

2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting: final communiqué

1. Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Uganda from 23-25 November 2007. Of the 48 countries that attended the Meeting, 36 were represented by their Heads of State or Government.
2. The Opening Ceremony of the Meeting included an address by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth.
3. Heads of Government conveyed their sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Uganda for the warm hospitality extended to them and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting. They also congratulated President Museveni for his leadership in chairing the Meeting.

Fundamental Political Values

4. Heads of Government reiterated their commitment to the Commonwealth's fundamental political values of: tolerance; respect; international peace and security; democracy; good governance; human rights; gender equality; rule of law; the independence of the judiciary; a balance of power between the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary as recognised in the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles; freedom of expression; a political culture that promotes transparency and accountability; and sustainable development.
5. They also reaffirmed that the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity is a fundamental Commonwealth value, and reiterated their commitment to work together to ensure that the responsibility to protect is carried out by the international community, in accordance with the UN Charter.
6. Heads of Government reiterated their full support for the good offices role of the Secretary-General in conflict prevention and resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction and development. They also expressed their continuing commitment to the Commonwealth Secretariat's work to strengthen democratic institutions, processes and culture including through election observation, provision of technical assistance and training and other activities, upon the request of the countries concerned. Heads of Government acknowledged the value of the Commonwealth's strategic partnerships with other international and regional organisations and encouraged the Commonwealth Secretariat to further develop these links so as to enhance cooperation in areas of common interest.
7. Heads of Government welcomed the Secretariat's collaboration with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and other relevant organisations to promote best democratic practice. They commended the CPA for providing assistance to Commonwealth Parliaments for capacity building and promoting awareness about the respective roles of the Government and Opposition in democracies, and took note of the outcomes of its 2007 New Delhi Conference. They reaffirmed their support for the Aberdeen Principles on Good Practice for Local Democracy and Good Governance and encouraged member states to implement the Auckland Accord: Delivering Development through Local Leadership. They urged the CLGF to continue its work in strengthening the role of local government in Commonwealth societies.

Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration

8. Heads of Government endorsed the Report of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG) covering the Group's deliberations in the period since the Malta Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November 2005. They commended CMAG's work, which has contributed significantly to the promotion of the Commonwealth's fundamental political values in member countries.
9. Heads took note of CMAG's suspension of Fiji from the Councils of the Commonwealth on 8 December 2006 following the military take-over of Fiji's democratically elected Government. They reiterated CMAG's call for the restoration of constitutional rule and democratic Government as soon as possible and not later than the March 2009 deadline which the military Government has committed itself to. They welcomed the dialogue which had been opened with the interim Government and the engagement by the Chairman of CMAG and the Secretary-General with Fiji.

10. Heads took note of CMAG's suspension of Pakistan from the Councils of the Commonwealth on 22 November 2007 following the Government of Pakistan's failure to implement a series of measures requested by CMAG in response to the imposition of a state of emergency and the abrogation of the Constitution by President Musharraf on 3 November. They expressed their serious disappointment that President Musharraf had failed to implement the decision of Heads at their last CHOGM in Malta that the offices of Head of State and Chief of Army Staff be separated at the end of the Presidential term in 2007. They acknowledged his announced intention to separate the roles in the future and called on him to do so as soon as possible. While welcoming the announcement of the elections on 8 January 2008, they stressed the need for the Government to move rapidly to create the conditions that would allow the elections to be free, fair and credible. They endorsed the decision by CMAG to review progress following the conduct of the scheduled elections in January 2008 and called on the Government of Pakistan to respond positively to the Commonwealth's desire to remain engaged and support the return of democratic Government and the rule of law in Pakistan.

11. Heads of Government reconstituted the membership of CMAG for the next biennium as follows: Ghana, Malaysia, Namibia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, St Lucia, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom and Uganda (as Chairperson-in-Office).

Belize

12. Heads of Government noted the recent developments in the ongoing efforts of Belize to seek a just, peaceful and definitive resolution to Guatemala's territorial claim, under the Agreement on a Framework for Negotiations and Confidence Building Measures between Belize and Guatemala signed by the two parties and the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) on 7 September 2005 and in particular, the recommendation of the Secretary General of the OAS, Jose Miguel Insulza on 19 November 2007 that Belize and Guatemala should submit the issue to the International Court of Justice.

13. Heads of Government expressed their satisfaction that the process of the relocation of the Guatemala settlement of Santa Rosa, from Belizean to Guatemalan territory is underway and will be completed shortly.

14. Heads of Government reiterated their firm support for the territorial integrity, security and sovereignty of Belize.

15. Heads of Government mandated the Secretary-General to convene the Ministerial Committee on Belize whenever necessary.

