

## ADDRESS BY THE HON MINISTER ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

Today, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, Dominica joins the rest of the United Nations in observing the International Day of Older Persons, under the theme, **“The Journey to Ageing Equality.”** Significantly, this follows at the heels of the recently concluded activities of the Dominica Council on Ageing’s “Month of the Elderly” with a conjoined theme *“Pioneers of Resilience – The Journey to Ageing Equality”*. This latter theme clearly reflects on the determination, commitment and capacity of this nation of ours to rise and advance against all odds.

As the clock ticks, so does the number of Older Persons in our society increase, and likewise our responsibility to them. Our responsibility to a people who have contributed to the fabric of our successes as a nation, a group of people who still have more to offer, a group of people who we must continue to respect and cherish, a people who will never disappear because of inevitable natural recruitment. These are the reasons why like other members of this global community, this Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica continues to make provisions for the ageing components of our nation, by providing, among other things, appropriate housing, care, and other social

programmes that see to it that our Older Persons age gracefully and enjoy their golden age. It is in this spirit that the International Day of Older Persons theme espouses 'ageing equality', a task and responsibility every single capable citizen of this nation and the global community must remain in tune with.

Another aspect this year's theme advocates is the need to ensure that our Older Persons are not exposed to the ugly and unfortunate elements of **abuse** which are becoming exponentially a global concern.

Our senior citizens deserve better. As a nation, we must remain vigilant, and, at all costs, guard

against such evils. We must rise above that fray, we must act decisively and nobly to be part of the psyche that considers and makes our Older Persons not just our equals, but, our adored treasures. We must continue to interact with them, engage them, and not let them leave the face of this planet with all their wealth of knowledge.

It is projected that by 2050 the global population of Older Persons, which currently stands at 700 million, will rise to over 2 billion, and proportionately in our local context, our population will take a similar, if not increased, trend. This is evident in the number of persons

we have on record that are annually joining the grouping of persons over 60 years. Additionally, many people are joining the ranks of national centenarians, an indication of how blessed we are in this *isle of beauty* to have and enjoy the quality of life many others may envy. Yes, as a nation, we must not detract from what gives us this global status as a people with exceptional longevity. Let us learn from the lifestyle of our Older Persons and emulate their successes.

Let us, on this day and beyond, continue to exhibit our respect to the Older Persons. Give them their dues. They have made the sacrifice

and have laid the foundation that we now must build on.

On this International Day of Older Persons, visit and spend a few extra moments with our beloved Older Persons wherever they may be. If not all the time, but for this day, today, share with them your love and appreciation.