

Transcript of final news conference at CHOGM 2009 on 29 November 2009

Conference Spokesperson Eduardo del Buey:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the closing press conference of CHOGM 2009. We have the honour of having with us today the Chair of the meeting, Prime Minister (Patrick) Manning, the President of South Africa, the Prime Ministers of Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Secretary General of the Commonwealth.

The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago will begin by making a short statement followed by the other leaders at the table, after which we will follow up with a question and answer period.

Prime Minister, the floor is yours.

Prime Minister Patrick Manning: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman.

My colleagues, members of the media, I think we have come to the end of a very successful 20th Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting here in Port of Spain.

We concluded by adopting a total of six documents: a communiqué which is standard practice, a statement on Commonwealth values and principles, a declaration on young people, a statement on non-communicable diseases which commits us to pursue a summit under UN auspices in 2011 and a statement on the theme of partnership for a more equitable and sustainable future. And together with those documents, there was the climate change consensus of Port of Spain of yesterday. Six documents in all.

We also admitted one new member to the Commonwealth which is Rwanda. Rwanda becomes Member No. 54 and we took a decision that the next Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting will be held in Australia in 2011; in Sri Lanka in 2013 and in Mauritius in 2015.

I must say how pleased we in Trinidad and Tobago have been to have been hosts to such a distinguished group of leaders from all around the world. And as we pointed out a few minutes earlier, many of them have come very long distances to be here with us and we welcome the opportunity to host them.

In the midst to some of the cultural experiences to which they had been exposed, we thought that we were able to get a lot of work done. We believe that we broke new ground when we had associated with us for the very important discussions on climate change the very distinguished President of France, President (Nicholas) Sarkozy, the Prime Minister of Denmark, Prime Minister Lars Rasmussen, and the Secretary General of United Nations. Ban Ki-moon.

It is most unusual in a Commonwealth forum for such an approach to take place, and it took place on a matter that we thought was not just of interest to us but of global interest, and we believe and we feel quite pleased over the fact that we came to a conclusion in circumstances where that was not predicted by many. And that the conclusion to which we have come is likely to go some considerable distance in forging a consensus in Copenhagen three weeks from today.

I was very pleased that so many people have come from so far to the conference and it was their deliberations that contributed in no small measure to the success of which we feel so proud today.

Thank you very much.

Spokesperson: Thank you Chair. Secretary General, would you like to say a few words?

Secretary-General Kamallesh Sharma: Thank you very much. I thought that this CHOGM demonstrated and revalidated the kind of organisation it is, an organisation of values which seeks to advance values in every way possible; an organisation of the vulnerable, one which is mindful

of the equality of all states irrespective of size and endowment to an equal destiny in terms of fulfillment of their people in giving them an equal voice. An organisation for the young people. Half of our population is under 25. An innovative organisation, an organisation of its times which it always has been. And I am delighted that at this event we saw the way forward in so many things and so many ways through the various declarations which the Honourable Prime Minister has just mentioned.

There was a decision that an Eminent Persons Group will be created and I am sure it will be very helpful to us in taking us forward and making us a more effective organization in the future. We have been looking at the comments that have been made in various polls that have been taken by the congress and the ways in which we need to have our profile understood and our work understood better. We will be concentrating on that a lot. We will be modernizing in many different ways.

I have been particularly delighted at the fact that we have what we call Partnership Platform Portal or CP3, approved by the leaders because I think it is a huge idea that can create a variety of windows to serve our members and time will demonstrate that.

It was a particular pleasure for me to call (Rwanda's) President (Paul) Kagame yesterday and be the first to congratulate him – it was 2.00 a.m.—but he assured me he hadn't gone to sleep and he was delighted to receive this news. That shows the vibrancy of this organisation, that people want to join it.

About climate change, the Prime Minister has already taken a press conference, and he has spoken about it.

I would just like to draw your attention, because you are people from the media, that we have made an effort to try and serve you as much as we could. If you think there are ways in which we can do it better next time, please let (Spokesperson) Eduardo (del Buey) know, because we are here to do that. And because you are media people, let me also tell you that we are very happy to release a magazine called Global. It is not a house magazine but it is a magazine which will be significantly devoted to the work of the Commonwealth, and I am sure you have seen copies of it lying around. So we are moving forward in all of these ways.