Cyprus

16. Reaffirming their previous Communiqués on Cyprus, Heads of Government expressed their support for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus. They expressed their support for a lasting, just and functional settlement based on the principles of the United Nations Charter, the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the principles of the Commonwealth.

17. Heads of Government called for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on Cyprus, in particular Security Council Resolutions 365 (1974), 541 (1983), 550 (1984), 1250 (1999) and all subsequent resolutions. They reiterated their support for the respect for the human rights of all Cypriots, including the right to property, the implementation of the relevant decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and for the accounting for all missing persons.

18. Heads of Government further agreed on the importance of supporting the efforts of the UN Secretary-General to bring about a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem in line with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

19. Heads of Government welcomed the principles and decisions enshrined in the 8 July 2006 Agreement and stressed the need to start the process as described in UN Under-Secretary General Gambari's letter of 15 November 2006, without delay and without preconditions, in order to prepare the ground for full-fledged negotiations, leading to a comprehensive and durable settlement.

Guyana

20. Heads of Government noted that the Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana, which was established in 1999 to monitor developments in respect of the existing controversy between Guyana and Venezuela, met recently in September 2007. They expressed satisfaction at the cordiality which had characterized relations between Guyana and Venezuela in recent years and recognized the instrumental role of dialogue at the highest levels in facilitating the commitment to a peaceful settlement of the controversy under the aegis of the United Nations Good Offices Process and to enhanced cooperation at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. Heads however took note of the incursions by Venezuelan military personnel and aircraft into Guyana's territory and airspace on November 15, 2007 and reiterated the need for the controversy to be resolved by peaceful means.

21. Heads of Government reaffirmed their unequivocal support for the maintenance of Guyana's territorial integrity and sovereignty, including its unrestricted right to development of the entirety of its territory for the benefit of its people. Heads of Government mandated the Secretary-General to continue to convene meetings of the Ministerial Group on Guyana whenever necessary.

Promoting Respect and Understanding

22. Heads of Government noted the Report of the Commission on Respect and Understanding chaired by Professor Amartya Sen and adopted the Munyonyo Statement on Respect and Understanding [**See Annex 1**].

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

23. Heads of Government acknowledged the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction and in this regard reaffirmed their commitments towards the attainment of general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. They reiterated that these objectives should be achieved in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law.

Small Arms and Light Weapons

24. Heads of Government expressed their deep concern over the illicit manufacture, illegal trade, and uncontrolled availability of small arms and light weapons, including man-portable air defence systems and their ammunition. They also highlighted the nexus between the proliferation of such weapons and terrorism, increased drug trafficking, other criminality and armed violence. Heads of Government also reaffirmed their concern at the threat this posed to national, regional and global peace and security by prolonging conflicts and hindering development.

25. Heads of Government expressed their support for the UN Firearms Protocol, and encouraged all member states to become parties to the Protocol. They also expressed their support for the 2001 UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and action to identify and trace illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. They also expressed support for the ongoing Secretariat assistance to member states in dealing with the issue of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Arms Trade Treaty

26. Heads of Government noted the ongoing discussions towards a comprehensive Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in respect of all conventional weapons.

Cluster Munitions

27. Heads of Government recognised the danger which cluster munitions can pose to civilians and welcomed efforts to negotiate a proposal to address humanitarian concerns arising from their use.

Landmines

28. Heads of Government recalled the progress made by States party to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction in addressing the global anti-personnel landmines problem through the Comprehensive Framework for Mine Action provided by the Convention. They urged all countries which are in a position to do so, to accede to the Convention and fully implement their respective obligations. They recognized the importance of the continuation of the international community's assistance for affected countries aimed at achieving the goals established by the Ottawa Convention beyond 2009.

International Co-Operation in Criminal Matters

29. Heads of Government acknowledged that it is critical that States have the ability and capability to cooperate with each other, and with relevant international organizations, in action on criminal matters and against drug trafficking. They therefore urged all member states to support the full implementation of those United Nations Conventions that address international co-operation in criminal matters. They further encouraged the Secretariat to continue to provide technical assistance and targeted capacity building activities in consultation with member states.

Combating Corruption and the Tracing and Recovery of Assets of Illicit Origin

30. Recognising that extortion, bribery and corruption undermine good governance, respect for human rights and economic development, Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to combat systemic corruption at both national and international levels. Heads of Government urged member states which had not already done so to consider becoming parties to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). They acknowledged the on-going activities of the Secretariat designed to build institutional capacity and awareness in member states so as to assist them with its implementation and enforcement. They encouraged member states to consider implementing the recommendations of the 2005 Commonwealth Expert Working Group on the Recovery and Repatriation of Assets of Illicit Origin. They also recognised the resolutions of the First Conference of the States Parties to UNCAC, which address asset recovery and international co-operation and affirm those twin pillars among principal objectives of the Convention.

