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REINVENTING THE COMMONWEALTH

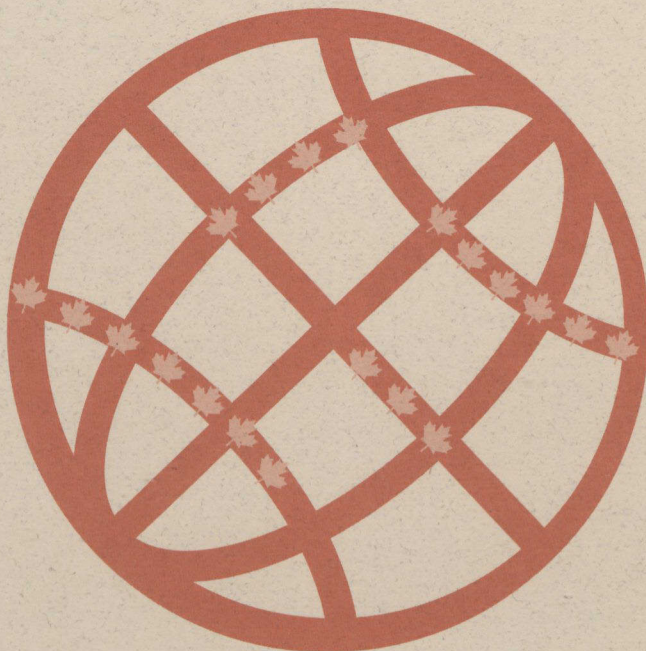
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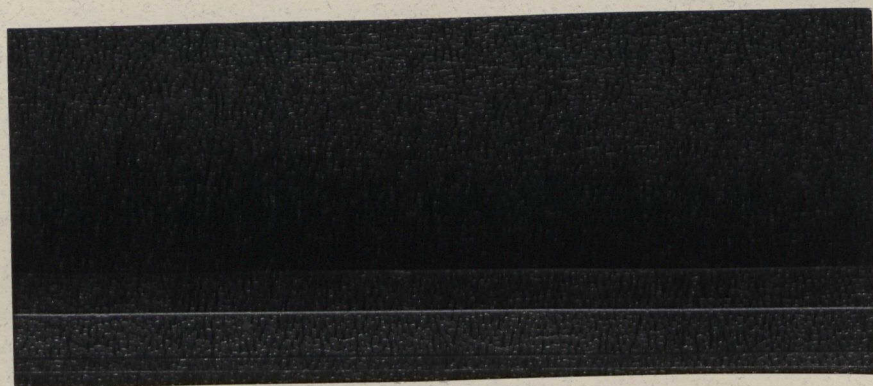
by

Kate Ford and Sunder Katwala

The Foreign Policy Centre

London, United Kingdom, 1999





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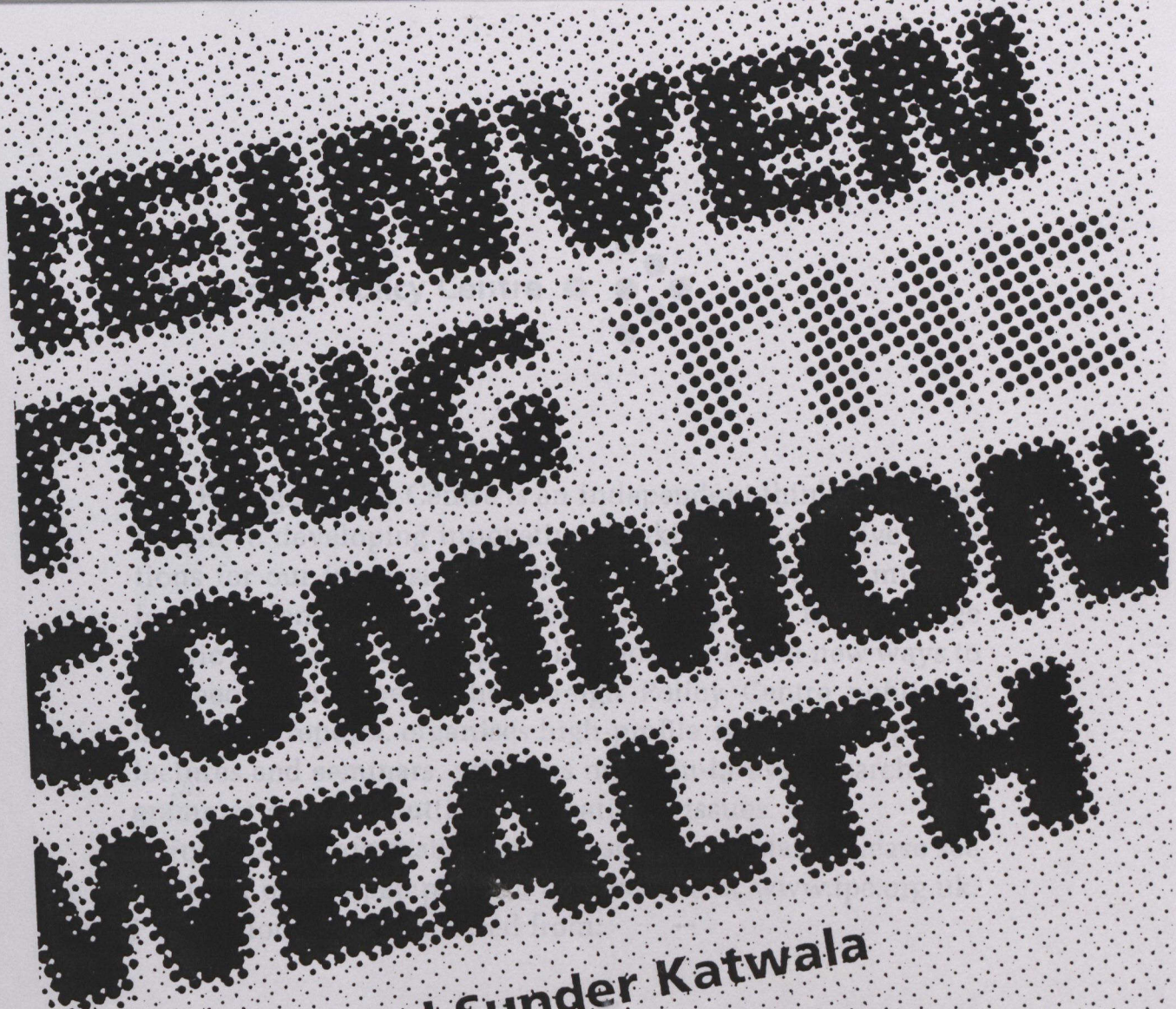
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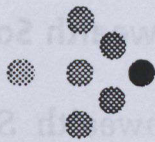
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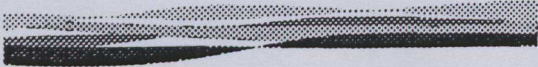
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The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) promotes understanding of peoples, cultures and governments in the Commonwealth. Founded in 1868, the RCS provides a platform for debate and meetings addressed by leading figures on a wide range of contemporary issues. The RCS is supported by a world-wide membership, with self-governing branches and representatives in 35 countries. The international headquarters, the Commonwealth Club, aims to become the premier multicultural centre in London. As well as educational projects on the Commonwealth, the RCS mounts art exhibitions and holds social and cultural events featuring individuals and groups from around the world.

The RCS welcomes debate on the Commonwealth and is pleased to be involved with this publication, but is not responsible for its content, views or recommendations which are the sole responsibility of the authors.

About the Authors

Kate Ford and Sunder Katwala are researchers at The Foreign Policy Centre. Their interim project report, *Making the Commonwealth Matter* was published in April 1999 to mark the modern Commonwealth's 50th anniversary and stimulated widespread political and media debate throughout the Commonwealth.

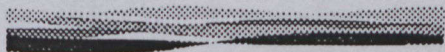
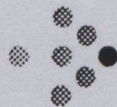
Reinventing the Commonwealth

Kate Ford and Sunder Katwala

The Foreign Policy Centre

in association with

The Royal Commonwealth Society



First published in 1999 by
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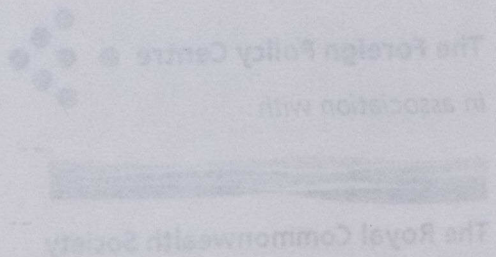
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ISBN 0-9535598-4-X

Printed in Great Britain by
Direct Image

Design by
Interbrand Newell and Sorrell

Typesetting by
Emphasis London



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Acknowledgements

It is perhaps in the nature of the Commonwealth that the debts which are incurred in thinking and writing about it are so numerous, so diverse and so deep. We are immensely grateful to all of those who have helped us in our research – some, but not all, are listed below. Particularly heartfelt thanks must be expressed to the Royal Commonwealth Society, for co-sponsoring this final output, and for organising the launch of the report at the Durban CHOGM, to the Institute of Commonwealth Studies for also making it possible for the authors to attend the Durban meeting, and to Cluff Mining for their support of research towards this project.

We would particularly like to thank Colin Ball, Deputy Director, Commonwealth Foundation; Richard Bourne, Institute of Commonwealth Studies and Director-Designate, Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit; Pat Caplan, Director, Institute of Commonwealth Studies; Graeme Carter, Director of Public Affairs, Commonwealth Institute; David French, Director General, Commonwealth Institute; Ann Grant, Director (Africa and Commonwealth), Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Andrew Hood, Special Adviser to the Foreign Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Tony Humphries, Commonwealth Coordination Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Derek Ingram, Consultant Editor, Gemini News Service; Peter Luff, Director, Royal Commonwealth Society; Dr Peter Lyon, Editor, The Round Table and Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs; Nana Serwa Mancell, Public Affairs Manager, Royal Commonwealth Society; Stuart Mole OBE, Director and Head of the Secretary-General's Private Office, Commonwealth Secretariat; Sanjay Nazerali, The Marketing Depot Ltd and former Marketing Director of MTV Europe; and Mark Leonard, Director of The Foreign Policy Centre, who have proved most inspirational and supportive throughout. Many thanks also to David Carroll for yet more design genius; to Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, Rachel Briggs, Stephen Edwards, Vidhya

Alakeson, Anna Boase and Caroline Loat at The Foreign Policy Centre for their ideas and assistance, and to James Sparling of Emphasis Design for his efficiency and good humour in setting the text so quickly.

This report is the culmination of a six month research project. It follows up the project's interim report and discussion document *Making the Commonwealth Matter*. We were delighted that our first report created such a lively debate about the Commonwealth's priorities and about its place in the 21st century. Those who have been involved in the Commonwealth for many years were so keen to engage with and debate the ideas in the positive and constructive manner in which they were intended that we continued to learn about the Commonwealth and to believe that there is clearly something very special about an idea which inspires so many good people for so long. The report itself, and the reaction to it, was also able to demonstrate how little so most people know about the Commonwealth and what it is doing today. And so we were particularly pleased that we were able to help kick-start a process of debate about the Commonwealth among those who had heard little about it in recent years.

