

proposed "roadmap for the restoration of democracy." Commonwealth foreign ministers also agreed that the Secretary-General should monitor the situation and provide Commonwealth observers and technical aid at provincial and national elections.

Sierra Leone: The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, which has been working to provide political support to Sierra Leone's fragile democracy, removed Sierra Leone from the agenda in October 2001 in recognition of the improved situation, but requested the Secretary-General to continue to monitor events in that country.

Solomon Islands: In June 2000, a Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group delegation held talks with officials of the Solomon Islands and principal combatants in an effort to avoid having the democratically elected government overthrown. In October 2000, a peace agreement was signed under the auspices of the Australian government. Although elections held on Dec. 5, 2001, were judged free and fair by a Commonwealth observer group, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group has decided to retain the Solomon Islands on their agenda to further help it promote good governance, peace and stability, and economic development.

The Gambia: Commonwealth concerns over The Gambia's Decree 89, which restricted political activity by certain political parties and specific individuals, prompted the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group in March 2001 to ask the Secretary-General to help that country create an environment in which all political parties and individuals can freely take part in the political process. The Gambia was removed from the group's agenda in December 2001 following the repeal of Decree 89.

Zimbabwe: Since May 2000, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group has expressed concern about reports of politically motivated violence and intimidation of the judiciary and the media in Zimbabwe. In March 2001, ministers decided to send a mission to consult with the government, convey its concerns, and offer assistance, but Zimbabwe refused to receive the mission.

At a meeting held in Nigeria on Sept. 6, 2001, the Committee of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers on Zimbabwe won commitments from the government of Zimbabwe to stop further occupation of farmland, to restore the rule of law to land reform, to protect constitutionally guaranteed freedom of speech, and to act firmly against violence and intimidation. However, during a followup meeting in Zimbabwe, in October 2001, the group concluded that Zimbabwe had not lived up to its commitments.