Human Trafficking

31. Heads of Government expressed their abhorrence at increasing levels of human trafficking, which deprives people of their human dignity. Heads of Government urged member states to put in place a framework to prevent human trafficking, protect and support victims of human trafficking and prosecute human traffickers. Such a framework would include all necessary criminal measures and investigative and international cooperation tools to combat human trafficking. Heads of Government also affirmed the principle of solidarity and burden-sharing with regard to assistance of refugees and their host communities.

32. Heads of Government urged member states to comply with all obligations arising under international law and to consider becoming party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the Protocols thereto, in particular the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Heads of Government also expressed concern about the difficulties faced by millions of refugees in protracted situations and their particular vulnerability to situations of human trafficking, and emphasised the need to redouble international efforts and cooperation to find practical and comprehensive approaches to resolving their plight and to realise durable solutions for them.

Terrorism

33. Heads of Government reaffirmed their strong condemnation of terrorist acts in all their forms and manifestations and recognised that terrorism continues to present a serious challenge to international peace and security. They emphasised that targeting and deliberate killing of civilians through acts of terrorism cannot be justified or legitimised by any cause or grievance. Heads of Government stressed the continuing need for comprehensive efforts at local, national, regional and international levels, to counter terrorism, which also take into account the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. In this context they commended the various initiatives to promote dialogue, respect and understanding among civilizations. Heads of Government highlighted the need to conclude a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism during the Sixty-Second Session of the UN General Assembly.

34. Heads of Government recalled the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Terrorism (CPAT) adopted in Abuja in 2003 following the meeting of the Commonwealth Committee on Terrorism (CCT). In this context, Heads of Government welcomed the offer made by Sri Lanka to host a ministerial meeting next year of all member states on the issue.

35. Heads of Government reiterated their call for all states to accede to and implement the UN Counter Terrorism Conventions and Protocols and relevant Security Council Resolutions, to prevent the use of their territories for the support, incitement or commission of terrorist acts. They emphasised in particular, the need to implement the necessary legal framework for the suppression of terrorist financing. They commended the capacity building work of the Secretariat in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Counter Terrorism Committee of the Security Council and other relevant UN bodies, in assisting member countries and regional bodies to implement their international obligations.

36. Heads of Government highlighted the need to protect the rights of victims of terrorism while emphasising that any measures taken to counter terrorism must comply with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, refugee law and humanitarian law. They reaffirmed that the promotion and protection of human rights for all and the rule of law should be an integral part of the approach to countering terrorism.

Human Rights

37. Heads of Government expressed their appreciation for the Secretariat's work in advancing human rights in the Commonwealth and for its to support the work of national and regional mechanisms in protecting and promoting human rights. In this context they confirmed their commitment to support further the various initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat in raising awareness and respect for human rights in member countries and assisting them to meet their human rights obligations. They recognized the facilitating role that the Secretariat could play in strengthening dialogue on and raising awareness of human rights in member countries, and through the UN Human Rights Council.

38. Heads of Government recalled that 2007 marked the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and commended activities undertaken in observance of the bicentenary. They also noted that 2008 will mark the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. They reaffirmed their commitment to promote respect for and protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms in the Commonwealth without distinction of any kind. They urged all countries to consider acceding to all the major international human rights instruments, especially the twin 1966 Covenants (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) which, along with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, form the International Bill of Human Rights. They also called for the implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

39. Heads of Government welcomed the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 13 December 2006 and encouraged all Commonwealth countries to consider ratifying and implementing the Convention without undue delay.

40. Heads of Government agreed that the Commonwealth should increase its efforts to promote respect for human rights through public awareness and training for police, the judiciary, prison officers and security forces across the Commonwealth.

International Criminal Court and Tribunals

41. Heads of Government stressed the importance of ending impunity for the perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, and took positive note in that context of the work of the international criminal tribunals. Heads of Government called on states to consider further contributions to the valuable work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Heads of Government of those member countries that have ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court emphasized their support for the Court and urged those states that have not yet done so to accede to the Rome Statute at the earliest opportunity.

