



The emergence and development of the modern Commonwealth after 1949 was strongly welcomed by Canada. Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's condemnation of apartheid in South Africa in 1961, which led to that country's departure from the Commonwealth, encouraged African members to remain and to join as new states. Canada gave strong support to the creation of the Commonwealth Secretariat in 1965 and successfully nominated Canadian diplomat Arnold Smith to be the first Secretary-General.

It was Canada that proposed the transformation of the style and format of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs) in the 1970s, strengthening their informality and relevance, and introduced meetings of senior officials. In 1985 and 1986, Canada strongly supported the Commonwealth's lead in international efforts for the peaceful dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs has chaired the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa, established at the 1987 Vancouver CHOGM. The reform of the Commonwealth Secretariat, including the creation of a steering committee of senior officials to provide it with strategic guidance, was accomplished with the benefit of Canadian input.

Canada is the largest financial contributor to Commonwealth Secretariat programs, which range from activities in support of democratic development, good governance, human rights and women's equality to technical assistance and capacity enhancement initiatives. 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, and Canada has often played host to the organization's major conferences.

The good will Canada attracts through the Commonwealth is beneficial to Canada's commercial ties with Commonwealth countries. However, since the end of the Commonwealth preference, the Commonwealth has been less a focus of immediate Canadian commercial interests and more of a vehicle for Canada to provide technical assistance to countries in their long-term economic development.

To a large degree, Commonwealth institutions and programs are designed to assist the small states and developing countries of the Commonwealth. These countries comprise the bulk of its membership. Canada's annual contribution primarily serves that aim. In 1993-94, this contribution will total nearly \$36 million, a large portion of which will go to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation.

Major Commonwealth institutions and programs to which Canada contributes include the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, Commonwealth of Learning, Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth Youth Program, Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, Commonwealth Science Council and the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Technology Management.

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 tremendous role in strengthening pan-Commonwealth links. Sport is also recognized for its ability to foster Commonwealth values and as an instrument of social development, especially amongst the young.

As a modern, multilateral association of 50 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.