

facilitate the resolution of stubborn problems because of its unique blend of membership, structure and traditions.

36. Students and young people generally should be priority targets in a renewed information programme, through events such as Commonwealth Day and the festival of Arts, Music and Dance at the Commonwealth Games. More effective support should be extended to Commonwealth Studies and to access to information and networking through the Internet. The Secretariat should more vigorously enlist the energies of Commonwealth fellows, local branches of the Royal Commonwealth Society and Commonwealth professional associations to spread the word.

37. The CFTC can play a critical role in moving away from a traditional donor-recipient relationship between richer and poorer countries to a more genuine partnership. With significantly greater resources, it can augment the bargaining power of member states in negotiations on such matters as access to markets, mineral development, debt levels, telecommunications, etc.. The Commonwealth must prioritize the Fund's objectives to focus on those activities where it can justifiably claim pre-eminence, and to cooperate with UN and other agencies in other areas.

38. We are dismayed at the erosion of respect for basic human rights and democracy. If the Commonwealth has nothing to say on Nigeria, for example, it will quickly become irrelevant. The official and unofficial Commonwealth should seize the opportunity of controversies surrounding such issues and provide the media with background material on how the Commonwealth uses consensus to address them.

Environment and sustainable development

39. Living in harmony with nature is a value which is central to many of the cultures of the Commonwealth. The Earth's environment cannot be preserved without sustainable development - the balancing and integration of social, economic and environmental factors to replenish the Earth's finite resources and support all manner of life.

40. Climate change, air pollution, poor water quality of oceans and freshwaters, emissions of hazardous and toxic wastes, and land use, ecosystems and biodiversity are among the key factors degrading the global and local environments and threatening the ecological equilibrium of our planet. Information concerning these and many other threats to the environment is readily available from a vast range of international, national, and local governments and organizations. We will not repeat these here, but we will call on the Commonwealth to respond to particular challenges.

41. First and foremost, the Commonwealth must truly embrace environmental preservation and sustainable development as a priority, and not treat it as a side issue for Commonwealth action. Areas in which it can make useful contributions include population growth, consumption