

# Towards a Common Future

Commonwealth Day | 12 March 2018

## Commonwealth Day Message by The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Commonwealth Secretary-General

Never before in the history of our family of nations has there been such a remarkable season of gatherings as that heralded by Commonwealth Day 2018.

Over coming weeks at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and associated forums, leaders and representatives of the people in all 53 of our member countries will assemble to work and plan together. We will share and learn from one another, and be motivated to ever greater heights of endeavour and achievement.

There will also be the Commonwealth Games, with compelling scenes of athletic prowess, tenacity and triumph. Huge new audiences worldwide will deepen in understanding of what the Commonwealth is, what it does, and how it brings positive change for the good of all.

An example of this is the Commonwealth Blue Charter currently being developed. By agreeing to protect the health of oceans and marine life, and to use the precious resources they yield in responsible and sustainable ways, we will be sharing more fairly the benefits they bestow, and preserving these for future generations.

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Please note the embargo on this message: It must not be published in print or online form before 1200 GMT **Saturday 10 March 2018**.



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Wherever we live – on island or coast, or inland where streams and rivers flow to the sea – our actions and the way we live affects life in the ocean. In turn, the health of the ocean affects our own wellbeing, our weather, our food, our trade and our prosperity. Industrial and domestic waste pollutes great rivers and their tributaries, or flows directly into the sea. Plastic and other toxic waste materials poison the ocean, which belongs to us all and is vital to our common future.

Just as we work together in the Commonwealth to preserve the health of the ocean, we cooperate in many other ways for the common good. Our member countries have committed to nurture and protect democracy, development and respect for diversity so that people of all communities can live safer and healthier lives, and share in the fruits of prosperity. This includes preventing greed and corruption, unfairness, or partisan discord from poisoning politics and public life.

We work together to achieve this by creating channels through which good ideas and clever ways of doing things flow from the governments and people of all our countries into a continually renewed and refreshed Commonwealth ocean of knowledge. It is an ecosystem of experience and expertise in which all give and all gain.

Through our 'Faith in the Commonwealth' project, we draw wisdom and insights from secular streams of thought, and from the many communities and traditions that are the sea of faith. Such resources and riches add to all that we celebrate on Commonwealth Day, and they are indeed treasures to be cherished and shared.

There are opportunities for each and every one of us as members of the worldwide Commonwealth family to become involved. With our fellow citizens, we live, learn, work and play in countries set in every continent and ocean – all 2.4 billion of us, representing a glorious spectrum of diversity and talent. It is by living and working for the good of one another, towards a common future, that we build our Commonwealth.

A recorded version of the Secretary-General's speech can be seen [here](#)