

## **Message of the Commonwealth Secretary General to member countries on the occasion of the organisation's centenary**

People of the Commonwealth nations, greetings. I am sure that you all are as proud and honoured as I am today to be celebrating the centenary of an organisation which has, throughout time, stood out as an exemplary and most efficient one.

It is indubitable that the Commonwealth has since long transcended the role of a mere organisation to become a global community, a society breaking all geographical and cultural barriers. During the last forty years, particularly, it has accepted more and more countries as members; it has embraced the world, broken down prejudices and annihilated all lingering notion of it being a vestige of the colonial period.

The Commonwealth has succeeded in establishing cooperation between countries: a special fund has been set up to help countries affected by political or economic crises or by natural cataclysms. Moreover, the organisation has ensured friendly entente and diplomacy among member states; as part of the 2030 Commonwealth Treaty, member countries, especially the richer ones, have engaged themselves to help others to supply quality education and adequate health services to their people. The Commonwealth is also involved in reducing the disparity in wealth and technology existing between rich and poorer countries. Furthermore, it has, over the years, strived to establish an environment favourable to international trade.

A Commonwealth Watch has been set up to ensure that human rights are respected in the member countries, that every child is given education at least up to the age of sixteen, that the freedom of expression is granted to all and that the concepts of democracy are applied. Members failing to adhere to set norms are not immediately suspended, nor do they have their membership terminated. The modern Commonwealth shows a predilection for peaceful resolution of conflicts, and acts upon the principle that any problem plaguing mankind should not be ignored, qualified as affecting others only, nor seen as some other group's responsibility, but should instead be solved collectively, in the hope of a better world.

The Commonwealth has not been indifferent to the pressing problem of climate change. For want of a scientific solution, we have encouraged protective measures, urged member states to cut down greenhouse gas emissions and set up widespread tree planting campaigns. The 2030 Treaty stipulates that all countries should have at least 15% of their lands dedicated to the preservation of biodiversity, especially endemic flora and fauna.

The youth, being the inheritor of our world, has been given a preponderant place and numerous opportunities to have its voice heard and to help in protecting and improving our society. Through frequent youth summits and competitions, young people are encouraged to present innovative ideas to help deal with the difficulties the modern world is facing. Through exchange programs, they get an opportunity to share their ideas and their culture. By the organisation of sports and literary competitions for those under twenty-one years of age, the Commonwealth has contributed to fostering much talent and skill. The youth are the ambassadors of tomorrow; training them to take responsible decisions and to deal with the disastrous consequences of our own impulsive ones is an endeavour the Commonwealth has taken as mission.

I thank you for making the Commonwealth what it is today and earnestly hope that that tomorrow sees a better world because of our efforts; for we work for a brighter future, for a better world, for mankind.

**Boodhoo Vijn Hiteshna,  
17,  
Mauritius.**