Our research was able to benefit from a wide range of inputs, through discussions, interviews, correspondence and seminars. We would particularly like to thank the Institute for Commonwealth Studies, the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Commonwealth Secretariat for organising roundtables in order to discuss and debate the findings of our interim report with representatives and officials from many Commonwealth governments, academic institutions, associations, non-governmental organisations, and from the Commonwealth Secretariat itself. Many people involved in Commonwealth Professional Associations provided very useful information and ideas, in seminars, conversation and correspondence. Although it is outside the scope of a short report like this one to report on their particular activities in depth, we believe that they will have an increasingly vital role if the Commonwealth is to deepen and better coordinate its cooperation with members. During these discussions, we found a widespread belief that the Commonwealth

could and must change, and that the opportunity to do so has never been better than it is today. It is in this spirit that we publish this report and recommendations, and in which we thank those very many people who have contributed in a great variety of ways and without whom this publication would never have been possible:

Eduardo Mutorropa Adriano, Counsellor, Mozambique High Commission; James Aggrey-Orleans, High Commissioner of Ghana; Simon Atkinson, Associate Director, MORI; Amitav Banerji, Special Adviser, Political Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat; J Bartels-Kodwo, Minister-Counsellor, Ghana High Commission; Sarah Booker, Commonwealth Co-ordination Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Steve Brace, Director of Education; Commonwealth Institute; Dr Karen Brewer, Secretary General, Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association; Colin Bright, Director, Commonwealth Co-ordination Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Kit Burdess, Anderson Consulting; Lord Cairnes, Chairman, Commonwealth Development Corporation; Christopher Child, Chief Programme Officer, Political Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat; Richard Clarke, Head of Policy Planning Staff, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Algie Cluff, Chief Executive, Cluff Mining; Ambassador Patrick Dele Cole, Presidential Adviser, Nigeria; Linda Colley, London School of Economics; Vic Craggs, Commonwealth Youth Exchange Programme; Maja Daruwala, Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative; Sumi Dhanarajan, Oxfam; Meenakshi Dhar, Assistant Director, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat; Arthur R Donahoe, Secretary-General, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association; Terry Dorma, NGO Desk, Commonwealth Secretariat; Dr Geoffrey Edwards, University of Cambridge; Rt Hon Gareth Evans MP, Former Foreign Minister of Australia; Michael Edwards, Ford Foundation and former Senior Civil Society Specialist, The World Bank; Mr Michael Fathers, Former Director, Information and Public Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat; Michael Gillibrand, Management and Training Services Division, Commonwealth Secretariat; Gareth Griffiths, Director, British Empire and Commonwealth Museum;

Sophie Grig, Survival International; Jaygdish Gundara, Institute of Education; Sidney van Heerden, Counsellor, South African High Commission; David Held, Open University; Lord Howell of Guildford; Dato Mohamad Amir Bib Jaafar, High Commissioner of Malaysia; George Johannes, Counsellor, South Africa High Commission; Professor Geoffrey Jones, Department of Economics, University of Reading; Dr Mohan Kaul, Director-General, Commonwealth Business Council; Jo King, Institute of Commonwealth Studies; Muriel Kirton, Director, Commonwealth Relations, British Council; Professor George Kirya, High Commissioner of Uganda; Steve Lee, Director, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development; Jo Leadbeater, Britain in Europe; Michael Little, Institute of Commonwealth Studies; Lalit Mansingh, High Commissioner for India; Jonathan Mazower, Survival International; Gregor MacKinnon, Programme Manager, Commonwealth Business Council; Sir Michael McWilliam KCMG, Chair, The Royal Commonwealth Society; Dr Alan Montgomery, Commonwealth Business Council; Sally Morphett, Research Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Muhammad Muda, Counsellor, Malaysian High Commission; Abdel-Fatau Musah; Rosemary Nuamah, International Policy Officer, The Labour Party; Caroline Phillips, Commonwealth Association of Corporate Governance; Helen Potts, Commonwealth Lawyers' Association; Susan Prichard, World Affairs Analyst, BBC Research; Patrick Rata, Commonwealth Coordination Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Mark Robinson, Executive Director, Commonwealth Press Union; Sharon Robinson, Commonwealth Foundation; Gabrielle Rush, Second Secretary, New Zealand High Commission; Ricky Sankar, Head of Department, Finance and Management Information Department, Commonwealth Secretariat; Laura Sandys, LSA; Hassan Shahriar, Deputy President, Commonwealth Journalists' Association; Helena Sharp, Project Manager, Commonwealth Relations Unit, British Council; Dr Peter Slinn, Commonwealth Legal Education Association and School of Oriental and Asian Studies, University of London; Peter Slowe, Executive Development Abroad; Dr Mihaela Smith, Chief Executive, Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management; Ambassador Farooq Sobhan, Special

Envoy of Bangladeshi Prime Minister; Niobe Thompson, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative; Annie Watson, Director, Commonwealth Trade Union Council; Paula Watt, First Secretary, Australian High Commission; Helena J Whall, Institute of Commonwealth Studies; Kaye Whiteman, Director, Information and Public Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat; Nicky Winstanley-Torode, Trustee Office, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative; Carl Wright, Director, Commonwealth Local Government Forum.

Finally, we would like to dedicate this pamphlet to Olly and to Stacy and to thank them for their loving support.

1. Introduction: Reinventing the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is seeking to reinvent itself.

It is determined to demonstrate that it is modern, relevant and looking firmly to the future as it meets for the final time this century. This report looks at how the Commonwealth can turn that promise into a reality. It sets out the reform agenda which can make the Commonwealth an internationally-recognised standard for good governance and growth. It shows how the Commonwealth can help its members secure investment and be heard in the international system – by being clear about its values and helping its members to realise them.

The stage-management for Durban could not be better. The Commonwealth leaves the twentieth century in a flurry of rich symbolism. Its Heads of Government Meeting – or ‘CHOGM’ – takes place in what we still call the new South Africa, so powerful were those images of democratic change five years ago. President Thabo Mbeki will lead the Commonwealth's attempts to grapple with globalisation and to discover the formula for people-centred development. Nigeria's return to the

fold further symbolises hopes of an African renaissance, and the Commonwealth's commitment to democratic values, while the absence of Pakistan reminds leaders of the fragility of democracy and how much remains to be done. The Durban jamboree also marks the modern Commonwealth's 50th anniversary. With 53 governments from countries ranging in size from India to Nauru, and surrounded by a People's Centre, NGO Forum and a multinational media circus, CHOGM '99 could not be more different from the 8-strong Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meetings discussing family matters over the fire in Whitehall. The Commonwealth wants to project how much it has changed, and will also elect a successor as Secretary-General to Chief Emeka Anyaoku to take the helm as the Commonwealth seeks to deliver on its goals of good governance, growth and global consensus in the new millennium. It wants to be a very modern Commonwealth.

Yet many still regard this as an oxymoron. The Commonwealth has had to spend fifty years denying that it is simply a post-imperial alumni club, deeply frustrated at always being asked "Is the Commonwealth still relevant?". It now has the opportunity to define a meaningful role for itself. But to do this, the Commonwealth will have to think, organise itself and act differently.

To make a difference, the Commonwealth should focus on the many things it agrees on – it shouldn't value its diversity for diversity's sake. In previous decades, it allowed north and south to talk in what was (sometimes) a less confrontational atmosphere than

elsewhere. But exchanging opposing views about global economics or neocolonialism or calling for east-west dialogue and world peace had little practical value. The Commonwealth was more a debating society than an organisation which sought to deliver. The Commonwealth is not the United Nations – and there is no point in seeking to emulate it by being a smaller, weaker and equally-divided organisation. As it does not need to embrace every single state in the world, the Commonwealth can avoid the lowest common denominator politics of the UN where the General Assembly becomes a talking-shop, organisational reform is blocked and the Security Council can only act when the USA, China, Russia, France and Britain all agree.

In recent decades, the Commonwealth has measured its success by the number of members it had, not the quality of the work it did for them. It sought to prove that it was not fading away by growing as big as possible. After the initial waves of decolonisation, it has continued to expand and Secretary-Generals have pointed to the queue at the door as a sign of vitality. But the Commonwealth needs to rethink its approach to membership. It needs to set higher standards for new members – and make clear to applicants like Yemen how they would need to improve their poor human rights records.¹ By ensuring that members sign up to high standards – and take concrete action to deliver them – the Commonwealth can truly add value for all of its members, and vouch for their commitment to democracy, good governance and growth to international organisations and the investment community. To be taken seriously, so that countries get real benefits from mem-

bership, the Commonwealth might have to suspend members that abuse these norms – as it began to do by suspending Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Pakistan in the 1990s and by monitoring The Gambia's progress closely.

The Commonwealth's biggest strength today comes from the fact that it is a highly diverse group of countries and peoples from every continent and at every stage of development which share common values – and which do agree on the really big questions.

A Commonwealth of values

The Commonwealth in the 1990s found that it was able to evolve into an organisation which could state its values clearly and begin to act on them. The values that Commonwealth countries share are not unique to them – in fact they form the basis of an emerging global consensus – but the Commonwealth does not contain the countries which have stopped other international organisations from pursuing this agenda more vigorously.

The Commonwealth has affirmed the importance of democracy and has gone further than other international bodies in suspending members when they break with democracy. And it is committed to **developing civil society**, as an essential tool to safeguard democracy and to deliver the 'people-centred development' which is the theme of CHOGM. The Commonwealth makes much of its people-to-people links. It does not contain governments like those of China and Burma, which oppose the idea of fundamental human rights.

Commonwealth countries all believe in trying to seize the opportunities of globalisation for themselves and their peoples – it does not contain any of those few

states like Iraq, Cuba, Serbia and North Korea which seek to stand outside the world economy, nor those developed countries like France, Japan and the United States which are schizophrenic, and often have strong protectionist instincts when it suits them.

The Commonwealth believes in countries having ownership over their own development. It does not believe that successful development can be managed from outside. It wants the world's multilateral institutions and donor communities to work in genuine partnership to empower legitimate governments which accept their rights and responsibilities: their democratic mandate to govern their societies, and the need to do so in partnership with and in the interests of their own people.

The Commonwealth believes in the idea of an international community. Commonwealth countries have an enlightened view of self-interest and believe in international cooperation as a way to further it. The Commonwealth does not contain countries like the USA, China and Russia which seek to protect their interests by projecting power rather than pooling it multilaterally, nor those 'pariah states' whose regimes believe that self-destructive defiance is the best way to hang on to power.

This is the new Commonwealth consensus – it is what the organisation stands for today. Of course, Commonwealth members do not agree on everything – nor should they. And many countries need to make progress to make their commitments a reality. But their shared values give Commonwealth members a very solid foundation on which to build – the question is how to make it pay off for its members in practice.

Making the Commonwealth consensus matter

But the Commonwealth needs to change if it is to deliver on the new Commonwealth consensus.

- **The Commonwealth must become a more delivery-oriented organisation.** It must leave the excessive caution of the past behind, and develop an infrastructure capable of achieving its objectives.
- **Commonwealth countries need to make their commitments a reality.** The Commonwealth talks about a 'Commonwealth Factor' in trade and investment, but needs to help Commonwealth countries overcome the realities of corruption and a lack of capacity which hold them back.
- **The Commonwealth needs to project itself and its values – as a quality standard of good governance and safe investment.** Otherwise, successful reformers will continue to be held back by outdated stereotypes and fail to win the investment and growth they deserve.

Capitalising on the new Commonwealth consensus could make Commonwealth countries richer, their societies more equal and their democracies stronger. It can give them a greater say both in the international system and over the future of their own societies. Chapters 2-6 outline the ways that the Commonwealth needs to move forward in order to achieve this. But the key factor will be whether its members embrace this agenda and make it work.

If they do, membership of the Commonwealth will be a much more valuable asset than it has been in the past. The Commonwealth will not just take useful initiatives

on capacity-building and good governance, it will engage more deeply to ensure that all members have the ability to reach their goals and agree time-scales and action plans to tackle problems. All Commonwealth members need to play their part in making the Commonwealth a seal of quality, a **'Commonwealth Kitemark'** for countries that are open and democratic, where the rule of law and a strong civil society provide the conditions for safe investment, whose members have got themselves in shape for the global age.

