

# In this issue

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**Published by**  
Canadian High Commission  
Public Affairs Section  
Canada House  
Trafalgar Square  
London SW1Y 3BJ

**Design**  
Christopher Stanbury

**Production**  
Barry Wright

**Printing**  
Pegasus Print & Display  
Limited

**Typesetting**  
Type Out

**Acknowledgements**  
Commonwealth Secretariat  
Information Division  
Olympia and York  
Developments Ltd  
Stephen Challis  
Cinéma Québecoise  
Jonathan King  
Museum of Mankind

**Subscriptions**  
Any change of address  
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Keith Vines, at Canada  
House.

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sources where indicated.  
Acknowledgement to  
*Canada Today/d'aujourd'hui*  
magazine would also be  
appreciated.

ISSN 0226-6685

**Other Canadian  
government offices in the  
United Kingdom**

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## Editorial

Canada is the only nation in the world that combines memberships in the Commonwealth and la Francophonie, and that participates in the annual Economic Summit of Western industrialised nations.

The opportunity to host three summits within the next 12-months gives Canada a unique opportunity, and a pressing responsibility, to act as a force for international cohesion and co-operation.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney set the tone for Canada's participation in the three summits, with his recent observation that 'Canadians are united in one simple conviction: to better the human condition and to achieve international peace and security. Nations acting together can always do much more than nations acting apart.'

### A tradition of leadership

Canada has always been one of the Commonwealth's most solid supporters. Historically, as the first self-governing Dominion within the British Empire, Canada demonstrated a way for other countries to assert their own independence while retaining friendly links with Britain.

With the development of the modern Commonwealth, Canada has supported a broadly based association in which all members have a close interest and a contribution to make.

In recent years, Canada has been the second-largest financial contributor to the Commonwealth, and has been deeply involved in pioneering a number of important policy initiatives.

It was Canada that first proposed the establishment of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Programme, urged that women be equally represented among scholarship recipients, promoted

the idea of an annual Commonwealth Day, and suggested that the Commonwealth Games be complemented with a parallel arts festival that was first held in Edmonton in 1978.

### New style and format

Another Canadian initiative was the introduction of a new style and format for the Heads of Government Meetings that emphasize the informal discussion and collegial decision-making that have been so important to the success of Commonwealth summits.

Participants gather in a relaxed, private atmosphere conducive to a forthright exchange of ideas. Much of the discussion takes place in executive sessions that are generally restricted to three delegates from each country, while difficult issues are left for a 'retreat' away from the conference table in which only Heads of Government themselves participate.

The structure of Heads of Government Meetings often enables Canada to pursue a role of 'honest broker' between developing and developed nations – a function that is strongly reinforced by that simultaneous membership in the Commonwealth, la Francophonie and the Group of Seven.



Canadian High Commissioner