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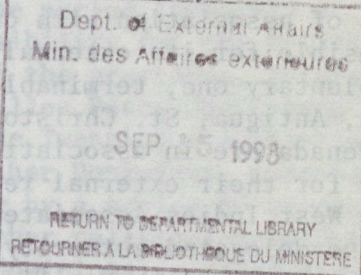
# REFERENCE PAPERS

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## THE COMMONWEALTH

The Commonwealth (or Commonwealth of Nations) is a voluntary association of 31 sovereign independent nations, each responsible for its own policies. With the exception of Britain, they share a common history as former British colonies. There are members from each of the six continents and from five oceans; the members comprise peoples of widely different races, languages, religions and cultures. They range from poor developing countries to wealthy industrialized nations like Britain, Canada and Australia.

### Extent

In a geographic sense, the term Commonwealth is understood to include fully self-governing states associated with a Commonwealth member for the purposes of foreign policy and defence, protectorates, protected states, trust territories administered by a member on behalf of the United Nations and territories still dependent on a member. Including dependencies, the Commonwealth embraces roughly a quarter of the world's land surface and between a quarter and a third of the world's population.

Of the 31 independent members, 16 have adopted a republican form of government with a president as head of state and 15 have retained a monarchical form of government. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is head of state of Britain, Canada and ten other members. Malaysia has as head of state an elected monarch (the Yang di Pertuan Agong) chosen from among their own members for a five-year term by the nine hereditary Malay rulers of West Malaysia. On attaining independence, two members of the Commonwealth, Lesotho and Swaziland, had their paramount chiefs declared king and head of state. All members recognize the British Sovereign as the symbol of their free association and head of the Commonwealth. (1)

(1) A list of the Commonwealth members showing area, population, form of government and date of independence is attached as Appendix A.

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### Associated States

Within the Commonwealth, the term "associated state" means a country that has attained full internal self-government and has formally assumed a status of association with one of the larger independent members, which becomes responsible for its external affairs and defence. The association is a free and voluntary one, terminable by either country at any time. In the Caribbean region, Antigua, St. Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada are in association with Britain, which retains ultimate responsibility for their external relations and defence. The six countries are known as the West Indies Associated States (WIAS) and by agreement with Britain exercise delegated authority over a wide area of external relations. The Cook Islands in the South Pacific also enjoy full internal self-government, but have chosen to be associated with New Zealand.

### Dependent Territories

In Commonwealth terminology, the phrase "dependent territories" includes some 33 remaining colonies, protectorates, protected states and trust territories. Most of these are dependencies of Britain; a few are dependent on Australia or New Zealand. Australia also administers New Guinea as a United Nations trust territory.<sup>(2)</sup>

### Evolution of the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth evolved from the British Empire by a gradual process that began in the nineteenth century. Many important developments first occurred in relation to what is now Canada. While there are many possible starting-points, a convenient one is Lord Durham's *Report*, published in 1839 following an inquiry into the causes of the rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada in 1836-37. One of Lord Durham's key recommendations was that full self-government should be granted to the governments in the colonies in all matters of concern to them. Under the recommendations of the *Report*, authority was reserved to the Imperial Government only in those fields deemed necessary to maintain imperial unity; such functions included control of foreign relations, the regulation of commerce, the determination of the constitution and the disposal of public lands. All other powers and functions, including the expenditure of public funds, were to be transferred to the colonial governments, to be administered by an executive council responsible to the elected legislative assembly and exercised only so long as they retained the support of a majority in the assembly. Following the Union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1840, this recommendation was implemented by stages during the Forties, the testing-point being the acceptance of the Rebellion Losses Bill in 1849 by Lord Elgin and by the British Government, thus effectively establishing the practice of full responsible self-government over the very wide range of matters within the control of the governments in the colonies. Subsequently, the conception

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(2) A list of the more important remaining dependencies, showing their relationship to a metropolitan power, area and population, appears as Appendix B.

of responsible government with a wide area of local autonomy was widely applied throughout the British Empire; the changes flowing from general application of this conception have been immense.

