

## Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting - FINAL COMMUNIQUE

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Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Malta from 25 to 27 November 2005. Of the 52 countries that attended the Meeting, 38 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 Malta for the warm hospitality extended to them and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting. They also congratulated Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi for his leadership in chairing the Meeting.
4. Noting that their Meeting was taking place following the United Nations 2005 World Summit, Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to the outcome of this Summit.

### **Fundamental Political Values**

5. Heads of Government reaffirmed 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, freedom of expression, and a political culture that promotes transparency, accountability and economic development.
6. Heads of Government expressed 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 for strengthening 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.
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. They also noted the outcomes of the CLGF Conference in 2005, and in this context welcomed the Aberdeen Agenda: Commonwealth Principles on Good Practice for Local Democracy and Good Governance.
8. Heads of Government noted that the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles on the Accountability of and Relationship between the Three Branches of Government 2003, which recognise the importance of a balance of power between the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, constitute an integral part of the Commonwealth's fundamental political values as set out in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration.

### **Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG)**

9. 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 Abuja Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in December 2003. They commended CMAG's work which has contributed significantly to the promotion of the Commonwealth's fundamental political values in member countries.
10. Heads of Government expressed sympathy with the Government and people of Pakistan for the massive loss of life and devastation caused by the earthquake in October 2005.
11. Heads of Government welcomed the progress made by Pakistan in restoring democracy and rebuilding democratic institutions as well as Pakistan's participation in the Commonwealth since its reinstatement by CMAG in May 2004.

12. Heads of Government noted that the holding by the same person of the offices of Head of State and Chief of Army Staff is incompatible with the basic principles of democracy and the spirit of the Harare Commonwealth principles. They reiterated that until the two offices are separated, the process of democratisation in Pakistan will not be irreversible.

13. Heads of Government urged Pakistan to resolve this issue as early as possible, and not beyond the end of the current Presidential term in 2007 at the latest. They noted that CMAG will retain Pakistan on its agenda pending the resolution of this outstanding issue.

14. Heads of Government requested the Secretary-General to continue to maintain high level contacts with Pakistan and utilise his good offices and technical assistance, as appropriate, to support the strengthening of democracy, institution building and democratic governance.

15. Heads of Government reconstituted the membership of CMAG for the next biennium as follows: Canada, Lesotho, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, St Lucia, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom and United Republic of Tanzania. They further agreed that Malta would continue to be a member of CMAG in its capacity as the representative of the Chairperson in Office, as its ninth member.

### **Belize**

16. Heads of Government noted the developments in the continuing efforts of Belize to bring an end to Guatemala's territorial claim, including 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 Organisation of American States (OAS) on 7 September 2005. Heads of Government noted that this Agreement provided for a mechanism to allow recourse to an international judicial body for final resolution should the parties fail to reach agreement in negotiations, and expressed the confidence that this framework could bring this long-lasting claim to an early end. Heads of Government reiterated their firm support for the territorial integrity, security and sovereignty of Belize.

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

### **Cyprus**

18. 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.

19. They welcomed the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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.

### **Guyana**

22. 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 2005.

23. Heads of Government expressed satisfaction at the cordiality which had characterised relations between Guyana and Venezuela in recent years and recognised 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 UN Good Offices Process and to enhanced co-operation at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

24. Heads of Government reaffirmed their unequivocal support for the maintenance of Guyana's territorial integrity and sovereignty including its unrestricted right to the development of the entirety of its territory for the benefit of its people.

25. Heads of Government mandated the Secretary-General to convene the Ministerial Group on Guyana, whenever necessary.

### **Promoting Tolerance and Respect**

26. Heads of Government affirmed the importance of promoting tolerance, respect, enlightened moderation and friendship among people of different races, faiths and cultures. In this regard they commended various initiatives at the national, regional and international level and encouraged the Commonwealth Secretariat to strengthen its interaction with other bodies that seek to build a common platform of unity against extremism and intolerance. Heads of Government also requested the Secretary-General to explore initiatives to promote mutual understanding and respect among all faiths and communities in the Commonwealth.

