The Commonwealth of Nations

Basic Facts:
Pop: 1,921,974,000
Members: 53 (52) States
Headquarter: Malbrough House, London
Head: Queen Elisabeth II.
Sec.-General: Kamalesh Sharma

History:
- The term “Commonwealth of Nations” was first used in 1884 to describe the changing British Empire.
- The organisation was used to bind the “Dominions” of England to the Empire.
- By the 1926 Balfour Declaration the Dominions became: “autonomous Communities [...] equal in status, in no way subordinate [...], though united by a common allegiance to the Crown [...].“
- After World War II, in which some colonies played an important role. The independence movements grew stronger in the colonies, especially in India.
- The new states mostly joined shortly after their independence, allowing the Commonwealth to grow very rapid.
- The London Declaration of 1949 ended the membership prerequisite to accept the King of England as the Head of State.
- The easier way to become a member, had the effect that until today 53(52) states have joined the commonwealth.
Membership Criteria (according to the Edinburgh Declaration):

- acceptance of the british crown as the Head of the Commonwealth
- acceptance of the core principles of: World peace, liberty, human rights and equality (Singapore Declaration, Harare Declaration)
- be fully sovereign states
- acceptance of the English language as the means of commonwealth communication
- respect the wishes of the general population vis-à-vis Commonwealth membership
- constitutional association with a commonwealth member

Organisation:

- The Head of the Commonwealth is the British Queen with only ceremonial functions
- The Commonwealth Secretariat is the central institution of the organisation, responsible for the cooperation between the members.
- The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, abbreviated to CHOGM is a summit meeting of the heads of the member states/prime ministers
- The Privy Council serves as the highest court of appeal in 27 jurisdictions of the Commonwealth