

## Message from His Excellency Chief Emeka Anyaoku Commonwealth Secretary General

I was delighted when your president, Mr. Emmanuel Arinze, asked me to provide a message to your Triennial Conference in Barbados. I send all of you my greetings, and I should like to congratulate you on your timely and important theme “Museums: Peace, Democracy and Governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”.

On the date that your Conference starts, there will only be 228 days left before the beginning of the new millennium; 228 days during which countless people will refer in speeches, interviews and articles to the possibilities of a brighter future for us all. However, if we are to plan for better things, we must learn from the mistakes of the past, value the present and have a vision of the changes which we wish to bring about in the future.

In all of these tasks, museums have challenging roles to play. You can be not only the guardians of the past but also agents of change for the better, through educating people of all ages and from all backgrounds in our Commonwealth member countries. For it is only through education that people are empowered to take charge and enrich the quality of their own lives; not only materially but through embracing the values of tolerance and respect for the views, the cultures and the rights of others, which are the essence of a common humanity.

I applaud the excellent work of museums throughout the Commonwealth and wish you every success in your deliberations during your week in Barbados. I feel sure that your exchanges of views will be both interesting and productive and that, on your return home, all of you will be able to ensure that the theme of your Conference is reflected fully in the work which you do in your various communities.