

the priorities agreed on. In Canada, we have been following a similar procedure in seeking solutions to the major problems which confront us. We all know from experience that even the best attempts at forward planning often fail; unexpected developments may occur which can upset the most carefully considered plans. We know, too, that the allocation of resources to a problem does not guarantee its solution. Nevertheless, the methods we have been following in Canada may have some relevance also for the Commonwealth.

As we consider the shape of our association in the Seventies, we might, I suggest, reflect on whether we want the Commonwealth to become a miniature United Nations, where we spend our time making set-piece speeches rather than talking to each other. The former purpose, it seems to me, is already more than adequately served by existing international forums. As I see it, this unique meeting might more profitably be used for dialogue with one another, with the aim of learning from one another's experience, of broadening our understanding of the forces at work in the world and of co-operating in seeking ways of dealing with problems which are already looming over the horizon. We would all benefit, I am sure, through taking counsel together, seeking to identify the factors causing change in the world, and helping one another in seeking solutions to some of the issues which we all face. As I see it, there would be mutual advantage in concentrating less on immediate problems, which, while important, are for the most part dealt with in other forums, and more on the longer term, focusing at a stage where there is some prospect of influencing the forces at work, and well before the problems assume the proportions of crisis which threaten to overwhelm us. Some of these problems are, of course, economic disparities, racial discrimination, changing patterns of trade, environmental pollution and population, to mention only a few of the more obvious. We cannot deal with any of those problems of such momentous proportions by mere reference to them in a general speech or by short-term arguments relating to an immediate problem, whatever its urgency.

Perhaps we might consider whether at future heads-of-government meetings it would be profitable to spend the customary two or three days in a general discussion of the world political situation and the world economic situation. As an alternative, I think the Secretary-General might try to identify one or two subjects, such as those that I have just mentioned, which might be discussed in some depth rather than trying either to "cover the waterfront" or to argue a particular case.

Indeed, it is with such thoughts in mind that Canada was receptive to President Kaunda's initiative relative to those principles which might guide the Commonwealth in the Seventies. President Kaunda's draft declaration has served a most useful purpose in focusing attention in depth on this important matter and in helping to clarify in our minds what the Commonwealth stands for in the world and the principles which should guide us during the present decade. For my part, I am glad that Dr. Kaunda does not conceive a declaration as a charter or constitution, for experience, over the years, has shown how valuable is the flexibility which flows from proceeding by precedent and convention without a formal charter or rigid procedural rules. We support the idea of a Declaration of Principles.

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