A second major development occurred over the period 1867-1939 as Canada gradually came to assume more and more responsibility for its relations with other countries and for its own defence. Out of the pressures, strains, persuasion and dialogue with Britain up to the Versailles Peace Conference at the end of the First World War and subsequently in the Twenties and Thirties, Canada, supported on occasion by Australia and the other Dominions, succeeded in asserting its independence from the Imperial power by a series of agreements and precedents that in turn became the basis for further political development. Following the First World War, Canada and the other Dominions successfully asserted the claim to independent representation at conferences, beginning with Versailles, and to diplomatic representation in foreign countries. The altered relation was registered by a communiqué from the Imperial Conference of 1926 which declared that Britain and the Dominions were "equal in status, in no way subordinate to one another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations". The Statute of Westminster, 1931, gave legal effect to the substance of the decisions reached in 1926 and established the legislative equality of the Dominion parliaments with the British Parliament.

In part as a result of developments in the Second World War, the movement toward independence in the then colonial areas of South and Southeast Asia became irresistible. In 1947, Britain acted to enable India to achieve independence and "Dominion status" on August 15, 1947, a development accompanied by the partitioning of the subcontinent and the emergence of the Muslim state of Pakistan on the same date. A year later, Ceylon also achieved independence. The following year, in April 1949, the Commonwealth prime ministers agreed that India, which had decided to become a republic but wished to remain in the Commonwealth, should be encouraged to do so. The acceptance as a full Commonwealth member of an independent, non-white Asian republic constituted an important landmark in the development of the Commonwealth; two decades later the great majority of members are of non-European stock from Asia, Africa or the Caribbean, and a majority of members have adopted a republican form of government.

Another key stage in the evolution of the Commonwealth was the repeated public reaffirmation during the 1960s that the association was non-racial in character and stood firmly for the principle of racial equality. This principle was implicit in the decision to accept India and Pakistan as full members in 1947, Ceylon in 1948, and other Asian and African members in the late Fifties. However, it was publicly reaffirmed in 1961 at the time of South Africa's withdrawal, and again came into prominence in 1964 and subsequent years in connection with the Rhodesian issue. The non-racist character of the Commonwealth was explicitly reaffirmed in the communiqué of the 1964 prime ministers' conference, and assumes a prominent place in the declaration issued by heads of government at Singapore in January 1971.

#### Nature of Commonwealth Association

The essential functions of the Commonwealth can be stated simply in two words: consultation and co-operation. As expressed in the opening

paragraph of the declaration issued by heads of government at the Singapore Commonwealth Conference in January 1971, Commonwealth governments consult and co-operate in the common interests of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace.

Since the members come from all parts of the world, each with different responsibilities and interests and each pursuing policies which it judges to be best suited to its interests, it is hardly surprising that agreement on a common course of action is seldom possible. Thus the Commonwealth is not an international organization like the United Nations or the Organization of American States with a charter and a structured hierarchy of councils and committees, reaching decisions on political and other international issues by formal resolution and majority vote. It has no continuing executive structure, though since 1965 it has had a Secretariat whose main functions are to facilitate and promote consultation both bilaterally and multilaterally among members; to act as a focal point and a link for various specialized Commonwealth agencies; to prepare and to circulate factual papers on international questions of concern to members; to undertake studies on various subjects in the economic, social and cultural fields; and to service Commonwealth meetings.

Members have complete freedom to belong to any other grouping, association or alliance, or to remain non-aligned. Membership carries no obligation to come to the assistance of another member that may be attacked, though naturally Commonwealth countries would be concerned about such a development. At an earlier stage, commerce was an important cohesive factor but, with the passage of time, natural processes of economic growth and the liberalization of trade on a multilateral basis following the Second World War, the Commonwealth preference system has become relatively less significant, particularly for the more-developed members.

