



Message from  
Hon Bruce Golding  
Prime Minister  
of Jamaica

The Commonwealth remains an Organisation of enduring importance. It continues to evoke a sense of pride amongst its membership which spans every region of the world and includes countries of all sizes and stages of development. Its potential to build consensus among a group of diverse nations is legendary, given that the Commonwealth's 2 billion citizens are drawn from a broad range of faiths, races, cultures and traditions.

Such an accomplishment is no small feat for an Organisation that is not dictated by a Charter or other legal instruments, but by principles and procedures to which all its Members have subscribed. Very few organisations have been able to distinguish themselves in such a manner.

Built on a tradition of mutual respect, diversity and partnership, the Commonwealth remains unflinching its support of democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law. Through the various Declarations and Statements adopted by successive Meetings of Heads of Government, the Commonwealth has been able to promote these principles and

establish a foundation to build peace and deliver prosperity to all our people.

These shared values and goals define the raison d'être of the Commonwealth and continue to shape the Organisation in the 21st Century. It is also this shared history and common legacy that has sustained the Organisation and has fostered the bonds of friendship that it continues to engender through engagement in different Commonwealth fora. The Commonwealth's enduring quality is evidenced by the determination of Member Countries to not only reflect on past achievements but to evolve and respond to the many challenges besetting the global community. We can, therefore, embrace the future confident in the fact that collectively we can make a difference. Jamaica is convinced that this can be achieved because of our years of fruitful and mutually beneficial relationship with the Commonwealth. Through our membership of the Organisation, we have been able to share our experience and skills across international boundaries, and benefit from the expertise of others. The Commonwealth is also a unique forum for global diplomacy. It has afforded

small states like Jamaica a voice on the international scene. We are particularly appreciative of the pioneering and prominent role that the Commonwealth has played in highlighting the challenges and vulnerabilities faced by small states. We expect that the plight of these states, particularly in the context of climate change, the promotion of international trade and the reform of international financial institutions, will remain at the forefront of the Commonwealth agenda. We recall that one of the earliest studies on the dangers of climate change emanated from the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth must continue efforts to promote social, economic and human development. For this to happen, special attention must be given to advancing development cooperation, reducing poverty and achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Central to this endeavour is national capacity building, education, the empowerment of women and young people as well as the engagement of civil society. The strong emphasis on education and training for our young

people is especially necessary given that more than half of the population of the Commonwealth is under the age of 25. Positive and active engagement in ensuring that the views and concerns of young people are reflected in the work of the Organisation is, therefore, critical.

When Commonwealth Heads of Government meet in November, we will do so fully aware of the magnitude of the challenges that confront us but confident in our ability to weather the storm. We have a responsibility, as reflected in the theme, to ensure that we bequeath to this and succeeding generations a more equitable and sustainable future.

It is imperative that we build on this collaboration to continue to ensure the Organisation's vitality and effectiveness in this new era of globalisation. Jamaica stands ready to work with fellow Commonwealth Members to advance this objective. E



HON BRUCE GOLDING PM

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