

**Address by Donesha Prendergast**

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**Ms. Donesha Prendergast, the First granddaughter.**

I am happy to be here in Ghana with everyone. This is my second time to Ghana but it is my first time really experiencing Ghana. The first time I came here I came here as a child on my birthday in December with Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers. But this time I am here with my grandmother fighting for the cause fighting for Africa to Unite. I have a few things to say and I am sure that you guys will share my sentiments. Children children, good morning, greetings to you it is so good to see you here.

My grandfather once said that reggae music is a music that have nuff fight, but it is the music that should fight, not the people. And it is so important for us to know and truly grasp what he means. We don't need guns and knives and fists to fight for the cause, we fight through words, we fight through love, because love is felt before a harsh word is heard. We must know this. [Even though] you are here in Africa and I am all the way over in Jamaica, we are still brothers and sisters. We are still one love, one heart. So we must always know that and always fight to be heard. Listen children, I am telling you stand for something, or you will fall for anything. You must know yourself, you must know who you are before you can say anything to anybody else. Because the slightest wind that blows will blow you away if you are not confident in who you are. Let no one tell you, you are ugly, let no one tell you that you can't do anything because once there is life there is a chance to do all things in this world. And if one person can do it, many people can do it, many people can do it. If one person can be inspired and motivated to change the world like Bob Marley did, Bob Marley didn't have any money he didn't know how he was going to do it, but he had the word and he had the heart. And so he put word to instrument and he made music, reggae music that fights for all of us. So let you know now that once there is life, there is a way and you can do it too. It doesn't have to be with money, it doesn't have to be with something as great as the Africa Unite tour. It can be by a simple smile, by sitting and talking to a brother, by hugging a friend, simple things like that, you never know what a simple smile can do until you need one, you know. So smile because it takes nothing to smile, and laugh, laugh and enjoy life because you see once life passes there is nothing else. So we have to live today, worry about tomorrow when tomorrow comes, but live for today, I implore you children live for today. We must try and make a difference.

Reggae music contains a spirituality and a power to unite us that no other music possesses. It engulfs you it infects your body with a natural high, a natural mystic; old, young, middle aged, red, white, blue, black, it doesn't matter, music has no eyes, music is colour blind! Music don't see none of this, music knows this, the heart, music knows this, the mind. So you must always know that. When you talk to someone, don't talk to the physical because this goes, this wears with time. But you see knowledge and heart, it never goes. No one can ever take that away from you. They can cut you, they can beat you, you will bleed and you will hurt but they cannot take this away from you, knowledge and power. Older people I am telling you talk to our children talk to them even if they don't want to listen sometimes. Talk to them pass on the knowledge because there is too often that children want to ask questions and don't know who to go to. They don't need to go to anybody the knowledge

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should be there for them to know. You could think it is foolishness, to them it might be the world. Please pass on our heritage. Marcus Garvey once said 'A people without knowledge of its past history and culture is like a tree without roots'. It is us who has knowledge, the children they know nothing unless we teach it. I am an actress by profession, right now I am away at school in the United States of America, and in my acting class a student said that it is only a man with experience that can truly act. And it relates exactly to life, because if one does not know how to do it then he does not know how to do it. If one does not know how to tie his shoe lace then he will not know until he is shown. So if we do not show love then how do we expect love to be shown. We have to show love, we have to show unity so that the children know how to recreate it. We have to talk, we cannot go quietly, we cannot go quietly, mek noise, stand up for what you believe in, stand up and hold your own ground, don't let anybody try to topple you over, no. You see once you know yourself and once you are happy with yourself, you can save anybody you put your mind to. It only takes a word, it only takes a smile, you never know what it takes so just give, give and don't expect to receive, it will come to you, you know, but don't look for it or else you will never see it.

Now back to the foundation of music. The drums play such an important part in reggae music; in music worldwide. We have to be careful the messages that we put to these drums beats. The words that are being thrown out into the air because there are ears listening, tiny ears listening, we have to be careful what we say because children take them at face value. They look up to us, we are the heroes of today we have to stand and make ourselves known. I am the eldest grandchild of the third generation of Marley, to whom much is given much is expected. But life, life itself is a great gift, life itself is the greatest gift so you don't need a title to have to do good, you don't need a big name to do good. Life itself is a gift, so once you have life you do your part, you make sure that when you die, everything that you have done in your lifetime will echo throughout eternity and it will be good because ears will hear for years and years after we have died what we have done. So make sure what you do today, you would do tomorrow and the day after that and the day after that and the day after that. Consistency, you cannot be a good person today and promote positive today and tomorrow change your mind, you cannot go with the tide like that, you have to know who you are and stand on your feet. There will be situations that will come, there will be temptations, just like Jesus there will be temptations, but once you know you and your heart and once you know where your history is coming from it doesn't matter what the future holds because you are confident that whatever it holds it will be good because you did your part today.

There is so much to say, there is so much I could say about what is happening in Africa today. But know this that the Bob and the Rita Marley Foundation and all our friends and family are fighting for you, are fighting for us, are fighting for all those who cannot fight. So let us fight together because that makes the fight easier, when there is unity no one can defeat us. When we are together with heart and hands, no one can defeat us. In Ethiopia last year it was such a magnificent sight to see so many people from all walks of life from all over the world hands and hearts in unity singing Africa Unite. I could feel the drum beat, the heartbeat of the world, singing out shouting out, the time is now brothers and sisters, the time is now we cannot

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wait on anybody to bring victory to us, freedom unity to us, we must fight for it, you mother always told you, your father always told you, nothing in life comes easy, nothing in life is given so we have to fight for our own. And we are black people, mek it all worse. We have been oppressed for years and years but that is past and gone, emancipation is right hereso in the mind and in the heart, freedom is in the mind and in the heart. The physical will go, the physical this will go but what is here [in the mind] and here [in the heart] this will last for eternity, so make sure that it is right and positive.

It is so fulfilling to be in the motherland trust me many people do not get to travel outside of their home. I have seen the world I have seen all over the world. I have seen people I have seen faces I have seen hurt I have seen anger I have seen tears, but I have seen joy and I have seen happiness and I have seen that with what reggae music does to people. That is why we must keep reggae music alive that is why we must keep the fight alive. This vision that Brother Bob had of uniting Africa was not just a dream that he had, it is manifesting itself right before our eyes. In our time, in our time, this is history that we are making right now, brothers and sisters, hold on to it, hold on to it and cherish it because years from now they will wonder what it was like now, but we know so we can tell them. So make sure we do our part today and hold on to it today, it is ours, it is theirs.

Positive change cannot come until one knows thyself one must have and unwavering, unfaltering knowledge and confidence in self to be able to stand up and defend.