

- seek to reverse the decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows, recognising the role of ODA as an essential instrument of partnership for development and poverty reduction in developing countries, particularly the Least Developed Countries and small states, and for helping to create the conditions for increased trade and investment, including skills and infrastructure development;
- work towards a comprehensive solution of the debt problem, and pursue vigorously the rapid implementation of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, in line with the Mauritius Mandate, which has the aim of enabling HIPC countries to have embarked by the year 2000 on securing a sustainable exit from their debt burden; as well as consider extending such relief to other developing countries, including small states, in similar circumstances; and
- promote the role of micro-credit schemes in reducing poverty through increased assistance from the international community.

8. We welcome the Report of the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Small States and its recommendations for action based on the Commonwealth Report, *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability*. In particular, we encourage international financial institutions to review their graduation policies, consider broader criteria covering the special vulnerabilities of their smaller members, and establish a task force to address the concerns of small states. We endorse the recommendation to set up a small ministerial group to discuss small states' concerns with major multilateral agencies and to report to governments on the outcome as soon as possible.

9. We underscore the importance of good governance including increased openness in economic decision-making and the elimination of corruption through greater transparency, accountability and the application of the rule of law in economic, financial and other spheres of activity. We endorse the request by our Finance Ministers to the Commonwealth Secretary-General to establish an expert group to work on these issues.

Environment

10. We have a shared interest in protecting our environment, a global resource in which all countries have a stake. The costs of protecting it should be borne in accordance with shared and differentiated responsibilities. It is therefore incumbent on the global community to strengthen co-operation to achieve sustainable development, so that we can protect our planet for future generations. In particular, we look to a successful outcome at the Kyoto Conference