

HM's Message on the occasion Commonwealth Day, 10 March 2008

Today, we celebrate Commonwealth Day in the spirit of friendship that we in Brunei Darussalam have shared with our fellow members for the past 24 years.

During this time, a great deal of practical cooperation has been undertaken in order to ensure that nearly two billion people our organisation represents have confidence in the future.

That confidence is critically underpinned by the environmental conditions which we all live. The theme of this year's Commonwealth Day, "The Environment, Our Future", is therefore extremely important.

To sustain human security and economic well-being, we must ensure that the environment is well protected. This can only be done if we work together and do all we can to help sustain a healthy and productive environment in our own countries and regions and throughout the world.

For many years, this has been the great concern of the Commonwealth and our fellow members. Although we are at different stages of development, we all face similar challenges and these can only be met successfully, if we work together.

Adverse climate change is the result of human activity. The rise in sea-levels threatens to inundate low-lying island nations and coastal areas. Changes in rainfall distribution and extreme temperature variations similarly threaten agriculture and future supplies of food. They thus intensify the problems of poverty and hunger that are sadly faced by many of our fellow Commonwealth citizens. These threats therefore affect us all. This is why we have a collective responsibility for the environment, both as individual nations and as international partners.

In encouraging its members to discharge this responsibility well, The Commonwealth has always committed itself to improving the quality of life for the people it represents and this year's theme stresses the need to ensure that our future generations will enjoy healthy, safe, clean and productive lives.

Brunei Darussalam thus joins its fellow members in reaffirming this commitment and the critical responsibilities it demands of us all.