

establishment of the Steering Committee of Senior Officials to provide broad operational policy and resource allocation guidance and strategic direction to the work of the Secretariat. They expressed particular satisfaction at measures towards ensuring that the Secretariat's work was now programme-driven and that its activities were based on a critical examination of such factors as the Commonwealth's comparative advantage. They also welcomed the extensive restructuring and re-organisation of the Secretariat undertaken with a view to pursuing its objectives more efficiently and cost-effectively. They commended the Secretary-General for his efforts in bringing about these important changes.

55. Heads of Government noted with appreciation the numerous practical measures undertaken by the Secretariat to promote the Commonwealth's fundamental political values. These included activities to promote democratic processes and institutions, such as the provision of constitutional, legal and electoral experts and the organisation of workshops and seminars for sharing of experience. The successful monitoring of nine elections in seven member states since the Harare Meeting reflected positively on the Commonwealth's electoral role. In that respect, Heads of Government noted that, subject to the availability of funds, periodic meetings of experts to assess the Commonwealth's experience in that field and help build on its successes could be useful.

56. Heads of Government also noted with satisfaction the Secretariat's efforts to promote human rights in all its aspects, through the dissemination of information; the provision of opportunities for consultation and the sharing of experience and expertise; human rights education and training; and assistance with the establishment or strengthening of national human rights institutions and mechanisms. They asked the Secretariat to provide for increased allocations to that area as much as available resources would allow.

57. Reiterating the important role played by non-governmental organisations in the area of promotion of human rights, Heads of Government encouraged increased practical co-operation between the Secretariat and NGOs.

58. Heads of Government reaffirmed the support given at Harare for the Report of the Commonwealth Governmental Working Group of Experts on Human Rights and its recommendations.

59. Heads of Government warmly received the attached message from Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs, especially the Commonwealth commitment to work towards a world in which women enjoyed their full rights and were equal partners in shaping the economic, political, social and cultural development of their countries. They expressed support for the actions proposed by the Ministers.

60. Heads of Government reaffirmed the Commonwealth's role in promoting sustainable socio-economic development, which