# Letter from Anthony Eden on the independence of the Gold Coast and its relations with the Commonwealth (London, 3 July 1956)

**Caption:** On 3 July 1956, the British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, outlines his position on the future relations between the Gold Coast and the Commonwealth. If the Gold Coast gains independence, Anthony Eden would approve the country's accession to the Commonwealth.

**Copyright:** (c) The National Archives of the United Kingdom

**Note:** This document has undergone optical character recognition (OCR), so that full text search and copy/paste operations can be carried out. However, the result of the OCR process may vary depending on the quality of the original document.

**URL:**
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/letter_from_anthony_eden_on_the_independence_of_the_gold_coast_and_its_relations_with_the_commonwealth_london_3_july_1956-en-a7cfda22-6a23-4600-9acb-206c5daa7237.html

**Last updated:** 01/03/2017

COPY

10 Downing Street,
Whitehall.

July 3, 1956

Dear Prime Minister,

As you know, there will be a general election in the Gold Coast during the present month. If the present Prime Minister of the Gold Coast, Dr. Nkrumah, is returned, we know that he will introduce a motion calling for full self-government within the Commonwealth. The United Kingdom Government are committed to give effect to such a motion if it is passed by a reasonable majority. The main Opposition party favour the calling of a conference to frame a new constitution, if they obtain a Parliamentary majority in the forthcoming election, but they intend that this conference should report before the end of 1956; and their intention is that thereafter the United Kingdom Parliament should be asked to grant self-government within the Commonwealth. It is known that Dr. Nkrumah would like to see full self-government by March 1957; the Opposition will not wish it to be more than a few months later.

It seems practically certain therefore that before another of our Meetings can take place the Gold Coast will have achieved full self-government, and the question of Membership of the Commonwealth will need to be decided; delay in returning a definite answer on the latter point would arouse speculation and suspicion in the Gold Coast and I am sure we ought to avoid this if possible.

On the other hand there are objections to making any reference in the final communique which will be issued after our present meetings to any discussion of Gold Coast affairs. However vague the reference may be, it could be regarded as an attempt to influence the forthcoming elections in the Gold Coast. If, however,



www.cvce.eu

we are to be faced before our next meeting with the question of Commonwealth Membership for the Gold Coast, then it will be very convenient if something could be placed on record now as to the views of existing Members.

My colleagues and I in the United Kingdom Government are convinced that the Gold Coast should on attaining full self-government be admitted to Commonwealth Membership. I trust that you will share this view.

I am therefore writing to you, and concurrently in similar terms to the other Prime Ministers of Member Countries, in the hope that in reply to this letter you will be able to record your agreement in principle to acceptance of an application for Commonwealth Membership from the Gold Coast on the assumption that self-government is reached. In that event, and assuming that the other Prime Ministers also agree to what is proposed, I should hope it would only be necessary for me to send you and them a message by telegram when the question of Membership had been raised and had become actual. This would invite formal concurrence to inform the Gold Coast Government that, with the coming into effect of full self-government, the Gold Coast would also be accepted as a Member of the Commonwealth.

Yours sincerely,

(SGD.) ANTHONY EDEN

Similar letters to:

The Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies, C.H., Q.C.
The Rt. Hon. S.G. Holland, C.H.
The Hon. J.G. Strijdom
Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru
The Rt. Hon. L.S. St. Laurent, Q.C.
Mr. Mohamad Ali
The Hon. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike.



www.cvce.eu