

**GREETINGS TO 2ND ANNUAL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
HILTON HOTEL,
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2008 @ 9:00 A.M.**

**Mr. Novar McDonald, MSc., MJIM
Chairman, Dispute Resolution Foundation**

- Madam Master of Ceremonies, Mrs. Carol Palmer
- Their Excellencies Sir Kenneth Hall and Lady Hall
- Hon. Minister of Justice & Attorney General Senator Dorothy Lightbourne
- Members of Government
- Members of the Judiciary
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps and International Donor Partners
- Conference presenters
- Distinguished Ladies & Gentlemen

I am honoured to bring greetings on this 2nd Annual International Conference on Restorative Justice, part of Restorative Justice Week and the start of Peace Month, a month in which we also celebrate a major cultural product, Reggae music, and join our friends overseas in marking Black History Month.

We at the Dispute Resolution Foundation are particularly pleased to be associated with this event and thank the Ministry of Justice for

permitting us to play a useful role in promoting Restorative Justice as part of the architecture of justice, peace and development in Jamaica.

This conference builds on the legislative reform, practice reform and systems reform which the DRF has promoted in the civil and criminal courts, and through Peace & Justice and Mediation Centres, and we look forward to supporting the design and implementation of the programme of community tribunals to be fully restorative forums meeting the needs of the modern Jamaican.

Newspaper stories daily affirm the need for us to, in the words of Howard Zehr, “*change lenses*” as we look at the issues of harm in society, whether in building and commercial disputes or praedial larceny in the community.

Restorative Justice Week helps us to focus on this need to change lenses and enhance the understanding of policy makers, private sector, justice system and the citizens. This discussion creates an opportunity to develop a policy of increased engagement of partners, effective funding of this expanded system of justice and ensuring standards and accountability.

2008 is the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Restorative Justice provides a pathway whether the issue is at Vale Royal talks, Tivoli’s pain, youth exclusion, or the South Camp

Rehab Centre. 2008 is also the Chinese Year of the Rat, known by the Chinese as a creative problem solver, imaginative, hyperactive worker respected for its resourcefulness, intuitive, with the ability to acquire and hold on to things it values. This much maligned animal is a positive symbol when we “change lenses”. The Dispute Resolution Foundation has been changing lenses for almost 20 years.

Let us value justice together and create for Jamaica the unknown future of Justice, Peace and Development for all.

Thank you.