But the reality will need to match this image. Countries which are struggling may need extra help, but those which do not try to uphold common values must not be allowed to hold others back. The Commonwealth may need to create a warning list for countries who consistently and deliberately flout agreed objectives on democracy, good governance and civil society. Nobody can force them to do it – the Commonwealth's value is that it is a voluntary grouping of countries which have decided that they will benefit by working together. But the Commonwealth can ask its members to take their shared commitments seriously.

The conclusion of this report proposes a timetable for reform. We believe that it is an achievable one – which could greatly enhance the Commonwealth's value and status. All of the Commonwealth's peoples want similar things. All of its governments are committed to shared values. Those who are not living up to them will need to change if they want to prosper – that will be the case whether they want to use the Commonwealth to support reform or not. We do not think that any member would want to leave the Commonwealth – when it could

enable countries to have more control over their own plans. If any regime did choose isolation over reform, then the Commonwealth must be ready to work with its successors to welcome that country back. But few countries will want to turn down genuine assistance – and none can really afford to walk out of a good governance club. All countries need a reputation for real reform in order to grow.

Reinventing the Commonwealth will enable its members to make their common values pay off. They can win real rewards – not just of enhanced growth, prosperity and social development, but of genuine ownership of their own solutions as they seek to prosper in a globalised world.

2. A prosperous Commonwealth: Making globalisation deliver for people

“Today’s globalised world poses both opportunities and challenges. Expanding trade and investment flows, driven by new technologies and the spread of market forces, have emerged as engines of growth. At the same time, not all countries have benefited equally from the globalisation, of the world economy, and a significant number are threatened with marginalisation. Globalisation therefore needs to be carefully managed to meet the risks inherent in the process”

*Promoting Shared Prosperity:
Edinburgh Commonwealth Economic Declaration, 1997.*

The pavement outside the South African High Commission in Trafalgar Square has been a great focal point for Commonwealth values in Britain. Many South Africans in exile – networked with democrats and human rights activists at home, across the Commonwealth and beyond – organised the anti-apartheid demonstrations and vigils which did so much to dramatise and give life to the human values which the Commonwealth stands for. Now, everything seems to have changed. The democrats run the ministries in Pretoria as well as the building

they used to picket – and they have invited other Commonwealth policy-makers and supporters inside to discuss the CHOGM. As participants discuss ‘interdependence’, ‘multilateralism’, ‘participatory development’, ‘FDI’, ‘non-tariff barriers in the Seattle Round’ and ‘CTFC cooperation’ we seem to have moved from passionate protest to the sort of academic seminar which could be taking place in any of the Commonwealth’s universities. But it is globalisation, and the challenge of making it work for people, which is giving the Commonwealth new life and relevance today.² That is why the Commonwealth’s central theme at CHOGM will be ‘people-centred development’ and making the opportunities of globalisation ‘translate our unique ties of friendship into shared prosperity’.³

The Commonwealth already talks about the ‘Commonwealth Factor’ – the fact that, if other things are equal, it is around 10-15% cheaper to do business in another Commonwealth country than outside the Commonwealth. The inheritance of familiar institutional and legal arrangements, and the wider use of English can help to create a ‘common business culture’, but this mainly arises from the shared imperial inheritance rather than Commonwealth activity. Though the Commonwealth professional associations and the Commonwealth Business Council, founded in 1997, do useful work to maintain and promote these advantages, both these similarities and the high levels of intra-Commonwealth trade and investment would still exist if the Commonwealth disappeared tomorrow.⁴ In fact, low awareness of the Commonwealth means that many companies which operate mainly or solely in

Commonwealth countries rarely or never think in those terms.

But a new 'Commonwealth Factor' could really add value – and help members win more investment from outside the Commonwealth as well as from within it. At present, the theoretical advantages are often squandered when they are heavily outweighed by significant obstacles to doing business successfully. If it can help its members tackle these obstacles to growth, the Commonwealth could win a premium for all of them by establishing itself as a kitemark for good governance and sound investment conditions. And the opportunity is there because, whatever the difficulties that they face, Commonwealth countries all agree on the way forward.

The new Commonwealth consensus

There is a stronger consensus about economics within the Commonwealth than outside it. During the 1990s, fear of globalisation and its impact has shifted “from the sceptical south to the fearful north”.⁵ Developing countries are all seeking to increase exports and attract international investment in an effort to emulate the strong growth in recent years of countries like Belize, Malaysia, Mauritius and Singapore.⁶ The Commonwealth difference is that its developed economies like New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Britain share this approach rather than the ambivalence of many policy-makers in countries like Japan, France and the US who have to combine internationalist and deeply-rooted protectionist instincts.⁷ For example, Paul Hirst and Graeme Thompson show how, across a wide range of indicators, the UK is a “far more internationalised country than its G7 counterparts”.⁸ But

this does not make it unusual in the Commonwealth. The economies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand are also among the most open in the developed world.

The Commonwealth consensus has also enabled it to leave behind debates about whether democracy or development should take priority and about whether or not there is a role for the state. Even the Pakistan coup, a sad throwback to an earlier era, can only be presented by its supporters as 'a different path to democracy'.⁹ This is not just because of international pressure, but because Commonwealth countries have learnt from past economic and political failures – that it is only by combining democracy and markets that they can achieve sustainable growth which benefits their people. And a development debate which oscillated between over-intrusive stagnant, state-dominated economies and the minimalist state is now over. We now agree on the need for the genuinely developmental state – which actively facilitates and creates the conditions for growth and ensures it delivers social development.¹⁰

But, while Commonwealth countries have found a new consensus, there are many barriers to growth which they need to tackle first.

Many Commonwealth countries have not developed the conditions for prosperity:

Because corruption and poor accountability continue to cripple growth and social development

Investors expected Nigeria to have similar or better growth prospects than South Korea in 1965. But in the last 25 years, \$225 billion of oil revenues were wasted to no developmental effect – and petrol only returned to Nigerian pumps in September 1999. A disastrous crisis of governance has seen many of the poorest countries go backwards in each successive decade, particularly in Africa – by 1990, 39 per cent of African private wealth was held outside the continent, which seemed to face marginalisation in the global economy.¹¹ The Commonwealth-wide shift to democracy in the 1990s is an essential first step – the OAU's decision to exclude military leaders from meetings and push hard for democracy also shows the strength of the new consensus that growth requires democracy. But rooting out endemic corruption will take longer. Commonwealth Business Council surveys show that corruption remains the central concern for investors from both developed and developing countries – especially when, for example, paying a series of small bribes to get telephone lines causes thousands of pounds worth of delays.¹² Commonwealth countries say that they are committed to tackling this corruption – but there will need to be widespread reform of attitudes and practices.

Because countries have not had ownership of their own development plans

Failed development has had numerous external causes

too: the inheritance of arbitrary borders, the shifting terms of trade against primary-goods, cold war rivalries, the ineffective use of aid to prop up corrupt regimes and stifle reform. We have known for decades why visiting economists fail, but the governance and corruption crises meant that strict conditionality was still seen by many as a necessary evil by donors who didn't support total disengagement.¹³ The record shows that there is no short-cut to success by imposing the 'right answer' from outside – international efforts can only support internal will to reform and help to build the coalitions for it. International organisations now say all of the right things. But servicing them remains costly – donors have promised to coordinate their activities but haven't achieved it. The President of the World Bank admits that "It is shameful that Tanzania must produce 2,400 reports each quarter for its donors".¹⁴

Because many countries do not yet have the opportunity, capacity, infrastructure or policies to compete successfully.

Legitimate and well-intentioned governments face immense challenges in turning their countries around. The burdens of the past can be crippling – and the Commonwealth has played a leading role in getting debt relief moving. It also needs to help its developing and least developed countries get their voices heard in calling for the trade liberalisation that will benefit them in the next WTO round. The Commonwealth's many small states, which are classified mainly as middle-income countries, also want to use the Commonwealth to ensure that their vulnerability is recognised properly by

international bodies. But many of the biggest challenges are domestic. The ability to attract and absorb investment and to win export markets depends on developing adequate infrastructure and know-how. That does not just mean basic utilities and transport infrastructure, but honest courts and an effective police service, ports and customs bodies which are efficient and do not deter trade with expensive bureaucracy, and new stock markets with the standards, payment systems and liquidity that they need.

And because outdated stereotypes hold successful reformers back.

Even doing all the right things is not always enough to succeed in global trade and finance. International investors and customers often rely on stereotypes as well as economic realities. Hence the 'national branding' programmes of countries like Australia and Britain which needed to overcome outdated perceptions. This presents a particularly damaging problem for developing economies even as they overcome 'real' problems of political and economic fundamentals and stable policy frameworks.¹⁵ If an 'Asian crisis' is in the offing, investors may pull out of all Asian countries, whatever their disparate economic fundamentals. This may even be rational for investors – as Keynes observed of stock markets over 60 years ago, what actually happens depends on what average opinion thinks average opinion will do next.¹⁶ Today, the costs of collecting information about emerging markets increases 'herd behaviour'. This can set development back, through apparently unnecessary macroeconomic crises and the costs of

coping with financial instability. Other countries may suffer less from fickle investors than from unfair neglect. African countries which have quietly done many things right, like Botswana, will still see growth stunted if investors believe that 'all African economies are basket-cases'. Thabo Mbeki used the example of the four cursory references to Africa in George Soros' best-selling book to show "the extent to which Africa is off the globalisation screen."¹⁷ As the World Development Report puts it "Unfortunately even those African countries with a five-year record of good economic policies have found it difficult to attract this kind of investment [FDI], in spite of evidence showing that the overall returns in these economies may be just as good as elsewhere".¹⁸

So what can the Commonwealth do?

Given the many barriers to development and growth, talk of the Commonwealth as an engine of shared prosperity can seem hollow. But the Commonwealth could be one of the best tools that its member governments have.

It must be realistic about what it can achieve. Only its members can solve their problems for themselves – but the Commonwealth can help them to get it right. While the Commonwealth does have development cooperation funds and can spread know-how, it is not in the major league of donor organisations – nor should it aim to be. But, because many of the economic problems have political causes, the Commonwealth is uniquely well placed to add value by helping countries to develop the good governance which they need to grow. We

believe that the Commonwealth does have the potential to be a force for growth in a global age – it can give its members additional global reach, valuable practical assistance and a real edge in global competition.

DEVELOPING THE CONDITIONS FOR PROSPERITY: AN ACTION PLAN

Provide a voice for development and liberalisation in the world

Commonwealth countries want their international cooperation to make the international system work more fairly. Just as they have campaigned successfully on debt, the timing of the Durban meeting gives the Commonwealth an opportunity to influence the WTO Seattle Round agenda. The strong Commonwealth consensus both between governments and, as the Commonwealth Business Council has shown, across the private sector in the developed and developing world, should enable the Commonwealth to articulate its **shared liberalisation agenda** that many outside it will also support. The Commonwealth will not agree on everything – it is not a trading bloc, and members including Britain, Canada and Malaysia will be bound by regional consensus. But, at the agenda-setting stage, the Commonwealth can have an important impact if it focuses on shared interests, like tightening the rules on non-tariff barriers, and ensures its members promote this shared agenda in the many other international fora to which they belong. And, because the Commonwealth now works more closely with both civil society and private sector groups, it can improve dialogue and be a strong voice for both values and development so

that there isn't a counterproductive stand-off between northern NGOs and governments and their southern counterparts. The Commonwealth can help to create a fairer, more open system. But, to take advantage, Commonwealth countries will have to reform themselves.

Deeper good governance and anti-corruption cooperation

As members seek to create the conditions for increased investment and trade, the Commonwealth should deepen its engagement with those that are struggling. It should help members to deliver **timed reform plans** drawn up in association with the Secretariat and other international bodies, such as the World Bank which is increasingly working closely with the Commonwealth on good governance. Deeper cooperation should focus initially on the most important obstacles – basic political and legal frameworks and anti-corruption programmes. The Commonwealth should not just arrange for its members to agree and sign up to anti-corruption guidelines, but should help them to implement these in practice and encourage them to share information about success in reforming inefficient public sectors which offer opportunities for abuse and tackling cultures of corruption. Governments would also benefit from **much closer cooperation with domestic and multinational businesses**, which suffer from corruption but can help to perpetuate bribery when they express resignation and pay up. The Commonwealth Business Council should work with business and governments to agree and promote good practice, so that the business community as

a whole takes a broader perspective and acts as a vocal constituency for reform.

