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[Rwanda](#): Government Welcomes Common Wealth Entry

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Kigali — The Government of Rwanda has welcomed the country's entry into the Commonwealth grouping and has vowed to contribute to promote the principles of the group including promoting peace and prosperity in the region and the world.

Rwanda, now the 54th member was officially and unanimously admitted into the group composed of mainly former British colonies on Saturday evening by the Commonwealth Heads of Governments meeting which ended yesterday in Trinidad and Tobago. "The Government of Rwanda expresses sincere appreciation to the Commonwealth member countries for admitting Rwanda into the club of Commonwealth of Nations at this historic moment when the organisation celebrates its 60th anniversary of the modern Commonwealth," a Government statement said. Addressing a joint press conference both the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Information said that Rwanda's admission is a sign of recognition of the country's achievements.

"We are pleased that the members of the Commonwealth have recognised the great strides Rwanda has made for the last 15 years to rebuild every aspect of our country and improve the lives of our citizens. We look forward to working with our new partner states to strengthen economic, trade, cultural and political ties for the benefit of over two billion people of the Commonwealth," Mushikiwabo read in a statement.

Rwanda's admission was merited on four grounds including democracy and democratic processes such as free and fair elections, rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, good governance including a well trained public service and transparency. The other aspect that merited Rwanda's entry is the protection of human rights, freedom of expression and equality of opportunity. Foreign Affairs Minister Rosemary Museminali affirmed the country's commitment to contribute to the group's aspirations, noting that much as Rwanda has a lot to benefit from the group, there is a lot the country can offer as lessons to other member states.

"Rwanda will definitely take advantage of this accession into the group to exploit all available opportunities. There are economic, political, social and cultural benefits but we should also say that there is a lot Rwanda can contribute to the group."

Among these, Rwanda looked up by other member states in regard to development, consensus, human rights, women emancipation, good governance, transparency and the rule of law. Rwanda becomes the second member of commonwealth without any direct British colonial connection or constitutional link after Mozambique. Its first attempt was in 1996. Rwanda's bid is to join the group this time round looked overwhelmingly positive with the support of Britain, Australia, Canada and India-the most influential countries in the group. The Commonwealth is a club of nations with a population of more than two billion and \$2.8 trillion in annual trade. Its main focus is promoting trade, education and good governance among its member countries.