

**REPORT OF THE SESSIONAL SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
HUMAN RESOURCES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE  
SYSTEM OF NATIONAL HONOURS AND AWARDS**

Members of this Honourable House are reminded that on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of March 2008, the House of Representatives, on a motion moved by the Leader of the House, passed the following resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** that notwithstanding Standing Order No. 68 (3) and in accordance with Standing Orders Nos. 68 (1)(i) and 73C this House appoint a Human Resources and Social Development Committee comprising the following Members:

Mrs. Maxine Henry-Wilson            - Chairman

Hon. Shahine Robinson

Hon. Michael Stern

Dr. St. Aubyn Bartlett

Mr. Franklyn Witter

Mr. Desmond Mair

Mr. Othneil Lawrence

Mr. Tarn Peralto

Dr. Fenton Ferguson

Mr. Kern Spencer

Rev. Ronald Thwaites

Mrs. Natalie Neita-Headley

Mr. Colin Fagan

with the following Terms of Reference:

- (a) examining policy documents and statements from Ministries and Government agencies which have a bearing on the subject matter of its terms of reference;
- (b) examining legislative proposals which may have an effect on the subject matter of its terms of reference and making recommendations to Cabinet through Legislation Committee;

- (c) receiving submissions from citizens and organizing meetings between citizens, community groups, sectorial organizations, Members of Parliament and representatives of Government agencies to facilitate exchange of views on the operations of Government agencies and their effect on communities and groups in the society; and
- (d) organizing meetings with relevant organizations in order to seek such information on their activities as the public interest may demand.

On September 16, 2008, the Prime Minister, having obtained suspension of the Standing Orders, moved the following motion:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, with reference to Ministry Paper No. 68/2008, that the report of the Review of the System of National Honours and Awards, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2008, be referred to the Human Resources and Social Development Committee for consideration and report.

On October 28, 2008, on a motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the House, **Dr. Fenton Ferguson** replaced **Mrs. Maxine Henry-Wilson** as Chairman of the Committee.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2009, the House of Representatives passed a further resolution enabling the Committee to complete the deliberations on the matters that were under consideration before the prorogation of Parliament.

Your Committee began its deliberations on the **Report of the Committee to Review the System of National Honours and Awards** on February 26, 2009 and held five (5) meetings, the last of which took place on November 24, 2009.

## **1.0 Overview**

In October 2007, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Hon. Bruce Golding, appointed a Committee to Review the System of National Honours and Awards. That Committee consisted of nine individuals and was chaired by Professor the Hon. Rex Nettleford, OM, OCC, FIJ.

The Committee's Terms of Reference are outlined below:

1. To review the system of National Honours and Awards and make recommendations as to the changes that may be necessary to preserve and enhance the value of national awards while ensuring that appropriate recognition is given to those who render outstanding services to the nation.
2. To include in its considerations, the advisability of:
  - (a) expanding the existing categories of award;
  - (b) introducing a new category of awards for groups;
  - (c) establishing more detailed criteria for the selection of recipients in each category;
  - (d) limiting the number of awards that may be made in each category;
  - (e) incorporating a system of Parish Awards with appropriate categories to give recognition for service rendered at the local level;
  - (f) according appropriate titles to recipients of high honours.

At the beginning of the deliberation process, some Members of your Committee highlighted a number of recommendations in the Report, which in their view were ambiguous. Your Committee therefore took a decision to invite Professor the Hon. Rex Nettleford, the Chairman of the Committee to Review the System of National Honours and Awards, to clarify the matters. Professor Nettleford was unable to attend the meetings due to prior engagements and therefore nominated Mr. Merrick Needham, OD, MVO to represent the Review Committee at the meeting held on March 26, 2009.

## **2.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **2.1 New Honour – Order of Jamaican Heritage (OJH)**

It was brought to the attention of the Members that there was a recommendation by the Committee which reviewed the System of National Honours and Awards to introduce a new Honour, namely the *Order of Jamaican Heritage*. That Honour would be the second highest National Honour and would be bestowed on individuals who made significant contributions to Jamaica's heritage over an extended period of time, for example, the Honourable Louise Bennett-Coverly and the Honourable Robert Nesta Marley. Additionally, the pre-nominal title *The Most Honourable Chieftain* would be used to address individuals to be admitted to the Order regardless of their gender.