Thank you very much.

I want in the end to thank the Prime Minister most warmly and most gratefully for the way in which we have been able to work together from the very beginning to this end, and I think – I am speaking for him as well – that both of us have the sentiment right now sitting before you of quiet satisfaction.

Spokesperson: Thank you Secretary General. Would any other leader like to say anything or should we go straight to questions and answers?

Prime Minister (John) Key: I don't think in the history of the Commonwealth have leaders been required to come together at a time of greater significance. And to come together three weeks before the Copenhagen summit is an example of the strength of the Commonwealth and the fact that it is in a position to show leadership. And I think that this summit which largely spent its time discussing climate change gives you an indication of the importance of that issue and of the leadership that we can show.

I think certainly the fact that you have countries like Rwanda wanting to join the Commonwealth is a good example of the fact that this is an organisation that is still very relevant, that the values

and principles that underpin the Commonwealth are of enormous significance still today and I think from that point of view, it was very successful.

And lastly, the Commonwealth faces plenty of challenges in relation to countries like Fiji and Zimbabwe. We continue to do our bit to help those countries as they come through some challenging times. So I think it was a CHOGM that was very successful. I think it was extremely well run. Prime Minister, I want to congratulate you.

And lastly, I just want to say that I think if you look at the Commonwealth, it is an eclectic group of countries coming from parts of Asia, from the African continent, from the Caribbean and from Asia/Pacific. One of the strengths, I think, of CHOGM, is not just what comes out of the communiqué but the ability of countries to actually engage on a bi-lateral basis where there is not necessarily the strongest of bi-lateral relationships and to exchange views and to get a sense of the challenges and the commonality that we actually head even if as leaders we don't see each other on a daily basis.

So I think it was a well run CHOGM and it was successful.

Spokesperson: Thank you Prime Minister.
Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Prime Minister Dato' Sri Najib Mohd Razak: Thank you.

I know there are many skeptics out there who continue to ask the question whether the Commonwealth is still relevant as an institution. I for one came here with a very open mind, and this is my first CHOGM, and I would like to say that this CHOGM has truly answered that the Commonwealth as an institution is still very much relevant because it is able to meet and face the global challenges of today.

I go home with that feeling. I go home with a feeling that the spirit of Commonwealth is still very much alive. I go home with the feeling that the values of Commonwealth are very much dear to our hearts, and I go home with the feeling that there is so much camaraderie and friendship within the nations of the Commonwealth.

And in this regard, I would like to thank Prime Minister Manning for his outstanding leadership, and also the contribution of the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, and all those involved in making this summit, to me, hugely successful.

Thank you.

Spokesperson: Thank you Prime Minister.
The President of South Africa.

President Jacob Zuma: Thank you. Prime Minister Manning and my colleagues. I would want to join my colleagues in saying that we have concluded a very successful Commonwealth summit, certainly under very quality leadership of our Chairperson, the Prime Minister who really facilitated that we finished on time.

We dealt with quite a number of issues that could have been classified as difficult issues but we were able to deal with them and conclude those issues.

The Secretary General will remember when he visited South Africa, we had a discussion and I had posed quite a number of questions about the disassociation. And I think some of my questions have been answered. Because I was saying, what impact are we making as an organisation globally when the global challenges face us all today?

I think one of the issues that proved this point in addition to others was the manner in which the Commonwealth addressed the issue of climate change. I think for the first time we invited key people on this matter; the Secretary General of the United Nations, the Prime Minister of Denmark would be meeting to discuss this issue, and the President of France. I don't think that it is a common thing that CHOGM allows people to come, but I think this indicates that we are dealing with a CHOGM of today. That helped to inform us as we were to enter the debate about this issue.

And I am very happy, because the Commonwealth represents a very large number of countries within the global setting, that we are able to sit here and really contribute to what must be the outcome of Copenhagen, those countries that were here, small, medium and big, were able to hammer out the views and emerge with a communiqué that I thought captured the feelings. And I have got no doubt that it will make an impact to the outcome of Copenhagen because these countries that have been here will be holding these positions as we head to Copenhagen.

