

## OPENING CEREMONY

Introductory remarks  
by Mr. Jean Ah Chuen  
Acting Minister of Youth and Sports

Right Honourable Prime Minister, Your Lordship, Reverend Swamijis, Maulana Sahebs, Commonwealth Assistant Secretary-General, Honourable Ministers, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Delegates, Consultants and Observers, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a pleasure and privilege for me to extend a warm welcome to all of you at the opening by the Prime Minister, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, of the Commonwealth Seminar on "Pluralism and Development in Island Communities".

I am thankful to the Prime Minister for having kindly accepted to open the Seminar this morning, although he has a very heavy programme these days, as he has just come back from a fruitful mission to India and he is busy with preparations for the arrival of President Kaunda tomorrow.

I should like to extend a special welcome to Mauritius to the Commonwealth Secretariat officials, especially Dr. James Maraj, Commonwealth Assistant Secretary-General, and Mr. P.K. Patnaik, Director of the Youth Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat, to the lead speakers, the observers and to the participants in the Seminar. I wish all of them a pleasant stay in the island. I can assure them that no effort has been spared to make their visit a happy one.

We are honoured that Mauritius has been chosen by the Commonwealth Secretariat as the venue for this Seminar. It is probably the first time that representatives of islands from different parts of the world have been brought together for such an important purpose.

Young people today occupy a very important position in the Commonwealth as they constitute the majority of the population. For this reason, the noble programme elaborated by the Commonwealth Secretariat deserves our encouragement and support.

As the islands represented at this Seminar have common problems of pluralism and economy, there is no doubt that they have a great deal to learn from one another's experience. The Seminar will therefore prove fruitful to the participants and, ultimately, to the young people living in the islands of the Commonwealth.

I am confident that the Seminar will help to strengthen further the ties of friendship binding the different nations of the Commonwealth.

I am now inviting Dr. Maraj to address you. Dr. Maraj was Head of the Institute of Education at the University of the West Indies before he became Director of the Education Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat in June 1970. He has been the Commonwealth Assistant Secretary-General since January 1973, and he is now in charge of the Education, Youth, Medical, Legal and Scientific Divisions of the Commonwealth Secretariat.