The Members were informed by Mr. Needham that the term “cacique” had been among the titles suggested during the review process. However, it was felt that there was a need for a title with an African linkage that Jamaicans could appreciate. The Members were subsequently advised that the Committee which reviewed the System of National Honours and Awards had agreed on the title *Chieftain*, which was a designation for leaders of various Scottish clans. The view was then expressed by your Committee that the title was inappropriate, would be used derisively and would take a long time for Jamaicans to accept. It was therefore proposed by the Members that if one is unable to find a congenial appellation it would be enough to simply bestow the Honour on individuals. **Your Committee recommends that the Parliament decide on a suitable title which would be used to address individuals to be admitted to the Order of Jamaican Heritage.**

## **2.2 Order of Merit (OM)**

The Members of your Committee were advised that the Committee to Review the System of National Honours and Awards has recommended that a limited number of individuals be admitted to the Order of Merit. It was further brought to the attention of the Members that during the review process the Committee had also considered whether the number of recipients for the other Orders should be limited.

**Your Committee recommends that the number of recipients of the various honours be limited.** It was further proposed that the number of ceremonies to award individuals for their services rendered to the nation should also be limited. It was the view of some Members that those ceremonies should be held when the required numbers of individuals who are deserving of the various honours and awards were selected.

## **2.3 Posthumous Awards**

In his presentation to the Committee, Mr. Needham pointed out that during the review process, the question of whether people should be appointed to high Honours in their lifetime or after their death was raised. The Members were told that during the deliberations of the Review Committee, mention was made of the appointment of Ben Johnson to the Order of Canada and the decision to later remove him from that Order because of his use of illicit drugs. Your Committee was subsequently informed that currently there is an extremely careful process

of making appointments in Canada and that people are rarely appointed to certain high Honours. Mr. Needham also advised the Members that the review Committee was of the view that one should be slow in bestowing honours. **Your Committee considered the matter and strongly recommends that as far as possible individuals must be awarded or honoured during their lifetime once they meet the relevant criteria.** The view was expressed that there was no point in honouring or awarding an individual after his or her death because the honour or award would only serve to benefit the community or the family of the individual. Some Members proposed that awards be made posthumously in cases where the services rendered by people were recognized following their deaths.

#### **2.4 Criteria for selecting recipients for the various Honours and Awards**

The Members of the Committee expressed concern about the criteria used to select recipients of honours and awards at both the local and national level. The Members are of the view that individuals should not be honoured or awarded based on the discretion of those making the recommendations and therefore propose that the System of National Honours and Awards be transparent and that there be set standards for selecting the awardees. It was further proposed that there be prescribed standards by which persons who had been honoured or awarded should live. Your Committee also recommends that there be a mechanism whereby individuals who had been honoured and who later discredit the Honour, particularly the Order of Jamaica, be stripped of such as soon as possible.

#### **2.5 The Jamaica Medal of Appreciation and the Categorization of Parish Awards**

The Members have considered the recommendation by the review Committee to introduce a new national award, namely the Jamaica Medal of Appreciation. That award would be incorporated into the system of annual Parish Awards to give recognition for various categories of services rendered at the parochial level. Your Committee is in full support of the view that it would be useful to have various categories for Parish Awards. However, there should be a distinction between awards for service at the national level and service at the parochial level. It was therefore recommended that the present system of annual Parish Awards remain and that effort be made to embellish what currently exists. Your Committee also recommends that every Parish Council should ensure that individuals who meet the relevant criteria are awarded for their

contribution. Additionally, the Association of Local Government Officers (ALGO) should also ensure that there is a standardized system of parochial awards.

Your Committee is also of the view that effort must be made by the various social and community groups as well as Members of Parliament to ensure consistency in awarding individuals from all parishes for their services rendered at the local level.

