

Promoting Sustainable Development

We reaffirmed our view that the Commonwealth should continue to be a source of help in promoting development and literacy and in eradicating poverty, particularly as these bear on women and children. With a view to enhancing its capacity in this area, we agreed on the following steps:

- to strengthen the Secretariat's capacity for undertaking developmental work through support for its various Funds and especially by restoring the resources of the CFTC to their 1991/92 level in real terms; and to provide adequate resources to the Commonwealth of Learning and to the Commonwealth Foundation;
- to support a greater flow of investment to developing member countries through such schemes as the Commonwealth Private Investment initiative;
- to work for continued progress in assisting countries with unsustainable debt burdens and to promote enhanced multilateral concessional financial flows to developing countries; in particular, to support new and innovative mechanisms for relief on multilateral debt, such as the one proposed by the British Chancellor of the Exchequer at the 1994 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in Malta, and reiterated subsequently;
- to support the Secretariat in facilitating the adoption by more Commonwealth countries of successful self-help schemes, with nongovernmental agencies and others acting as catalytic agents, for mobilising the energies of people in alleviating poverty;
- to support the efforts of small island developing states to mitigate the effects on their development of environmental change, natural disasters and the changing international trading system; and
- to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, which threatens large parts of the younger population of many countries, recognising that the effective exploitation of economic opportunities requires a healthy and educated population; and to provide further resources to renew the core funding of the Southern African Network of AIDS Organisations (SANASO), along with increased funding for UNICEF initiatives in Southern Africa.

Facilitating Consensus Building

We were convinced that the Commonwealth, with its global reach and unique experience of consensus building, was in a position to assist the wider international community in building bridges across traditional international devices of opinion on particular issues. We therefore agreed that there was scope for the association to play a greater role in the search for consensus on global issues, through:

- use of their governments' membership of various regional organisations and attendance at other international gatherings to advance consensual positions agreed within the Commonwealth;
- use, where appropriate, of special missions to advance Commonwealth consensual positions and promote wider consensus on issues of major international concern; and
- use of formal and informal Commonwealth consultations in the wings of meetings of international institutions with a view to achieving consensus on major concerns.

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