Digital Divide

42. Heads of Government expressed their appreciation for the work of the Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Action Programme for the Digital Divide (Commonwealth Connects) and endorsed the recommendations in the Committee's 2007 Report to the Secretary-General. They also welcomed the Secretariat's work in assisting member countries to address the persisting digital divide and the challenges of using information and communications technology (ICT) for national development. They commended India, Malta, Mozambique, Trinidad and Tobago for their support to the Programme, and urged member countries to promote and support continuing initiatives for sharing the ICT knowledge and experience of the Commonwealth, including through transfer of technology. They expressed appreciation for the successful convening of the International e-Partnership Summit in New Delhi in March 2007, coordinated for Commonwealth Connects by the Commonwealth Business Council, and the launch of the 'Hole in the Wall' Pilot Project in Kampala in November 2007. Heads of Government noted the need to ensure that the Commonwealth Connects programme is closely coordinated with other efforts in this field by organisations such as UNESCO, UNDP, ITU as well as region-specific donors so as to enhance effectiveness.

43. Heads of Government commended the work of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation and its contribution to assisting member countries to bridge the digital divide. They also commended the CTO's Programme for Development and Training around the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC)

44. Heads of Government noted that capacity building is a fundamental component of sustainable development and aid effectiveness, and a key element in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) especially for small states and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). They commended the CFTC for recognising the critical importance of country ownership and leadership in its programmes, and noted the importance of aligning CFTC programming with national plans.

45. Heads of Government welcomed the augmentation by many member governments of their respective CFTC contributions by 6 per cent per annum in real terms, for each of the five years following the Malta CHOGM. They urged other member countries to do likewise. They also welcomed the continued efforts by individual member countries to extend technical assistance to others, including South-South cooperation, within and outside the framework of the CFTC.

Trade

46. Heads of Government reiterated their commitment to an urgent and successful conclusion to the DDA negotiations. The negotiations remain at a critical stage and are vital for the global economy and development, including the attainment of the MDGs. Heads expressed their commitment to constructive and meaningful engagement and called on all WTO Members to demonstrate goodwill and flexibility.

47. Heads of Government recognised the fundamental contribution of international trade to global prosperity, sustainable development and to the elimination of poverty. They acknowledged the core role of the World Trade Organisation and emphasized the need to give priority to fuller participation of all Commonwealth members in multilateral trade as well as the critical importance of all countries obtaining a fair and equitable share of the gains of trade. Heads reaffirmed their commitment to:

- the fundamental principles and rules of the multilateral trading system;
- the well sequenced and appropriately paced liberalisation of international trade;
- the goals of development and equity through greater responsiveness of the international trading system to the concerns and interests of developing countries;
- the strengthening of coherence between development and trade policies for the enhancement of market access, trade and technological transfer; and
- the fuller integration in the global trading regime of low income states, particularly LDCs and small vulnerable economies taking into account their specific development challenges, including those resulting from the erosion of their long-standing trade preferences for which both trade and non-trade solutions are needed at the multilateral level.

48. Heads of Government noted that a strongly development-oriented outcome would involve: elimination of export subsidies and substantial reduction in domestic support; reduction, where appropriate, in tariffs and other trade-distorting measures; provision of Special and Differential Treatment for Developing countries, especially Least Developed Countries; and strengthening of supply-side capacity and trade-related infrastructure through Aid for Trade and other mechanisms. They recognised that in developing countries, agriculture is closely intertwined with food security, livelihoods and development and that the NAMA negotiations should provide sufficient flexibility for the developing countries to implement their development strategies whilst the Services negotiations should open up areas of interest to developing countries.

49. Heads called upon developed countries that have not already done so and developing countries in a position to do so to implement their 2005 WTO Hong Kong Ministerial commitments on providing predictable duty free and quota free market access on a lasting basis on products from LDCs.

50. Heads of Governments encouraged Commonwealth members, in a position to do so, to extend Aid for Trade support to Commonwealth developing countries and called for the honouring of commitments by development partners, made at G8 Summits and elsewhere, and for an increase in support for Aid for Trade initiatives, such as the Enhanced Integrated Framework.

51. Heads of Government acknowledged the contribution that regional trading arrangements can make to the gradual and beneficial integration of developing countries into the multilateral trading system. They called upon the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific group (ACP) to put in place Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) that constitute effective tools for poverty eradication and sustainable development and contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. They urged that EPAs take due account of capacity constraints, the need for adequate accompanying measures to be provided on a predictable basis to meet, inter alia, adjustment costs and other potential vulnerabilities and the safeguarding of policy flexibility. They considered the EC's unilateral denunciation of the Sugar Protocol as very regrettable and urged that the new trading arrangements enhance and improve effective market access to deliver long term economic benefits to ACP sugar exporters. Heads of Government called for improved delivery of transitional assistance to make the necessary adjustments.

