

believe that the Commonwealth does have the potential to be a force for growth in a global age – it can give its members additional global reach, valuable practical assistance and a real edge in global competition.

DEVELOPING THE CONDITIONS FOR PROSPERITY: AN ACTION PLAN

Provide a voice for development and liberalisation in the world

Commonwealth countries want their international cooperation to make the international system work more fairly. Just as they have campaigned successfully on debt, the timing of the Durban meeting gives the Commonwealth an opportunity to influence the WTO Seattle Round agenda. The strong Commonwealth consensus both between governments and, as the Commonwealth Business Council has shown, across the private sector in the developed and developing world, should enable the Commonwealth to articulate its **shared liberalisation agenda** that many outside it will also support. The Commonwealth will not agree on everything – it is not a trading bloc, and members including Britain, Canada and Malaysia will be bound by regional consensus. But, at the agenda-setting stage, the Commonwealth can have an important impact if it focuses on shared interests, like tightening the rules on non-tariff barriers, and ensures its members promote this shared agenda in the many other international fora to which they belong. And, because the Commonwealth now works more closely with both civil society and private sector groups, it can improve dialogue and be a strong voice for both values and development so