### **2.6 Gallantry Companion of Honour**

It was brought to your Committee's attention that the Committee to Review the System of National Honours and Awards has recommended that there be a new award, namely, the *Gallantry Companion of Honour*, a medal for exceptional acts of gallantry. The Members considered the matter and are of the view that there was no justification given for this new award. Furthermore, there was no clear definition as to what would constitute 'exceptional acts of gallantry.' **Your Committee is of the view that the existing Medal of Honour for Gallantry is enough and therefore rejects the recommendation.**

### **2.7 People's perception of the various Honours and Awards**

During your Committee's deliberation it was stated that there were individuals who perceived certain awards, for example, the Badge of Honour for Meritorious Service, to be less important than certain honours, for example, the Order of Distinction. Your Committee recommends that emphasis be placed on certain core values and that there be programmes to educate the populace on the criteria for selecting individuals for various types of honours and awards so that there can be a greater appreciation for those honours and awards.

### **2.8 Honours should be granted on the basis of achievement rather than ascription**

The view was expressed that Jamaica should adopt the principle of the British House of Commons to bestow honours on individuals who had served their country well. During the deliberations, it was said that in many instances people were contributors to political campaigns and as a consequence they become recipients of certain honours, an occurrence which is not unique to Jamaica. The view was then expressed that individuals should only be honoured or awarded on the basis on merit.

The Committee established to review the System of National Honours and Awards had recommended that the Order of the Nation should be conferred on Governors-General and not on Prime Ministers. However, the view expressed by the Members was that Honours should neither be bestowed on a Governor-General nor a Prime Minister before he or she carried out the required duties. Mention was made of the current Prime Minister, the Hon. Bruce Golding, and his refusal to be admitted to the Honour Order of the Nation, merely by virtue of the assumption of the Office, and admiration was subsequently expressed. **Your Committee recommends that Honours be granted on the basis of achievement and not ascription.**

### **2.9 Miniature Badges**

Your Committee queried the recommendation, noted as item 25 on page 40 of the Report, to discontinue the issuing of miniature badges to the recipients of the various awards in an attempt to save hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. During his submission, Mr. Merrick Needham advised the Members that the total cost of miniature badges in 2007 was estimated at the Pound Sterling (£) equivalent of J \$ 2,400,000.00. He further informed the Committee that for at least forty years the United Kingdom had not issued miniature badges to awardees and it was on that basis that it had been proposed that recipients would be required to purchase miniature badges. The Members were further advised that consideration had been given to sourcing the badges in either Trinidad or China to reduce cost. However, it was felt that the badges should be sourced from the current manufacturers to ensure that the quality would remain the same. **Your Committee is of the view that recipients of the various awards should not be required to purchase miniature badges in spite of the cost. It is the view of the Members that the badges should be provided free of cost.**

### **2.10 Formal Occasions where Badges of Honour can be worn**

Your Committee was advised that in countries such as Britain and the United States functions were held to give the recipients of various awards an opportunity to wear their Badges. The Members were further informed that a proposal had been made many years previously for national functions to be held annually, so that awardees could wear their Badges. It was recommended that those functions be held throughout Jamaica, not only on Emancipation Day and Independence Day but on other occasions. **Your Committee disagrees with that**

**recommendation. The Members propose that the Badges be worn only on formal civic occasions.**

### **2.11 Awards Ceremony for Members of the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF)**

Your Committee received a letter dated November 2, 2009 from the Prime Minister, the Hon. Bruce Golding, who forwarded correspondence to the Committee written by Major (retired) Richard Reese, JP, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of National Security.

Major (retired) Richard Reese wrote to the Chancery of the Orders of the Society of Honours in response to a letter submitted by Major General SE Saunders, the Chief of Defence Staff, who in a letter to the Minister of National Security had raised concern that for over nineteen years, there has been a lack of awards for the Order of Distinction (Officer Class) to serving and past members of the Jamaica Defence Force. He subsequently proposed that there be a ceremony at King's House before the end of 2009 to award the members of the JDF who had been recommended for the Honour (See Appendix 1).

