sustainable development. Some of the sustainable development goals that we have been working towards include:

- Quality Education
- Good jobs and economic growth
- Innovation and Infrastructure
- Climate action
- No poverty

- **Quality education:** Jamaica has approximately 585 primary schools and about 166 high schools. We have extended opportunities for everybody to be in school and we are committed to build more to ensure that no one gets left behind. Statistics also indicate that in the past 10 years there has been an upward trend in the growth of the student population here at UTech and at its competitor down the road. This progressive trend contributes directly to reducing poverty, leaving more and more Jamaicans equipped to lead a positive and impactful life. Once our citizens have been armed with degrees, they are now positioned to fill and even create good jobs that can boost economic growth. This is enablement.
- **In regards to Innovation, we have been ushering Jamaica into the digital economy** where the public sector in particular, will leverage modern technology to improve service delivery is another imperative. One of the many individual steps needed to make this vision a reality is a National Identification System. To support transactional activities, secure entitlements and provisions from the State, and adequately plan for our citizens, there must be a civil registry uniquely identifying every person, securing identity data and allowing verification of the identity as needed. This is efficiency and modernization.
- We have been expanding our efforts to have a better **infrastructure** network. We have undertaken projects to rehabilitate and widen many of the major roads to help to foster more productivity by

easing traffic and congestion in the corporate area. Rural areas are not to be forgotten either. Plans for the rehabilitation of rural roads have also been put in place to facilitate more agricultural, industrial and tourism activities across the island.

- **Public sector transformation and improved service delivery across all sectors** - the pace at which we get things done and the quality of the work done is an important factor in achieving growth. We must consistently perform at a high level, increase our output and capitalize on opportunities. This is productivity.
- **To reduce poverty,** access to housing has been highlighted as a critical social need in Jamaica. Various surveys and analyses have noted that there is an unfulfilled demand for housing. The policy of the current administration is to make housing accessible for all Jamaicans. And through individual steps taken by various stakeholders, we are on a path to creating that vision – accessible housing for all. For example: the National Housing Trust has made several policy and product changes that facilitate easier access to housing solutions. In the last two years, we have completed approximately 8,200 housing starts. Additionally, we are already executing plans to do a total of approximately 22,000 housing starts for the four-year period to 2020. These small steps, aggregated will significantly contribute to the big vision of housing accessibility for all. This is empowerment.

- Jamaica suffers huge economic losses as a result of the environmental effects of climate change, which makes **Climate Action** pertinent to Jamaica being able to foster sustainable growth. Billions of dollars have been lost in recuperation efforts, and governments are becoming increasingly aware that adaptation and capacity building are crucial to communities' continued survival. To address this, capacity building and climate change adaptation programs have been executed in rural areas in Jamaica. These initiatives prepared Jamaicans to help promote agricultural activity and bolster farming areas against the effects of climate change. In addition to creating infrastructure which will aid in preventing soil loss, the farmers that are prone to the effects of climate are being educated about the impacts of climate change and have been engaged to use their experiences to aid in the development of strategies for coping with oncoming effects.

Many of us do not know a Jamaica where growth is robust and sustained. The vision of sustainable growth is the aggregate of a series of individual steps. From obtaining and maintaining fiscal stability to stimulating and expanding investment opportunities to improving the country's physical infrastructure for an easier commute and movement of goods and services; and the list goes on. We must find what works and make it work for us. This is consistency.

My point is that transformational leadership does not occur in a vacuum. Transformational leadership is about managing a series of individual steps that in totality result in achieving the intended vision. My charge to us as a country is that we must commit ourselves to the growth agenda. We must take it personally, we must think of how our individual effort can contribute to the collective thrust towards growth. We are all part of the bigger picture.

Transformational leadership rests on the core attributes of integrity and honesty. It requires the ability to inspire people, foster good human relationships; develop the skills of those with whom you work; and motivate others to go beyond the confines of their job descriptions.

My challenge to all of us is that we endeavor to add value and have a positive impact and that we think of growth as a micro matter, something that can result from our simple individual decision to be more and do more. If each of us does this with conviction, we are just moments away from sustainable growth for all.

I thank you.