World Economic Situation

52. Heads of Government welcomed the continued global expansion of output and the improved growth performance of some developing countries in recent years. However, they noted that a significant number of developing countries, including many small states, have not been part of this trend and called for measures to address the special vulnerabilities of these economies. They also noted the risk factors that could affect future growth performance: the sub-prime crisis and the resulting reduction in available credit; high and increasing in oil prices; the prospect of increasing food prices; global macroeconomic imbalances; lack of progress in multilateral trade negotiations and increasing protectionism; and demographic changes in developed countries. They also highlighted the complex relationship between environmental factors and economic growth. Heads called for individual and collective efforts to address these risk factors.

53. Heads of Government acknowledged the need to strengthen the voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making and norm-setting and, in this regard, stressed the importance of continuing efforts to reform the international financial architecture, including the Bretton Woods institutions.

Reform of International Institutions

54. Heads of Government expressed concern that the current architecture of international institutions, which was largely designed in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, does not reflect the challenges in the world of the 21st century. This undermines the legitimacy, effectiveness and credibility of the whole international system. Heads requested the Secretary-General to establish a small representative group of their number that would build on the considerable work that has already been done to undertake advocacy and lobbying in support of wide-ranging reforms. In doing so, the group would take particular cognisance of the special needs of LDCs and small states. This group would report back to the next Heads of Government Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009.

Debt Relief

55. Heads of Government welcomed the progress made in implementing debt relief under both the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). They, however, expressed concern that many countries are still faced with large and unsustainable debt burdens. They stressed the need for donors to honour their commitments to compensate the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) for their share of MDRI relief on an ongoing basis so that their financial capacity is protected and their ability to assist low-income countries is not impaired. They also reiterated the need to sufficiently address the debt problems of middle-income countries taking into account their debt sustainability and financial gaps.

Investment

56. Heads of Government noted the valuable role of productive investment in contributing to economic growth and the eradication of poverty. They recognized that improvements in the business environment and overall regulatory framework which reduce investor costs are crucial to promoting private investment. They also called for an increased focus on developing domestic financial markets and providing opportunities for domestic investors. Heads of Government encouraged the use of home country incentives to promote investment in LDCs, small states and other developing countries. Heads recognised that improving access to financial services for the poor and vulnerable is an essential element in the fight against poverty and called for continued efforts to integrate them into the formal financial system. They recognised in this regard the importance of micro-finance and micro-credit in providing access to capital and inclusive financial services for people living in poverty. They also called for innovative and market friendly interventions that mobilise ODA to share investment risks.

Strengthening Financial Systems

57. Heads of Government commended the Commonwealth Secretariat for its continued role in facilitating the dialogue between the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Commonwealth countries on the issue of a global level playing field and transparency and information exchange in tax matters, and called for constructive engagement on the outstanding issues.

Climate Change

58. Heads of Government adopted the Lake Victoria Commonwealth Climate Change Action Plan.

Challenges Facing Small States

59. Heads of Government reaffirmed the enduring and new challenges facing small states as set out in the 2005 Gozo Statement on Vulnerable Small States. They expressed concern at the recent increase in frequency and intensity of natural disasters and their often devastating social, economic and environmental impact, particularly on Small Island Developing States. Heads of Government encouraged small states to continue to implement outward-oriented development strategies that would assist them to overcome their vulnerabilities. Heads welcomed the recent advocacy work of the Secretariat on behalf of small states in the area of debt, youth unemployment, improving the quality of international assistance, building resilience mechanisms to offset economic vulnerabilities, and diversification into new economic activities. Heads of Government further welcomed the newly formed Small States Network for Economic Development, set up under the auspices of the Government of Malta and the World Bank, and expressed the hope that the Network would be an effective tool in fostering sustainable economic development in Small States. Heads agreed that the Secretariat should explore the possibility of establishing a Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva, modelled on the Office in New York.

60. Heads of Government stressed the need for small states to build their economic resilience by making appropriate interventions in four areas: macro- economic strategy; micro-economic market efficiency; good governance; and social cohesion. They recognized that an important element in development strategies for small states is the operation of the labour market. They urged small states to implement measures on both the demand and supply sides of the labour market to address youth unemployment and the migration of the highly skilled. Heads urged the international community to provide all possible support to assist small states in the pursuit of their development strategies, and in particular, small island developing states in line with their commitments under the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Education

61. Heads of Government reaffirmed the fundamental role played by education in facilitating social and economic transformation. They commended the efforts made by Commonwealth countries in seeking to achieve the MDGs of universal primary education (UPE) and the elimination of inequity in education, particularly gender inequity. They affirmed the need to prioritise support to member countries at risk of not achieving the education MDGs. Heads supported the invitation of Education Ministers to increase public spending on education at all levels to facilitate achievement of the MDGs and develop effective school curricula to complement the implementation of UPE.

