

year's Meeting of Heads of Government, Commonwealth leaders set up a group of experts, a Commonwealth think-tank, to make proposals for international action to reduce economic disparities. The work of this group, which has issued two reports so far, has been a valuable input into the world dialogue; and it is work that is continuing.

In this matter, a great responsibility devolves on Commonwealth developed countries. If the Commonwealth is to help to move the world forward on the poverty front, Commonwealth developed countries have to be in the vanguard of the rich, demonstrating their own commitment to change and urging on the industrial world toward enlightened and progressive positions. If they are not: if, instead, they are seen to be within the rear guard of reaction, they not only deprive the world of the Commonwealth's contribution to global progress but diminish the quality of the Commonwealth connection itself.

This was why at UNCTAD IV in Nairobi, Canada's final position was so important to continuing Commonwealth efforts. It can be quite important also to the ongoing international dialogue whether the promise implied in that final position, for it was only a promise, is fulfilled in the ongoing negotiations in the commodities field. Indeed, it can be a matter of considerable significance that Commonwealth developed countries generally are seen to be disengaged from those 'hard-line' positions rooted in the ideology of market forces that now threaten to polarise the international debate. In the months ahead, Commonwealth and global consultations will be much concerned with these questions of what the world will do, as distinct from what the world professes, about eradicating the inequalities that so pollute our planet and diminish our humanity.

I venture to suggest that Commonwealth and global interests, the interests of rich countries no less poor ones, require the urgent conquest of international poverty; and therefore, responses that will at least represent the commencement of the assault upon it.

In what might have been his valediction to the developed world, the late Lester Pearson, who, as a statesman belonged as much to the world as to Canada - admonished us in 1968 in words that reflect fundamental truths and remain relevant today:

"Peace is progress, peace is growth and development. Peace is welfare and dignity for all people. The nations - developed and developing - must work together; each side has its responsibility to this end. They must do so not merely by transferring resources from those who have to those who have not, in conditions which make progress possible. There must be international, economic, and financial policies which recognize the interdependence of all nations and will help the poorer ones to grow. If after the political, economic, and financial experiences of recent years we still think that states, however proud and independent they may feel, can go it alone in these matters, ignoring each other's interests and above all the interests of the impoverished and backward states, then we are beyond redemption. Before long, in