

they used to picket – and they have invited other Commonwealth policy-makers and supporters inside to discuss the CHOGM. As participants discuss ‘interdependence’, ‘multilateralism’, ‘participatory development’, ‘FDI’, ‘non-tariff barriers in the Seattle Round’ and ‘CTFC cooperation’ we seem to have moved from passionate protest to the sort of academic seminar which could be taking place in any of the Commonwealth’s universities. But it is globalisation, and the challenge of making it work for people, which is giving the Commonwealth new life and relevance today.<sup>2</sup> That is why the Commonwealth’s central theme at CHOGM will be ‘people-centred development’ and making the opportunities of globalisation ‘translate our unique ties of friendship into shared prosperity’.<sup>3</sup>

The Commonwealth already talks about the ‘Commonwealth Factor’ – the fact that, if other things are equal, it is around 10-15% cheaper to do business in another Commonwealth country than outside the Commonwealth. The inheritance of familiar institutional and legal arrangements, and the wider use of English can help to create a ‘common business culture’, but this mainly arises from the shared imperial inheritance rather than Commonwealth activity. Though the Commonwealth professional associations and the Commonwealth Business Council, founded in 1997, do useful work to maintain and promote these advantages, both these similarities and the high levels of intra-Commonwealth trade and investment would still exist if the Commonwealth disappeared tomorrow.<sup>4</sup> In fact, low awareness of the Commonwealth means that many companies which operate mainly or solely in