The Commonwealth has grown into a very useful vehicle for consultation. At the top level, consultation is carried on at meetings, every year or two, of heads of government, as well as by correspondence, annual meetings of finance ministers and periodic meetings of trade and other ministers. In recent years, apart from heads of government meetings, there have been numerous meetings of ministers and officials on functional matters and an almost continuous succession of meetings at the technical, administrative and professional levels on a broad spectrum of international relations, including finance, trade, development assistance and education.

The Commonwealth is also evolving into an instrument for practical international co-operation along functional lines. Economic assistance for the less-developed members has long been a matter of concern. The Colombo Plan grew out of a multilateral decision at a meeting of Commonwealth foreign ministers in 1950; development assistance programs for the Commonwealth African countries and in the Caribbean are further examples of the way in which economic assistance has been channeled bilaterally from the wealthier to the less-developed members. The agreement to establish on a multilateral basis the existing Commonwealth Program for Technical Co-operation, to be financed from a fund administered by the Secretariat to which members in a position to do so would contribute, is a further step toward practical co-operation for development.

The Commonwealth has also been active in the field of education; under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, scholarships are awarded by 16 countries, and since the Plan was launched several thousand awards have been taken up. Other intergovernmental bodies promote Commonwealth co-operation, notably in the fields of agriculture, scientific research and law.

The Commonwealth Foundation was established in 1966 to enhance interchanges between professional organizations within the Commonwealth, and administers a fund to which most members contribute. Funds are dispersed to encourage representation at conferences, to facilitate the exchange of visits among professional people, and to assist in organizing professional conferences. The Foundation is now concentrating on encouraging the development of Commonwealth-wide non-governmental professional associations in a number of newer professional fields.

### Principles, Objectives, Guidelines

At the Commonwealth Conference in Singapore in January 1971, heads of government issued a declaration -- called the Singapore Declaration -- setting out the principles on which the Commonwealth operated and listing certain goals and objectives aimed at by member governments and the people they represented. This document is neither a charter nor a constitution but a statement of principles and objectives that defines Commonwealth aims at the beginning of the Seventies and provides a useful set of guidelines for the decade ahead.

The main objectives set out in the Declaration are:

- (a) Support for the United Nations; enhancing its ability to remove causes of tension and strengthening its influence for peace in the belief that international peace and order are essential to the security and prosperity of mankind;
- (b) individual liberty; equality of rights for all citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief, and their right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which they live; the promotion of representative institutions and guarantees for personal freedom under law;
- (c) recognition of racial prejudice and racial discrimination as evils which must be combated; opposition to colonial domination and racial oppression; the fostering of human equality and dignity;
- (d) progressive removal of wide disparities of wealth that create world tension; measures to help overcome poverty, ignorance and disease and to create better living standards; the freest possible flow of trade on fair and equitable terms; the provision of adequate resources for developing countries in a spirit of partnership to help establish conditions conducive to sustained investment and growth;

- (e) international co-operation to remove the causes of war, promote tolerance, combat injustice and foster development among the world's peoples. (3)

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(3) The text of the Singapore Declaration appears as Appendix C.

NOTE: Members of the Commonwealth (or Commonwealth of Nations) include Britain and those independent countries formerly governed by Britain, which have chosen to become members. Dependent territories such as colonies, protectorates and trust territories, of Britain and other member countries, may be described as "within the Commonwealth" in that they are territories of member countries, but they are not "members of the Commonwealth", for only sovereign independent states are accepted as such. (Nauru, which became independent in January 1968, is associated with the Commonwealth as a special member.) The prefix "British" before "Commonwealth" and the term "Dominion" are no longer used.

