

# News Release

Secretary of  
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# Communiqué

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## CANADA OBSERVES COMMONWEALTH DAY

External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall issued the following statement to mark Commonwealth Day, March 8:

Canadians join with over 1.5 billion people of various faiths, races, languages, traditions and levels of economic development, in observing the 17th anniversary of Commonwealth Day.

The theme for Commonwealth Day 1993 is *human values*. These fundamental human values are at the heart of the modern Commonwealth and are values to which every Canadian subscribes: respect for human rights; a deep commitment to democracy; access to education; racial and women's equality; freedom from poverty, hunger and disease; peace and world order; and protection of the environment.

March 8 also marks International Women's Day. Canada has been in the forefront of efforts to ensure that women's rights are addressed within the context of human rights globally. Efforts by Canada have been instrumental in the adoption by the Commonwealth Heads of Government of the "Harare Declaration" in 1991. This Declaration enshrines women's equality as a fundamental objective of the Commonwealth, and includes among its priorities a pledge to work with renewed vigour to pursue "equality for women so that they may exercise their full and equal rights." I am pleased that a Canadian, Dr. Eleni Stamiris, was recently appointed Director of the new Commonwealth Youth and Women's Directorate.

Canada continues to lead Commonwealth efforts to bring about a just and lasting solution to problems in South Africa. As Chairperson of the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa, I visited

South Africa in April 1992 and encouraged all parties to join in the negotiations on a new constitution. In September, I met with the Commonwealth Secretary-General in Ottawa to discuss the role of the Commonwealth in South Africa. In October, Canada sent two participants to the 12-member Commonwealth observer team in South Africa, in support of UN Security Council Resolution 772.

At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Cyprus this October, Canada will again bring vision, creativity and concrete plans of action in order to enhance the Commonwealth's ability to respond to the challenges of the 1990s and beyond.

Canada will host the Commonwealth Games in Victoria, British Columbia, in August 1994. The most important sporting event to be hosted by Canada in this decade, the Games will provide an opportunity to bring Commonwealth nations together and will bring Commonwealth activities into homes and communities in every region of the globe.

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