



No. 59

March 11, 1991

CANADA OBSERVES COMMONWEALTH DAY

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today said that the Government joins Canadians and others around the world in observing the 15th anniversary of Commonwealth Day.

"Nineteen ninety-one marks the 60th anniversary of the Statute of Westminster, which gave birth to the Commonwealth and confirmed Canada's full independence in the field of diplomacy and foreign policy," stated Mr. Clark.

The Minister said that much had been accomplished in the Commonwealth over the past year:

- . Namibia acceded to independence and became the 50th member of the Commonwealth.
- . Bowing to pressure from the Commonwealth and others, the Government of South Africa announced its intention to dismantle important legislative pillars of the apartheid system.
- . A new election observer facility is being established to support democratic processes throughout the Commonwealth.
- . Meeting in Ottawa, Commonwealth ministers responsible for women's affairs called for full equality of women and their full integration in the development process.
- . A Commonwealth committee on sport chaired by Roy McMurtry proposed a major revamping of the Commonwealth Games and an ambitious scheme of sport development.

- . A select committee of 10 heads of government, including Prime Minister Mulroney, is examining ways to enhance the Commonwealth's role in the 1990s and beyond and will report to the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

"Voluntary, non-governmental organizations are the driving force behind today's Commonwealth. They will meet for the first time to discuss sustainable development before Commonwealth Heads of Government get together in Harare this fall," said Mr. Clark.

-30-

For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
External Affairs and International Trade Canada
(613) 995-1874