It also confirmed the necessity of countries, that is, heads of states -- that the issue of Copenhagen needs heads of states is a serious matter. I think that example alone indicates that this organisation, that it is here, it is making an impact. The fact that it is getting new members indicates the fact that it still attracts those who are outside to be part of it.

So I am very happy and I think Secretary General my questions which were really argumentative have been answered because I think the challenges that face us today need an organisation that can respond to those issues. And I think that this CHOGM has responded to issues very correctly.

So we are very happy. We go home very happy indeed. Thank you very much.

Spokesperson: Thank you very much Mr. President.
The Prime Minister of Papua, New Guinea.

Prime Minister Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, Prime Minister Manning, I just want to take the opportunity, I just want to take the opportunity to be able to say first of all thank you and the people of Trinidad and Tobago for a wonderful hospitality extended to us particularly to all of all of our world leaders.

From those of us who come from the smaller island states and from the bigger nations, we were able to be here in your soil and we find it wonderful. Hopefully, one day we will make a return on holiday.

This has been a wonderful meeting because I have attended a number of Commonwealth meetings before and today's conference has an outcome, listening to the voice of the smaller island states of the Pacific, of the Caribbean, of West Africa and East Africa and South East Asia and the Pacific.

This meeting, I term it as a wonderful meeting because under the stewardship of your Prime Minister, Prime Minister Manning and guided by the committee that came up with the throwing up of the agendas for our meeting has been a great success; success in the sense that there are nations of the world who may not be serious about what is happening to the rest of us, the small island states.

In Papua, New Guinea there is a good example. Hirbas (*phonetic*), Tuvalu, all these islands are coming under the water which gives us the impression that there is something wrong. We need the world's attention. And this conference made it possible for our voice to be heard. And that is why with cooperation, I am going from this conference with a very happy mind. Three weeks

time we will be meeting in Copenhagen, addressing the same issue which the Commonwealth came as a late start to take this issue up.

And in Trinidad and Tobago, the Port of Spain decision will go down in history as when the voice of the smallest and other big nations was heard. And it will be taken to a big conference in Denmark in December.

And I want to conclude by once again thanking the Prime Minister for his stewardship. This is one of the best Commonwealth meetings that we have ever had on the island. Yes, it was very far for most of us but we enjoyed the hospitality of your people making us very comfortable. I think you are making some of us feel to not want to leave too early.

Thank you.

Spokesperson: Leaders will answer some of your questions.

Mr Brent (inaudible), Associated Press: This question is for President Zuma. We saw a report yesterday out of India that your country, Brazil, India and China had agreed to walk out of Copenhagen simultaneously if negotiations were not going their way. I am wondering if that is in fact true, whether your countries have in fact taken such a decision and also if you could lay out your country's position on the climate change issue going into Copenhagen.

President Zuma: Well, that's news to me, that we have conspired to walk out. I am hearing it for the first time. We never did that. I think we have been part of this group and we want to participate very strongly. So there is nothing of that nature; I am sure it was just a rumour.

Associated Press: And the other part on climate change?

President Zuma: Well, we have an African position that we have been discussing as a region and South Africa has been very active. In fact, the Minister from South Africa who deals with the environment chaired the African group of Ministers who were discussing that issue. So we have an African position that we put together. So the views of South Africa as a country would be part of those views by our continent.

Thank you.

Mr Henry Ghamba, Commonwealth Journalists Association, UK Branch, Black (inaudible) of New York and (inaudible) Straight Talk Chronicle:

The issue of climate change has indeed been the main issue here. But I want to find out whether leaders have been concerned about, for example, people in Papua, New Guinea who have been misplaced by the gold mining company Barick(?) of Canada; people in say Tanzania who are having the same problem and people in South Africa who have been having problems with refugees who are flowing in from Zimbabwe. I wonder if those issues have been attended to in this summit.