### **Peace and Security**

27. Heads of Government observed that insecurity, armed conflict, gender inequality and the failure to promote and protect human rights undermine development and poverty reduction and endanger the security and stability of states. They underlined that social and economic marginalisation also undermines security and stability. Heads of Government urged member countries to ensure that, where appropriate, national poverty reduction frameworks and development assistance programmes include measures to build effective and accountable security and justice sectors, particularly in countries affected by conflicts.

28. 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.

29. Heads of Government noted the substantive contributions of Commonwealth members to peace building and to UN peace support operations, as major troop contributors and donors. They reaffirmed the decision by the UN 2005 World Summit to establish a Peace Building Commission, a Support Office and Fund to coordinate relevant actors and advise on integrated strategies for post-conflict reconstruction so as to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. They urged that these bodies be established by the end of 2005 and called for active Commonwealth collaboration with the Peace Building Commission to provide support for post-conflict reconstruction.

### **Terrorism**

30. Heads of Government reaffirmed their strong condemnation of all acts of terrorism in all its 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.

31. 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, tolerance and understanding among civilizations.

32. Heads of Government also called for increased efforts to promote economic development and good governance as a means of tackling insecurity and conflict. They recognised that international cooperation to fight terrorism must be conducted in conformity with international law, including the UN Charter and relevant international conventions and protocols. States must ensure that measures taken to combat terrorism comply with their obligations under international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law

and international humanitarian law.

33. Heads of Government called upon all states to accede to and effectively implement the UN Conventions and Protocols related to terrorism. They reiterated the need for all states to tackle the financing of, incitement to, and other support for terrorist activities and to take appropriate measures, including the effective implementation of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, to ensure that their territories are not used for such activities. Heads of Government stressed the need to conclude a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism during the sixtieth session of the UN General Assembly, and support the early entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

34. Heads of Government encouraged all member governments to continue to follow steps outlined in the Commonwealth Plan of Action and to implement UNSCR 1373 (2001) and relevant UN and other international resolutions, conventions and standards aimed at combating terrorism. In this context they commended the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat in assisting member countries and reiterated the need to further strengthen counter-terrorism co-operation and assistance, particularly in the area of capacity-building .

### **United Nations Reform**

35. Heads of Government reiterated the need to build a UN fit to meet the challenges of the 21st century. They called for urgent reforms in the UN decision-making structure, including the expansion of the Security Council, to make the UN system more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. Heads of Government also underlined the vital importance of an effective multilateral system based on the principles of international law, in order to achieve progress in the areas of peace and security, development and human rights . This should include action to strengthen the management and coherence of the UN humanitarian and development systems, so that the UN can fulfil its potential to help accelerate progress towards attainment of the MDGs. They agreed to actively follow up the outcomes of the UN 2005 World Summit.

### **Responsibility to Protect**

36. Heads of Government welcomed the universal acceptance at the UN 2005 World Summit that each individual state has the responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. They urged Commonwealth countries to help states to exercise this responsibility and support the UN in establishing an early warning capability. They welcomed the recognition that the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity is also a collective responsibility, through the UN and bearing in mind the principles of the UN Charter and international law, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations.

37. Heads of Government agreed that the responsibility and obligation to protect populations from such acts is a fundamental Commonwealth value, consistent with Commonwealth commitments to human rights, democracy, good governance and international law. They agreed to work together to ensure that the responsibility to protect is carried out by the international community, in accordance with the UN Charter.

### **International Criminal Court**

38. Heads of Government of those member countries that have ratified the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court welcomed the 100th ratification the Rome Statute and urged other states that have not yet done so to accede to the Rome Statute in a timely manner.

### **Small Arms and Light Weapons**

39. Heads of Government expressed their deep concern over the illicit production, illegal trade and uncontrolled availability of small arms and light weapons, which prolong conflict, increase levels of armed violence and undermine development. They acknowledged the nexus between drug trafficking, illegal trade in small arms, organised crime and terrorism and stressed the need for continued regional and international collaboration to combat these threats. Heads of Government noted the proposals by certain member states

for the establishment of common international standards for the transfer of small arms and light weapons. They urged all member states to support the strengthening of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

40. Heads of Government further expressed their deep concern at the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict by armed forces and groups and urged member states to take measures to ensure accountability by those responsible for abuse against children and to prohibit and criminalise such practices and assist those affected children.

