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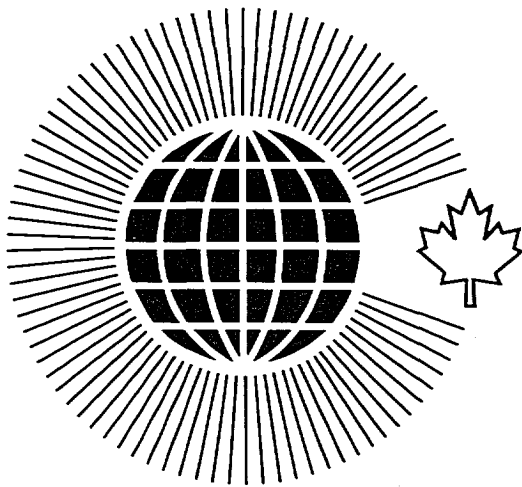
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Overview

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# Canada and the Commonwealth



## Introduction

With the gradual transformation of the British Empire into the modern Commonwealth, there has been much speculation about the possible demise of the Commonwealth itself. But, on the contrary, this multicultural and multiracial association of 49 nations, comprising more than one quarter of the world's population, is more alive and active today than ever before. The year 1987 is especially important for Canada's role within the Commonwealth because Vancouver has been chosen to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in the fall of 1987. It is during the CHOGM, held every two years, that important policy directions are adopted.

The modern Commonwealth has slowly evolved from its origin in the British Empire to a free association of independent member states that recognize Queen Elizabeth II as its symbolic Head. Since the very beginning of this process, Canadians have played a significant role in Commonwealth affairs.

The 1986 "mini-CHOGM" in London demonstrated the process of consensus politics at work. Not all participants subscribed to all the proposed measures of economic sanctions against South Africa, but all Heads of Government joined in insisting on the very foundation on which the Commonwealth was built — racial equality and representative government. By their action, the Heads of Government have ensured that the Commonwealth will continue to be one of the multinational institutions that works well and contributes to international peace and co-operation.



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