President Zuma: Firstly, we discussed Zimbabwe. We gave a report on behalf of SADC (Southern African Development Community) to say where we are in Zimbabwe. Second, we touched on the question of the numbers of the refugees from Zimbabwe. Not only in South Africa, but in all the neighbouring countries that share borders with Zimbabwe but of course the bulk of them are in South Africa.

The critical point that we directed our attention to is to resolve the situation in Zimbabwe which we are currently doing together with the Zimbabweans. We believe that the resolution of the Zimbabwean problem could resolve the amount of refugees that are in South Africa. We didn't think that we should discuss the refugees in isolation. We thought that we should discuss the big problems, what is being done to resolve the problems in Zimbabwe so that the issue of the refugees will be automatically resolved.

Mr Shane (inaudible) Jitta, Heritage Radio: Good afternoon. I have one large question but I will direct the first part of it to Mr. Manning and the second part of it to Mr. Sharma.

There has been talk of financial aid to the vulnerable and small nations of the world coming out of this conference. President (*French President*) pledged some aid. I want to know if Trinidad and Tobago falls within this category of small and vulnerable nations or whether Trinidad and Tobago will be supplying financial aid to other nations. And the second part of my question: Has an assessment or audit been done (this is to Mr. Sharma) to ascertain exactly how much money is needed to help these small nations and vulnerable nations prior to making the declaration that you all announced yesterday. And perhaps a third question, I would like to direct it to Mr. Zuma or the Chief of Papua, New Guinea. Do you think the ultimate success of CHOGM 2009 will be seen at Copenhagen where your declaration on climate change would really make an impact on the discussions there? I just want to know whether we can say from today that CHOGM 2009 is a success in terms of climate change or do we have to wait for Copenhagen to make that determination. Thanks.

Prime Minister Manning: Small and vulnerable is a category of developing country of which Trinidad and Tobago is an integral part. True, we aspire to developed country status by the year 2020 but we are not there yet and we are still considered a developing country that we undoubtedly are.

Trinidad and Tobago however is an industrialized country, different from many other countries in similar circumstances and therefore you will find that our carbon footprint is a little larger than the footprint of other countries in circumstances that are not dissimilar from ours.

In those circumstances, we have taken the position that we will voluntarily move to correct it as far as we can. We will pursue a policy of minimising our carbon oxide emissions and the emissions of other greenhouse gases and we will seek to retrofit existing plants in collaboration with the companies that operate here in the industry, and seek to do that in the shortest possible time because we realise that time is also of the essence.

One of the mechanisms that we are now ourselves contemplating to reduce our carbon footprint is the question of carbon capture and sequestration which is something that is very contentious in the world because there are countries that believe that if you place carbon oxides in formations that once contained oil and/or gas you run the risk of leakages from these horizons. And while that is always possible, we do not see it quite frankly as the problem that some others see it and therefore we are contemplating it. In fact, in Trinidad and Tobago, we have been doing some of that for some time because carbon dioxide, as you may know, is a commodity that we use in the secondary recovery of oil, so we have been doing that for quite some time, it is just a lower scale. And particularly, some of the plants that we use here to manufacture ammonia, they produce carbon dioxide as a by-product. And on the other hand, the methanol plants use carbon dioxide to increase their output so it is a kind of trade-off situation, a net situation in which we have an

excess of carbon dioxide produced over carbon dioxide consumed. It is in those circumstances that we are considering carbon capture and sequestration.

Mr Sharma: There are several ways in which the Commonwealth pursues its responsibility in advocacy towards small states. One is – and this they have been doing for a very long time, I don't know whether you were there when I made the point but the Commonwealth is the first international organisation that passed a statement on the question of environment and what a present and real danger it is and ever since then we have been very mindful of keeping this issue in the forefront.

One way we do it is by emphasizing that whatever international environmental government structure is emerging – and I hope next year finally we will get it done – that it have inbuilt in it the support systems which are required most in a pressing and urgent way by these countries.

The other one as to advocacy is the funding requirement must have priority. And there is a bit of that in yesterday's statement. But above all, what the Commonwealth can directly do is we help smaller states negotiate in international trade. We started helping smaller states negotiating internationally in the environmental field as well. What can they do with the forest cover? ... make it into demonstrable examples of the fact that a live forest is better than a dead forest.

We had many other ways of giving technical assistance which are part of it; I need not go into it. But at this CHOGM we have come up with the idea which is a much larger idea which says that just as Secretary-General exercises his good offices in the political field, he should exercise his good offices in the environmental field as well in mitigation and adaptation, helping them access financial technology the way it can be done. Because many of these countries really don't know how to go about it. How what is available can be made available to them.

So this is what we will be doing in the future. They must know that there is a strategic partner who is prepared to walk the walk with them and that is the big message that has gone out from here.

Mr Andrew Bhagoo, Newsday: One of the communiqués issued today involved a reaffirmation of the values of the Commonwealth. I was wondering whether or not that is related to or in reaction to the human right issues that have been raised with regard to the Gambia and Uganda and if not, what action if any was taken or recommended at the end of today's summit.

Mr Sharma: The Commonwealth is a human rights advancing organisation. It is always very mindful of reports that it receives on human rights violations. And the way it approaches it is to get into the process of dialogue with those member states that are involved in it. Most importantly, from our point of view, is to create a common purpose. These member states have subscribed to the principles which are alleged to have been violated in these reports. The first thing that needs to be done is to get to a common purpose that both the institution and the member states want to achieve. And so, with these states, we do this. We are an organisation of engagement more than pronouncement because in the end we want to get to a place where both of us would like to go together. There are many instances of this.

Necessarily, in order to make progress, we do it as we call it below the radar screen and that is the way to make an advance. I think in my opening speech I said we are not an institution that is quick to raise a wagging finger but to raise a helping hand. We see ourselves more as a voluntary coach than a referee.

This is a culture in which we must move the misinterpretation ... that there is indifference to the violations and the reports of them that comes to us.

Mr Ken Thomas Isaac, Network News 98.1: Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Prime Minister Manning, I would like to direct a question to you in two parts. The first part being, do you see the future of the association that is the Commonwealth, being threatened by disunity among island states like ours? And the second part is, what would you recommend as being able to bring more ties** between Africa and the Caribbean?

Prime Minister Manning: Well, I don't see the future of the Commonwealth threatened by disunity among states at all. You are not going to find any two states in the world that are exactly alike or that hold exactly the same points of view and therefore in whatever organisation you put together, be it the Commonwealth, be it Caricom (Caribbean Community), be it any other organisation – the United Nations – you are going to have divergences of view and when these divergences of view arise we must not see these as an opportunity for division or as threatening to divide us in that way but really what the organisations present is in fact a forum where you could discuss these things and in many respects come to a common position as indeed we were able to do on the climate change matter in circumstances where it was predicted that it would have gone otherwise.

And in the case of Africa and the Caribbean, you may be aware that a number of African countries have discovered oil and gas in recent times especially in West Africa. Two years ago when I attended the AU (African Union) meeting in Addis Ababa, I did in fact outline a Trinidad and Tobago position designed to make some contribution to the eradication of poverty in the African continent.

What the position was that were prepared to give technical assistance to those states, and I named the seven of them, from Trinidad and Tobago, at no cost to those states. And I can tell you that since that offer has been made a number of states have come here to access that, and we have been to a number of those other countries. And other countries have asked to be included. We have expanded it for example to include two states in East Africa; Uganda and Tanzania. And recently we had the state of East Timor coming to Trinidad and Tobago, Timor Leste as it is called, they were here and they are in circumstances in which we found ourselves many, many years ago. They have discoveries of oil and gas but their level of development is nowhere near where Trinidad and Tobago is at this time.

So really when we discuss with those countries where they are, especially in the oil and gas field, and when we take into account our own experiences, coming as we have from the position in which several of them now find themselves, we find that there is much that we can contribute.

Quite apart from that, we look for other ways in which to do it. When South Africa became independent for example, a number of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago operating in the field of business went to South Africa and because of the level of trust of the South African government in the people who had helped them as Trinidad and Tobago did during the years of struggle, you found that many of them were called upon to make contributions to the development of South Africa at a time when the country felt that that kind of development assistance was necessary for its own advancement.

Those are merely two examples of a whole range of other opportunities that exist for collaboration and cooperation as between the Caribbean and the African continent.