### **Arms Trade Treaty**

41. Heads of Government noted the proposal for the development of common international standards for the trade in all conventional weapons and added their support to calls for work on such a treaty to commence at the UN.

### **Drug Trafficking and Transnational Crime**

42. Heads of Government recognised that drug trafficking and related transnational criminal activities are serious threats to stability, security and development. They emphasised the need for all countries, particularly producing, consuming and transit countries, to continue to work together bilaterally and multilaterally to fight the harmful effects of drug trafficking.

43. Heads of Government expressed concern that transnational crime is a serious and growing threat to Commonwealth jurisdictions, especially those small states which might experience resource constraints and capacity issues to respond effectively.

### **Landmines**

44. 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 recognised the importance of the continuation of the international community's assistance for affected countries aimed at achieving the goals established by the Ottawa Convention by 2009.

### **Human Rights**

45. Heads of Government commended the Secretariat's work in assisting member countries to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant instruments. They reaffirmed that respect for and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, is the foundation of peaceful, just and stable societies and that these rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and inter-related. In this context, they welcomed the agreement reached by the UN 2005 World Summit to establish a Human Rights Council. Heads of Government urged member countries to conduct open, transparent and inclusive negotiations to be completed as soon as possible during the sixtieth session of the UN General Assembly with the aim of establishing the mandate, modalities, functions, size, composition, membership, working methods and procedures of the Council.

### **Public Financial Management Reform**

46. Heads of Government welcomed the guidelines for Public Financial Management Reform considered by the Commonwealth Finance Ministers in Barbados in September 2005 and urged member Governments to devise suitable measures to adopt and implement these guidelines to support the reform of this important sector. Heads of Government appreciated the work of the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) in governance, public administration and public sector reform.

## **Combating Corruption**

47. Heads of Government reiterated their commitment to root out, both at national and international levels, systemic corruption, including extortion and bribery, which undermine good governance, respect for human rights and economic development. They acknowledged that comprehensive preventative measures, including institutionalising transparency, accountability and good governance, combined with effective enforcement, are the most effective means to combat corruption.

48. Heads of Government welcomed the imminent entry into force of the UN Convention against Corruption and urged member states which had not already done so to become parties to the Convention and to strengthen the fight against corruption by the adoption of principles and policies, as appropriate, that emphasise good governance, accountability and transparency.

## **Recovery and Repatriation of Assets of Illicit Origin**

49. Heads of Government accepted for implementation the recommendations of the Report of the Commonwealth Expert Group on the Recovery and Repatriation of Assets of Illicit Origin. Corruption, reprehensible as it is, should not, however, be equated with war crimes or genocide. Heads of Government underscored the importance of maximum co-operation and assistance by all Commonwealth countries to recover assets of illicit origin and repatriate them to their countries of origin.

## **Migration and Development**

50. Heads of Government underlined the need to deal with the challenges and opportunities that migration presents to countries of origin, destination and transit. In an interconnected world, growth and prosperity increasingly rely on the global flow of people, for travel, work and study. When managed effectively migration can have a substantial positive impact both for host and source countries and for migrants. Heads of Government emphasized that better management of migration flows is a matter of priority. They urged member countries to participate actively in the UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2006 to deliberate its multidimensional aspects. Heads of Government also reaffirmed their resolve to take measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and members of their families, as enshrined in international law.

## **Human Trafficking**

51. Heads of Government condemned human trafficking which deprives people of their human dignity, including their fundamental rights and freedoms. They acknowledged that eradicating human trafficking requires a comprehensive approach which focuses on prevention, protection and prosecution. Heads of Government urged member states to honour all obligations arising under international law and to support the full implementation of the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime. Heads of Government also affirmed the principle of solidarity and burden-sharing with regard to assistance of refugees and their host communities.

## **Digital Divide**

52. Heads of Government highlighted the significant potential contribution of information and communication technologies for development and issued the Malta Commonwealth Declaration on Networking for Development.

## **Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC)**

53. Heads of Government expressed their appreciation for the CFTC's programme of assistance in the areas of debt management, trade development and investment promotion, as well as in governance, public sector development, gender equality, human development, and in addressing anti-money laundering issues.