Your Committee considered the issues and has rejected the recommendation that there be an awards ceremony at King's House before the end of the year. It was pointed out that the recommendations were submitted to the National Honours and Awards Committee and, except for one officer, were not approved. The view was expressed that if the Committee were to accept the recommendations, they would be setting a precedent and people who had been recommended for awards but were not approved would think that they could go through another route to get approval.

It was proposed that the JDF be advised that the matter be referred to the National Honours and Awards Committee for consideration. The view was also expressed that the officers should be considered for awards at the specified time and should be awarded under the same structure and system as other awardees. Additionally, it was the view of the Committee that national awards must be given on the basis of achievement and not ascription. Therefore, people should be awarded because of their achievement and not because of rank or years of service. Your Committee has decided that the Chairman would write a letter to the Prime Minister expressing the views of the Members.



### 3.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Your Committee recommends that a more suitable title than ‘The Most Honourable Chieftain’ be used to address persons who are to be admitted to the Order of Jamaican Heritage.
2. Individuals to be admitted to the various Orders should be deserving of the honour and all recipients of the various categories of awards should meet the relevant criteria. Therefore, individuals must be honoured or awarded on the basis of merit and not ascription.
3. The number of recipients of the various honours and awards should be limited. Additionally, the number of award ceremonies should also be limited.
4. As far as possible, deserving individuals should be awarded or honoured during their lifetime, though in some instances awards can be made posthumously.
5. There should be set standards for selecting recipients of honours and awards at the national and local level. Additionally, there should be a prescribed standard by which recipients of the various honours and awards should live.
6. It is recommended that the present system of annual Parish Awards remain and that effort be made to ensure that there is consistency in making awards to those who have rendered service at the parochial level. Your Committee is not in support of the recommendation to introduce the Jamaica Medal of Appreciation.
7. Your Committee rejects the recommendation that there should be a new award, namely, the *Gallantry Companion of Honour* for exceptional acts of gallantry.
8. More effort should be made to educate people about the criteria for selecting individuals for the various honours and awards. Furthermore, Civics should be taught in all schools.
9. Your Committee is of the view that recipients of the various awards should not be required to purchase miniature badges.
10. The Members of the Committee recommend that Badges of Honour be worn only on formal civic occasions.

The Committee is in support of the other recommendations that are noted in the Report of the Committee to Review the National System of Honours and Awards.

#### **4.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Your Committee wishes to express gratitude to the Committee which reviewed the System of National Honours and Awards, which was chaired by Professor the Hon. Rex Nettleford, and Mr. Merrick Needham, who made a presentation on behalf of that Committee. Your Committee would also like to thank the Clerk to the Houses and staff for their administrative support and for the kind courtesies extended during the meetings.

**December 2009**

APPENDIX 1



Jamaica

Office of the Prime Minister  
Jamaica House  
Kingston 10



2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009

Dear Mrs. Cooke,

I would be grateful if the attached correspondence is brought to the attention of the Committee reviewing the system of National Honours and Awards.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Bruce Golding'.

Bruce Golding  
Prime Minister

Mrs. Heather Cooke J.P.  
Clerk to the Houses  
Houses of Parliament  
Gordon House  
81 Duke Street  
Kingston



TELEPHONE: 906-4908-24  
FAX: 920-0523

**MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY**  
MUTUAL LIFE BUILDING  
NORTH TOWER  
2 OXFORD ROAD  
KINGSTON 5  
JAMAICA

No. **C850/S3<sup>IV</sup>**

**2009 September 24**

The Secretary General  
The Chancery of the Orders of the Society of Honours  
Office of the Prime Minister  
1 Devon Road  
Kingston 6

**Attention: Mr. Colin D. Robb**

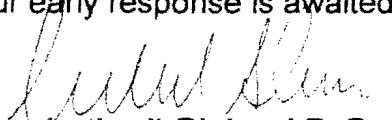
**Proposed Policy for National Civil Honours  
and Awards to Jamaica Defence Force**

Reference is made to letter from the Chief of Defence Staff to the Honourable Minister dated 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2009, in which he raised concerns regarding the lack of awards for the Order of Distinction (Officer Class), to serving and past members in the Jamaica Defence Force whose recommendations were not approved.