MEMBER COUNTRIES	DATE OF INDEPENDENCE	CAPITAL	CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS (Monarchy or Republic)	ACCREDITED CANADIAN POST (H.C. - Office of the High Commissioner)
Britain (The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)		London	M	H.C. - London
Canada		Ottawa	M	H.C. - Canberra
Australia		Canberra	M	H.C. - Wellington
New Zealand		Wellington	M	H.C. - New Delhi
India	August 15, 1947	New Delhi	R	H.C. - Islamabad
Pakistan	August 15, 1947	Islamabad	R	H.C. - Colombo
Ceylon	February 4, 1948	Colombo	M	H.C. - Accra
Ghana	March 6, 1957	Accra	R	H.C. - Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia	August 31, 1957	Kuala Lumpur	R (M-elected)	H.C. - Lagos
Nigeria	October 1, 1960	Lagos	R	Emb. - Tel Aviv
Republic of Cyprus	August 16, 1960	Nicosia	R	H.C. - Lagos
Sierra Leone	April 27, 1961	Freetown	M	H.C. - Dar-es-Salaam
United Republic of Tanzania	December 9, 1961	Dar-es-Salaam	R	H.C. - Kingston
Jamaica	August 6, 1962	Kingston	M	H.C. - Port of Spain
Trinidad and Tobago	August 31, 1962	Port-of-Spain	M	H.C. - Nairobi
Uganda	October 9, 1962	Kampala	R	H.C. - Nairobi
Kenya	December 12, 1963	Nairobi	R	H.C. - Nairobi
Malawi	July 6, 1964	Zomba	R	Emb. - Rome
Malta	September 21, 1964	Valetta	M	H.C. - Dar-es-Salaam
Zambia	October 24, 1964	Lusaka	R	Emb. - Dakar
The Gambia	February 18, 1965	Bathurst	R	** H.C. - Kuala Lumpur
Singapore	August 9, 1965	Singapore	R	H.C. - Georgetown
Guyana	May 26, 1966	Georgetown	R	Emb. - Pretoria
Botswana	September 30, 1966	Gaborone	R	Emb. - Pretoria
Lesotho	October 4, 1966	Maseru	(M)	H.C. - Port-of-Spain
Barbados	November 30, 1966	Bridgetown	M	H.C. - Dar-es-Salaam
Mauritius	March 12, 1968	Port Louis	M	Emb. - Pretoria
Swaziland	September 6, 1968	Mbabane	(M)	H.C. - Wellington
Tonga	June 4, 1970	Nuku'Alofa	M	H.C. - Wellington
Western Samoa	August 28, 1970	Apia	M	H.C. - Wellington
Fiji	October 10, 1970	Suva	M	H.C. - Canberra

\* The Commonwealth of Australia came into existence in 1901 and the Colony of New Zealand became the Dominion of New Zealand in 1907. The two countries and Canada achieved fully equal sovereign status with Britain under the Statute of Westminster in 1931.

\*\* An Office of the Canadian High Commissioner to Singapore is maintained in Singapore, but the High Commissioner is resident in Kuala Lumpur.

DEPENDENT TERRITORIES

NOTE: Southern Rhodesia, at the time of its illegal declaration of independence, was self-governing but had not attained the status of a member of the Commonwealth; such coastal sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf as Bahrein, Dubai and Abu Dhabi are in special treaty relation with Britain but are not British dependencies; the Cook Islands have full internal self-government, but have chosen to be associated with New Zealand (Cook Islanders are New Zealand citizens), which remains responsible for the external affairs and defence of the territory; Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia and St. Vincent have full internal self-government but have chosen to be associated with Britain, which remains responsible, in consultation with the islands, for external affairs and defence.