62. Heads committed to redoubling their efforts to deliver education for all, with a particular focus on enrolling the 30 million primary school aged children out of school across the Commonwealth; eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education; and strengthening education systems in countries affected by conflict. Donor countries committed to significantly increase aid for education – including through the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI), which provides a framework for supporting education planning and donor harmonisation in developing countries. They noted that several Commonwealth countries were already working on credible long-term education plans, some of them already endorsed by FTI. They aimed to have at least 20 such plans prepared by the end of 2008.

63. Heads also undertook to place a renewed emphasis on education quality at all levels, and the measurement and improvement of learning. They undertook to examine how to make demonstrable progress on vital literacy and numeracy outcomes for primary aged children.

64. Heads committed to increase the flow between countries of training, IT resources, knowledge exchange, innovation and partnerships, including programming for youth and adults, and to further supporting Commonwealth institutions adding value in these fields. Heads welcomed the expansion of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan and the commitment by Education Ministers to expand further the number of

awards available in the lead up to the 50th anniversary of the Plan in 2009. They noted the proposal for a new facility to encourage scholarships to be hosted in a greater range of Commonwealth countries.

65. Heads undertook to work to harness the expertise of the private sector and non-governmental and civil society organisations to complement state provision, particularly in training and skills development as key drivers of growth and development.

66. Heads welcomed the offer by the Government of Malaysia to host the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Kuala Lumpur in June 2009, and agreed to explore the strengthening of on-line tertiary education, and access for youth to such education, for consideration at that meeting.

Health and HIV/AIDS

67. Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to the attainment of the health related MDGs, especially improving maternal and child health; and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases. They acknowledged the need to invest in services and prevention tools, including vaccines and microbicides, to contribute towards the goal of universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010. They urged implementation of the political declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted at the 2006 UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS.

68. They recognised that the crisis in human resources available to the health sector is a major challenge to achieving the MDGs; acknowledged the role of the Commonwealth Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Health Workers; supported the health systems strengthening approach of the International Health Partnership and urged the Secretariat to continue supporting primary health care systems.

69. They noted the rising burden of chronic diseases on health systems and welcomed the Action Plan on Non-Communicable Diseases adopted by CARICOM in their 2007 Port of Spain Declaration. They also acknowledged the need for accessible, affordable appropriate medicines and action to combat counterfeit drugs.

Gender

69. Heads of Government reaffirmed that gender equality and women's empowerment, including greater progress in their economic empowerment, are fundamental for the advancement of human rights and the achievement of MDGs, development, democracy and peace. They welcomed the priority given by Women's Affairs Ministers, at their 8th Meeting in Kampala in June 2007, to financing gender equality, and endorsed their call for implementation of international, regional and national commitments to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Heads of Government also endorsed their call for the effective monitoring and tracking of resources for gender equality and women's empowerment through gender responsive budgeting and other gender analysis tools, and through strengthening aid effectiveness to improve accountability and the impact on gender equality. They also supported the call made by Finance Ministers in Guyana in October 2007, to specifically incorporate a focus on gender equality in the aid effectiveness agenda during the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in September 2008.

71. Heads of Government stressed the need to allocate adequate resources to: strengthen national women's machineries, public sector and civil society organisations; increase access for women to markets, property rights, credit and productive resources; and to improve women's participation, leadership and representation in decision-making at all levels including in peace, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction processes. Heads of Government condemned the continuing high levels of violations of the rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. In this context, they also called for the full and consistent implementation by all states of UNSCR 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. They welcomed the agreement at the 8th Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting to establish a Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security. In particular, Heads requested the Secretariat to continue assisting member countries to implement the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015.

Youth

72. Heads of Government reaffirmed their strong commitment to the young people of the Commonwealth and their priorities and needs. They stressed the important role that young people can continue to play in strengthening and supporting the Commonwealth's fundamental values, and called in particular for further efforts to include young people in democratic institutions, such as bodies of elected representatives, and in democratic processes, such as election observation. Heads also noted the contribution of young people to Commonwealth efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and requested that options be explored for drawing Commonwealth young people

in practical ways into efforts to support the recommendations of the *Civil Paths to Peace* report as well as the work of the *Alliance of Civilisations*.

