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**M**OMENTS after taking the Oath which officially signalled her return to office for a second time, newly installed Prime Minister Portia Lucretia Simpson Miller promised Jamaicans that the administration she now leads will reject governmental extravagance and be vigilant in eliminating corruption.

In a sobering inauguration speech, which was interrupted several times by rousing applause, Simpson Miller also pledged that her government will serve with humility while honouring the faith and trust of the Jamaican people.

"I believe that today marks a critical turning point in our journey. You must believe this with me and you must play your part in this process of transformation," she said, adding that it is "Jamaica's time to shine again".

"The challenges will not disappear overnight, but together we can overcome and we shall rise and we shall shine," Simpson Miller said.

According to Simpson Miller, who led the People's National Party to a convincing win in the December 29 poll, Jamaicans have sent a clear message that they want a more accountable and transparent government which consults them.

"And they should expect nothing less," Simpson Miller told the more than 8,000 invited

guests — among them several overseas and local dignitaries — who made the trip to King's House in St Andrew yesterday to witness Simpson Miller's return to Jamaica House.

Addressing the massive audience, Jamaica's first female prime minister, said she is aware of the awesome task the administration will face with greater debt, increased poverty levels and tighter fiscal space.

But Simpson Miller, who began her speech by reciting two verses from Psalms 118, insisted that she will not engage in any blame-game, in an obvious swipe at the previous Government which, after winning the 2007 general election, blamed the PNP administration it defeated for a lot of the country's ills.

"We will present the facts to the Jamaican people, based on rigorous analysis. Our approach must be to right the wrong and insist on accountability," she said.

The first order of business, she said, will be for the leadership team to inform themselves about the true state of the Jamaican economy, following which they must act.

Simpson Miller said she remains committed to a vibrant partnership with all critical stakeholders, among them the International Monetary Fund, as they identify the basis for a new agreement.

While noting that her administration's policies are based on the principle that the private sector is a major participant in shaping the country's economy, Simpson

# 'Time to

## Portia urges unity for transformation, pledges to reject extravagance and corruption



Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller smiles as she is presented with the instrument of office by Governor General Sir Patrick Allen at her inauguration yesterday at King's House. (Photos: Bryan Cummings)

# shine'

Miller said in a time of crisis, government must act to stimulate growth and to restore confidence in Jamaica's ability to pay its way.

"Hence, in the short and medium term, we will use State resources to stimulate employment through the Jamaica Emergency

Programme (JEEP)," she announced, adding that this will improve critical areas such as the infrastructure and the environment which support economic growth.

This, she however insisted, will be done in a transparent and non-partisan manner.

Her reference to the JEEP drew loud applause, given that the programme received a lot of flak in the run-up to the election, as it was described by the then Government as a crash programme that offered no permanent solution to the country's unemployment problem.

Simpson Miller also sought to assure the business community that the Government will pursue a tight fiscal policy, reduce the debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio, maintain key macro-

economic fundamentals and be very careful and prudent in debt management.

"We will do all of this while seeking to improve the social conditions of our people, including a serious reduction of the chronic state of unemployment in this country, particularly among our young people," she said.

The administration, she said, will work tirelessly to ensure that the lives of the people are balanced along with the books.

Meanwhile, Simpson Miller said an important agenda item will be Jamaica's acceptance of the Caribbean Court of Justice in its final appellate jurisdiction of criminal matters. That, she said, would end judicial surveillance from London's Privy Council and fully repatriate Jamaica's sovereignty.

"We invite the Opposition to follow through on the statements which it recently made that we were 'not far apart' in our respective positions," she said, as she urged them to complete this aspect of regional integration within the life of the administration.

Noting that Jamaica needs to complete the circle of independence with the celebration of our 50th anniversary of self-government, Simpson Miller said her Government will also initiate the process of the detachment from the Monarchy to become a republic with its own indigenous president as head of state.

But the near half-hour

speech was also punctuated with hope for the people as she promised that the Government will seek to earn the people's respect by how they conduct themselves and the nation's business.

"We will strive for more civil and respectful behaviour in our Parliament," she said.

She also encouraged Jamaicans to take responsibility for their lives. "Be the best student you can be, the best parent, the best teacher, doctor or nurse, politician, public servant or private business person, athlete or entertainer, designer, dressmaker, hairdresser or barber and strive to improve yourselves by reinvesting in your personal development."

She also reminded political parties that nothing can make Jamaica fail if "we put aside differences and strive for ultimate goals".

In the face of what she described as dramatic winds of change, Simpson Miller called for all hands on deck, noting that the nation requires the strength, creativity, innovation and the steely courage of every Jamaica man, woman, youth and child to place this vessel on a path to prosperity.

Her message delivered, Simpson Miller hugged outgoing prime minister Andrew Holness, then escorted him from his seat on the platform to the podium where she held his hand in the air and asked the audience to give him a big round of applause.



