

Fundamental Political Values

9. Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to the fundamental values of the Commonwealth, as set out in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991 and emphasised that democracy, good governance, sustainable development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms were interdependent and mutually reinforcing. They commended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for its work in strengthening the democratic culture and effective parliamentary practices, and its efforts to enhance the participation of women in public life.

10. Heads of Government reaffirmed their support for the valuable role played by the Secretary-General's good offices, at the request of the concerned member governments, to help resolve potential or actual conflicts.

11. Heads of Government received the Report from the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG) covering three countries, viz. The Gambia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, and accepted its recommendations.

12. They welcomed the completion of the electoral phase of the transition to civilian, democratic and constitutional rule in The Gambia and received the assurances of the Gambian authorities that they would further demonstrate their stated commitment to the Harare principles.

13. Heads of Government observed that the continued existence of a military government in Nigeria was a prime source of Commonwealth concern. They expressed concern about the failure to observe fundamental human rights, in particular the continued detention and imprisonment of many Nigerians, including Chief Moshood Abiola and General Olusegun Obasanjo. Accordingly, they decided that Nigeria should remain suspended from the Commonwealth.

14. They noted the positive contribution which Nigeria has been making to efforts through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in support of democratic government within the West African region, and expressed the hope that this reflected a determination to comply with the Harare principles in its domestic policies.

15. Heads of Government also empowered CMAG to invoke, in the period before 1 October 1998, Commonwealth-wide implementation of any or all of the measures recommended by CMAG if, in CMAG's view, these would serve to encourage greater integrity of the process of transition and respect for human rights in Nigeria. These included: