

## The Coolum Communiqué

1. Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Coolum from 2 to 5 March 2002. Of the 51 countries which attended the meeting, 35 were represented by their Heads of State or Government. The meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon John Howard.
2. The Opening Ceremony of the Meeting was addressed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth. Heads of Government expressed their gratitude to HM The Queen for her dedication and strong commitment to the association over half a century. They reaffirmed the warmth and esteem in which she is held in the Commonwealth family.
3. Heads of Government conveyed deep appreciation to the Government and people of Australia for the warm hospitality extended to them and for the excellent meeting arrangements. They congratulated Prime Minister Howard on his admirable stewardship of the Meeting.
4. Heads of Government welcomed the Prime Minister of Tuvalu which became a full member of the Commonwealth in 2000 and attended CHOGM for the first time. Heads of Government were also pleased to welcome Fiji Islands' return to the Councils of the Commonwealth.
5. Heads of Government adopted the Coolum Declaration, and approved the recommendations of the High Level Review Group on the Special Theme: 'The Commonwealth in the 21st Century: Continuity and Renewal'.

### Terrorism

6. Heads of Government reiterated their absolute condemnation of all acts of terrorism in whatever form or wherever they occur or by whomsoever perpetrated, with the consequent tragic loss of human life and severe damage to political, economic and social stability. They emphasised that terrorism constitutes a threat to all countries and peoples, irrespective of faith, nationality, culture or community. They reaffirmed their commitment to work together as a diverse community of nations, individually, and collectively under the auspices and authority of the United Nations, to take concerted and resolute action to eradicate terrorism. There is no justification for terrorism. While terrorist activities are unconscionable and should be eradicated forthwith, the challenge is to understand the root causes of those despicable acts and to deal with them appropriately.
7. Heads of Government welcomed the Report of the Commonwealth Committee on Terrorism and the Plan of Action based on their Statement on Terrorism of 25 October 2001. They agreed that the Committee should monitor the implementation of the Plan of Action and to that end meet annually to review progress. They requested the Secretary-General to implement the measures iden-

tified by the Committee. They urged all member countries to take the steps outlined in the Plan of Action and to give assistance to small and less developed members of the Commonwealth to enable them to meet their obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373; and agreed to support efforts to mitigate the economic loss experienced by poor and vulnerable states. Heads of Government requested all member countries to work for a speedy conclusion of the Comprehensive United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Terrorism.

### **Fundamental Political Values**

8. Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth as set out in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration and reinforced by the Millbrook Action Programme. They reiterated in particular their commitment to international peace and order, democracy, good governance, human rights, freedom of expression and the rule of law.
9. Heads of Government expressed strong support for the good offices role of the Secretary-General in conflict prevention and resolution. They also recorded their support for the Commonwealth's work in reinforcing democratic processes and institutions in member countries.

### **Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration**

10. Heads of Government received a Report from the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG) covering CMAG's deliberations in the period since the Durban Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 1999.
11. Heads of Government took note of the progress made in the restoration of democracy in Fiji Islands, particularly through the elections of 25 August to 5 September 2001, and endorsed CMAG's decision to lift Fiji Islands' suspension from the Councils of the Commonwealth with effect from 20 December 2001. In recognition of the ongoing legal proceedings over the constitutionality of the Government of Fiji, they agreed that CMAG should keep Fiji Islands on its agenda.
12. Heads of Government noted CMAG's decision to remove The Gambia from its agenda following the repeal of Decree 89 in that country.
13. Heads of Government agreed that Pakistan's suspension from the Councils of the Commonwealth should remain unchanged pending the restoration of a democratic government. In that regard, they welcomed the commitment of the Government of Pakistan to hold democratic elections by October 2002, and agreed that the Commonwealth Secretary-General should have an active monitoring role in the period leading up to the restoration of democracy, including the deployment of Commonwealth observers at the Provincial and National Elections and the provision of technical assistance.

