

Bulletin 2 of the Environmental Concern Collective

The reasons for the Commonwealth to become the leader in dealing with climate change from the perspective of a citizen of the United States

I am a citizen of the United States and thus writing this from a somewhat limited perspective on the nature of the Commonwealth. I have lived in Kenya for a number of years, visited the United Kingdom, the British Virgin Islands, Jamaica, Canada and New Zealand all of which are members. My exposure as limited as it is gives me the perspective on why I think the Commonwealth can and should be the leader in dealing with climate change.

The Commonwealth has 56 member nations and those members are found on all of the continents of the world. This membership includes communities speaking a variety of languages practicing a variety of religious faiths and living in a variety of different physical environments. What amazes me is that the Commonwealth has the basis of unity from the chaos of this multiculturalism.

The world needs a group that has the capabilities of dealing with the global threats arising from climate change. The Commonwealth has these capabilities because of the variety among its members. This variety is expressed inside of the legacy from the British Empire. The legacy of a common language English and the education, financial, legal and political systems. These elements of the legacy and others have allowed the Commonwealth to establish an organization that has and is developing information about the threats coming from climate change and some solutions on how to deal with these threats.

It is this chaos of multiculturalism that gives the Commonwealth the premier position of being the leader of dealing with the problems of the world. The problems are arising from climate change or global in nature and reach. Individual communities and people are affected but the solutions have to be from a global perspective. There is currently a number of the members of the Commonwealth facing immediate concerns arising from global warming. Thus in my perspective the Commonwealth because of its basis in unity and the immediate need of some of the members must take the lead in dealing with the crisis.

I look at the conditions inside the United States on immigration and multiculturalism and in spite of our claims to be open to the world we are in the process of moving towards a closed and exclusive society. We here are losing any platform to be a leader in dealing with the variety of crises here and coming for the world. The problems need global recognition and development of global solutions and the United States is not in a position to be the required leader.

The Commonwealth has some of the best universities of the world, some of the premier research groups and organizations already in operation dealing with the threats. Unlike the current administration in the United States the Commonwealth is starting to work on the threats. The Commonwealth has within the member nations access to just about all the natural resources necessary to build a sustainable economic base for all of the communities within its borders.

Yes it is true that many of the communities within the member nations are steeped in poverty and many of the governments are in debt. There is also a history of many ethnic and civil conflicts among the member nations, and yes several of the member nations are under dire and immediate threats from climate change. I look at the make up of the Imperial army during World War 2 and gives me hope for

the unity of the Commonwealth. Granted that even during World War 2 there was a level of dissension and not all of the elements of the legacy of the British Empire were benign.

I still see in the history of the British Empire and the Commonwealth elements of a unity that could and will lead the Commonwealth to be the necessary and required leader for solutions to the growing problems of the world.

What I see is not a reconstruction of the British Empire but the continued development of an organization leading to building sustainable economic base for all of its members. Yes there is massive differences in the economic throughout the Commonwealth but constructing sustainable economies throughout all members even the poorest will result to very significant benefits to all members even the current richest.

At moment it is obvious that many of the members do not have the luxury of being able to stand on their own against the often predatory investment practices of foreign nations and outside agencies. The examples are the conflict that arose between China and Kenya. China invested or loaned large amounts of money for Kenya to upgrade the railroad from Mombasa to Nairobi. Kenya has some problems on repaying the loan on time and China threaten to take over the duties from the port of Mombasa. China did the same thing to Sri Lanka.

If the Commonwealth continues on its unity programs it should be possible to set up regulatory organizations to protect both the investment groups and the communities receiving the investment. Often times the investments in many places within the world or another more recent form of colonialism. The members of the Commonwealth where in most cases at the end of colonialism. In some areas colonialism resulted in positive benefits but in many cases the negative was more the result.

The idea around the unity of the Commonwealth is to recognize the cultural differences and to find common ground on how to build the sustainable economic bases that will be needed to deal with climate change.

The Commonwealth is in a good position to take the lead as mentioned before some of the best universities and research organization exist within the borders. The Commonwealth also has within its members borders probably all of the needed mineral and natural resources to develop those sustainable economies. It has more than enough oil and gas to be used in making the needed transition from fossil fuels to alternate energy. It has differences in environmental regions with enough variation to help deal with potential loss of agricultural production in some areas. It has over the centuries developed a wide range of technology of food production and even those many of these technologies are outdated from the changes in climate many are not and can possibly be applied in other areas. The general point is that since the 56 member nations cover much of the world there is not just areas that are going to suffer harshly from climate change there maybe others that can become a haven for solutions.

I am hoping that the Commonwealth becomes a group with a similar structure and purpose much like the European Union and even the United Nations. For it to become a leader it has to recognize the equal demands of all of its members and be prepared to deal with the threats to its many nations. Again these threats are not the same intensity and immediacy for all members. But all members will have issues and again the solutions will require a global perspective. The Commonwealth is one of the few groups that has the basis structure to understand the global nature of the threats and how to develop solutions for these global threats.

The Environmental Concern Collective is developing itself into an organization with a global presence. We have offices in the United States, Kenya and India and are working proposals for helping communities in Kenya and Sierra Leone. We are committed to becoming an organization that will be able to help the Commonwealth restructure itself to deal with the global threats from climate change. At the moment we feel like the Commonwealth is the best organization to become the global leader. We have issues and concerns about the United States and hope that the lack of direction and concern throughout much of the United States Government will only be temporary and the succeeding years agencies and institutions and individuals will become concerned about the issues. Until then and even after the United States becomes concerned the Commonwealth will be not just the ideal organization to be a world leader but a necessary and vital world leader.