



COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL

21 June 2011

25th Anniversary Meeting of the Commonwealth Association of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition

I extend my greetings to members of the Commonwealth Association of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition as you gather in London for the first time since your inaugural meeting was held here 25 years ago. I am delighted to welcome you to the headquarters of the Commonwealth at Marlborough House for a reception to mark your 25th Anniversary Meeting.

By bringing together paediatric gastroenterologists, nutritionists and child health professionals to share knowledge, CAPGAN helps shape policy and improve the lives of millions of children in the Commonwealth - and beyond. Caring for the vulnerable and helping all our citizens live healthy lives lies at the heart of our Commonwealth mission.

Advances in understanding the causes of childhood diarrhoea and malnutrition and treatment of non-communicable diseases, such as coeliac disease and Crohn's disease, help us move towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal targets of reducing the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age and reducing the under-five mortality rate.

Tackling NCDs is a Commonwealth priority and in a statement on 'Commonwealth Action to Combat NCDs', issued at the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, leaders called for a summit on NCDs to be held in September 2011 under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly, in order to develop strategic responses to NCDs and their repercussions.

I wish you every success as you meet and consult on ways of working together in our common purpose.

Kamallesh Sharma