Establishing the 'Commonwealth Kitemark'

The Commonwealth, as an association based on values, is well placed to help its members maximise the benefits of good practice. The first step is to agree more detailed frameworks for good practice, so that it can help all members achieve democratic accountability and clean government, the necessary infrastructure and a stable policy environment. The Commonwealth can then become a **quality assurance of good governance that can be promoted vigorously to international investors and institutions**. This will only be credible if Commonwealth countries stick firmly to agreed principles and approaches. But the Commonwealth's strength is in encouraging reform – it often has more credibility than the IMF with the countries themselves because members choose whether to join and sign up to the Commonwealth's values. It can't force governments to agree, but to deliver benefits it does need to ask members to agree concrete action plans to show how they are getting back on track. **A Commonwealth which has established that it takes democracy seriously should seek to keep raising the standard of the Commonwealth Kitemark**. This will take time, because it will not and should not sacrifice members which are moving in the right direction. But if countries show they are not willing to do this, the Commonwealth will be forced to warn them that their membership is being put in jeopardy. As countries like South Africa, Botswana, Bangladesh and Nigeria move forward, they can't be held back by

dinosaurs who don't mean what they say.

This chapter has shown how the Commonwealth's strong consensus on economic questions can enable it to add value, as long as it understands that growth and good governance must go together and that establishing the conditions for growth is often a political question. Commonwealth countries can make their values pay off by proving the economic worth of a democratic Commonwealth.

3. Democracy and good governance: Making shared values effective

The television screen flickered, and the newsreader faded out. The pictures of army manoeuvres cut like a pop-video to a soundtrack of martial music and patriotic songs could mean only one thing. News began to filter out that the Prime Minister, elected just two years ago, was under 'preventive detention'. Some hours later, the protagonist appeared – the military uniform, the dark glasses, the large flag and the picture of the father of the nation over his shoulder. He sought to reassure 'his' people that "your armed forces have never and shall never let you down". And then the parliament was suspended, the constitution in abeyance, the President told to report to the military leader. It was a textbook *coup d'état* – from an army with more experience in the field than most.

The Pakistan coup was a blow to a strongly democratising Commonwealth. A Commonwealth which had been proud of reducing the numbers of military dictators over the 'nineties down to zero now has General Musharraf very much on its mind.

But it did also show, dramatically, how far the Commonwealth has come in recent years. It reacted in a bolder and speedier way than ever before, and showed how the Commonwealth is capable of doing things that the UN and other bodies would find unthinkable – it does not regard military coups as ‘internal matters’. The Secretary-General spoke out before the news was confirmed to say that a coup “would be in contravention of the Commonwealth’s fundamental political values”, and would therefore “inevitably invite Pakistan’s suspension”. This was confirmed within days in an emergency meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), which was created in 1995. The Commonwealth can make a real difference when it promotes its values and takes action against those that abuse them – just as it led international opposition to the Nigerian dictatorship and campaigned hard against apartheid South Africa. The 1990s have been an era in which the Commonwealth has taken democracy seriously, stated its values clearly and begun to act on them. It can now help its members to realise the benefits of this – as long as they know that they are being asked to act together in their shared interests, and feel ownership of the process.

How a democratic Commonwealth evolved

1949: The London Declaration: The birth of the modern Commonwealth – as India is allowed to become a Republic and stay in, enabling the Commonwealth to grow as decolonisation proceeded.

1957: Ghana becomes the first African member to join the Commonwealth on gaining Independence.

1961: South Africa leaves the Commonwealth, withdrawing its application to remain a member on becoming a Republic before it is refused.

1971: The Singapore Declaration, the first set of Commonwealth principles focus mainly on anti-racism, following ferocious rows between Britain and other members over South African policy.

1977: Idi Amin threatens to attend the CHOGM, but Nigeria leads opposition to Britain's bid to suspend Uganda. Amin finally stays at home and **human rights** are mentioned for the first time in a Commonwealth communiqué. The Gambia's proposal to create a Commonwealth Human Rights Commission is rejected.

1989: Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), a non-governmental organisation, is created by the Commonwealth associations of lawyers, journalists, trade unions and parliamentarians. Its work influences the Harare Declaration and it is later described by the Secretary-General as "the conscience of the Commonwealth".

1991: Harare Declaration commits Commonwealth governments to democracy, fundamental human rights, equality for women, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary and just and honest government.

1994: President Nelson Mandela brings democratic South Africa back into the Commonwealth.

1995: Millbrook Action Plan creates Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) to police "serious and persistent violations of the Harare Declaration". Nigeria is suspended and the Commonwealth leads international pressure against Abacha. Only Captain Jammeh of Gambia, who led the 1994 military coup ending unbroken record of multi-party elections since 1965, opposes Nigeria's suspension. CMAG monitors the Gambia's return to civilian government in 1996.

1997 Sierra Leone is suspended following a military coup, and deposed President Kabbah is invited to CHOGM as a special guest of host Premier Blair. A 1998 CMAG mission followed the restoration of the elected government, and Commonwealth countries helped facilitate the 1999 Peace agreement.

1999: Nigeria returns to full membership following the election of President Obasanjo.

1999: Pakistan suspended following military coup; Commonwealth mission led by Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy visits Pakistan.

The Commonwealth's democratic consensus

In the Commonwealth, debates about democracy are not between 'the west and the rest'. The Caribbean states in the Commonwealth, with strong democratic and trade union traditions, have long called for a stronger Commonwealth approach to democracy and human rights. And important, if unwitting, creators of the Commonwealth's emerging democratic consensus include the long and undistinguished rogues' gallery from Idi Amin to General Abacha. Their proud, self-destructive nationalism, in the guise of post-colonial posturing, has delivered only an unenviable record of human misery – combining political repression and external aggression with elite corruption and economic stagnation.

These experiences underpin the new Commonwealth consensus – that democracy is an essential part of a holistic approach to peace and security, economic development and a healthy society – which is in the lead of an emerging 21st century debate about international engagement.¹⁹ Commonwealth countries now want and need their neighbours to succeed, not just out of common humanity and altruism, but because their own economic prospects may depend on it, while dictatorship and human rights abuses threaten regional instability and the spillover threats of war, food insecurity, refugee flows and ethnic tension. "It is in the South African national interest to assist peoples who suffer from famine, political repression, natural disasters and the scourge of violent conflict" as a South African White Paper puts it.²⁰ Nigerian President Obasanjo has declared that "I am my brother's keeper"; British Prime Minister Blair that "We

are all internationalists now”.

It is not just that this emerging consensus is more widely shared within the Commonwealth than beyond it – it is that the Commonwealth debate is much less stuck in the past. The veto system on the UN Security Council means that familiar 20th century voices will continue to shape much of the debate. For example, the positions taken by the USA, EU nations, Russia and China over NATO’s intervention in Kosovo meant that the debate was reported in terms of universal rights or western imperialism. The debate within the Commonwealth has a different shape and tone – with Nigeria, South Africa, Bangladesh and many Caribbean states supporting a strongly democratic Commonwealth. Australian foreign ministers have spoken of “good international citizenship” furthering national and international interests, Canada led the campaign to establish the International Criminal Court and Britain has now committed to a strongly internationalist agenda.²¹

Commonwealth countries will often act in other fora in pursuit of these values, and the Commonwealth itself should focus on where it has comparative advantage. The Commonwealth does not have peace-keeping capacities, though its members often contribute strongly to international missions.²² The 6000 strong UN-peacekeeping force on its way to Sierra Leone will have a strong Commonwealth flavour – with Nigerian and Kenyan soldiers and logistical support and money from Britain, Canada and India as well as non-Commonwealth countries like the USA. But there is no reason for the Commonwealth to seek to organise it.

DEEPENING DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT: A REFORM PLAN

Today, the Commonwealth's confidence in its shared values, and its willingness to act on them, can help its members build and safeguard democratic processes and institutions. There are economic as well as ethical imperatives for it to move the agenda forward. The Commonwealth has begun to act against the old charge that it has "an open house for dictators".²³ But it needs to engage more deeply to make a real difference, and act openly so all of its members have full ownership over its actions and a clear understanding of what the Commonwealth's values mean.

Being Clear about Commonwealth Values: Updating Harare for the 21st century.

The Commonwealth should mark a decade of a democratising Commonwealth by updating its landmark Harare Declaration at the 2001 CHOGM. Harare provided real value when Commonwealth governments committed themselves very clearly to democratic values at their 1991 meeting. But, as many Commonwealth members have continued to democratise, Harare now looks slightly dated and phrases like "democracy, democratic principles and institutions which reflect national circumstances" can leave loopholes for abuse. The Commonwealth should commit itself firmly to **multi-party democracy, freedom of expression and of the media** so that a new Harare provides firm foundations for a 21st century Commonwealth of Democracies. We also discuss on page 54 below how Harare can be turned

into a strategic mission statement, updated at the first CHOGM of each decade.

Not just military dictatorships:

Clear and open action against abuses of shared values

When the Commonwealth established the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) in 1995, following the Abacha regime's provocative execution of the Nobel-prize winning poet and Ogoni activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, it showed that the Commonwealth could protect its values in practice, rejecting the idea that enforcement mechanisms would destroy the spirit of this 'informal association' or 'club'. CMAG has established its legitimacy by dealing with the worst abuses first and restricting itself to considering four countries – Nigeria, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Pakistan – which had military regimes. It should now **interpret its mandate to police “serious and persistent violations of the Harare Declaration” less narrowly** so that the Commonwealth can establish itself as a byword for good governance. The fact that countries have only received concerted, politically-led support on democracy after a military coup seems perverse. Given that a number of the Commonwealth's democracies are young and evolving, it is inevitable that many have not yet met all of the standards that they hope to achieve. But it is also important for the credibility of the Commonwealth that there are clear signs of progress and that the countries involved demonstrate their commitment to delivering on these values.

Ensuring equal ownership of action on democracy

By taking firm and swift action against Pakistan, CMAG showed that claims it would unfairly 'pick on' particular regions or countries were unfounded. It had started by looking at three African countries because it was tackling military regimes first. But CMAG could be even more effective if it was **more open about the way it works**. At present, the members are selected for two year periods but few are clear about how this is decided. One diplomat said: "it was a case of taps on the shoulder from the Secretary-General – you're in; you're out". And a **regional balance** between members is also important so that CMAG is seen to act for the whole Commonwealth. There has not yet been a single CMAG member from South Asia, where the majority of Commonwealth citizens live.

