



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 71/6

THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING, SINGAPORE - II

Communiqué and Declaration Tabled in the
House of Commons on February 2, 1971.

A. Final Communiqué

Commonwealth heads of government met in Singapore from 14 to 22 January. All Commonwealth countries were represented, seven by their presidents, seventeen by their prime ministers, one by the vice-president, and six by senior ministers. The Prime Minister of Singapore was in the chair.

2. This was the first heads of government meeting to be held in Asia. Heads of government welcomed this and expressed gratitude to the Government of Singapore for the hospitality it had provided.

3. The meeting expressed a warm greeting to the Prime Ministers of Tonga, Western Samoa and Fiji whose countries had become members of the Commonwealth during 1970, and particularly welcomed their membership as it brought to Commonwealth consultations additional views of the peoples of the Southwest Pacific.

Commonwealth Declaration

4. Heads of government approved unanimously and issued a Commonwealth Declaration.

International Affairs

5. Heads of government reviewed the world political situation and trends. Views were exchanged on: East-West relations; Chinese representation in the United Nations; the steps required to end the conflict in Indochina; the neutralisation of Southeast Asia; the conditions necessary for achieving a durable settlement in the Middle East; the violation of the security and sovereignty of the Republic of Guinea by the military and naval forces of Portugal in conjunction with other elements; the need for general and complete disarmament under effective international control, the cessation of the nuclear-arms race

and the conclusion of collateral measures with particular attention to nuclear disarmament until general and complete disarmament is achieved; the staging of nuclear-weapons tests and the dumping of chemical weapons in the peaceful Southwest Pacific area; and the complementary role of regional organizations and such trans-regional groupings as the Commonwealth.

Southern Africa

6. The meeting reviewed major developments in southern Africa, including in particular those in South Africa and Namibia (South West Africa), the Portuguese colonies and Rhodesia, and noted that tensions in that region were likely to increase rather than decrease unless there were fundamental changes in the conditions now prevailing. Earlier discussions on N.I.B.M.R. were recalled. There was unanimous reaffirmation of the importance of the principle that any proposals for settlement must be acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole.

7. The meeting had before it the report of the Commonwealth Sanctions Committee, which reviewed the working of economic sanctions over the last two years. Heads of government authorized the Committee to continue to review the situation.

8. Heads of government discussed fully the question of the sale of arms to South Africa.

9. Heads of government considered the factors affecting the security of maritime trade-routes in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans, which are of vital importance for a large number of Commonwealth countries. They decided to set up a study group, consisting of representatives of Australia, Britain, Canada, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia and Nigeria, with instructions to consider the question further and report to them through the Secretary-General as soon as possible.

10. Certain heads of government stipulated the understandings on which they agreed to support the proposal to set up the study group.

The Security of the Indian Ocean

11. In their discussion of a paper presented by the Prime Minister of Ceylon on the security of the Indian Ocean, heads of government agreed on the desirability of ensuring that it remains an area of peace and stability.

Economic Affairs

12. Heads of government held a full and frank discussion on the world economic situation and broadly reviewed recent developments and trends. Among the items discussed were: liberalization of trade and access to markets; the special problems relating to exports of developing countries; the generalized preferences system and the problems connected with it; international commodity problems; high freight-rates, inflation and its consequences; debt-servicing problems of developing countries; targets for the transfer of resources to developing countries; terms and conditions of assistance, including the untying of aid; supplementary financing; the possibility of a link between special drawing rights and development finance; and, the lending policies of international financial institutions.

13. Heads of government expressed their satisfaction that agreement was reached on the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade at the United Nations General Assembly. They reaffirmed their governments' resolve to take the measures to translate into reality the goals and objectives of the Decade. In summarizing their discussions, they also reaffirmed their conviction that fulfilment of the economic and social aspirations of the peoples of the developing countries was a matter of vital concern not only to the developing nations but to the world at large.

Possible British Entry into the EEC

14. Heads of government discussed Britain's possible entry into the European Economic Community and the implications of this for other Commonwealth members. Among the matters discussed were the questions of: the effect of the Common Agricultural Policy on the exports of Britain's traditional suppliers; the need for any enlarged Community to be outward-looking; standstill arrangements for those countries which desired or may be offered association or other trading arrangements with an enlarged Community; reverse preferences and their impact on international trading arrangements; the potential advantages and disadvantages for the Commonwealth in the event of Britain's accession; and methods of consultation during negotiations. They welcomed the resolve of the British Government to continue to press during the negotiations for measures to safeguard the interests of Commonwealth countries.

