

THE COMMONWEALTH OF TOMORROW

The world has changed dramatically since 1971. At their Harare meeting, the Heads of Government recognized that the Commonwealth had to adapt to those new realities and agree on more specific objectives and strategies.

In the Harare Declaration, the Heads of Government declared that “ having reaffirmed the principles to which the Commonwealth is committed, and reviewed the problems and challenges which the world, and the Commonwealth as part of it, face, we pledge the Commonwealth and our countries to work with renewed vigour ... to overcome the challenges of the 1990s and beyond. ”

The Heads of Government agreed that priority should be given to the following areas:

- «the protection and promotion of the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth» such as the democratic process, fundamental human rights, women's equality, access to education and the establishment of a free, democratic, non-racial and prosperous South Africa;
- the promotion of sustainable development and the protection of the environment;
- action to combat drug trafficking and abuse, and the spread of diseases such as AIDS;
- alleviation of poverty through a stable international economy, the freest possible flow of

international trade, adequate transfers of financial resources, technical expertise and modern technologies from the rich to the poor member countries of the Commonwealth; and

- increased support for the United Nations and other international institutions in their search for peace, disarmament and effective arms control.

With regard to the promotion of democracy, the Heads of Government stressed that the Commonwealth should strive to strengthen democratic institutions in its member countries, most notably by mounting electoral-observer missions when requested. Such was the case with Bangladesh, Malaysia and Zambia.

Heads of Government also agreed that the International Bill of Human Rights is the cornerstone of international human rights and member countries are to ensure the trend towards greater respect for these rights continues. The Commonwealth recognizes that non-governmental organizations have an important role to play in monitoring human rights abuses.

In concluding the Harare meeting, the Heads of Government declared that “ in reaffirming the principles of the Commonwealth and in committing ourselves to new policies and action, we express our determination to renew and enhance the value of the Commonwealth as an institution which can and should strengthen and enrich the lives not only of its own members and their peoples but also of the wider community of peoples of which they are a part. ”