

**MEETING OF
COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS
1957**

(London 26 June-5 July)

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FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers was concluded today. This was the first Commonwealth Meeting at which Ghana was represented, following her attainment of independence in March 1957. Other Commonwealth Ministers welcomed Ghana's participation in the Meeting as a full member of the Commonwealth, and took note of this occasion as further practical evidence of the progress made by the United Kingdom Government in the pursuit of their policy of fostering constitutional development in their dependent territories.

In the course of their discussions the Commonwealth Ministers have reviewed all the major international questions of the day which are of common concern to their countries. In this association of free and independent nations it is inevitable that there should be some differences of viewpoint and opinion. But these Meetings reveal a broad similarity of approach and purpose. It is not their function, nor is it the object of this communique, to record agreed decisions or formal resolutions. Their value lies in the opportunity which they afford for a full and candid exchange of views in the light of which each Commonwealth Government can formulate and pursue its separate policies with deeper knowledge and understanding of the views and interests of its fellow members.

The primary objective of all Commonwealth Governments is world peace and security. They believe that this objective can only be assured by increased co-operation between nations. They themselves accept the principle and practice of co-operation: it is the foundation of their own association: they will continue to work for its wider adoption.

The United Nations was designed to provide one of the main opportunities for the practical exercise of the principle of co-operation between nations. Experience has, however, revealed certain deficiencies and weaknesses in the functioning of the Organisation. The Commonwealth Ministers agreed that constructive action is needed to strengthen and improve the United Nations as an instrument for preserving peace, justice and co-operation throughout the world in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

In discussion of developments since their last Meeting Commonwealth Ministers expressed their grave concern at the tragic events in Hungary. They took note that the forthcoming consideration by the General Assembly of the report presented by its Special Committee will provide the occasion for the United Nations to record its views.

Commonwealth Ministers reviewed the course of developments in the current discussions on disarmament. They noted that proposals relating to a first stage of disarmament were put forward on 2nd July in the Disarmament Sub-Committee on behalf of the Governments of the United States, the United

Kingdom, Canada and France. They recognised that even a limited agreement, by reducing the suspicions and tensions throughout the world, would help to create conditions in which a more comprehensive scheme of disarmament could be developed.

The Commonwealth Ministers discussed the international problems of the Middle East. They agreed that, in the long term, economic and social progress must be the foundation for stability in the Middle East. They agreed, however, that in the short term the need is to work towards a relaxation of the tension arising from the dispute between the Arab States and Israel, the plight of the Arab refugees and the unresolved problems in connection with the Suez Canal. They considered that solutions of all these urgent questions should continue to be pursued by all practical means.

Consideration was also given to the contribution which might be made by the Commonwealth Governments concerned towards the easing of tension and the maintenance of peace, stability and political freedom in the Far East and South-East Asia. Commonwealth Ministers welcomed the important contribution already made by mutual assistance under the Colombo Plan towards raising standards of living and promoting economic development in the under-developed countries of this area.

In their general review of economic questions the Commonwealth Ministers gave special attention to the impact of the major programmes of development on which many of their countries are now engaged. These programmes call for high levels of domestic saving which can only be secured by sound internal policies. But they also call for conditions favourable to investment from other countries. The United Kingdom will continue to play its leading role in furthering economic development in the countries of the Commonwealth, and important contributions are also being made by other Commonwealth members. But, in view of the continued need for capital investment, it is also important to encourage investment from other sources on suitable conditions.

The Commonwealth Ministers noted the progress made since their last Meeting towards the freeing of trade payments. In this context they discussed the proposals for the creation of an industrial free trade area in Europe as a complement to the European Economic Community to be set up under the Treaty of Rome. They agreed that, as part of the continuous exchange of views between Commonwealth Governments on these matters, particular aspects of the proposals which might specially affect certain countries of the Commonwealth should be examined in London next week by officials of all Commonwealth countries in the light of the Ministers' discussions.

The Commonwealth Ministers noted that the Annual Meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development will be held in Washington in September. The normal practice is for this Meeting to be followed by a meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers. The Prime Minister of Canada extended an invitation that this meeting of Finance Ministers should be held this year in Ottawa.

The Commonwealth Ministers recognised the value of the work carried out over the past thirty years, by the Commonwealth Economic Committee. They agreed that the Committee should be invited to examine and suggest to Governments what expansion of its scope and functions might usefully be

undertaken for the particular purpose of drawing attention to the economic resources of Commonwealth countries.

The Commonwealth Ministers reviewed the progress of co-operation within the Commonwealth in the use of nuclear energy for civil purposes. They recognised the growing importance of the contribution which nuclear energy can make to the peaceful development of their countries and of the rest of the world and the value of close collaboration between members of the Commonwealth in this field. For this purpose nuclear scientists from Commonwealth countries will be invited to an informal meeting in the United Kingdom in 1958.

The Commonwealth Ministers noted that the Federation of Malaya was on the eve of attaining independence. They extended to the Federation their warm good wishes for its future, and they looked forward to being able to welcome an independent Malaya as a member of the Commonwealth on the completion of the necessary constitutional processes.

5 July 1957

Heads of Delegation

Australia	The Rt Hon R G Menzies, Prime Minister
Britain	The Rt Hon Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister
Canada	The Hon John Diefenbaker, Prime Minister
Ceylon	The Hon M W H de Silva, Leader of the Senate and Minister of Justice
Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland	The Hon Sir Roy Welensky, Prime Minister
Ghana	Dr The Hon Kwame Nkrumah, Prime Minister
India	Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister
New Zealand	The Hon T L Macdonald, Minister of External Affairs and Defence
Pakistan	The Hon H S Suhrawardy, Prime Minister
Union of South Africa	The Hon E H Louw, Minister of External Affairs