73. Heads endorsed the Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) adopted by the 6th Youth Ministers' Meeting, and took note with appreciation of the Communiqué of the Sixth Commonwealth Youth Forum held in Entebbe in November 2007. Heads noted the importance of developing national youth policies and also of including young people in all possible aspects of national planning and budgeting.

74. Heads reaffirmed their commitment to the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) as a longstanding and unique instrument for promoting youth empowerment and development. They endorsed efforts to strengthen the CYP's four Regional Centres to become centres of excellence, and in this regard, they appreciated India's support to develop the CYP Asia Centre as a focal point for cooperation and learning in the field of youth and local governance.

75. Heads noted with concern the severe shortfall in funding for the CYP which is seriously constraining its capacity to deliver its current mandates or fresh initiatives in support of Commonwealth youth priorities and needs. They therefore agreed that countries should not only live up to their financial commitments to the budget to the CYP, but that a new assessed contributions formula be developed for the CYP, while also allowing for additional voluntary contributions. The new financial arrangements should take effect from 2008/09.

Commonwealth Functional Cooperation

76. Heads of Government took note of the various aspects of Commonwealth Functional Co-operation presented to the Committee of the Whole (COW). They requested the Secretary-General to bring to the notice of Heads of Government any proposed mandates arising from ministerial meetings that have significant implications for the Secretariat's work programme and resources. Heads of Government also acknowledged in particular the contribution of the Commonwealth Inter-Governmental Agencies and Commonwealth Organisations which reported to the COW and to Foreign Ministers.

Civil Society

77. Heads of Government welcomed progress involving civil society in all aspects of the Commonwealth's work. They noted that a number of Ministerial meetings now included provision for dialogue with civil society and called for this to be extended where possible.

78. They took note of the outcome of the Peoples Forum and agreed with civil society that political, economic and human transformation should recognise and respect the right to freedom of association and assembly, as well as freedom of expression and the media, and access to information, and requires the active participation of all social groups in making decisions that shape their destiny in accordance with international and domestic law. They noted civil society concerns that poverty, climate change, HIV and AIDS and rapid urbanisation as well as risk of failure to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, pose serious threats to transformation.

79. Heads acknowledged that the Commonwealth's vision of development and democracy cannot be achieved without realising people's full potential, requiring significant investments in good governance, social capital, including gender equality and empowerment, youth opportunity and decent work, along with support for innovation in ICTs, science and technology. Heads urged civil society to support partnerships and linking for progress in health systems, education for all and sustaining the environmental resource base. They also recognised the role of civil society in achieving Commonwealth objectives, including democracy, good governance, development and respect for cultural diversity.

Commonwealth Foundation

80. Heads of Government received the report of the Commonwealth Foundation and commended its work on culture, governance and democracy and sustainable development. They recognised the work of the Foundation in providing leadership on the Commonwealth's engagement with civil society at Ministerial meetings and through regular consultations. They welcomed Antigua and Barbuda and South Africa into membership of the Foundation.

81. They noted the challenges identified by the Foundation in building partnerships for transformation between government and civil society, including the need for regulatory environments at the national level that encourage and enable the participation of all stakeholders in processes of democracy and development as well as improved opportunity and capacity of non-State actors to demonstrate their accountability.

82. Heads expressed support for the Foundation in strengthening the "Peoples' Commonwealth" through programmes and grants and facilitating dialogue between governments and civil society. They also encouraged the Foundation to continue to increase the impact of its work through its partnerships and networks and by increasing membership and voluntary contributions.

Commonwealth of Learning (COL)

83. Heads of Government expressed satisfaction with the achievements of COL in the 20 years since its creation by the 1987 Vancouver CHOGM. They commended COL's focus on the development agenda in its 2006-2009 Plan, Learning for Development, and progress in implementing the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth, in which 29 countries are participating. Heads of Government requested COL to support member countries in enhancing access to quality higher education, encouraging member governments to enhance their contributions, as appropriate, to the budget of COL to enable it to carry out these programmes.

Commonwealth Business Council (CBC)

84. Heads of Government commended the CBC's work to increase trade and investment in partnership with Governments and the private sector over the past ten years, since its establishment by Heads of Government in 1997. They welcomed the contribution of the CBC to the growth of Commonwealth trade and investment in that period through a number of initiatives. They also welcomed the dialogue with the private sector through the Commonwealth Business Forum and requested the CBC to carry forward its work in collaboration with governments.

Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (CPTM)

85. Heads of Government took note of the activities of the CPTM in cooperative networking and its partnership activities in facilitating application of technology management for development.

