

*Routine Proceedings*

and the beginning of the next century. Prime Minister Mulroney, who was a member of the high level task force, made a very useful contribution to the drafting of the text of the declaration and emphasized the important contribution of this stable democratic group at a time when many countries are turning to democracy.

[*English*]

The renewed Commonwealth is dedicated to the protection and promotion of the fundamental human values important to Canadians and to citizens of the Commonwealth; good governance, democracy, fundamental human rights and women's equality.

One important facet of the Commonwealth has not changed. The vigour and relevance of the Commonwealth springs from its pragmatic approaches and from its grassroot ties. The Commonwealth nurtures links between our societies, establishes people-to-people contacts in a vast international network of professional, cultural and sports organizations. These organizations constitute the backbone of the Commonwealth and ensure its continuing vitality. Members know that these organizations reach into this very Chamber in the form of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which, per the Harare declaration, should play its full part in promoting the objectives of good governance, democratic development and the promotion of human rights and women's equality in a spirit of co-operation and mutual support.

[*Translation*]

The capacity of the Commonwealth to establish links between different nations is a living symbol of international co-operation, as well as an example for other international organizations. Canada was honoured by the fact that the Secretary of State for External Affairs presided the meeting of ministers for external affairs when they met in New Delhi last September, at which time they recommended the gradual lifting of the sanctions taken against South Africa. The following month in Harare, the heads of governments followed up on this recommendation and lifted the sanctions that directly affected the population. Canada is pleased to see the progress accomplished so far toward a reform in South Africa and it will continue to promote the negotiation

process between the South African government and the other groups.

[*English*]

The Commonwealth continues to be one of Canada's most important windows on the world. We want to ensure that it not only continues as a force for peace, human rights and development, but also becomes a model and a catalyst for new forms of international co-operation in the 1990s and beyond. As the new century approaches, we should all remember that one of the many advantages of the Commonwealth lies in its ability to spark friendly, open and fruitful dialogue.

Today we celebrate the Commonwealth in the knowledge that Canada is not alone as it faces the global challenges of the future. We are among family.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to join with the hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs in asking all Canadians to celebrate Commonwealth Day, which marks their membership in the Commonwealth. Of course we believe that the Commonwealth is a very attractive international organization for Canada and the whole world.

[*English*]

The Secretary of State pointed out in his remarks, and it was an appropriate time, that the Commonwealth like every other international body is going through a period of re-evaluation, review of the future directions and missions. Certainly we were all supportive of the statements at Harare in setting out new goals and values and purposes. It would be less than honest if we did not begin to raise the question of what has happened since. Where is the beef? What is happening in the Commonwealth and what is happening to Canada's commitment to it?

I suppose there is no more profound way of indicating a government's commitment to a project or a program or an organization than where it puts its money. It is interesting that in the estimates tabled some 10 days ago, there is a substantial reduction in the Government of Canada's commitment to the Secretariat of the Commonwealth.

I recognize that all organizations must tighten their belts accordingly, but one has to measure this belt