

COMMUNIQUÉ

of the
Ottawa Colloquium on the Commonwealth in the 3rd Millennium
20-22 February 1998

This Communiqué synthesizes the views and opinions expressed by delegates in presentations, discussions and written submissions to the " Commonwealth in the 3rd Millennium" colloquium organized by the Royal Commonwealth Society (Ottawa Branch) in collaboration with the RCS Canadian National Council, held in Ottawa, Canada, February 20th to 22nd 1998.

1. In a world fraught with conflict and divisive elements, the Commonwealth has proven itself to be a gentle, yet strong force for decency, peace and good government. We believe it must increase that influence and example as the human family faces unprecedented challenges in the new millennium.
2. We believe that the Singapore Declaration of Commonwealth Principles, the Lusaka Declaration of the Commonwealth on Racism and Racial Prejudice, the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, the Edinburgh Economic Declaration, together with the Millbrook Commonwealth Action Programme, provide a necessary framework for action in the 3rd millennium by both governments and civil society. But inspiring declarations and programmes are not sufficient. Words must be given meaning by deeds.
3. We further believe that the challenges of the 3rd millennium present an opportunity which the Commonwealth cannot and must not let pass. It has certain advantages:
 - it is unique among international associations in its techniques of consensus-building and quiet diplomacy; and
 - it is well-placed to make a difference in promoting democracy, building capacity and defending human rights.

But these advantages are mitigated by certain weaknesses:

- its members have failed to meet their commitments to furnish the resources needed for its programmes;