



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

14 February 1985

Dear Charles,

NBPM  
ADP  
14/2

Representation of Small Commonwealth States at the UN

Thank you for your letter of 5 February about the Australian funding of a joint services office at the UN for a number of small Commonwealth states. The possible extension of this facility was raised by the Seychelles delegation at the CSOM in Bridgetown last December. It is likely that it was also raised during the regional colloquium organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in the Seychelles last month, as part of their studies into the security problems of small states following the 1983 CHOGM at New Delhi. The subject will almost certainly come up for discussion at the next CHOGM in Nassau in October.

The genesis of the proposal for collective representation in New York was the third Commonwealth Heads of Government Asia/Pacific Regional Meeting held in Fiji in October 1982. At that meeting the Australian Government agreed to pay half a million Australian dollars for three years, to cover the rent of an office and the salaries for four or five common service staff, but not, as far as we know, UN subscriptions. The Commonwealth Secretariat undertook to establish and administer the office. Four countries (Western Samoa, Maldives, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) have already made use of the office, which was opened during 1983. Four other Pacific countries (Nauru, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Tonga) have also been considering the idea (but are not yet members of the UN).

Since the office is being used by the Maldives it is not surprising that the Seychelles, as another Indian Ocean island state, are also showing interest. However, unlike the Maldives, the Seychelles are not members of the Asia/Pacific Regional Group to which the Australian offer originally related. If the facility were to be extended outside the region other financial resources would presumably be required (and the Australians are already alive to this). In fact their commitment runs only until 1986, when the financial arrangements for the existing office will have to be reviewed, and they have already hinted that they would like to share the burden. They may well consider that a Commonwealth decision to extend the scheme, either in time, financial commitment or in geographical spread would provide an ideal opportunity to do so, while they would still have the credit for their original initiative.

.../As



As you know the FCO and MOD have completed a joint review of the Security of Small States but we have concluded that proposals for any changes in the Government's present policy (especially those which might require new money) should at least wait until we have seen the report of the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Study Group. This should be available in good time for us to prepare our briefing for the Nassau CHOGM. We have the possible financial aspects well in mind.

I am copying this letter to Michael McCulloch (ODA).

*Yours ever,*

*P F Ricketts*

(P F Ricketts)  
Private Secretary

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COMMONWEALTH  
CHOGM PEG

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RANADU

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

5 February, 1985

Sir Anthony Parsons has written to me on a point about the Ramphal Committee on Small States. It seems that the Australians have opened a fund in the Commonwealth Secretariat into which they are paying something like US \$300,000 a year, disguised as multilateral technical assistance, which pays for the Commonwealth and UN subscriptions and the collective representation in New York of the small Pacific states. The Seychelles and some of the small Caribbean states have tumbled to this. Tony Parsons believes that a recommendation is likely to emerge from the Committee that the fund should be enlarged to embrace all the Commonwealth micro-states who might wish to join in. The fund might have to be around the \$2 million mark. If this happens there is likely to be powerful pressure for the United Kingdom to contribute.

I do not know whether this is news to you. But the issue will no doubt surface at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting if not earlier and the Prime Minister's views may be sought.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Michael McCulloch (Overseas Development Administration).

(C.D. Powell)

P. Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Highgrove,  
Ashburton,  
S. Devon.

1 Feb.

Dear Charles,

Please thank the P.M. very, very warmly for taking the time to talk to an irrelevant old bore when she was so frantically busy. I was delighted to see her in such cracking form and glad that I had the opportunity later on to get a certain amount of my chest on Robin Day's programme about the Oxford degree business. Mrs Dunwoody didn't look very pleased with what I said.

I only realised when I left 10.10 how appallingly scruffily dressed I was (even more so than usual). This was only partly due to senility. I had had to rush from a ghastly interview straight to 10.10 and didn't have time →

to return to my Club to change. Apologies to the PM for lowering the standards so appallingly.

One point of business I forgot to mention, worth bearing in mind. The Ramphal Committee on Small States is beginning to focus and I fear that the begging bowl will be out at the next CHSM. Specifically it seems that the Aussies have opened a fund in the Commonwealth Secretariat into which they are paying ? \$300,000 a year (disguised as multilateral technical assistance) which pays for the Commonwealth's UN subscriptions and the collective representation in New York (in a specially rented building) of the small Pacific states. The Seychelles and some of the small Caribbeans have tumbled to this and I think we are moving in the direction of a recommendation that the fund should be enlarged to embrace all the Cwth micro-states who might wish to join in. They would probably number about 10 which means that the fund would have to be around the \$2 million mark. If this happens, there will be very powerful pressure for us, the Canadians and New Zealanders to contribute. Obvious

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everyone will look at the P.M. and there will be stop if  
we do the odd (rich) country out. Just a warning  
in case this comes up with Ramphae or any of  
the High Commissioners (Claudius Thomas is keen  
on it) if they get into conversation with the P.M.

Very best wishes.

Yrs ever  

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Lany