

pursuit of international peace and order in support of the United Nations, the promotion of representative institutions and guarantees for personal freedom under the law, the recognition of racial equality and the need to combat racial discrimination and racial oppression, and dedication to lessening the disparities of wealth in societies.

In 1991, Heads of Government published the Harare Declaration — a strengthening of these principles — with a view to providing the organization with a clear set of objectives, values and strategies for the 1990s and beyond. Special emphasis was given in the Declaration to good governance and the promotion of fundamental political values.

Commonwealth Consultation

The Heads of Government meeting is held every two years, with the Head of Government of the host country presiding. The initial custom was to hold all such meetings in London, but since 1971 they have been held in various member countries. Heads of Government discuss world political, economic and social issues, how they affect their countries and what response can be made within the Commonwealth or by acting together in other international bodies.

Although a communiqué is issued after each meeting, the detailed proceedings are confidential. The tradition is to operate through consensus and to establish as much common ground as possible. From time to time, declarations have been issued expressing a common view of broad objectives and principles. Agreement on specific common policy measures is less frequent and has allowed for a member government to abstain when desired.

Difficult issues are usually left for the Retreat, when leaders spend one or two days together in a casual setting away from the conference location. Here, the Heads of Government confer without officials and with a maximum of informality. In this atmosphere, the more sensitive issues can be raised and common ground better explored.

Between the CHOGM meetings, Commonwealth senior officials meet to review the implementation of decisions of the previous CHOGM and to identify issues that may be raised at the next meeting. Commonwealth finance ministers meet every year. Ministers responsible for health, education, employment, law and women's affairs also meet regularly, and other ministers may meet on an occasional basis.

Role of the Commonwealth Secretariat

With the establishment of the Commonwealth Secretariat in 1965, the Commonwealth was able to consolidate the many strands of long-standing consultation and co-operation — in education, law, science, economic statistics