And a third one of course is in the field of education but we leave that for another time.

Tony Fraser (BBC Caribbean): Question to the Prime Ministers and I would like to hear the Prime Minister of New Zealand on this one also. The commitment to the climate change launch fund is absolutely crucial to Copenhagen and the whole climate change matter going forward especially for the developing countries.

Now, this is not the first time that such a commitment has been made and such a fund established. In fact, the G20 established a fund some time ago. I don't know what has happened to that. What is going to make a difference this time to allow the developed countries to operationalise this fund as different from making a commitment to it?

Prime Minister Key: Well, for starters, I don't think you are going to get agreement in Copenhagen if there is not a financial fund established so that money can be paid to the developing countries for adaptation. So quite simply, it will be the bottom line to getting a deal. That is one of the differences.

From New Zealand's point of view, if the fund is in the order of about \$10 billion, our expectations are that New Zealand will have a contribution of about somewhere between \$10 and (inaudible); that is the best estimate that my Ministry can give me.

I think the reality of climate change is that there is going to be quite a lot of money that will need to be spent both for adaptation and particularly in those states that are vulnerable to climate change, but also in the development of technology.

And from New Zealand's point of view, one of the concepts that we have been discussing with countries around the world is the establishment of a global alliance looking to resolve and find solutions to methane and nitrate emissions. We are obviously a very large agricultural producer. And it would be our expectation that we would be able to put together a global alliance where we will find solutions to those problems and give that technology to developing countries. And if you think about Africa – and they are large agricultural producers in their own right – to get that technology would allow them to grow their food supply and do so in an environmentally friendly way.

And that is not an insignificant challenge when you consider that over the next 35 years the population is likely to rise by about three and a half billion people and the demand for food will double by 2015.

So that is the kind of approach that a developed country like New Zealand is taking and we are not afraid of the financial commitment that we need to make and it will be one that we would expect the other developed countries to join us in making.

(Inaudible) Trinidad Express: I have two quick questions. The first is on WTO and the economy. We have had a lot of focus on Copenhagen and climate change which are no doubt colossal issues, but we also have the WTO ministerial meeting in Geneva I think it is tomorrow. And I don't think we have heard – I just wanted to get from you all – has any specific focus been paid at this meeting on advancing solutions to some of the very, very big economic problems that have been facing us. I mean we have had resurgence of mercantilism, non-tariff protectionist barriers etc., does the Commonwealth have a specific focus going into WTO, various regional blocks within the Commonwealth going into this meeting tomorrow.

And following up on that, I just wanted to ask PM Patrick Manning in particular, would CARICOM be going into WTO negotiating as a region or are we all going to go to talk as individual states?

And just one last one for Mr. Sharma, I think it is the Prime Minister of Bantu(?), he had lost his seat. It has been reported in the international media that he had lost his seat on Friday while more or less on civic duty in Trinidad and Tobago at the CHOGM Heads of Government Meeting, so I just wanted to know if the Commonwealth is taking any specific involvement in this in helping him get reinstated or anything like that?

Prime Minister Manning: How many questions did you ask please?

Trinidad Express: The first one had two parts, which is the WTO and CARICOM in particular.

Prime Minister Manning: All right, let us go to the WTO and CARICOM question. As you are aware, CARICOM has a mechanism by which we co-ordinate our positions on trade negotiations, be they for individual countries or for organisations. The WTO which is the principal negotiation taking place around the world today in terms of trade and market access has certainly been the subject of deliberations at the level of CARICOM and there is an established position CARICOM has taken in the interest of all CARICOM states. That is indeed so.

While at the same time, individual countries are going to be involved in those discussions, right now the Minister of Trade and Industry of Trinidad and Tobago is in Geneva to pursue these discussions that are underway, and I am sure that you have the Ministers from Jamaica and so many other Caribbean territories that are present. But we coordinate our efforts in the WTO.

A successful conclusion of WTO talks is an aspiration not just of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean but is an aspiration of so many countries around the world. Country after country has expressed this view from time to time and I don't think it has changed. The fact that the climate change issue has come up at this time seems to suggest that the WTO is being put on the back burner. That is not so.