<u>DEPENDENT TERRITORY</u>	<u>DEPENDENCY OF</u>	<u>SQ. MILES</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>
Rhodesia	Britain	150,333	4,260,000
Gibraltar	Britain	2	25,220
Brunei	Britain	2,226	105,876
Hong Kong	Britain	398	3,696,400
Pitcairn	Britain	2	100
British Solomon Islands Protectorate	Britain	11,500	139,730
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony	Britain	369	48,780
Central and Southern Pine Islands	Britain	34	None
New Hebrides	Administered as Anglo-French Condominium	5,700	65,800
New Guinea	Under Australian Trusteeship	93,000	1,575,966
Papua	Australia	90,540	573,437
Norfolk Island	Australia	13	980
Niue Islands	New Zealand	100	4,864
Tokelua Islands	New Zealand	4	1,870
Cayman Islands	Britain	100	85,111
Montserrat	Britain	33	14,066
Turk and Caicos Islands	Britain	166	6,000
Virgin Islands	Britain	59	8,619
British Honduras	Britain	8,866	107,664
Bahamas	Britain	4,404	138,000
Bermuda	Britain	21	48,617
Kamaran Island	Britain	22	1,800
Seychelles	Britain	156	47,424
Falkland Islands	Britain	4,700	2,079
Falkland Is. Dependencies (South Georgia and South Sandwich)	Britain	1,520	521
British Antarctic Territory	Britain	500,000 (approx)	87
Tristan da Cunha	Britain	38	300
St. Helena	Britain	47	4,702
Ascension	Britain	34	1,217
Christmas Island	Australia	55	3,333
Cocos Islands	Australia	5	675
Australian Antarctic Territory	Australia	2,333,624 (approx)	None
Ross Dependency	New Zealand	160,000 (approx)	None



COMMONWEALTH DECLARATION

The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of independent sovereign states, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the common interests of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace.

Members of the Commonwealth come from territories in the six continents and five oceans, include peoples of different races, languages and religions, and display every stage of economic development from poor developing nations to wealthy industrialized nations. They encompass a rich variety of cultures, traditions and institutions. Membership of the Commonwealth is compatible with the freedom of member governments to be non-aligned or to belong to any other grouping, association or alliance.

Within this diversity all members of the Commonwealth hold certain principles in common. It is by pursuing these principles that the Commonwealth can continue to influence international society for the benefit of mankind.

WE BELIEVE that international peace and order are essential to the security and prosperity of mankind; we therefore support the United Nations and seek to strengthen its influence for peace in the world, and its efforts to remove the causes of tension between nations.

WE BELIEVE in the liberty of the individual, in equal rights for all citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief, and in their inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which they live. We therefore strive to promote in each of our countries those representative institutions and guarantees for personal freedom under the law that are our common heritage.

WE RECOGNIZE racial prejudice as a dangerous sickness threatening the healthy development of the human race and racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil of society. Each of us will vigorously combat this evil within our own nation. No country will afford to regimes which practise racial discrimination assistance which in its own judgment directly contributes to the pursuit or consolidation of this evil policy. We oppose all forms of colonial domination and racial oppression and are committed to the principles of human dignity and equality. We will therefore use all our efforts to foster human equality and dignity everywhere and to further the principles of self-determination and non-racialism.

WE BELIEVE that the wide disparities in wealth now existing between different sections of mankind are too great to be tolerated; they also create world tensions; our aim is their progressive removal; we therefore seek to use our efforts to overcome poverty, ignorance and disease, in raising standards of life and achieving a more equitable international society. To this end our aim is to achieve the freest possible flow of international trade on terms fair and equitable to all, taking into account the special requirements of the developing countries, and to encourage the flow of adequate

resources, including governmental and private resources, to the developing countries, bearing in mind the importance of doing this in a true spirit of partnership and of establishing for this purpose in the developing countries conditions which are conducive to sustained investment and growth.

WE BELIEVE that international co-operation is essential to remove the causes of war, promote tolerance, combat injustice and secure development amongst the peoples of the world; we are convinced that the Commonwealth is one of the most fruitful associations for these purposes.

In pursuing these principles the members of the Commonwealth believe that they can provide a constructive example of the multi-national approach which is vital to peace and progress in the modern world. The association is based on consultation, discussion and co-operation. In rejecting coercion as an instrument of policy they recognise that the security of each member state from external aggression is a matter of concern to all members. It provides many channels for continuing exchanges of knowledge and views on professional, cultural, economic, legal and political issues among member states. These relationships we intend to foster and extend for we believe that our multi-national association can expand human understanding and understanding among nations, assist in the elimination of discrimination based on differences of race, colour or creed, maintain and strengthen personal liberty, contribute to the enrichment of life for all, and provide a powerful influence for peace among nations.

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