14. Heads of Government welcomed the improvement in the security situation and the conclusion of the disarmament process in Sierra Leone. They noted CMAG's decision to remove Sierra Leone from its agenda and the need to provide continued appropriate technical assistance.
15. Heads of Government welcomed the recent national Parliament elections in Solomon Islands, and acknowledged the role of regional governments for their support in assisting with the conduct of those elections. They expressed support for the Government of Solomon Islands, noting that much remains to be done to consolidate peace and stability. Heads of Government commended the role of the International Peace Monitoring Team, led by Australia and New Zealand, in overseeing the peace process and agreed that in recognition of the difficulties in that country, Solomon Islands should continue to be on CMAG's agenda for the purpose of promoting good governance, peace and stability and economic development.
16. Heads of Government adopted a Statement on Zimbabwe on 4 March 2002, which is attached.
17. Heads of Government decided that CMAG would have the following members with immediate effect, until the next CHOGM – Australia, The Bahamas, Bangladesh, Botswana, India, Malta, Nigeria and Samoa.
18. Heads of Government acknowledged that the current limitation of two terms on membership of CMAG could be made more flexible. They decided that in future a member could be retained for a third term if this was deemed desirable to preserve continuity, institutional knowledge, or to provide linkages with relevant international organisations.

## Cyprus

19. Recalling and reaffirming previous United Nations Security Council Resolutions and reaffirming their previous communiqués on Cyprus, Heads of Government welcomed the resumption of talks between the two sides under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General within the framework of his mandate of good offices mission as described in Security Council Resolution 1250.
20. They noted that progress could only be made at the negotiating table and encouraged all concerned to co-operate fully with the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser to show flexibility and negotiate to the conclusion of a just and lasting settlement consistent with relevant Security Council Resolutions.
21. Heads of Government reiterated their support for a Cyprus settlement that ensures the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of a reunited Cyprus.

## **Belize**

22. Heads of Government reaffirmed their firm support for the territorial integrity, security and sovereignty of Belize. They welcomed the progress being made in the dialogue taking place under the auspices of the Organisation of American States and pledged support for this facilitation process. Heads of Government mandated the Secretary-General to convene the Ministerial Committee on Belize whenever necessary. They noted that proposals for a final settlement were expected to contain a provision for the establishment of a development fund to be used for the benefit of border communities and urged member countries to contribute to it generously.

## **Guyana**

23. Heads of Government reaffirmed their solidarity with Guyana in light of the continuing threat to its sovereignty and territorial integrity by Venezuela. In this context they regretted Guyana's inability to fully exploit all its natural resources in the Essequibo region in accordance with the Geneva Agreement.
24. Heads of Government commended the United Nations good offices process in finding a solution to the controversy and urged both countries to continue to avail themselves of this mechanism to resolve their differences in a spirit of good neighbourliness. They further requested the Secretary-General to convene the Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana when occasion required it.

## **Landmines/International Criminal Court**

25. Heads of Government noted the progress made in addressing the global landmines problem in recent years through the comprehensive framework for mine action provided by the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Protection and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, and urged all countries that are in a position to do so to accede to the Convention. They also encouraged member countries to accede to the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court.

## **World Economic Situation**

26. Heads of Government noted that the tragic events of 11 September 2001 had worsened the global economic slowdown which could threaten achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Heads of Government also stressed the need to assist developing and vulnerable countries to cope with the challenges of a more adverse external environment.

## **Multilateral Trade Issues**

27. Heads of Government emphasised the crucial importance, especially for developing countries, of trade liberalisation and access to markets in overcoming poverty. With particular regard to the development objectives of the Doha Agenda, they urged the removal of barriers to exports and the elimination of trade-distorting subsidies, including agricultural subsidies.

28. Heads of Government reiterated their strong support for a transparent, equitable and rules based multilateral trading system and welcomed the launch of the WTO Work Programme agreed at Doha, Qatar, in November last year. Heads of Government welcomed the development agenda adopted at Doha including negotiations focused on improving market access for agricultural goods, industrial products and services for the benefit of all members and particularly for developing and least developed countries; the resolution of outstanding implementation issues; and the work programme for small economies. Heads of Government pledged to work together for a successful conclusion of the Doha Work Programme to achieve an overall balance in the outcome, consistent with the mandate and within the timeframe set out in the Doha Development Agenda to ensure the early realisation of these benefits. They noted that a successful conclusion will also support the multilateral trading system's contribution to sustainable development.
29. Heads of Government confirmed the importance of technical assistance to help to build capacity so that all members can fully participate in the WTO.