Commonwealth Co-operation for Development

15. Heads of government welcomed the establishment of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation and noted that the way was now open for it to be made operational.

16. Heads of government discussed the recommendations embodied in a study on Commonwealth Export Market Development. They decided that these recommendations should be given further consideration at an early meeting of trade and finance officials.

Commonwealth Information Program

17. Heads of government agreed in principle on the proposals submitted to them for a Commonwealth Information Program.

Commonwealth Co-operation on Youth Questions

18. Heads of government noted with approval the Secretariat's activities in the youth field and agreed that such activities be expanded. They noted that a number of related matters would be discussed at the forthcoming Commonwealth Education Conference in Canberra. They decided that a meeting of ministers concerned with youth matters be convened as early as possible.

Commonwealth Book-Development and Gift-Voucher Scheme

19. Heads of government approved in principle the establishment of a Commonwealth Book-Voucher Scheme.

Special Commonwealth Program for Assisting the Education of Rhodesian Africans

20. Heads of government took note of the development of the program and supported its continuation.

Commonwealth Foundation

21. Heads of government noted the progress of the Commonwealth Foundation and agreed to its proposed expansion.

Comparative Techniques of Government

22. The conference agreed that the item on "Comparative Techniques of Government", which was introduced by the Prime Minister of Canada, should be the subject of further discussion at the next meeting of Commonwealth heads of government. It was proposed that the Secretary-General should facilitate such discussion by arranging for preliminary study of the subject by appropriate officials.

Report of the Commonwealth Secretary-General

23. Heads of government took note of the third report of the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

B. Commonwealth Declaration

The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of independent sovereign states, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the common interests of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace.

Members of the Commonwealth come from territories in the six continents and five oceans, include peoples of different races, languages and religions, and display every stage of economic development from poor developing nations to wealthy industrialized nations. They encompass a rich variety of cultures, traditions and institutions. Membership of the Commonwealth is compatible with the freedom of member governments to be non-aligned or to belong to any other grouping, association or alliance.

Within this diversity all members of the Commonwealth hold certain principles in common. It is by pursuing these principles that the Commonwealth can continue to influence international society for the benefit of mankind.

WE BELIEVE that international peace and order are essential to the security and prosperity of mankind; we therefore support the United Nations and seek to strengthen its influence for peace in the world, and its efforts to remove the causes of tension between nations.

WE BELIEVE in the liberty of the individual, in equal rights for all citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief,

and in their inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which they live. We therefore strive to promote in each of our countries those representative institutions and guarantees for personal freedom under the law that are our common heritage.

WE RECOGNIZE racial prejudice as a dangerous sickness threatening the healthy development of the human race and racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil of society. Each of us will vigorously combat this evil within our own nation. No country will afford to regimes which practise racial discrimination assistance which in its own judgment directly contributes to the pursuit or consolidation of this evil policy. We oppose all forms of colonial domination and racial oppression and are committed to the principles of human dignity and equality. We will therefore use all our efforts to foster human equality and dignity everywhere and to further the principles of self-determination and non-racialism.

WE BELIEVE that the wide disparities in wealth now existing between different sections of mankind are too great to be tolerated; they also create world tensions; our aim is their progressive removal; we therefore seek to use our efforts to overcome poverty, ignorance and disease, in raising standards of life and achieving a more equitable international society. To this end our aim is to achieve the freest possible flow of international trade on terms fair and equitable to all, taking into account the special requirements of the developing countries, and to encourage the flow of adequate resources, including governmental and private resources, to the developing countries, bearing in mind the importance of doing this in a true spirit of partnership and of establishing for this purpose in the developing countries conditions which are conducive to sustained investment and growth.

WE BELIEVE that international co-operation is essential to remove the causes of war, promote tolerance, combat injustice and secure development amongst the peoples of the world; we are convinced that the Commonwealth is one of the most fruitful associations for these purposes.

In pursuing these principles the members of the Commonwealth believe that they can provide a constructive example of the multi-national approach which is vital to peace and progress in the modern world. The association is based on consultation, discussion and co-operation. In rejecting coercion as an instrument of policy they recognize that the security of each member state from external aggression is a matter of concern to all members. It provides many channels for continuing exchanges of knowledge and views on professional, cultural, economic, legal and political issues among member states. These relationships we intend to foster and extend for we believe that our multi-national association can expand human understanding and understanding among nations, assist in the elimination of discrimination based on differences of race, colour or creed, maintain and strengthen personal liberty, contribute to the enrichment of life for all, and provide a powerful influence for peace among nations.