

One Resilient Common Future

Commonwealth Day | 11 March 2024

Commonwealth Day Message from His Majesty The King, Head of the Commonwealth

The seventy-fifth anniversary of The Commonwealth is a moment to reflect on the remarkable journey that our unique family of free and independent nations has made since 1949.

Last year, The Bahamas celebrated its fiftieth anniversary of Independence, as Grenada has this year, and Papua New Guinea will next year. Each of these milestones – and many others like them – represent the fulfilment of countless aspirations and the achievement of such remarkable potential. And the Commonwealth's growth, with new members continuing to join our family of nations, demonstrates clearly that whilst we may not all have a shared history, we have common ambitions for a better future – working together to build resilience and respond to global challenges.

The Commonwealth family is strongest when we are connected, through friendship. As I have said before, the Commonwealth is like the wiring of a house, and its people, our energy and our ideas are the current that runs through those wires. Together and individually, we are strengthened by sharing perspectives and experiences, and by offering and borrowing the myriad ways we have each tackled the challenges of our time. This is true both at the level of nations and, indeed, at the local level.

We recognize today that our diversity is our greatest strength. The Commonwealth represents a third of humanity, from all regions of the world, with all the different experiences, knowledge, and aspirations that this brings. Wherever we live, we are united by the many challenges we face – whether it be climate change, the loss of Nature, or the

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social and economic changes that new technologies are bringing. Our diversity means that these challenges affect us all differently and that we experience their impacts in different ways. Their seriousness, however, is common to each one of us.

All of this means that we must work together to understand each other's perspectives, including the inequalities and injustices which still resonate to this day. We must find ways of healing, and to support each other to pursue solutions. I cannot say often enough that it is by coming together that we create the best chances to improve our world and the lives of people everywhere. Indeed, over the years countless people across the Commonwealth have been inspired to form their own Commonwealth Associations, from lawyers and accountants, to business and trade networks, and many more besides. The work they do is absolutely vital, sharing professional knowledge, experience, and expertise across the Continents for the betterment of each one of us.

The Commonwealth, above all, retains a particular focus on our young people, who make up two-thirds of the entire Commonwealth population. Whether in Kenya or Malaysia, Vanuatu or Dominica, Malta, or Canada, I never cease to be impressed by their creativity, innovative skills, and hard work, often in the most challenging circumstances. Their energy is transforming approaches to development, technology and preserving and restoring Nature and will, I hope, help to shape, and safeguard our common future.

Having recently celebrated my own seventy-fifth birthday, it warms my heart to reflect on the way the Commonwealth has been a constant throughout my own life – a precious source of strength, inspiration, and pride. In recent weeks, I have been most deeply touched by your wonderfully kind and thoughtful good wishes for my health and, in return, can only continue to serve you, to the best of my ability, throughout the Commonwealth. My belief in our shared endeavours and in the potential of our people remains as sure and strong as it has ever been. I have no doubt that we will continue to support one another across the Commonwealth as, together, we continue this vital journey.

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