### **Debt**

30. Heads of Government noted the report of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Ministerial Forum, held in Malawi this year, and welcomed the progress made to implement the HIPC Initiative. They stressed that countries, in the process, needed to benefit from the flexibility that the Initiative provided to compensate for exogenous shocks, and, where appropriate, from additional concessional support to achieve a sustainable exit from their debt burden.

### **International Economic Co-operation**

31. Heads of Government called on the international community to embrace global dialogue and co-operation aimed at enhancing development and good governance. They encouraged participation by governments at the highest level in the UN Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. They welcomed the initiative aimed at Africa's renewal through fostering closer co-operation and partnership among the industrial countries, Africa and the private sector worldwide, as enunciated in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and called upon all Commonwealth institutions to assist with the effective implementation of NEPAD. They recognised that all these initiatives provide important opportunities to develop strategies for tackling poverty and building global stability with a focus on the needs of developing countries.

### **Strengthening Financial Systems**

32. Heads of Government reaffirmed the right of sovereign nations to determine their own tax and fiscal policies and welcomed the proposed adjustments being made to the OECD Harmful Tax Competition Initiative and hoped that the dialogue, promoted by the Commonwealth, would ensure that the process continued to be inclusive. They reiterated that the standards and timelines for non-

OECD jurisdictions should be no more onerous than those for OECD members. They requested the Secretariat to support the affected jurisdictions to mobilise assistance to meet international standards, strengthen and deepen their financial sectors and diversify their economies.

### **Promoting Business**

33. Heads of Government endorsed the 16 Investment Principles set out in the Commonwealth Business Council (CBC) Report and noted the various recommendations contained in it. They urged the CBC to promote vigorously the implementation of these Principles. They also commended the CBC initiative establishing the Friends of Africa Business Group.

### **Good Corporate Governance**

34. Noting that foreign direct investment is crucial for their economies, Heads of Government reiterated the importance of good corporate governance and urged foreign investors to act in accordance with national laws, legal requirements and social obligations.

### **Technology Management for Development**

35. Heads of Government reaffirmed their support for the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management's objectives and activities, including the linking of technology management to business development, as well as its 'smart partnership' dialogue initiatives.

### **Climate Change**

36. Heads of Government expressed concern about the consequences of global warming and climate change, especially for vulnerable small island states and other low-lying areas. They welcomed progress made by the Iwokrama International Rain Forest Centre in Guyana in conserving and sustainably utilising tropical rain forest resources.

### **Small States**

37. Heads of Government reaffirmed their view that small states are particularly vulnerable to international developments and natural disasters and confront a range of structural challenges to sustainable development. They stressed the need for further concerted action by the international community to address these challenges. Heads of Government regretted the cancellation of the proposed Summit on Small States due to practical considerations and hoped that it would be convened at an appropriate time. They welcomed the Report of the Ministerial Group on Small States (MGSS) and the actions being taken in the Commonwealth, the World Bank and other international institutions to implement the Recommendations of the Report of the Joint Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Task Force on Small States.

38. Heads of Government acknowledged, at the same time, the need for systemic changes in dealing with small states' concerns and the creation of new delivery and support mechanisms. In that context, they endorsed the New Agenda for the Commonwealth's work on small states, which identified key priorities for the short and medium term. These included notably that the Commonwealth should provide appropriate assistance on trade issues, including working with the international community to strengthen small states representation at the WTO, promote dialogue on the OECD Harmful Tax Initiative and take action to help mitigate the impact on small states of the events of 11 September and their aftermath. They also stressed that the upcoming UN Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development were important platforms for promoting issues particularly relevant to small states. They endorsed the call of their Ministers that these meetings produce outcomes beneficial to small economies.
39. Heads of Government mandated the Ministerial Group on Small States to develop a framework of action, for consideration at the next CHOGM, on how the Commonwealth could work with partner organisations to develop appropriate responses to the challenges facing small states.

### **Commonwealth Functional Co-operation**

40. Heads of Government considered the various aspects of Commonwealth functional co-operation, which they reaffirmed as essential for realising the benefits of the association's membership, and endorsed the Report of the Committee of the Whole.

### **Next Meeting**

41. Heads of Government accepted with gratitude an offer by the President of Nigeria to host the next CHOGM in 2003.

*5 March 2002*