



Statement on the 25th anniversary of the Harare Declaration

A quarter-century ago, following extensive lobbying from CHRI for the 1991 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to adopt a Commonwealth charter for human rights, all Commonwealth member governments pledged in the Harare Declaration to:

- protect the Commonwealth's fundamental political values,
- promote democracy, independent judiciaries, and honest governments,
- achieve Gender equality,
- alleviate poverty, and
- work in a framework of respect for human rights.

To achieve these lofty goals, heads enjoined the Commonwealth's intergovernmental institutions, their own governments, and Commonwealth Accredited organisations to "seize the opportunities presented by these challenges" and to "play their full part in achieving these objectives."

These values and intentions have been repeatedly reaffirmed in CHOGM communiqués, and in the Commonwealth Charter.

Sadly, the Declaration's words have not been become reality, and time and again manifest violations of fundamental Commonwealth values have been met by weakness and division rather than strength and consensus.

CHRI calls on the Secretary-General, intergovernmental institutions, 52 member governments, and all Commonwealth Accredited Organisations to mark today's anniversary by committing to actively promoting and defending the values as laid out in the Harare Declaration and Commonwealth Charter, and in doing so to set a new standard for transparency and willingness to work across all three branches of the Commonwealth Family.