Getting the Capacity for Reform: Establish a Commonwealth Good Governance Commission

To go deeper on democracy, the Commonwealth needs to agree guidelines in particular areas, work with governments to promote good practice, monitor the situation in countries at risk, investigate complaints from citizens, non-governmental organisations and opposition groups and ensure that reform is timetabled and delivered. While the eight foreign ministers who make up CMAG have the political authority to act decisively against breaches of Harare, they cannot be expected to fulfil all these other roles. The Commonwealth Secretariat and professional associations do work in a number of these areas – such as

election monitoring when invited by governments, and drawing up guidelines on judicial independence and the role of the opposition. While these ad hoc initiatives do make a valuable difference, their coverage is inevitably patchy and they don't amount to a comprehensive strategy in this area. **A Commonwealth Good Governance Commissioner** should be appointed to head a permanent focal point and catalyst for a democratic Commonwealth. The Commission would work with countries to improve their records and join up the activities of the Secretariat, CMAG, the Commonwealth Foundation, member governments, professional associations and non-governmental organisations. It needs to be headed by a figure with the profile and expertise to make a difference, backed up by a small staff and drawing on broader Commonwealth expertise, to develop criteria for delivering on the Commonwealth's values in five central areas:

- **Holding free and fair competitive elections**
- **Establishing the rule of law and judicial independence**
- **Tackling corruption and promoting honest and efficient administration**
- **Promoting civil society and creating a framework for government-NGO relations**
- **Respecting fundamental human rights (including freedom of expression, association and of the press).**

By working in these areas, the Good Governance Commission will help members uphold the Commonwealth's values and make their democratic progress pay

off. In each area the Commonwealth bodies, such as the professional associations, which have particular expertise will play a valuable role. Governments will be asked to draw up annual reports and action plans on their performance in each of these areas. The Commission will have the power to investigate progress on the ground and to check out specific complaints raised. If there is evidence of serious violations of the Commonwealth's shared criteria, it will work with the governments to monitor and improve practice in that area. If there is no improvement and a government seems to be deliberately obstructing progress, the Good Governance Commissioner will have the power to refer the matter to CMAG for further investigation.

'At Risk' register for democracies under threat

CMAG should consider countries referred to it by the Good Governance Commission as being on an **'At Risk' register**, where democracy is weak or under threat. For example, this might have enabled CMAG to respond to widespread concerns about abuses of the democratic and judicial system in Pakistan and to widely-reported warnings of an impending coup, such as that issued by the US State Department. Countries on the 'At Risk' register because of concerns about whether there are fair elections should be asked to accept Commonwealth or Commonwealth-approved international election observers and to produce a plan to deal with particular issues of concern (like the electoral register, use of the media, free association) well ahead of the election.

The Commonwealth realises that its members often face difficulties in fulfilling their commitments, but

countries like Mozambique and Ghana have shown how good progress on democracy and respecting the right to oppose can be delivered. The Commonwealth needs to ensure that those countries which aren't moving forward are given the help they need, and that they are sincere in their efforts. Problems differ from country to country, and the severity of abuses differ greatly, but the Commonwealth should ask for evidence of progress in particular areas where concerns have been raised so that its standards can be credible. For example, Pakistan will need to restore democracy and work to re-establish judicial independence; Zimbabwe will be asked to improve its approach to freedom of association; Kenya's minority rights record should be monitored carefully; Zambia should be asked to produce a concrete timetable for elections which all sides agree are fair; and Sri Lanka should respond to concerns about press freedom. The Commonwealth must show that its goal is to work with members to deliver progress – where countries do commit to major reforms, such as Uganda's pledge to introduce multi-party democracy following a history of ethnic conflict, the Commonwealth needs to offer real assistance as well as checking that the promises are kept.

Full democratic health-check for new members

The Good Governance Commission should also be mandated to work with other Commonwealth bodies to develop **much clearer criteria for aspirant members**. It should consult government, opposition, media and civil society in order to make a recommendation as to whether an application should proceed – creating a timetabled action plan to deal with areas of concern

before the state is admitted if necessary, and also indicating any areas which a new state in particular may wish to keep under review. This would be a more constructive approach than simply deferring applications from countries which do not seem to meet Commonwealth standards.²⁴

Joining-up the Commonwealth's good governance activities will enable it to offer its members more support and make it a credible guarantor of good governance. This will add value for Commonwealth members – and enable them to show other international institutions how they are tackling their problems themselves. The cost of the extra capacity should be kept down by drawing on the Commonwealth's existing networks, and perhaps redeploying the small Commonwealth Secretariat human rights unit. But the conduct of governments is only part of the picture. Good governance and democracy also depend on a healthy civil society – and the Commonwealth needs to help its countries develop in this area too.

4. The People's Commonwealth: Enabling civil society

There is nothing the Commonwealth is more proud of than the informal Commonwealth – or ‘The People’s Commonwealth’ as it prefers to call it. The Secretary-General points out whenever possible that the Commonwealth is as much about people-to-people links as links between governments. His successor will also do so – “no other organisation in the world has as many networks as the Commonwealth” says candidate Farooq Sobhan; “this is what makes the Commonwealth different and special” agrees Don McKinnon.

But, for all the praise, ‘The People’s Commonwealth’ is still seen predominantly as a supporters’ club. Ritual celebrations of its existence only partially mask a reality too often of conflicts and mutual mistrust between governments and key elements of civil society. Governments often seek to keep non-governmental organisations (NGOs) at arms length, because they fear they could threaten their legitimacy while non-governmental organisations fear that governments want to hamper their work or co-opt them. Commonwealth governments used to want to keep NGOs away from the

CHOGM – until 1993, NGO representatives had to masquerade as press and media representatives if they wanted to be accredited. Since then, they have had a higher profile at successive CHOGMs – and the unofficial Commonwealth will be on full show in Durban in the NGO Forum and the People's Centre with a stronger presence of southern NGOs than ever before. But this has not altered the difficult relationship that resurfaces when governments and NGOs return home.

To deliver the people-centred development that Durban will commit to, the Commonwealth will need to ensure that this changes. It often involves the Commonwealth professional associations in its activities, but it must also focus on helping legitimate governments and legitimate NGOs work together – in the interests of both communities and the societies they serve. And there are many shared interests. When governments need to be lean to compete in the global economy, they should welcome extra social provision while their growth strategies take shape. And because we now know that “growth does not trickle down; development must address human needs directly”, Commonwealth countries need to find appropriate ways to deliver education, health and other needs.²⁵ Grassroots organisations and NGOs can be essential tools for delivering quality development and participatory projects – they can improve policy by making it reflect local needs as well as providing extra capacity. And by making Commonwealth membership a guarantee of good NGO-government relations and practice, Commonwealth members will find it easier persuading investors and donors that money will be well spent.

The Commonwealth already has the infrastructure to help members make their commitment to civil society a reality. The Commonwealth Foundation provides an interface between the official and unofficial Commonwealths. Its board of Governors is made up of the London High Commissioners of its member countries, and the Chair of the board is appointed by Heads of Government. It receives £1.8 million directly from Commonwealth member states, which it uses to fund many of the professional associations and other projects.²⁶ The Foundation consulted with NGOs before publishing guidelines for NGO good practice, which set out the rights and responsibilities of NGOs, governments and donor bodies.²⁷ These were approved by heads of government in 1995. But the messages have not yet changed practice on the ground enough.

Problems with governments

The relationship has been troubled because many Commonwealth countries were not democratic in the past, and some are still building democratic structures and cultures today. Repressive Societies Acts left on the statute books from the colonial era have been exploited by illegitimate or weak governments, protecting and hoarding power under the rhetoric of nation-building, and arguing that organisations with external funding must also have external agendas. Commonwealth countries have democratised strongly and there has been an explosion in the number of southern-based NGOs – but the belief that international NGOs are a western imposition sent to harass and harry southern governments can linger on.

Even when governments do realise that NGOs' independence from government does not automatically mean they oppose it, it can be difficult to get the right framework in place given the knowledge and cost involved in creating or reforming legal frameworks. This is not just an issue for developing countries. The United Kingdom's charitable law framework, developed in the 19th century, has been criticised for decades for excluding most NGO activity but governments have shied away from getting entangled in reform.

And governments will have legitimate concerns about as much as 80 to 95 per cent of NGO activity in developing countries being funded by foreign governments and international organisations, although often through intermediaries, if there isn't a clear, agreed framework of rights and responsibilities.²⁸

Questions for NGOs

NGOs want governments to understand them better. They can play a vital role – but they need freedom from harassment and a recognition of the valuable role that they can play. The relationship works best when NGOs work with government programmes, not against them, and have a framework for sharing information with other organisations to avoid unnecessary duplication. But NGOs have also not always lived up to their professed ideals either. Most NGOs do valuable work but the fragility of their relationship with governments means that bad practice by a few can be immensely damaging to the whole sector. NGOs face a number of legitimate questions from both their supporters and the countries and communities in which they work.

Questions of efficiency: do they cut their administration costs to a minimum? There are regular media stories about some NGO projects spending more than half of their donations on administration rather than the cause they serve. There are occasional cases of gross malpractice. In 1996, the Australian National Audit office found CARE-Australia guilty of funding its expansion in Australia by inflating the price of relief goods in the field.

Questions of legitimacy: are they in touch with the people they claim to represent? NGOs can overstate their ability to reach and represent the people they say they are working for. And while northern NGOs make much of 'partnership' with southern counterparts, which can transfer valuable know-how, the southern partner can often find that they are not trusted with real decision-making power.

Questions of integrity: are they more preoccupied with maintaining their market share than cooperating with one another and getting the right messages across? Funds raised inappropriately can do more harm than good. Sending donors a leaflet with two coins sell-taped to it and the message "This 12p can help a child like Susana break free from a life of poverty" perpetuates dependency relationships.²⁹ Development NGOs have a duty to educate donor publics about the causes of poverty, and they can't do it if they market with shock tactics aimed at the heartstrings. And the big, high-profile projects which make good advertising often make for bad development.

As Michael Edwards puts it “The reason many NGOs are disappointed with their results at project level is that they do not practice what they preach – the need for innovation, accountability, and partnership, not to mention lowering their transaction costs to focus more resources where it really matters. Why are there still 5 different Save The Children Funds in Zimbabwe?”³⁰ But NGOs also have legitimate fears about getting too involved with governments or being coerced by them. Many NGOs have experience of heavy-handed attempts to control and regulate their behaviour under the rubric of partnership. For example, former Sri Lankan President Premadasa’s requirement that NGOs register and accept scrutiny by a ‘Commissioner for NGOs’ was rightly seen as an attempt to remove their independence. The process was deeply flawed by the lack of genuine dialogue, so that it exacerbated tensions rather than managing them constructively.³¹

MAKING THE PEOPLE’S COMMONWEALTH A REALITY

The Commonwealth Compact on Civil Society: ‘Rights and Responsibilities in the Good Society’

The relationship between governments and civil society in the Commonwealth has been so thorny, complicated and misunderstood that only a high-profile initiative can make the breakthrough. For people-centred development to be a reality, the Commonwealth needs governments and NGOs to define the healthy relationships they need to develop so that the right legal frameworks and codes of practice can be put in place. The Commonwealth needs a **Civil Society Compact**, a

– ‘Harare Declaration’ for civil society, just as it had for democracy.

Both governments and NGOs each need to sign the same document – to show that they have put their mutual mistrust behind them and can work constructively together to develop their societies. And governments shouldn’t this time agree to something about civil society at CHOGM that they don’t plan to implement in a domestic setting. All governments will be asked to propose an action plan and timetable for implementation for agreement with the Commonwealth Foundation. Commonwealth professional associations and other organisations should also agree to the guidelines in order to be eligible for future Foundation funding, to help promote the idea that ‘Commonwealth’ stands for high standards. But the broad family of NGOs operating in the Commonwealth should also all be invited to join in spreading good practice, by publicly committing themselves to these Commonwealth standards.

This process could mark a valuable breakthrough. But it will fail if it is not approached in the right spirit on both sides. The Commonwealth Foundation must use its role as a key institution trusted by both sides to manage the consultation process – so that governments need not fear they will be over-legitimising NGOs without guarantees that NGOs will play their proper role well and not seek to abuse it. And NGOs need to know that this is also being done in their interests – with their full participation and equal ownership.

The Commonwealth Foundation’s recent work offers a good framework for the consultation process. Its study of civil society across the Commonwealth, which heads

will endorse at Durban, demonstrates the critical importance of participation in making development work – showing that people throughout the Commonwealth, including the very poorest, don't want to be simply recipients of government programmes, but partners in them.³² With governments now also focusing on ensuring development delivers for people, the Commonwealth needs to show that it is serious about good NGO-government relations as one key part of a healthy civil society and functioning democracy. If the Commonwealth succeeds in doing this, it will help all of its members to prosper. It will be able to credibly vouch to donors and investors that Commonwealth governments and NGOs are working together to ensure that aid and growth are directed towards reducing poverty, tackling ill-health and increasing literacy – encouraging a virtuous circle of growth and development.

