

traditions and from their humanist values, of which the Commonwealth countries are legatees. Permeating the Commonwealth are the attitudes of a community created by a common historical experience, from which so many of the habits, institutions and values of Commonwealth countries continue to be built.

The common values held by members transcend racial, religious, cultural and geographic perimeters. They ease relationship and understanding. They bind members spanning all continents and stages of development, and embracing all races, in a mutual acknowledgement of equality. They condition Commonwealth activity. They permit free and frank discussion in Commonwealth assemblies unequalled elsewhere. These common values find expression in the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles adopted by heads of government at their meeting in Singapore in 1971: human dignity and equality, individual participation in framing the national society, a more equitable international society, the freest possible flow of international trade on fair and equitable terms, and a multinational approach to peace and progress.

These values, held in common by members, endow the Commonwealth with the flexibility needed to respond to challenges as they occur. This adaptability was shown in the Commonwealth's adjustment to a sixfold increase in membership in the postwar period, and in establishing the Commonwealth Secretariat in 1965 to implement decisions, and to facilitate communication and co-operation. It is evident in the orientation of Commonwealth activity towards the concerns of newly-independent members, and the increasing stress on functional co-operation responsive to the needs of all members. From it has sprung a distinct Commonwealth mentality, predicated on a willingness to collaborate on a basis of equality. The anglocentric order has disappeared, and with it the hierarchical structure which had characterized the association. This has been replaced by a lateral pattern of relations. It is working well, and to the benefit of all members, including Britain.

Above all the Commonwealth is concerned with people. As the Prime Minister put it at last year's heads of government meeting: "We are concerned with the dignity of individual human beings and the improvement of the lot of ordinary men and women." In other words, answers to the world's problems which do not confer benefits upon ordinary human beings are not answers at all. And, in this, not only governments are involved but some 250 non-governmental Commonwealth organizations and societies. Here, I suggest, lies the Commonwealth's true strength. Foreign policy is, after all, only a framework; the people must make it live.