

2.1. CMAG

It is essential for CMAG to lead the way in raising the awareness of the Commonwealth and the International Community on the situation in Nigeria and in taking a determined stance. In its approach, CMAG has to propose to CHOGM clearly establish criteria to measure progress in the leading to the elections and in the follow-up. CMAG is an opportunity for Canada and other concerned countries to let the International Community know that the situation in Nigeria needs to be widely addressed and acted upon. However, the same political realities apply to CMAG and it is feared that the Body will take a more nuanced approach and will present a compromise, less meaningful position. Although CMAG is central to our influence over the Commonwealth, it should not preclude Canada from promoting its own national policy.

However, Canada has to be careful in positioning its policy in order to maintain its good relationship with CMAG members. Participants hoped that Canada would be able to promote its views within CMAG. An alternative scenario needs to be prepared if the position taken by the latter is not in line with what Canada would have hoped. Therefore, before going to CMAG, Canada needs to clearly establish its own set of criteria that will measure progress in Nigeria, such as release of the political prisoners, democratic electoral process, and freedom of the press.

2.2. CHOGM

At its last session, the CHOGM presented a number of criteria to force changes in Nigeria. However, few of those have been met by concrete actions. To maintain its credibility, CHOGM needs to recognize that measures taken in the past have failed and now has to elaborate a new pro-active approach. CHOGM should establish a list of actions to be taken by the Nigerian Government in the leading-up to the elections. The communique issued after CHOGM should be strong, and unambiguous as to the position taken, and also present sanctions for the non-respect of those requirements. Participants suggested that Canada could take a temporary stance until the next CHOGM and monitor the forum willingness to impose sanctions on Nigeria if progress criteria are not met.

3. Sanctions

Participants have raise the possibility of imposing an oil embargo to Nigeria if no progress is seen towards democracy. It was felt that such measure could have a serious impact on the dictatorial military regime in Nigeria. At the last CMAG meeting, this measure was proposed to CHOGM. In response, CHOGM stated that following 1 October 1998, CMAG should assess Nigeria's observance of the Harare principles and in the case these principles are not met, expulsion and other measures such as oil embargo could be introduced (par. 16 of the 27 October 1997 *Communiqué*).