5. Making the Commonwealth deliver

The Durban CHOGM will be full of promise. But the commitment of heads of government to tackle everything from world development to corruption can only be the first step. We have seen that the Commonwealth's new consensus gives it a greater opportunity to agree to act than ever before. But the real test must be delivery. And this could prove the Commonwealth's Achilles' heel – because it has inherited structures and attitudes from the days when its idea of an action plan after a CHOGM was to think about possible themes for the next one.

It is always difficult for international organisations to maintain momentum between summits, but the Commonwealth's current organisation gives it little hope of doing so. It must now seize the Durban opportunity by producing concrete plans that members will act on – not a communiqué they file away until 2001. Heads of Government will appoint a new Secretary General to succeed Chief Anyaoku in Durban – but even more important than getting the right person in place is finally giving them a clear political mandate and the

tools to implement it. Governments must ensure that they put in place the structures to give the Commonwealth presence, action and drive in the 100 weeks or so between CHOGMs. What do they need to change?

There is too little continuity between CHOGMs. It is not just that the Commonwealth seems to flit on and off the international stage every two years. It is that the activities it does undertake, such as its ministerial meetings and Secretariat programmes, are not joined-up and linked into its key goals. Because the theme of each CHOGM is decided by the host government in conjunction with the Secretariat, this can encourage governments to bolt-on high-profile new initiatives which play to the host's strengths rather than the more important work of following through previous commitments. The South African government's theme of people-centred development, which will also enable it to project 'the African renaissance', does follow on from the British theme of common prosperity, which the Blair government used to promote 'Britain: a young country' in 1997. The decision made for 1997 to have a clear theme for each CHOGM is a step forward from the old *ad hoc*ery. But there is little guarantee of detailed follow-up between hosts, which would enable decisions to be followed through and new hosts to prepare better.

Commonwealth's activities outside CHOGMs aren't strategically planned. The Commonwealth's ministerial meetings are too often like mini-CHOGMs, much lower profile but replicating the problems. The Commonwealth

has too often judged its success by how many meetings it can set up, rather than on the practical results they achieve. And so it organises a complex calendar of annual, biannual and triennial meetings of different ministerial groups – and tries to find a suitable theme the next time the women’s or education ministers are due to meet. So the meetings are not always focused around the relevant CHOGM goals or best-timed to maximise their impact. And, if the Commonwealth did decide to focus on moving gender issues up the political agenda, it would be better to have a cross-section of ministers dealing with the major issues – economics, justice, education, development – rather than a meeting containing only ministers for women, who are often among the most junior members of their governments.

The Secretary-General’s role has not been clearly defined. Like much else in the Commonwealth, the Secretary-General’s role has evolved quietly. It has been up to its holders to make what they can of it, according to their personalities and historical situations – the first three Secretary-Generals can be seen as representing periods of quiet establishment, post-colonial assertion and steady democratic evolution. But there has always been an underlying tension between different conceptions of the job – and this can prevent governments and the secretariat working constructively together. Governments say that they want Secretary-Generals to deliver an effective Commonwealth, but are often wary of them overstepping the mark. In its least constructive form, this was expressed as former New Zealand Premier Muldoon’s outburst to Secretary-General Ramphal

“You’re just here to take the minutes”. Of course, the Secretary-General’s ‘good offices’ role means it is vital he has a strong relationship with all heads of government, but this doesn’t mean that he will always be the Commonwealth’s most effective voice on the world stage.

The Secretariat is not structured around the CHOGM’s goals. As with CHOGM themes, the tendency is to bolt on new divisions when ideas arise for new projects, and not to join up divisions working on similar issues from different perspectives. When Commonwealth governments increasingly realise that economic, social and political development need a holistic approach, it seems anachronistic to divide the Commonwealth’s activities into three departmental silos for Politics; Economic & Social Affairs; and Development Cooperation which each report into a different Deputy Secretary-General. This prevents the Commonwealth deploying its resources strategically and flexibly to tackle its major goals. And it means that the Development Cooperation section contains an Agricultural Development Unit, an Industrial Development Unit and an Export Market Development Department – while the Economic Affairs division contains a separate Agricultural & Rural Development Policy Desk and a Trade & Regional Cooperation Department. More coordination would make the whole more than the sum of its parts.

The Secretariat has retained too much of the organisational culture it began with in the 1960s. There have

been a great many reviews and audits of its efficiency and financing. But this has not done enough to change the Secretariat's culture, described by a number of people in both governments and the Secretariat itself as too hierarchical and out-of-date. In the age of email, it continues to employ a team of messengers and chauffeurs. And this is only one symptom of a culture that many of its own skilled staff find frustrating. Instead of encouraging them to use their individual initiative, it often requires even small decisions to go through too many layers of management for this small organisation to be efficient and responsive. This means that it is seen more as an organisation for diplomats nearing retirement rather than somewhere where young policy-makers gain valuable experience before returning to more senior positions in their home services. And, most importantly, the Secretariat focuses on processes rather than outcomes – on setting ministerial meetings up and facilitating them, rather than delivering results.

MAKING THE COMMONWEALTH DELIVER

A more ambitious, effective Commonwealth will need to change. But it will also need to change the way it discusses reform. Everybody agrees there are problems – but blames somebody else for them. The Secretariat feels it is being scapegoated by governments that don't engage enough with the Commonwealth or give it the resources to deliver its goals. Governments use Senior Officials Meetings to try to challenge what they see as an ineffective use of the resources already pledged. We need to replace this atmosphere of mutual recrimination with one of constructive reform.

Reform CHOGMs so that they deliver

Now that the Commonwealth has the opportunity to agree real reform, CHOGMs must not waste time making rhetorical statements about the state of the world. **All Commonwealth communiqués should end with a timed action plan**, making clear what the responsibilities of official Commonwealth bodies and member governments are, and how this will be tracked and followed-up. The Commonwealth should choose issues where it has the consensus, and where there are delivery mechanisms in place, to make a difference. The Commonwealth's two biggest successes – on anti-apartheid and debt relief – were successful because it could agree strongly, it got the timing right, and could work with other international organisations and strong non-governmental communities in both north and south to keep the issue on the agenda.

Continuity between CHOGMs: following up, not bolting-on

The Commonwealth needs a **strategy for each decade**, not a series of bright ideas which might not be followed up. Countries that host CHOGMs put a lot of work into pushing their themes, but this expertise and experience isn't always fully utilised. Future hosts must track and act on the commitments already made at CHOGM, and would benefit from tapping fully into the organisational experience. **All CHOGMs should be planned by a 'troika' made up of the previous CHOGM host and their next two successors**, working together throughout at all levels and consulting closely with the Secretary-

General. The Secretary-General will also be continuing to consult all members about potential ideas and to check progress on action plans agreed, in particular ensuring that the small states which are less likely to host CHOGMs have clear opportunities to input. This can ensure that there is continuity and sustained political input throughout, as well as administrative oversight.

CHOGMs to mandate a clear role for the Secretary-General

As well as setting a strategic agenda, the Commonwealth needs to ensure that the Secretary-General has a clear mandate and the tools to deliver organisational reform. Heads of Government should agree a **clear and public job description for the Secretary-General**, and ask him to produce a timed plan for Secretariat reform. There are tensions in all inter-governmental organisations, and the Commonwealth should not think that it is unique in this respect, but they are best managed by clarity and political direction.

A goal-driven secretariat

The new Secretary-General should create a **goal-driven and responsive Secretariat** with a modern, flatter structure appropriate to its size, so that it is seen as a catalyst for Commonwealth activity rather than a hierarchical bureaucracy. The Secretariat should be reorganised around taskforces to work with countries on delivering the key goals which CHOGMs set – rather than separate

sections for Politics, Economics and Development, when these are goals which inevitably overlap, which contain permanent divisions on issues like Gender and Youth Affairs. If it becomes a dynamic organisation, the Secretariat will use its existing staff's skills fully and attract graduates of the highest calibre to work for it.

Strategic taskforces, not ministerial meetings

A goal-driven Commonwealth will also **rethink the Ministerial meetings** it holds between CHOGMs, so that it ensures they cover the right topics to deliver on its pledges, and so that **they take place when they are most likely to impact on the international agenda**. Finance Ministers have managed to do this, on Debt and the Seattle WTO round, but the Commonwealth should only call meetings when they will make a difference. In the electronic age, it may be possible to arrange the exchange of information, for example, on legal systems without necessarily having a meeting with everybody from across the world. It may often be the case that goals like growth and development are best fostered by a **taskforce of cross-departmental ministers**. And, as CMAG has shown, bringing together a small taskforce of ministers can often be the best way to make a practical difference in a focused area.

6. The 'image thing': getting the Commonwealth across

It is lunchtime in Leicester Square, in the centre of London. The square is crowded – with the diversity not just of London and Britain, but of much of the world. There are plenty of Americans, but also Canadians; back-packers from around Europe but also tourists from Asia, Australia and everywhere else. People from nearby shops, offices and think-tanks are grabbing a sandwich; culture-vultures are heading for the cinemas and theatres; a group of All Blacks fans are enjoying a drink in the sunshine ahead of the World Cup match at Twickenham. The benches are full and people are sitting on the grass, the pavement and the steps around the statue of Shakespeare. What nobody seems to notice is that, around the perimeter of this circle, there are some worn, dirty plaques. They read “Mauritius, Port Louis 6056m 9746 km; Kenya, Nairobi 4237m 6819 km; Tanzania, Dar Es Salaam 4657m 7495 km; Malta, Valletta 1297m 2088 km” – the capitals of the Commonwealth’s countries. The Commonwealth’s life, its excitement and vibrancy are all around us. And, of course, the connection would never be made.

Everybody involved with the Commonwealth will tell you that it has “an image problem”. But, before it can tackle it, the Commonwealth needs a much better grasp of what the image problem is. It is often said in Commonwealth circles that if only the Commonwealth didn’t have such a limited budget, it would make a bit more of a splash; that the Commonwealth doesn’t get the credit for its effective preventive work from a media only interested in glitz, glamour and disaster stories; that members should promote it much more energetically in their own countries and stop being so half-hearted about it. None of these offer constructive ways to bring about change. The Commonwealth will never have an immense publicity budget – and if it did have one, it wouldn’t know what to do with it. As years of glossy but ineffective EU material show, only changing the reality will work. The Commonwealth needs to realise that it is thinking about this question in the wrong way – that it has a problem as much with elites as peoples, and that in fact its image problem is a reality problem. The Commonwealth needs to be more effective and equally-owned, vibrant and useful, if it is to connect better to both its governments and its peoples, and to be seen to stand for something valuable in the international arena.

Engaging governments as well as peoples

The modern Commonwealth knows that people – from Lahore to Leicester, Kampala to Canberra – know very little about it. Most people ignore it completely – or think it is a hangover from the past. As Derek Ingram, commissioned by governments to tour and report on ways to

“sharpen the profile of the Commonwealth” found: “The lack of knowledge of what the Commonwealth is and does is profound. In some places there is no knowledge full stop. Wrong perceptions are everywhere, especially in the so-called old Commonwealth countries”.³³

This is a problem for the Commonwealth. It can't be useful if people think it is an imperial relic run by others, rather than a shared tool of international cooperation. Its attempts to influence change in Pakistan depend on its being seen as engaging constructively, not pursuing an outsiders' western agenda. Most of the things that the Commonwealth wants to encourage its governments to achieve – democracy, growth, strong societies – will be very popular. But if governments are being asked to make difficult choices, for example, on economic reform, to get there then they will find it easier if the Commonwealth is seen as a genuine force for cooperation and partnership. If Britain or Canada want to use the Commonwealth to pursue an internationalist agenda, it will help if people associate this with all of the benefits of their own vibrant and diverse societies. So the Commonwealth's public profile matters. But all of the apprehensions and doubts about it are as much held by policy-makers as their peoples. Many of them see the Commonwealth at close quarters – and so know how much it could achieve, but do not feel that it is yet the effective, modern tool that they need. This is because of the reality of what the Commonwealth is and does, not its inability to get itself across.