Commonwealth Institute / Commonwealth Education Trust

86. Heads of Government noted with satisfaction that the capital released from the Commonwealth Institute property had been secured in a successor charitable trust fund, the Commonwealth Education Trust (CET), the income from which will be used to advance education in the Commonwealth. They stressed the importance of maintaining the liaison, facilitated through the Secretariat, between the education-oriented Commonwealth bodies including the Commonwealth of Learning, the Commonwealth Foundation and the CET.

Commonwealth Membership

87. Heads of Government reviewed the recommendations of the Committee on Commonwealth Membership and agreed on the following core criteria for Membership:

(a) an applicant country should, as a general rule, have had an historic constitutional association with an existing Commonwealth member, save in exceptional circumstances;

(b) in exceptional circumstances, applications should be considered on a case-by-case basis;

(c) an applicant country should accept and comply with Commonwealth fundamental values, principles, and priorities as set out in the 1971 Declaration of Commonwealth Principles and contained in other subsequent Declarations;

(d) an applicant country must demonstrate commitment to: democracy and democratic processes, including free and fair elections and representative legislatures; the rule of law and independence of the judiciary; good governance, including a well-trained public service and transparent public accounts; and, protection of human rights, freedom of expression, and equality of opportunity;

(e) an applicant country should accept Commonwealth norms and conventions, such as the use of the English language as the medium of inter-Commonwealth relations, and acknowledge Queen Elizabeth II as the Head of the Commonwealth; and

(f) new members should be encouraged to join the Commonwealth Foundation, and to promote vigorous civil society and business organisations within their countries, and to foster participatory democracy through regular civil society consultations.

88. Heads of Government also agreed that, where an existing member changes its formal constitutional status, it should not have to reapply for Commonwealth membership provided that it continues to meet all the criteria for membership.

89. Heads endorsed the other recommendations of the Committee, including a four-step process for considering applications for membership; new members being required to augment the existing budget of the Secretariat; and countries in accumulated arrears being renamed "Members in Arrears". They also agreed with the Committee's recommendations on Overseas Territories, Special Guests and strategic partnerships.

Submissions to CHOGM

90. Heads of Government noted the submissions of the COL, Commonwealth Foundation, CBC and civil society representatives, which reported to Foreign Ministers. They also received submissions from the Commonwealth Youth Forum, People's Forum and Business Forum and other Commonwealth civil society organisations which met in Uganda on the eve of CHOGM. Heads of Government noted that some of the issues raised in these submissions had been covered in their Communiqué. They requested the Secretary-General to take their recommendations into account, where possible, while implementing CHOGM mandates.

Commonwealth Secretariat Governance

91. Heads confirmed that the terms and conditions of service of the Secretary-General should be in accordance with the recommendations made to them in 2005 and 2007. Heads decided that a troika of leaders – being the past, present, and future Chairs-in-Office – should continue to review the terms and conditions of service of the Secretary-General every four years at least.

92. Heads of Government recalled that, at their Meeting in Coolum in 2002, they had adopted the report of the Commonwealth High Level Review Group which included a direction to the Secretary-General to streamline and simplify the Commonwealth Secretariat's structure, along the lines proposed in the Draper and Change Management Reports of 2001 and 2000 respectively. They also recalled that flexibility in recruitment and staffing was seen as an important element of such changes, including a mix of contract arrangements for staff, as well as providing the Secretary-General with the managerial authority to make staffing decisions as he/she determines the work and service delivery priorities of the Secretariat. Heads reaffirmed the importance they attached to these earlier decisions in order to achieve greater cost-effectiveness and a more productive synergy between programmes in the Secretariat.

93. Heads acknowledged that the scale of assessments for the Commonwealth Secretariat budget had not been revised since 1989, and agreed that regular reviews and adjustments to the scale should occur in future on a five yearly basis. They agreed that the scale should continue to be based on the principles of capacity to pay, equitable burden sharing, and shared ownership and responsibility for the Secretariat. Heads decided to have a revised scale implemented with effect from the 2008/09 financial year, and with the changes phased in over a three year period.

Commonwealth Secretary-General

94. Heads of Government unanimously selected Mr Kamallesh Sharma to succeed Right Honourable Don McKinnon as Commonwealth Secretary-General, for a four-year term beginning on 1 April 2008. They paid warm tribute and deep appreciation to Rt Hon Don McKinnon for his dedicated and exceptional service to the Commonwealth over the eight years of his tenure in office. They believed that his contribution to the strengthening of the Commonwealth and its fundamental values would be long remembered.

Next Meeting

95. Heads of Government reaffirmed their decision to meet in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009 at the invitation of the Government of that country.

96. They also took note of the offer from the President of Sri Lanka for the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in that country.

Kampala

25 November 2007