

Address at the Governor General's Installation

This is a great day. Today we say goodbye and thank you to our beloved Governor General, and we also welcome and give thanks to our new Governor General.

I wish to thank Her Excellency Dame Susan Dougan for her magnificent service to our country. Your Excellency, your public service has been enduring and outstanding. Today, as you leave this public role, a grateful nation says farewell. We wish you Godspeed as you embark on a new journey. We thank you, and we wish you good health and good fortune in the years ahead.

Our nation remains in good hands, for we now have as our new Head of State His Excellency Stanley John. Our nation knows him as an excellent barrister at law, King's Counsel. As a prominent and distinguished lawyer, he has given service to many in our courts, representing vigorously and always in keeping with the highest standards of that noble profession, always with dignity and professionalism.

He has also had his days in the rough and tumble of national politics. In keeping with his nature, he gave his all, remaining true to himself, his family, and his beloved country. Knowing him as well as I do, I can say that he could do it no other way, for he knows no other way but to give of his best.

It is my immense good fortune to know him, to have benefited from his generosity and wisdom over the years. It is my pleasure to call him my long standing friend, and now it is my distinct honour to have him as my Head of State, my country's Governor General.

Your Excellency, we are indeed a fortunate people that you have once more answered the call to be at the forefront of public service. As His Majesty the King's representative here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, I know you will serve honourably and faithfully. As a son of the soil, whose love of country is second to none and knows no bounds, I have no doubt that you will be exemplary in your service as Head of State.

To your family, I say thank you on behalf of a grateful nation for enabling him to take on this great and awesome responsibility. This new journey will not be his alone, for you will be with him every step of the way.

Today, the sun shines brightly on our blessed land. We have only recently elected a new Government with a clear and unmistakable mandate to bring change for the better, to continue to move our people forward together as one, to build on and accelerate progress for our people.

Your Excellency, as the leader of the Government, I pledge to fulfil that mandate and to govern this land with respect for all, and by the grace of Almighty God, never to yield, no matter the challenge.

Further, we are at the beginning of a new year. Beginnings always bring hope. It is for us to make the best of that hope, to embrace the immense possibilities it lays before us, and to move forward.

I am fortified by the love and support our people have invested in me as your Prime Minister, and in my colleagues as your Ministers and as their representatives. That strength will enable us to do great things. Of this I have no doubt.

May God continue to bless us all.