

## **Donald McKinnon**

### **Secretary-General of the Commonwealth**

Donald McKinnon was born on Feb. 27, 1939, in Greenwich, England. He attended Lincoln University in New Zealand.

Prior to entering politics, Mr. McKinnon managed his own real estate business and was a farm management consultant.

Mr. McKinnon was first elected to the New Zealand Parliament in 1978. He was New Zealand's longest serving Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He has held a number of senior posts within the government, including Deputy Prime Minister from 1990 to 1996, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade from 1990 to 1999, and Leader of the House of Representatives from 1992 to 1996.

As Foreign Minister, Mr. McKinnon developed close Commonwealth ties, at both the governmental and non-governmental levels. In 1995, he was the deputy chairman of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group and chaired the Commonwealth Small States Meeting at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Auckland. In 1998, he was appointed to the five-member Commonwealth Ministerial Mission to Small States.

In 1998, Mr. McKinnon was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his involvement in the resolution between the Bougainvillians and the government of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. McKinnon took office as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth on April 1, 2000.

Mr. McKinnon and his wife, Clare de Lore, have one child. He has four children from a previous marriage.