

Address by Mr. M. V. Kamath,

Chairman, Prasar Bharati Board

Sh. Das Munshiji, distinguished guests on the dias and below, a very warm welcome to you. I must start first of all with a minor confession. Till the other day, I was not sure how many countries are members of the Commonwealth. I could have checked it with Internet, but out of sheer curiosity, I decided to find out whether someone else could enlighten me. I asked several people at random but no one had a clue. At that point of time, I realized that the Commonwealth arouses very little interest among anyone I know. That raises an important question. 60 years ago, Britain was exceedingly anxious that India should remain in the Commonwealth. Indeed, India gave an assurance that it would to the great relief of the British government. Presently the situation has changed. Membership of the Commonwealth seems to have become more a formality - something taken for granted. In an era of globalization, this is sad. Can we do something to enliven interest in its great international body? Unique in its own way, that cuts across continents, religions and cultures. Has the CBA a role to play? I think it has. We can suggest something for you for your contribution...we need to popularize the Commonwealth. It can be done with the active cooperation of all member countries. It can be done by devoting one hour each day for a one week for each Commonwealth country on our Public Broadcasting Channels. In 52 weeks, we can introduce 52 countries to our national viewer-ship because a country is just not in name. It has people. It is people. We must introduce the people in all their glory to the other member nations of the Commonwealth. We must bring to the attention of the world the great men and women, the poets, the scholars, the philosophers and the scientists, the artists and the artisans. Indeed all who contribute to the making of each of the Commonwealth nations. May I in all humility ask the CBA to discuss how this can be achieved and to persuade all member Public Broadcasting Corporations to do their bit in making this a success of this very vital endeavor. I could tell you about myself multi-ethnic, multi-lingual country. There are about 22 languages in this country. Actually there are 23, the last one has no script and it is called the language of love. We love our guests and our friends. You are both welcome to India. (clapping)