

**WELCOME REMARKS ON THE OCASSION OF THE INVESTITURE OF
JAMAICA'S POET LAUREATE
PROFESSOR MERVYN MORRIS
MAY 21, 2014**

DAHLIA HARRIS-PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR OF CULTURE

On behalf of the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment and the National Library of Jamaica, an agency of the Ministry of Youth and Culture, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Jamaican history...because that is in fact what we are all witnessing today....an event that years to come will be referenced through our archives as a critical part of how we preserve the narrative of this wonderful island.

May is a month that marks a number of significant activities here in Jamaica. It is the month that we place more emphasis on our children and their needs, it is the month that we celebrate the Jamaican worker and their contribution to our development, it is the month when volunteers across the island join hands and heart to make this a better nation, it is the month when we recognise the sacrifice of the Rt. Excellent Sam Sharpe and how that catalysed full freedom; and it will now be known as the month when as a nation we underscored the significance of creative expression through literary work.

Every single one of us are therefore not just here to witness the proceedings as they unfold, but will be counted among the few who will be able to bear testimony to how every single minute blossoms into years and decades and eventually centuries of increased Jamaican artistic appreciation and national engagement.

T.S. Elliot offers that:

“Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.”

We can certainly attest to the fact that our Laureate is possessed of great emotion and certainly a lot of personality.

Professor Morris represents a generation of distinguished Jamaican poets and thinkers including Claude McKay, Louise Bennett and the Rt. Excellent Marcus Garvey whose words have propelled us to global recognition.

Our list of speakers will shed more light on the significance of the event, so I simply ask that you relax, enjoy and absorb the continuity of greatness, which Morris describes in his own dialogue on Usain Bolt....

**Greatness is
to get mi head to settle
on di nex event**

Congratulations Professor Morris, we look forward to your next, great 'literary' event.

I invite you all to enjoy this remarkable evening with an outstanding Jamaican son and brother.