The Commonwealth's reality problems

Can governments create an effective Commonwealth?

We have seen in the previous chapter how the Commonwealth's opportunities to use its new consensus depend on it getting the capacity in place to deliver effective reform, so that governments don't just sign up before moving on to the next summit. We have shown that the Commonwealth could deliver real material benefits for its peoples and governments, if it can successfully and credibly project itself as an international guarantor of quality and good governance. This will require governments to see the Commonwealth as an arena in which this could happen – and therefore to engage more strongly with it. If they do so, many could win much more ownership over their own development, which is one of their primary goals. But this can only work if they feel they have equal ownership over the Commonwealth itself.

Is the Commonwealth equally-owned?

The Commonwealth needs its members to engage with it more. In theory, we have seen how – because it is value-based, voluntary and has global reach – it could be an ideal vehicle and tool for its members in the 21st century. But the Commonwealth needs to make sure they can seize the opportunity. When more countries get deeply involved, as with South Africa's CHOGM, we can see the benefits that this brings to both the organisation and themselves. The Commonwealth needs to seize this energy and further incentivise involvement from others.

Debating ownership in the Commonwealth is a thorny issue. For much of the post-war period, Britain saw the Commonwealth as a 'Brit-bashing' organisation, while most others felt that Britain still wanted control. There was then a hangover period when the attitudes were reversed – other members asked 'when will Britain join the Commonwealth' while Britain felt it couldn't get too vigorously involved without being seen to take charge. This period is now over. The current make up of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office ministerial team strongly reflects both Britain's diversity and the benefits of Commonwealth immigration to Britain. Britain has realised that it can leave its "Commonwealth problem" behind simply by stating openly what its agenda is, doing what it says and working with others who share it. But because the Commonwealth has seemed so remote or so much about the past for so long, it may take some other members longer to re-engage. It is often some of the Commonwealth's oldest members who understand it least – and so fail to see it as a potentially effective tool.

When our interim report suggested that this could be a problem, the media response was illuminating. The British media found the idea of a 'third world dignitary' as a Commonwealth President or future head remarkable; and treated the reporting of the fact that the Queen's role as Head is an appointed and not hereditary position (and so will not be automatically inherited by Prince Charles) as a news story. A Canadian Broadcasting Corporation interviewer couldn't see the point – "But that's exactly what it is. It is the British Commonwealth". Irish commentators have suggested that similar perceptions are

behind its decision not to join – despite the Secretary-General's overtures and emphasis on the many Republics in the Commonwealth, many having experienced strong anti-colonial struggles – and disengaged members may share these sentiments.³⁴ The idea that the Commonwealth is mainly about bilateral links with Britain is one of many reasons why the Commonwealth's South Asian members have only intermittently engaged with it, and why it has been as much a forum for regional tensions – Pakistan withdrew in 1972, because Britain, Australia and New Zealand were set to recognise Bangladesh, and only returned in 1989. Eighty per cent of the Commonwealth's peoples live in South Asia, yet no South Asian head of government attended the 1995 CHOGM, and it has yet to supply a member of CMAG. The Commonwealth needs to show members that it can be an effective and equal tool – being seen to help Pakistan get back on track and enabling countries to benefit from liberalisation and anti-poverty strategies. India could also realise that the Commonwealth could be an effective tool for it to play a greater role in world affairs – just as Commonwealth votes have helped elect both Canada and Bangladesh onto the UN Security Council. But members will be encouraged to engage when the Commonwealth shows what it could do for them.

GETTING A MODERN COMMONWEALTH ACROSS

A mission statement

The Commonwealth thinks that it is clear what it stands for – that the Harare Declaration, the Edinburgh Declaration and the outcomes of Durban define it clear-

ly. But these have only reached those in the know – and too few of them. The Commonwealth should combine their key points into a single up-to-date **mission statement which is updated at the first CHOGM of each decade**. This would provide a single clear statement of Commonwealth values and activities, a strategic agenda for policy-makers to deliver and judge themselves by and a clear way to track progress on long-term commitments such as the Edinburgh pledge to halve absolute poverty by 2015.

Equalise ownership

It is time to **destroy the myth of the “British Commonwealth”** – constantly revealed in slips of the tongue and misinformed references – once and for all so that outdated perceptions can't hold the Commonwealth back. One way forward is to show that the Commonwealth really stands for something positive, valuable and new, rather than simply reiterating that it has left the past behind. The Commonwealth could also incentivise involvement and seek to project itself better by encouraging **the chair of CHOGM to speak as ‘Commonwealth President’ on the international stage** at major summits, just as Thabo Mbeki spoke for NAM at the United Nations this year. This would complement the Queen's role as symbolic and apolitical head and that of the Secretary-General by also giving the Commonwealth a clear governmental presence on major occasions. But these attitudes can be more deeply rooted. **To give everybody a sense of ownership, it is vital that all of the key decisions about the Commonwealth's future organisation and image – from the location of the**

Secretariat to the Queen's eventual successor as Head of the Commonwealth – are decided in a fair and open way. There should be nothing shocking about debating the idea of Nelson Mandela as the next Head of the Commonwealth or considering Delhi or Lagos as the seat of the Secretariat. Whatever the final decision, the Commonwealth must make all decisions based on what people can contribute – it cannot afford to grant anything by right. Simply getting across the idea that the Secretariat need not be perpetually based in Britain is valuable. If the Commonwealth does decide that it is in its best interests to stay put, then it is especially important that other activities are diversified further. **The Commonwealth Good Governance Commission should start off in South Asia, Africa or the Caribbean,** and perhaps follow the good example of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (currently in Delhi) which seeks to rotate every few years.

Make sure the world recognises the 'Commonwealth Kitemark'

If the Commonwealth can persuade its members that it can be an effective tool, it will help them win ownership over their own development. But it can't do so unless its members are ready to strongly promote and live up to their values. To make this really pay off, the Commonwealth has to embody them itself and be prepared to stand up to those who are falling behind, so that it has a much clearer image in the world than it has now – because it is seen to be truly value-based, because the reality matches the image. The 'Commonwealth Kitemark' needs to be recognised as a copper-bottomed

guarantee that countries are delivering high standards on good governance, human rights and civil society – as well as establishing a new form of international cooperation which empowers legitimate governments.

Make the Commonwealth Connections

The Commonwealth's image problem will change as the reality does. The aim will not be to get 1.6 billion people into "I Love the Commonwealth" T-shirts but the Commonwealth will matter more to its governments and its peoples as it helps countries deliver on democracy, growth and anti-poverty strategies.

But the Commonwealth must seize its opportunities to connect – to show that it is an important symbol of who we are, our societies and often our families and friends, and that it does not just represent our ability to learn from our shared histories in all of their complexity but also what we want our countries to stand for today. When these connections are made, the Commonwealth can be a powerful force for good. South Africa is hosting the CHOGM because it believes that that it can only solve its domestic problems by engaging internationally, and that the Commonwealth is a great way to get the African Renaissance across to a wider global audience which supported its struggles in the past. Similarly, promoting Commonwealth values is an important way of Britain joining up the debates about its changing identity at home and its new role in the world. When two-thirds of British primary schoolchildren have a cousin in another Commonwealth country, the **Commonwealth in the classroom** and the **Commonwealth in our cities**

are vital to understanding the kind of society we want to live in.

But the Commonwealth could often project itself better. The case for the Commonwealth in Britain can be strongly made at the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games. But repeating the successful experiment with cricket and rugby in Malaysia in 1998 would have strengthened their impact, after the cricket world cup illustrated strongly that being British can be combined with supporting Bangladesh, Pakistan or the West Indies.³⁵ Commonwealth connections cover everything from friends and family in other countries to sport, music, film, theatre and the writers from across the Commonwealth who have changed the English language like JM Coetzee, Anita Desai or Canadian-Indian Rohinton Mistry. Throughout the Commonwealth, there are many diaspora groups – Indian, Nigerian, Australian, Caribbean and many others. The Commonwealth should encourage its members to promote and **celebrate diversity as a valuable asset, and be a beacon for this at a local as well as a global level.**

The Commonwealth should also ensure that it embodies, as an organisation, the Commonwealth's strengths – our values, our diversity and the range of our expertise – and captures the informality, vitality and optimism of its predominantly young peoples. To show that the Commonwealth stands for democracy, its elections for Secretary-General, while clearly a choice for governments, could be opened up further. When candidates campaign both behind the scenes and even on websites, they are already more open than those of other international organisations where the winner often emerges

from a murky stitch-up at the last minute. The Commonwealth should seek to lead the way in taking this further. It should set formal times for nominations to close and then arrange for **public debates between the candidates** so that the Commonwealth's future can be debated openly and new ideas thrown up; it should seek to encourage a larger number and greater diversity of candidates, perhaps by broadening the power to nominate (but not to vote); and it should commit to having an open and contested election every four years rather than assuming it will most likely renominate a Secretary-General unopposed, both because the Commonwealth should stand clearly for democracy and because this would help to keep even the best Secretary-General on their toes. This would not set the world alight, but it would show that the Commonwealth stands for democracy, encourage other international bodies to open up too, provide a greater opportunity for debate and enable the Commonwealth to connect to more of its potential supporters, and raise the profile of the Secretary-General who is elected.

7. Conclusion: The 'Commonwealth Kitemark'

The Commonwealth is meeting in Durban because it believes that it can create a new Commonwealth.

We have seen that the Commonwealth has made more progress in the 1990s than ever before – on globalisation, democracy and civil society and even its own institutions, it has not just found much more to agree on, it has begun to act strongly on these values. But this has only really been noticed by those closely involved in it.

The Commonwealth has been able to change because many of its members have transformed themselves in the 1990s. The most celebrated example is South Africa, but many other countries have moved forward too. Botswana has shown that African economies can sustain growth and development; Nigeria has shown even the most military regimes can be replaced with vibrant democracies; India seems to be leaving its poor growth performance behind and looks set to reduce mass poverty dramatically; many small states have improved their economies and pushed their environmental and trade concerns up the international agenda, and Britain has

showed that it can finally put its imperial past behind it and find a new positive global role. There have been negative developments too – but Sierra Leone is seeking to maintain peace, with much Commonwealth support, and the Commonwealth is showing in Pakistan that it can act both firmly and constructively.

Because its members have changed so much, there is now a new Commonwealth opportunity. We have seen that it is one which the old Commonwealth could not have seized, and set out ways in which it needs to build the capacity and culture which can allow it to deliver more and play a constructive role in its members' development.

But the biggest question is not whether the Commonwealth can change, but whether its members want it to. And that is a question about how much they want to change themselves – how far they really believe the positive story about globalisation, democracy and civil society that they have been sharing at Durban. We have shown that taking their Commonwealth values seriously can help members to deliver growth, strengthen their democracies and take real ownership of their own destinies. This is what all of the Commonwealth's peoples want, and what the governments themselves are committed to. The Commonwealth can give them the opportunity to deliver it.

In the previous chapters, we have set out standards and processes which all Commonwealth countries should meet – tackling corruption, holding fair and free multi-party elections, protecting human rights including free speech, association and media rights, establishing the rule of law and developing a fair framework for

government-NGO relations. These are the essential conditions for people-centred development, and they can be turned into a 'Commonwealth Kitemark' which is recognised throughout the Commonwealth and beyond it, by investors, donors and multilateral institutions. Delivering this will not be easy – it will require many members to start or speed up reform. The Commonwealth can offer them real and non-coercive assistance if they want to make it. And they will collectively benefit by doing so.