Both issues are important. Climate change is a very urgent issue in the context of the UN discussions next month. But we are anxious to conclude a successful arrangement in terms of world trade, and we continue to focus heavily on the discussions that are taking place designed to realise that objective.

Prime Minister Key: Just a slight comment in relation to WTO. Obviously, the contentious point is up and around agriculture. From New Zealand's point of view, we think it is absolutely critical that WTO round (?) is completed. We are more confident that it can be completed in 2010 than we have been for some time.

When we were at the (inaudible) Leader's Meeting both (U.S. President Barak) President Obama and (Chinese) President Hu (Jintao) made it clear that they wanted to see resolution to the Doha (Development) Round and I think if we want to send a very strong signal as leaders that we have confidence that the world is coming out of the global economic recession, then one of the strongest ways of doing that is through a successful completion of the WTO round.

In terms of protectionist measures, I think you are right, there has been some of the G20 countries, 17 have put some form of protectionist barriers up, but they have been very mild in comparison to other recessions and I don't think we should take those out of perspective, so we would be very hopeful that Trade Ministers can reconvene in Geneva and make progress.

Mr Sampson Nanton (CNC3): I would like to ask about Rwanda. Was it a unanimous decision and if not what countries voted against and why. And also I would like to ask Prime

Minister Manning, the carbon capture system that you just referred to, isn't that a very expensive system? And if so, would Trinidad and Tobago be considering tapping into that \$10 billion fund to fund that.

Prime Minister Manning: Let me try to answer the first question first. There was no contention in the acceptance of Rwanda's application for membership in the Commonwealth. There is a process through which we go. It is a four stage process. In fact, we have been through all the stages and the acceptance stage is the final stage. And by the time you get to that stage, whatever doubts may exist in the minds of people by that time they are dispelled. Rwanda came to that happy position and we were very pleased to accept Rwanda's application for membership here in Port of Spain.

In respect of carbon capture and sequestration, I don't think that some people understand how significant this climate change issue is. When the President of Maldives holds a cabinet meeting under water and is able to suggest to the Commonwealth heads that he thought they were able to come to an agreement so quickly underwater he suggested that the COP**15 be held in similar circumstances, you understand – and when you listen to countries like Kiribati and Vanuatu and so on, when you hear these countries talk, then you realise that this question of climate change is not an academic issue. It is not a matter for sentiment. We just have to do what we have to do to ensure that we keep the level of greenhouse gases' concentration in the atmosphere as low as possible and to reduce it in the shortest possible time. If one of the options available to us is carbon capture sequestration then we would have to use that, and we do not see it as the prohibitively expensive proposition that you are suggesting.

Spokesperson: Ladies and Gentlemen, the Secretary General would like to make a closing remark.

Mr Sharma: I would just like to add that the Commonwealth is a visionary organisation and what it does, it likes to keep practical toolkits in its hands as well, and this applies to many fields. It applies to the field of environment as well. But I have taken the liberty of wanting to say something at the end because we all dream of friendly, captive media audiences and I just want to say from this CHOGM, to draw your attention to one or two in my view extremely important developments. One is about the network of election management bodies. This is a pivotal institution for the functioning and deepening of democracy. There is nothing that the Commonwealth can do which is more important for advancing value systems than this one.

The second one. We talked a lot about youth. We need to talk about the youth, advocacy, words are important. But there is one very important idea which the leaders have now entrusted the Commonwealth with, and it is to prepare a resource where policy makers and planners in their respective countries talk so that they can reach as a tool which has the best thinking, the best practices in the area of youths from all angles, which is coherent in the way it approaches the subject which I hope, far from being a great Commonwealth resource, will become a global resource as well. As I said, half of our population is under 25 and I look forward to working on this and seeing this as hopefully a window of what we were talking about.

And lastly there was this question of human rights. I want to draw your attention to the fact that the body which is entrusted with the protection and advancement, which is called ... the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group or CMAG. And the CMAG has been instructed now

by the leaders to see how its role can be made more effective in the preservation of these values.
The meeting was convened by me just this morning in order to get it all started.
Thank you.