Former prime ministers Edward Seaga (2nd left) and P J Patterson share a word during yesterday's inauguration of Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller at King's House. Also photographed are Seaga's wife Carla (left), Lady Hall and her husband former governor general Sir Kenneth Hall.

# Portia's return a 'satisfying

BN Miller Portia

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PRIME Minister Portia Simpson Miller's ascendancy to head of government a second time in scarcely six years was yesterday deemed as more than just history repeating itself: it was a "satisfying comeback", according to Burchell Whiteman.

"It's very satisfying because I think she has been through a very testing time as a new prime minister, having been a member of parliament and minister for many, many years and at the end of the day in 2007 while the economic statistics were looking good there was clear evidence that the party machinery had not done well in her time. Not necessarily her fault but it had not done well, and as a result she tasted the agony of defeat," said Whiteman, a former senator, cabinet minister and diplomat under the previous People's National Party administration.

Whiteman, easily one of Jamaica's most respected politicians ever, was speaking with the **Observer** ahead of



Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller is flanked by Governor General Sir Patrick Allen (right) and outgoing prime minister Andrew Holness at her inauguration at King's House yesterday.

Simpson Miller's inauguration ceremony yesterday at King's House.

He said Simpson Miller, who was installed as prime minister for the second time, had — despite the odds — bounced back admirably from the PNP's

2007 election defeat.

"She has weathered the storms, she kept herself together, she brought the party together in fact, and now is reaping the rewards of being an effective opposition leader, managing the affairs of the

party very well and being in touch with the people, the mood of the people, and the interest of the people and the concerns of the people which really has been her strength all along," Whiteman noted.

"So it's very satisfying to see

her come back in this way and with such a significant majority of seats," he said in reference to the PNP's winning 42 seats in the 63-member Parliament. "So we are looking forward to good things; very challenging times, but I think that she of all people can communicate with the people and ensure that they are onboard with what is happening to them and around them and what they can contribute."

In the meantime, the elder statesman said while he would have no active role on the front pages of the current administration his interest was in grooming the successors to the current crop of politicians.

"I have no role. I am just in the background. There is some support. I would like to give to the whole succession planning and the changing of the guards and so on, when it comes. I am willing to do that, but I am not front and centre in anything," he noted.

Yesterday, among those who had gathered to hail the return of Simpson Miller was former junior minister and member of parliament for North East St Elizabeth Kern Spencer, who is now before the Courts on

# comeback', says Whiteman

corruption charges in the Cuban light bulb scandal.

"At this point I am extremely happy for Mrs Portia Simpson Miller, she had the position as prime minister before for a very short stint but I think this is even more significant because even though it was said that she created history by becoming the first female prime minister I think this now feels 'realer' to her because she has gotten her own mandate," he told the **Observer**.

"It was handed to her under the mandate of former prime minister PJ Patterson at first, and I think now it must be a great feeling for her. I know that she has a lot of good intentions for the country but didn't get enough time to

execute and I think that she is going to prove herself," Spencer said.

"I don't think she is that pressured at this time because of the overwhelming majority in terms of the seats, so she is a little bit more comfortable to carry out and execute her job and I think we are going to see the best yet of Portia Simpson Miller going forward," he added.

Spencer, who was dropped from the PNP election slate, said he had regrets about not being part of the new administration.

"I would have loved to serve," he said. "I didn't actually get a chance to be a part of this administration because of the court case. I am very disappointed and I am not afraid to say it, I feel as if four years of

my life have been taken away from me unfairly, but I have learnt that a day in politics is a very long time and I have said to persons you have not heard the last of Kern Spencer."

"I am still very happy, I have one team, one government, I am still a part of the party, the party has powerful support in the constituency of North East St Elizabeth where I am still active. I was the one who engineered the entrance of Raymond Pryce and I am working with him to ensure that that constituency is successful," Spencer told the **Observer**, adding "so this is not the last of me; there are so many capacities in which to serve and I am hoping to be assisting the Government in helping to execute their responsibilities".

Yesterday, at 4:27 pm after a prompt start, Simpson Miller was presented with the Instrument of Appointment sealing her ascendancy to the office by Governor General Sir Patrick Allen under a burnished afternoon sun and the watchful eyes of an adoring, well-behaved crowd which, as if on cue, clapped and cheered at appropriate intervals with one will, substituting birdcalls for the prohibited vuvuzelas (noisemakers).

For the siblings of the newly installed prime minister, the moment, though a repeat, was nonetheless potent.

"Oh my goodness, it's overwhelming, she's my smaller sister. I am overjoyed. I was expecting this. She was

always a great girl growing up, she was always my father's special girl. I am very, very, very proud of her," the prime minister's elder brother, Vincent Simpson, told the **Observer** while beaming from ear to ear.

The prime minister's sister, Cynthia Simpson-Smith, was no less effusive: "Oh my God, it's the best thing ever that can happen. I came in from New York only yesterday. I am ecstatic, I can't find words. She has earned it, I don't even have to wish it, I know the Lord has blessed her," Simpson-Smith said. "It's going to be a trying time. I know she will be challenged, but we are with her."