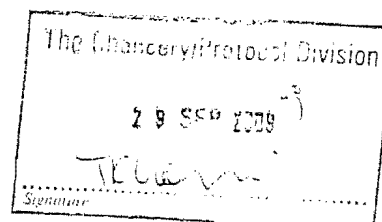
The Chief of Defence Staff has submitted the attached proposal for the award of the Order of Distinction (Officer Class) to members of the Jamaica Defence Force for consideration.

He is requesting that recommendations made in letter dated March 2, 2009 (copy attached), be reviewed and a simple awards ceremony arranged for later this year at Kings House. This, in his opinion would boost the morale of the Force and address the anomalies.

Your early response is awaited.

  
**Major (retired) Richard B. Reese**  
**Permanent Secretary**

Encl.



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217/1



**HEADQUARTERS  
JAMAICA DEFENCE FORCE**  
UP PARK CAMP  
KINGSTON 5  
JAMAICA

Tel: (876) 926-8121-9 Ext 2000  
Fax: (876) 926-8243  
www.jdfmil.org

17 August 2009

Senator the Honourable Dwight A NELSON, CD, JP  
Minister of National Security  
Ministry of National Security  
National Commercial Bank Towers  
2 Oxford Road  
Kingston 5

Dear Minister,

**PROPOSED POLICY FOR NATIONAL  
CIVIL HONOURS AND AWARDS  
TO JAMAICA DEFENCE FORCE**

References:

- A. HQ JDF 482 dated 07 July 2008.
- B. HQ JDF 217/1 dated 02 March 2009.
- C. Meeting Ministry of National Security on 13 August 2009.

At Reference 'C' I raised some concerns regarding serving members and past members of the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) who were recommended for the Order of Distinction (Officer Class) but were not approved.

You subsequently outlined the process on the one hand and I explained the fact that my submission had the intent of addressing the lack of such awards in the JDF, a situation that has existed for over nineteen (19) years.

My recommendations spoke to three (3) full Colonels (one of which was approved), five (5) retired Lieutenant Colonels (past Commanding Officers of the Third Battalion The Jamaica Regiment (National Reserve)) who had all given excellent voluntary service to their country and a Warrant Officer Class One, who is the Force Sergeant Major and therefore the most senior enlisted man in the entire JDF.

Unfortunately, the magnitude of their contributions and the issue that I was trying to resolve where this award and the JDF is concerned, was not made clear at Reference 'B'.

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Based upon this I have attached a proposed policy for the award of the Order of Distinction (Officer Class) for the JDF, for your consideration. Additionally, if at all possible, as suggested at Reference 'C', the recommendations at Reference 'B' could be reviewed and a simple awards ceremony arranged later this year at King's House. This would do wonders for the morale of the Force whilst positively addressing the void explained.

Best regards and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,



S.E. SAUNDERS  
Major General  
Chief of Defence Staff

Copy to:

Major (retired) Richard B REESE, JP  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of National Security  
National Commercial Bank Towers  
2 Oxford Road  
Kingston 5

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**PROPOSED POLICY FOR THE NATIONAL CIVIL HONOURS  
AND AWARDS OF THE ORDER OF DISTINCTION (OD) OFFICER CLASS  
IN THE JAMAICA DEFENCE FORCE**

1. The National Civil Honours and Awards of the Order of Distinction (OD) Officer Class shall be awarded to the following categories of personnel of the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) based upon the recommendation of the Chief of Defence Staff:
  - a. Officers of the rank of Colonel or its equivalent, after serving one (1) year in the rank.
  - b. Officers of the rank of Lieutenant Colonel who have been appointed Commanding Officer of the Third Battalion The Jamaica Regiment (National Reserve) who have completed three (3) years in the rank and appointment.
  - c. Officers of the Quartermaster Category (commissioned from the ranks of the Jamaica Defence Force) who have attained the rank of Major and have made an exceptional contribution to the development and/or administration of the Force.
  - d. Warrant Officers Class One (1) on their appointment as Force Sergeant Major.

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