

Recognizing that the increasing size of the Commonwealth presented a challenge to the desired informality of discussions, Commonwealth Heads of Government recommended at their 1971 Singapore meeting that Senior Officials examine ways of restoring greater informality to future meetings. These officials, most of whom were Cabinet Secretaries or the equivalent, met in Ottawa in October 1972 and made recommendations adopted at the 1973 Meeting in Ottawa which resulted in Heads of Government restoring the informality which remains a feature of general Commonwealth relations. At subsequent meetings in 1974, 1976 and 1978, senior officials again reviewed procedures and agreed that the style and format of the 1973 Heads of Government Meeting in Ottawa be continued.

In New Delhi, the formal opening session of November 23 will be open to the news media, but government leaders will meet in closed executive or restricted sessions for the balance of the conference. An outline of their discussions will be given in the Final Communique and there will be daily news media briefings by the Commonwealth Secretary-General. Facilities for press conferences and interviews by national delegations will be made available.

The agenda for the New Delhi meeting has not yet been approved in final form - this will be one of the first items of business at the opening session. However, it will focus on important world political and economic developments. As usual, the agenda will also provide for discussion and follow up on specific programs of Commonwealth economic and functional cooperation.