54. They expressed their concern at the progressive decline in the real resources of the CFTC over the years and noted that this was affecting its ability to assist member countries, especially Small States and Least

Developed Countries (LDCs), to attain the MDGs by supporting pro-poor policies for economic growth and sustainable development. They endorsed the support expressed at the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in Barbados in September 2005 for the Secretary-General's call on all member Governments to increase contributions to the CFTC by 6 per cent per annum in real terms for each of the next five years. Heads of Government also welcomed recent substantial increases in pledges to the CFTC by some countries and urged other member countries to do likewise. They also welcomed the continued efforts by individual member countries in extending technical assistance to other member countries within and outside the framework of the CFTC.

### **World Economic Situation**

55. Heads of Government welcomed the ongoing global expansion and low levels of inflation. However, they noted that unbalanced growth, disparities in global current accounts and savings, high and volatile oil prices, increasing protectionist sentiments and the effects of natural disasters continue to impact negatively on the outlook and urged concerted international efforts to minimise these major sources of risk.

56. Heads of Government emphasised that oil producers and consumers as well as oil companies need to work together to promote greater transparency and stability in the oil market and enhance access to energy, including alternative sources of energy, and also to assist the poor and most vulnerable countries to deal with the impact of rising energy prices.

### **Meeting the Millennium Development Goals**

57. Heads of Government expressed deep concern that many Commonwealth countries were falling behind the MDG targets. They noted that the MDGs were largely linked to poverty reduction, health, education and gender equality targets, and urged member countries to re-commit themselves to human development. Heads of Government noted with satisfaction the achievement of some of the MDGs by some member countries. They called upon all member countries to continue to pursue macroeconomic stability and to strengthen the social and economic policies and human rights frameworks needed for sustainable growth and poverty reduction. They also urged the international community, led by developed countries, to follow through expeditiously on commitments regarding Official Development Assistance (ODA) and debt, particularly for LDCs and low-income countries.

58. Heads of Government welcomed the increased resources that will become available as a result of the establishment of timetables by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for ODA by 2015 and to reach at least 0.5 per cent of GNP for ODA by 2010 as well as, pursuant to the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs, 0.15 per cent to 0.20 per cent for the LDCs by no later than 2010, and urged those developed countries that have not yet done so to make concrete efforts in this regard in accordance with their commitments. They urged others to continue to take concrete steps towards reaching this goal in accordance with their commitments. They also welcomed greater attention paid to the priority issues of vaccination and immunization, including the decision by some countries to launch the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) and plans to implement new voluntary mechanisms to generate additional and predictable aid resources. Heads of Government requested the Secretary-General to include information on action taken to implement ODA commitments in the documentation for their next meeting.

59. Heads of Government recognised that along with increases in volumes, aid needs to be made more effective. In this regard, they called for determined action by all countries to implement the commitments made in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid. They also stressed the need to respect national processes in setting and implementing development strategies, and for donors to align their support with national priorities.

60. Heads of Government noted that some middle-income countries continue to face mounting debt problems, challenges in respect of the negative impact of HIV/AIDS, vulnerability to natural disasters, high unemployment and prevailing poverty. They noted that middle-income countries contain 70 percent of the world population earning less than two dollars a day and continued to face development challenges.

## **Multilateral Trade Issues**

61. Heads of Government emphasised that increased trading opportunities were the most potent weapon for combating global poverty. They issued the Valletta Statement on Multilateral Trade.

## **Debt Relief**

62. Heads of Government noted the vanguard role played by the UK Government and welcomed the proposal of the G8 countries for a fully funded 100 per cent debt cancellation for eligible Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) on their debt to International Development Association (IDA), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Fund (AfDF). They called on shareholders to support full and immediate action to implement these proposals. Once approved, consideration could be given to the extension of the initiative to debt owed to other multilateral institutions. In addition, they noted that it is important that the cancellation of multilateral debt does not compromise the financing capacity of the institutions involved and that IDA debt does not compromise the target of 50 per cent of IDA 14 funds being spent in sub-Saharan African countries pursuing sound policies, consistent with the IDA 14 final report.

