



His Majesty The King's Commonwealth Day message Westminster Abbey, Monday 13th March 2023

Commonwealth Day was an occasion of particular pride for my beloved Mother, The late Queen – a treasured opportunity to celebrate our Commonwealth family, to whose service she dedicated her long and remarkable life.

In succeeding Her Majesty as Head of the Commonwealth, I draw great strength from her example, together with all that I have learnt from the extraordinary people I have met, throughout the Commonwealth, over so many years.

The Commonwealth has been a constant in my own life, and yet its diversity continues to amaze and inspire me. Its near-boundless potential as a force for good in the world demands our highest ambition; its sheer scale challenges us to unite and be bold.

This week marks the tenth anniversary of the Charter of the Commonwealth, which gives expression to our defining values – peace and justice; tolerance, respect and solidarity; care for our environment, and for the most vulnerable among us.

These are not simply ideals. In each lies an imperative to act, and to make a practical difference in the lives of the 2.6 billion people who call the Commonwealth home.

Whether on climate change and biodiversity loss, youth opportunity and education, global health, or economic co-operation, the Commonwealth can play an indispensable role in the most pressing issues of our time. Ours is an association not just of shared values, but of common purpose and joint action.

In this we are blessed with the ingenuity and imagination of a third of the world's population, including one and a half billion people under the age of thirty. Our shared humanity contains an immensely precious diversity of thought, culture, tradition and experience. By listening to each other, we will find so many of the solutions that we seek.

This extraordinary potential, which we hold in common, is more than equal to the challenges we face. It offers us unparalleled strength not merely to face the future, but to build it. Here, the Commonwealth has an incredible opportunity, and responsibility, to create a genuinely durable future – one that offers the kind of prosperity that is in harmony with Nature and that will also secure our unique and only planet for generations to come.

The myriad connections between our nations have sustained and enriched us for more than seven decades. Our commitment to peace, progress and opportunity will sustain us for many more.

Let ours be a Commonwealth that not only stands together, but strives together, in restless and practical pursuit of the global common good.
