

*Commonwealth Heads of Government
Coolum, Australia, 2002*

**The Coolum Declaration
The Commonwealth in the 21st Century:
Continuity and Renewal**

At the outset of this new millennium we, the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Nations, meeting at Coolum, Australia, renew our enduring commitment to the values and principles which we share. We stand united in:

- our commitment to democracy, the rule of law, good governance, freedom of expression and the protection of human rights;
- our respect for diversity and human dignity; our celebration of the pluralistic nature of our societies and the tolerance it promotes; and our implacable opposition to all forms of discrimination, whether rooted in gender, race, colour, creed or political belief;
- our determination to work to eliminate poverty, to promote people-centred and sustainable development, and thus progressively to remove the wide disparities in living standards among us and overcome the special challenges facing our small state and less developed country members; and
- our collective striving after international peace and security, the rule of international law and the elimination of people-smuggling and the scourge of terrorism.

We reiterate in the strongest terms our condemnation of all forms and manifestations of terrorism. In the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001 and following our statement of 25 October 2001, we solemnly reaffirm our resolve as a diverse community of nations individually and collectively to take concerted and resolute action to eradicate terrorism. We pledge to work together in fulfilling our international obligations to deny any safe haven for terrorists.

We cannot accept that nearly half the world's population should live in poverty, nor that disease, illiteracy and environmental degradation should continue to blight the lives of many of our people, nor the fact that in too many societies women continue to face discrimination. The benefits of globalisation must be shared more widely and its focus channelled for the elimination of poverty and human deprivation. We stress the importance of equality of access to economic opportunities and the need to apply new international standards such as the OECD Harmful Tax Initiative evenly, equitably and without exception.

The Fancourt Declaration and the UN Millennium Declaration have laid a firm base for us to push back the frontiers of poverty and under-development. In pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals, we call on governments to seize the opportunities presented by the Financing for Development Conference (Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, August/September 2002) to chart a more sustainable and equitable growth path for the world. We also welcome the groundbreaking proposal from Africa to tackle poverty through the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and will use our best efforts to support similar partnerships in other regions of the Commonwealth. More broadly, we call on all nations to work to reduce the growing gap between rich and poor, and to enhance international support to democracies fighting poverty.