

# Unlocking Opportunities Together

Commonwealth Day | 9 March 2026

Embargoed until 22:00 GMT, Sunday 8 March 2026

## Commonwealth Day Message from The Hon. Shirley Botchwey, Commonwealth Secretary-General

This Commonwealth Day, we affirm the truth that co-operation among nations – freely chosen, values-based and equal – remains the surest foundation for peace and prosperity.

The Commonwealth is not held together by force or geography. It is sustained by conviction. Fifty-six countries, one third of humanity, united by a shared commitment to democracy, human rights, the rule of law and opportunity for all.

The world is changing – economically, technologically, environmentally and geopolitically. Institutions are under strain and trust is being tested. Communities everywhere feel the weight of disruption and the anxiety of transition.

The temptation to narrow our horizons and turn inward can be powerful, but the Commonwealth chooses partnership.

Partnership as lasting friendship, as strategy, as joint action and as a clear statement that sovereignty is strengthened, not diminished, when nations work together in mutual respect.

Our diversity is extraordinary. We include small island states on the frontline of climate change and major economies shaping global markets. We are young, entrepreneurial, creative and resilient. And we are connected – through language, education, business, law, culture and enduring human ties.

Those connections are powerful instruments for resilience and progress. They lower barriers, deepen trust and create the conditions in which trade can flourish, investment can flow and innovation can spread. In uncertain times, trust itself becomes a source of strength.

True partnership is never passive. It asks more of us – and this is such a moment.

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Across the Commonwealth, citizens seek security in their livelihoods, fairness in global systems, and confidence in the future. They want growth that includes them. Transitions that protect the vulnerable. Institutions that listen and respond.

As we work together towards the consequential Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Antigua and Barbuda, we carry a shared responsibility: to ensure that our co-operation translates into stability, resilience and a truly prosperous Commonwealth.

Our family of nations has always evolved. From supporting newly independent nations to standing firm for democratic principles and climate action, we have shown that our values are most powerful when they are lived.

We meet this time of change with the promise of renewal – of our purpose, our partnership and our confidence.

Confidence that multilateralism grounded in shared values is our only path to transformation and shared prosperity.

Confidence in the energy and ingenuity of our people.

Confidence that by acting together, we expand what is possible for every nation.

Commonwealth Day is both a celebration and a promise.

I hope that this Commonwealth Day, each of us can share in a celebration of enduring bonds across oceans and generations, and renew our promise that – despite the uncertainty of our times – we choose co-operation over division, dialogue over discord, and partnership over isolation.

When we do, we do more than navigate change.

Together, we shape a future worthy of our shared values and all our people.