But the reforms will have to be real. The Commonwealth can only help its members to prosper if they commit to timed action plans. By 2001, the Commonwealth should set out much more detailed criteria for what its values mean in each of the key areas, and should provide for mechanisms which both help its members to meet them, as well as being clear about how it will tackle abuses. This will require a good governance commission to work closely with member states and with CMAG and the Secretary-General to ensure that the Commonwealth can be credible when it projects its values. The Commonwealth should be clear that fundamental abuses of these standards will see members closely monitored by CMAG, and given six months to get back on track. Where the problems involve major questions of capacity-building, the Commonwealth should expect a detailed programme to deliver significant reform within two years. And though the Commonwealth should step up its work in these areas at once, and have a much better idea of what is going wrong, it should resolve, and state publicly, that it would suspend any members which are not making sig-

nificant progress by the time it holds its 2003 CHOGM. That way members will have a very clear idea of how the Commonwealth will take its values seriously, of what the benefits could be, and of whether they will benefit from being part of this process.

If it starts now, the Commonwealth can prove that it is a modern, relevant organisation which can be an effective tool for its members. It will tackle the charge that it does not engage deeply enough with its members' problems and give them all real ownership not just of the Commonwealth's structures but of their own development and the benefits which it can bring.

On its 50th anniversary, the modern Commonwealth finally has the opportunity to live up to the idealism with which it was founded – of serving its members' interests through international cooperation, giving them the ability to prosper by building their common wealth.

government-NGO relations. These are the essential conditions for people-centred development and they can be turned into a Commonwealth Kitemark which is a way forward. The members will have a very clear idea of how the Commonwealth will take its values seriously and what the benefits could be and of whether they will be a part of this process. It is clear that if it starts now, the Commonwealth can prove that it is a modern, relevant organisation which can be an effective tool for its members. It will lack the courage that does not engage deeply enough with its members' problems and give them all real ownership not just of the Commonwealth's structures but of their own development and the benefits which it can bring. It has the opportunity to live up to the ideal with which it was founded - of serving its members in the most effective way possible. This will require a good governance framework to be put in place with member states and with CMAG and the Secretary-General to ensure that the Commonwealth can be credible when it projects its values. The Commonwealth should be clear that fundamental abuses of these standards will be monitored closely by CMAG and given six months to get back on track. Where the problems involve major questions of capacity building, the Commonwealth should expect to deliver a detailed programme of significant reform within two years. And though the Commonwealth should step up its work in these areas, it is going to have to set itself a very high bar. It is clear that it has a long way to go and that it will need to be very clear about what it wants to achieve and how to get there.

Notes

1. The Commonwealth currently has applications pending from Yemen, Rwanda and the Palestinian Authority, which were deferred in 1997. As Palestine has not achieved statehood, it could not be eligible.
2. See David Held & Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt & Jonathan Perraton, *Globalisation* (Key Concepts, The Foreign Policy Centre, 1999) for an authoritative concise guide to what globalisation means, and the same authors' *Global Transformations* (Polity Press, 1999) for the most comprehensive and detailed study of global change.
3. Tony Blair, Statement by the Prime Minister on the 50th anniversary of the London Declaration, 27 April 1999.
4. Of course, intra-Commonwealth trade and investment includes that between Australia and New Zealand, India and Sri Lanka or within sub-Saharan Africa. And the strengthening flows between Britain and Australia do not depend on the Commonwealth either.
5. Jagdish Bhagwati, 'From a skeptical south to the fearful north' (1996), reprinted in *A Stream of Windows: Unsettling Reflections on Trade, Immigration and Democracy* (MIT Press, 1998).
6. While the Asian crises demonstrate problems of internal accountability as well as international stability, the severe knock-back sometimes to early '90s levels hardly invalidates the lessons of development at unprecedented speed. See Victor Mallet, *The Trouble With Tigers* (Harper Collins 1999) for a balanced view of the success and the crises, as well as an intelligent investigation of the 'Asian values' debate.
7. See Andrew Jack, *The French Exception. Still So Special?* (Profile, 1999) for an enjoyable discussion of divided attitudes to globalisation throughout French society.
8. Paul Hirst and Graeme Thompson *Globalisation in One Country? The Peculiarities of the British*, (1999) takes a sceptical view of globalisation while admitting that it would be difficult to deliver 'domestication' of the economy.
9. Bhagwati: '*Democracy and Development: New Thinking on an Old Question*', The Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Lecture (in Bhagwati, 1998) offers an excellent summary of this changing debate, from an author who wrote of "the cruel choice" in the mid-1960s; also Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen: *Hunger and Public Action* (Clarendon Press, 1989).

10. For a good summary of this debate and a positive reform agenda, see *Eliminating World Poverty: a Challenge for the 21st Century*, White Paper on International Development, British Government, Cmd 3789, 1997.
11. Paul Collier of the World Bank, quoted by Martin Wolf, 'A World Divided', *Financial Times*, 14 July 1999.
12. *Promoting Investment in the Commonwealth* (Commonwealth Business Council, 1998).
13. Dudley Seers: 'Why Visiting Economists Fail' *Journal of Political Economy* 70(4) summed up the debate in 1962, but the lessons took longer to sink in.
14. Alan Beattie, 'World Bank: Wolfensohn pledges development reform', *Financial Times*, September 29 1999.
15. See Wally Olins, *Trading Identities: Why Countries and Companies are taking on each others' roles* (The Foreign Policy Centre, 1999) on how and why nations need to manage their identities to compete for investment, trade and tourism.
16. JM Keynes *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (Macmillan, 1936). See also Charles Kindleberger *Manias, Panics and Crashes: A History of Financial Crises* (6th edition, Macmillan 1996).
17. George Soros, *The Crisis of Global Capitalism* (Little, Brown & Company 1998). Cf pp 82, 124, 185, 215 – the most substantive reference is "Even Africa has shown some signs of life", quoted by Thabo Mbeki, The Challenge of Globalisation: the Establishment of the African Economic Community, Speech at the 35th Session of the OAU Assembly, 13 July 1999.
18. *Entering the 21st Century: World Development Report 1999/2000* (The World Bank, 1999), p73.
19. The South African scholar Deon Geldenhuys, in a path-breaking contribution to the academic debate, *Foreign Political Engagement* (Macmillan, 1998) argues that the 'intervention' debate needs to be reshaped for a world of close interdependence and failed states, and shows how instruments of engagement include both cooperative involvement on a spectrum from diplomatic recognition, humanitarian aid, election observation, peacekeeping, and state-building assistance and more confrontational tools from diplomatic censure, to high conditionality aid or its withdrawal, economic sanctions and military intervention in extreme cases.

20. *South African Participation in International Peace Missions*, White Paper, South African Government, approved by Cabinet, 21 October 1998.
21. See former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans *Cooperating for Peace: The Global Agenda for the 1990s and Beyond* (Allen & Unwin, 1993) and Robert Cooper *The Postmodern State and the New World Order* (Demos, 1995) on ethics and internationalism in foreign policy.
22. A 1500-strong Commonwealth Monitoring Force was sent to Zimbabwe in 1979 in a successful four month mission.
23. Philip Johnston, 'Commonwealth has Open House for Dictators', *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 1995.
24. Some members admitted in recent years, like Cameroon, have been asked to commit to reform, but the process should be consistent, open and more detailed.
25. *Entering the 21st Century: World Development Report 1999/2000* (The World Bank, 1999).
26. The Foundation was created in 1966 and its mandate was extended in 1979 so that it works with other non-governmental organisations as well as the Commonwealth's professional associations.
27. *Nongovernmental Organisations: Guidelines for good policy and practice* The Commonwealth Foundation, 1995.
28. David Hulme and Michael Edwards (eds) *NGOs, States and Donors: Too Close for Comfort?* (Macmillan, 1997). The figures quoted is the editors' estimate, from personal experience, of foreign funding in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Kenya, p7.
29. A mailing from World Villages for Children, a London-based charity, October 1999.
30. Michael Edwards *Future Positive. International Cooperation in the 21st Century* (Earthscan, 1999), pp84-85. Edwards provides one of the best discussions of these issues, drawing on many years of work with major NGOs including Oxfam and Save The Children, and as Senior Civil Society Specialist at the World Bank. *Future Positive* makes a powerful case both for the positive role of NGOs in civil society, and the need for NGO practice to improve.
31. Ranjith Wanigavante *The State-NGO Relationship in Sri Lanka*, in Hulme and Edwards, 1997.
32. *Civil Society in the Third Millennium*, The Commonwealth Foundation, 1999.

33. See Derek Ingram: 'The Commonwealth Image' in *The Future of the Commonwealth: A Golden Opportunity* (The Royal Commonwealth Society, 1997) and also 'The Too-Cautious Commonwealth' The Roundtable, July 1999.

34. Seamus Martin, 'Hard to see benefits of Commonwealth', *Irish Times*, December 7 1998. Mark Bannister, 'Commonwealth "no longer a relic of British empire"': Chief Emeka Anyaoku promises the Irish a *céad míle fáilte* should they decide to rejoin, *Irish Times*, December 11 1998.

35. See Robert Hardman 'Friendly Games deserve their place on calendar', *Daily Telegraph*, 15 September 1998, on the success of the experiment with cricket, hockey and rugby.

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EXPORTING VALUES: Lessons from Russia

John Lloyd

Russia was the biggest laboratory for the western policy of imposing democracy and markets. But Russian hostility towards the west is now greater than at any time since Gorbachev began the reform process. What went wrong? And how do we learn the lessons? Attempting to impose capitalism without regard for local conditions or sensibilities has delivered only economic failure and political turmoil. The risk now is that the west will disengage, especially as the blame for losing Russia is becoming an issue in the US Presidential campaign. John Lloyd argues that Europe must now take the lead on a new constructive strategy if we are not to get Russian policy disastrously wrong again, and argues that we can learn important lessons for making internationalism effective elsewhere.

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Linda Colley

The leading historian of British identity shows that Eurosceptic myths of 'Europe and Britain' as separate and monolithic distort Britain's long European history, and misrepresents the nature of Continental Europe in the past today.

MODERNISING ISLAM

Ziauddin Sardar

This timely, controversial and challenging report argues that the Muslim diaspora, far from being a threat and mere agents of a global Islamic fundamentalist agenda, can play a positive role in updating Islam.

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Yasmin Alibhai-Brown

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown argues that we need to fundamentally rethink our approach to national identity, race and public culture. The old debate about multiculturalism no longer illuminates the new challenges for reinventing identity and participation in a developed Britain, a plural Europe and an increasingly interdependent world. We need to leave behind a debate about "ethnic minorities", which has too often only engaged blacks and asians rather than whites as well, if the coming battles over political culture and national identity are to have a progressive outcome.

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REINVENTING THE COMMONWEALTH

Kate Ford and Sunder Katwala

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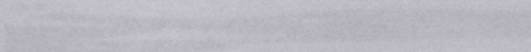
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Kate Ford and Sunder Katwala are researchers at The Foreign Policy Centre. Their previous report *Making the Commonwealth Matter* published on the modern Commonwealth's 50th anniversary, was described by the Daily Telegraph as "a challenge to member states to modernise themselves for the next century and shed the last remaining traces of the British Empire".

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REINVENTING THE COMMONWEALTH

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By standing proudly for its values so that they can deliver prosperity and democracy, the Commonwealth can pioneer a new model of international co-operation that gives countries greater ownership of their own development.

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ISBN 0-9535598-4-X

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Reinventing the Commonwealth :
policy paper submitted to the CCFD
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