

COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE
of the
Chairman of the Executive Committee
of the
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
Hon. Ripton MacPherson, Speaker
of the
House of Representatives
of Jamaica

It seems appropriate that a Commonwealth Day Message has afforded me the first opportunity of communicating with all the Branches of the Association since my election in New Zealand as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. It is an honour to be able to serve in this capacity and I look forward to working constructively with all Branches throughout the Commonwealth.

Over the years, the Commonwealth has evolved into a major international organization with a membership of forty-two sovereign states. Not surprisingly therefore, its functions and activities have increased significantly and its role in international affairs has received great recognition. The relationship which has developed among its members is of inestimable value, not only because of the shared experiences and the consultative nature of the relationship, but also because of the practical nature of Commonwealth co-operation and its concern for matters with which we can all closely identify.

Within the Commonwealth, there is continuous wide-ranging inter-governmental co-operation in such areas as education, health, youth, law and various forms of technical assistance. It is, however, the special responsibility of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to actively encourage the growth and development of appropriate Parliamentary systems within the member states of the Commonwealth.

The Association therefore warmly welcomes Norfolk Island, and the return of Bangladesh, Ghana and Swaziland to its membership and hopes that in the very near future, it will have the pleasure of receiving delegates from Nigeria and Zimbabwe-Rhodesia at its Conferences.

As we observe the occasion of Commonwealth Day, it is my deep belief that this group of nations with its time-honoured traditions, rich diversities and strong sense of community will continue through its Parliamentarians to inspire and provide leadership in the pursuit of new co-operative and mutually beneficial relationships among states of the international community.