

Canada is the second largest financial contributor to Commonwealth Secretariat programs, after the United Kingdom. These range from activities in support of democratic development, good governance and human rights to women's equality and technical assistance. Individual Canadians work in senior positions at the Secretariat in London, and Canadian experts have participated in the preparation of virtually all major Commonwealth special studies that have formed the basis of later political and economic action. Parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations and private citizens are active year-round in Commonwealth conferences and programs. Canada has often played host to the organization's major conferences.

To a large degree, Commonwealth institutions and programs are designed to assist small and developing countries of the Commonwealth. These countries comprise the bulk of its membership. Canada's annual contribution primarily serves that aim. In 1995-96, this contribution will total nearly \$36 million, a large portion of which will go to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation.

Other major Commonwealth bodies and programs to which Canada contributes include the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth of Learning, Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth Youth Program, Commonwealth Consultative Group on Technology Management, Small States Facility and the Commonwealth Institute.

Beyond the governmental elements of the Commonwealth, there exists a thriving and visible "unofficial Commonwealth" in which the government of Canada and Canadians play an active role. The voluntary sector, professional associations and other non-governmental organizations, as well as arts and cultural groups, play a key role in strengthening pan-Commonwealth links. Sport is also recognized for its ability to foster Commonwealth values and as an instrument of social development.

As a modern, multilateral association of 52 member states, the Commonwealth, supported by both governmental and non-governmental ties, is a credible, non-threatening instrument of political, economic and social development in which Canadian participation is both varied and influential.