



Commonwealth Secretary-General

Message to all taking part in *Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth* on Commonwealth Day, 12 March 2018

Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth provides a splendid opportunity every year for people from all walks of life to join with others in their local community to celebrate Commonwealth Day in association with fellow citizens throughout our worldwide family.

People from nations and territories in every continent and ocean cherish the rich diversity of our membership, the deep sense of affinity and kinship we share, and the Commonwealth values and principles that unite us.

Together we number almost 2.5 billion people, a third of the world's population. Each one of us has something very special to offer, and as Commonwealth citizens we gain and draw benefit from vast interconnected networks of mutual support.

By working together in practical ways in our local communities, and by interacting and cooperating across national boundaries, we build and sustain a more strongly connected Commonwealth that is mutually respectful, resilient, peaceful and prosperous and that cherishes equality of opportunity and inclusiveness.

Early next month, the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games in Queensland, Australia, will bring athletes and spectators together with a global television audience to celebrate sporting excellence and friendly competition.

From Gold Coast 2018 the focus will immediately move to the United Kingdom for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London, when presidents and prime ministers representing more than fifty countries will confer on shared Commonwealth approaches to making the most of global opportunities, and tackling together the challenges we face.

Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth is an occasion to acknowledge publicly and collectively the continuing aspiration of the Commonwealth to build on common traditions and uphold our shared values of democracy, inclusive development and respect for diversity.

Local and national flag raising ceremonies in school yards, on village greens, in town squares, and on mountaintops and beaches, bring greater understanding and appreciation of the values and principles of the *Commonwealth Charter* - to which the governments of all Commonwealth countries subscribe, and to which each of us individually as Commonwealth citizens can recommit ourselves on Commonwealth Day.

I send my best wishes to all involved, saluting you and wishing you well as you raise both the Commonwealth flag and awareness of all that we achieve together through Commonwealth friendship and cooperation.

The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC