

Freetown within the Commonwealth and the wider international community. They agreed to assist the victims of the situation in Sierra Leone in their own countries, as well as in other countries of the Commonwealth which may request such assistance. They pledged the support of the Commonwealth for the efforts of ECOWAS to resolve the Sierra Leone crisis, including the provision of technical and logistical support to enable ECOWAS to carry out its responsibilities. They also pledged Commonwealth support for the reconstruction of Sierra Leone upon the resolution of the crisis. In the meantime, they looked forward to further clarification of the reported agreement between the ECOWAS Ministerial delegation and the military junta that the latter would demit office and allow the reinstatement of President Tejan Kabbah in six months' time.

19. Heads of Government reviewed the composition, terms of reference and operation of CMAG. They decided that CMAG should continue its work as a standing ministerial mechanism to address serious and persistent violations of the principles of the Harare Commonwealth Declaration. They agreed that CMAG should, in the two-year period after the Edinburgh CHOGM, consist of the following countries: Barbados, Botswana, Britain, Canada, Ghana, Malaysia, New Zealand and Zimbabwe. They further agreed that in future CMAG's remit should extend to member countries deemed to be in serious or persistent violation of the Harare principles, on the basis of established guidelines. They decided that the Commonwealth Secretary-General, acting on his/her own or at the request of a member government, should bring the situation in question to the attention of the CMAG membership, which would then include it or otherwise in its work programme in the light of its guiding principles.

#### **Commonwealth Membership**

20. Heads of Government received and endorsed a report from the Intergovernmental Group on Criteria for Commonwealth Membership. They agreed that in order to become a member of the Commonwealth, an applicant country should, as a rule, have had a constitutional association with an existing Commonwealth member; that it should comply with Commonwealth values, principles and priorities as set out in the Harare Declaration; and that it should accept Commonwealth norms and conventions.

21. Recalling Palestine's historical association with the Commonwealth, Heads of Government welcomed the interest expressed by the Palestinian Authority in Commonwealth membership. They recognised that, under the Oslo Accords, Palestine may attain state sovereignty in 1999. Once this was so, the case for membership would be duly determined in accordance with the agreed criteria for Commonwealth membership. Heads of Government also considered