63. Heads of Government expressed their shared concern about the effectiveness of the use of resources released through debt cancellation. They stressed that current programmes were able to ensure this without the need for additional conditionality. They called on the Bretton Woods Institutions to ensure that the debt sustainability framework is aligned to the achievement of the MDGs.

64. Heads of Government further stressed the need to consider additional measures and initiatives aimed at ensuring long term debt sustainability through increased grant based financing, cancellation of 100 per cent of the official multilateral and bilateral debt of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and, where appropriate, and on a case-by-case basis, to consider significant debt relief or restructuring for low- and middle-income developing countries, including Least Developed Countries, with an unsustainable debt burden that are not part of the HIPC Initiative, as well as the exploration of mechanisms to comprehensively address the debt problems of these countries.

## **Investment**

65. Heads of Government noted the importance of productive investment and the financial sectors as building blocks for economic growth, resource mobilisation and eradication of poverty. They recognised that improvements in the investment climate reduce investor costs and risks and generate higher rates of private sector investment and sustainable economic growth. Heads of Government called for increased efforts to address shortcomings in the investment climate, including the overall regulatory environment, in order to attract greater levels of both domestic and foreign investment. Heads of Government further noted that easy access to financial services by poor people reduces risk and vulnerability and increases income potential, and that new focus needs to be given to removing barriers to wider provision of services by banks and other commercial providers. They called for the adoption of financial access indicators to help guide reform and monitor progress.

## **Strengthening Financial Systems**

66. Heads of Government welcomed developments within the recent meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Global Forum, which focused on the issue of a global level playing field and fairness in the area of transparency and information exchange in tax matters and stressed that the way forward required a satisfactory resolution of this issue. They also welcomed the continued engagement of the Commonwealth on this issue, which, through the Secretariat, has offered support to a number of the affected jurisdictions by mobilizing assistance to meet international standards, strengthen and deepen their financial sectors and diversify their economies.

67. Heads of Government also commended the Commonwealth Secretariat for the technical assistance it is currently providing to the International Trade and Investment Organisation (ITIO).

## **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)**

68. Heads of Government recognised that poverty and under-development continue to challenge many African member countries in meeting the MDGs. They reiterated their support for the initiative taken by African leaders in setting up the NEPAD, and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and stressed their positive role in promoting economic development, good governance, democratic institutions and practices.

69. Heads of Government requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to continue bringing its various programmes in Africa within the NEPAD framework and to strengthen its partnership with AU/NEPAD. They also requested the Secretariat to consider support for its African Priority Programmes and Needs as identified at the Africa Partnership Forum and in the Report of the Commission for Africa.

## **Sustainable Development**

70. Heads of Government noted with concern the adverse immediate and long term effects of climate change, biodiversity loss, water management issues, deforestation and sea-level rise on small island and other states that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of global warming and sea level rise. They urged Commonwealth member states and the wider international community to meet their obligations under relevant multilateral environment agreements including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and to implement their commitments under Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI).

71. Heads of Government called for co-operation and continued international efforts to address the specific challenges posed by climate change, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and adaptation, including capacity building, and saw a role for the Commonwealth in progressing this agenda. They also called for international co-operation in addressing issues related to the transfer of affordable technologies and the management and promotion of renewable energy resources. Heads of Government also stressed the importance of the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, to be held in Montreal in November 2005.

72. To this end, Heads of Government acknowledged the role of some Commonwealth member states in the development of positive initiatives on climate change and sustainable development, including the G8 dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development and the Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate.

73. Heads of Government recognized the importance of the role of the Commonwealth Iwokrama Rainforest Programme in Guyana in conserving and sustainably utilizing tropical rainforest resources. They drew attention to the need for funding to be made available to secure the future of the Programme over the long term. They also welcomed the initiatives of the Papua New Guinea Government on climate change and rainforests.

## **Small States**

74. Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to small states, recognising their particular challenges and vulnerabilities. They issued the Gozo Statement on Vulnerable Small States .

## **Natural Disasters and Humanitarian Assistance**

75. Heads of Government noted with concern the devastating and increasing impact of natural and man-made disasters on human lives, infrastructure and economies. They called for action at the national, regional and international levels to strengthen disaster management through increased capacity for disaster preparedness, early warning systems, risk mitigation and post-disaster recovery and reconstruction. In this context, they welcomed the proposal to develop a Commonwealth Programme for Natural Disaster Management, through which member countries could cooperate in capacity building for disaster risk reduction and disaster response management. They requested the Secretary General to develop a mechanism for establishing and operationalising the proposed initiative in consultation with member states.

76. Heads of Government emphasised the critical importance of effective, timely and equitable humanitarian

action in support of disaster affected populations. In this regard, they called on member countries to support efforts to further strengthen the international humanitarian response system, including the proposed extension of the UN Central Emergency Revolving Fund and the strengthening of the UN humanitarian coordination system. They noted that international strategies for disaster reduction should take due cognisance of national policies and establish partnerships upon the request of countries concerned so as to support and complement the national programmes of affected countries.

### **Health and HIV/AIDS**

77. Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases, which all threaten sustainable development. They acknowledged that LDCs, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and other vulnerable states face particular difficulties in responding to HIV/AIDS and other major diseases, and in reaching the goal of universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for HIV/AIDS by 2010. They urged the Secretariat to continue to assist countries with prevention measures and strengthening health systems.

78. Heads of Government welcomed the priority given by Commonwealth Health Ministers to the health of women and children in line with international human rights instruments and the MDGs. They encouraged implementation of the Codes of Practice for the International Recruitment of Health Workers, to limit the active recruitment of health workers from vulnerable Commonwealth countries.

79. Heads of Government called for strong regulatory frameworks to combat the manufacture, trade and distribution of counterfeit drugs and stressed the need for access to appropriate drugs at affordable prices.

80. Heads of Government expressed their commitment to take all necessary steps to prevent, prepare for and respond to pandemic threats, including avian influenza. In this context, they welcomed the outcomes of the Ottawa ministerial meeting and other international initiatives.

### **Education**

81. Heads of Government affirmed the centrality of education to development and democracy, as it provides the foundation for realising broader Commonwealth political, economic and social objectives. They commended the efforts of Commonwealth Governments that have successfully invested in the education of their people, encouraged all governments to allocate the resources necessary to meet the education MDGs and noted with appreciation the attainment by some Commonwealth countries of the MDGs on gender equality in primary and secondary education.

82. Heads of Government noted the call by Commonwealth Education Ministers for implementation of the 2004 Protocol for the Recruitment of Commonwealth teachers and complementary measures, to limit the adverse effects of teacher migration upon the most vulnerable Commonwealth countries.

### **Gender Issues**

83. Heads of Government endorsed the new Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015, agreed by Women's Affairs Ministers at their 7th Meeting in the Fiji Islands in June 2004, consistent with the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. They supported the call of Women's Affairs Ministers for the allocation of adequate resources to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Plan of Action.

84. Heads of Government welcomed the declaration adopted at the 49th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, in particular the unequivocal re-affirmation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and called for their full and urgent accelerated implementation.

85. Heads of Government acknowledged that gender equality and women's rights are essential preconditions for the achievement of development, MDGs, democracy and peace. They expressed their resolve to achieve political, economic and social equality for women as outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action and international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), so as to create the necessary environment for the promotion, protection and full

realisation of the rights of women and girls.

86. Heads of Government requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to assist member countries in achieving the MDGs on gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as promoting gender equality through the other seven MDGs.

### **Youth**

87. Heads of Government recognised the work of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) in maximising the participation of young people in development and democracy and in the shaping of their communities. They noted CYP's efforts to address the issues of poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS and capacity-building. Heads of Government also noted the report of the Commonwealth Youth Forum held from 16-23 November 2005 in Malta and reaffirmed their commitment to the inclusion of youth in Commonwealth efforts that sought achievement of the MDGs.

### **Sport**

88. Heads of Government underlined the important role of sport as an effective instrument for community and youth development in terms of building character, discipline, tolerance and friendship, promoting fair and open sporting competition, protecting the integrity of young athletes and in creating broader opportunities for socio-economic development in the Commonwealth. They acknowledged that the meeting of Commonwealth Sports Ministers in Melbourne on 14 March 2006, before the commencement of the Commonwealth Games, will be an opportunity to strategically develop policies and programs for the development of youth through sport in the Commonwealth in the context of wider approach to achieving development objectives in health, education and gender equality.

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

89. Heads of Government noted the various aspects of Commonwealth Functional Co-operation presented to the Committee of the Whole (COW). They appreciated the valuable work of the Commonwealth Secretariat and its partner organisations in implementing CHOGM and CMAG mandates. 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.

90. Heads of Government noted ongoing efforts to strengthen strategic planning, administration, budgeting and evaluation activities and encouraged further work by the Secretariat in these areas.

### **Civil Society**

91. Heads of Government acknowledged the contribution of civil society, including in supporting democracy, human rights, peace and development. They also acknowledged that governments and civil society share a common objective in addressing development and governance challenges and acknowledged the importance of partnership underpinned by sound institutional, legal and policy frameworks. They urged civil society to be pro-active in the local and national environment with well-defined priorities and governance arrangements.

92. Heads of Government noted the steps being taken by the Commonwealth and its institutions to mainstream civil society in all activities and called for these efforts to be increased. They noted civil society's call for the Commonwealth to use its international standing to advocate for policy coherence at the global level.

### **Commonwealth Foundation**

93. Heads of Government received the Report of the Commonwealth Foundation and commended its work in enhancing civil society's engagement and dialogue with ministerial meetings, Commonwealth Secretariat programmes and activities, and the COW. They recognised the resulting opportunities for governments and civil society to address development and governance challenges and Commonwealth priorities through joint partnerships. They expressed support for the Foundation's work in building such co-operation, as well as its

programmes to strengthen the work of civil society in achieving democracy, sustainable development and cultural understanding in member countries. They also welcomed the Foundation's plans to expand its work through a combination of increased membership, partnerships, and voluntary contributions.

### **Commonwealth of Learning (COL)**

94. In recognition of the challenges facing the higher education sector, Heads of Government requested the COL to assist member countries in further developing expertise in the areas of quality assurance mechanisms for open and distance learning, developing criteria for opening and operating distance learning programmes, accreditation of open and distance learning programmes and undertaking trans-border education. They further encouraged member governments to enhance their contribution, as appropriate, to the budget of COL to enable it to carry out these programmes. Heads of Government also expressed satisfaction with the implementation by COL of Commonwealth Education Ministers' call for the establishment of a Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

### **Commonwealth Business Council (CBC)**

95. Heads of Government commended the CBC's work to enhance trade and investment by providing a bridge between the private sector and Governments, between developed and emerging markets, and between large and small businesses. They 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)**

96. Heads of Government welcomed the report of the Commonwealth Secretary-General on the respective roles of and linkages between the CPTM and CBC. They noted the CPTM's networking and partnership dialogues, and also encouraged CPTM to pursue its mandate to promote technology management and exchange in the Commonwealth.

97. Heads of Government also noted the annual international Smart Partnership Dialogues organised by the CPTM on strategic issues, held alternately in Africa and Malaysia. They further commended all Commonwealth countries which have contributed to the CPTM Endowment Fund, as well as all the private sector companies in various Commonwealth countries which have also made important contributions. They encouraged new contributions from other Commonwealth governments and their respective private sectors.

98. Heads of Government decided that the governance arrangements of the CPTM should be changed as proposed by the Secretary-General. They also decided that CPTM should report to the pre-CHOGM meeting of Foreign Ministers on a biennial basis.

### **Submissions to CHOGM**

99. Heads of Government noted the submissions of the Commonwealth of Learning, Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth Business Council and civil society representatives, which reported to Foreign Ministers. They also received submissions from the Commonwealth Youth Forum and other Commonwealth civil society organisations which met in Malta on the eve of CHOGM.

100. 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 Membership**

101. Heads of Government received a paper from the Secretary-General on the status of applications for the membership of the Commonwealth. They mandated the Secretary-General to convene a Working Committee at the appropriate political level to consider the issues raised in the paper as well as any other issues which may be relevant to the subject, and to report its findings to the next CHOGM.

## **Next Meeting**

102. Heads of Government agreed to meet in Kampala in 2007 at the invitation of the Government of Uganda.

103. They also accepted an offer from the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago to host the 2009 CHOGM.

## **Malta 27 November 2005**