

COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS*

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting,
Vancouver, 13-17 October 1987.

The text of the final communique and separate documents on Southern Africa, Fiji, World Trade and Commonwealth Functional Co-operation were adopted at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Vancouver, 13-17 October.

COMMUNIQUE

The text of the final communique, slightly abridged, is as follows:

Heads of Government stressed the importance they attached to sustained and constructive international dialogue and negotiation aimed at creating a world free of insecurity and tension and promoting an era of genuine accord in international relations. They agreed that the issues facing the world community towards the end of the 1980's were as challenging as ever. They expressed their resolve to make full use of the Commonwealth's capacity to assist the world community, drawing upon its proven facility for enlarging consensus.

Their views on a number of issues and problems are set out below.

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[The text of these documents was provided from the Survey of Current Affairs, Volume 17, No. 11, November 1987, pages 346-355, through the British High Commission, Canberra.]

Global Trends and Prospects

Heads of Government were conscious that they were meeting at a time when an improvement in super power relations was holding out the prospect of a more peaceful global environment. Welcoming recent developments in East-West relations, they called on the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States to work with vigour and commitment for continued progress in arms control and disarmament.

In reviewing a number of international issues, heads of Government were acutely aware of the interrelationships of economic and political factors in efforts to ensure international peace and security and of the urgent need to strengthen the role of the United Nations in dealing with both military and non-military threats to security.

Heads of Government expressed the hope that the improvement in East-West relations and prospects for peace and security and greater recognition of independence would be reflected in greater international co-operation for development. They called for a clearer acknowledgment of the need for partnership and co-ordinated approaches on the widest possible basis to secure a more robust world economy, and reiterated their commitment to efforts to revitalise international co-operation for development and their support for international institutions which sustain development.

Disarmament

Heads of Government welcomed the progress in the Geneva talks on reducing intermediate-range nuclear weapons....They urged that every effort be made to achieve agreement on significant reductions in strategic nuclear arms with a view to preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on earth. They expressed the hope that an INF agreement would provide impetus for progress in other areas of disarmament, particularly for securing a world-wide reduction in conventional forces and achieving an agreement on banning the development, production, stockpiling and deployment of chemical weapons. They believed that further progress on the verification issue would have a favourable influence on all disarmament negotiations.

Heads of Government welcomed the recent agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union to start negotiations with the aim of agreeing upon effective verification measures which would make it possible to ratify the United States/Soviet Union Threshold Test Ban Treaty of 1974 and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty of 1976 and to proceed thereafter to negotiating further limitation on nuclear testing. Heads of Government believed that this would facilitate progress towards the achievement of a negotiated and verifiable Comprehensive Test

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Ban Treaty. In the meantime, most heads of Government stressed the need for earnest efforts to be made for an immediate halt to the testing of nuclear weapons.

Noting the conclusions of the recent UN Conference on Disarmament and Development, heads of Government called for efforts to ensure that progress in arms control was accompanied where possible by a reduction in the budgets for both nuclear and conventional arms .[and] urged all countries without exception to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament.

Cyprus

Heads of Government reaffirmed...their support for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and non-aligned status of Cyprus, and reiterated their condemnation on non-recognition of the unilateral declaration of independence by the Turkish Cypriot leadership in November 1983 [see pp 422-5, 1983 and 337, 1985]. They further denounced all subsequent steps and measures taken in order to consolidate the secessionist 'state' in the area of Cyprus which, to their deep regret, still remained under foreign occupation. They noted with satisfaction that no other country besides Turkey had recognised or assisted this illegal entity and called upon all states not to recognise any Cypriot state other than the Republic of Cyprus.

. They stressed the need for the speedy withdrawal of all foreign troops and settlers from the Republic of Cyprus and in this respect noted with interest the proposal made by President Kyprianou for the demilitarisation of the Republic of Cyprus. Heads of Government stressed the importance of securing compliance with the United Nations resolutions on Cyprus in general and in particular Security Council Resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984) calling for the withdrawal of all secessionist actions as well as for the transfer of the City of Varosha to the administration of the United Nations as a first practical step in improving the situation.

Heads of Government supported the continuation of the mission of good offices of the United Nations Secretary-General entrusted to him by Security Council Resolution 550 for finding a just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem in conformity with the charter and United Nations resolutions on Cyprus and called on all parties to co-operate fully with the Secretary-General. They also noted the proposal made by President Kyprianou for a United Nations - sponsored International Conference on Cyprus.

Heads of Government commended the work of the Commonwealth Action Group on Cyprus they had set up at their 1983 Meeting in New Delhi [see pp 412-13, 1983] and the support it had given to the United Nations Secretary-General's good offices mission. As an expression of continuing solidarity with the Government and people of Cyprus and their colleague, the President of Cyprus,

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they agreed in accordance with the stand taken by the Commonwealth countries that the Group should continue to monitor developments within the scope of its terms of reference including in particular assisting the Secretary-General's efforts.

Belize

Heads of Government noted with regret Guatemala's continued non-recognition of Belize's sovereignty and independence, which they viewed as inconsistent with the movement towards peace and democracy in Central America. They urged the parties to pursue negotiations to achieve an early and lasting settlement, based on the acceptance of Belize's right to strengthen its sovereignty and independence and to preserve its territorial integrity and inviolability. Renewing their commitment to co-operate in the search for a settlement, they requested the Secretary-General to convene the Commonwealth Ministerial Committee on Belize whenever necessary. They commended the continuing role of the British Government in helping to provide for Belize's security [see p 290, 1986].

Guyana

Heads of Government welcomed the improved relations between Guyana and Venezuela, and the increase in co-operation in several areas between the two countries. In relation to the controversy arising from Venezuela's territorial claim they were encouraged by the continuing efforts and the determination of the two governments to reach agreement in accordance with the 1966 Geneva Agreement.

South Pacific

Heads of Government reaffirmed their support for the right of the peoples of the remaining non-self governing territories of the South Pacific to self-determination and independence in accordance with the Charter and decolonisation principles and practices of the United Nations.....They stressed the need to secure an early settlement on the political future of New Caledonia which reflected requirements for a viable political solution and recognised the inalienable right of all the peoples of the territory to participate by means of free democratic processes in framing the society in which they live. They also noted the unanimous view of the members of the South Pacific Forum that the recent referendum in new Caledonia had been fundamentally flawed and had made no contribution to the resolution of the situation in the territory, which could only be achieved through a genuine act of self-determination.

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Heads of Government expressed their belief that nuclear weapon free zones, on the basis, among other criteria, of agreements freely arrived at among states of a region, could constitute an important disarmament measure. They recalled that the adoption of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty by the South Pacific Forum on 6 August 1985 had been an important step in global and regional efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. They noted that the Treaty had entered into force on 11 December 1986, that nuclear weapon states had been asked to support the Treaty through adherence to the accompanying Protocols, and that the number of parties to the Treaty now totalled nine. They expressed the hope that nuclear weapon states adhering to the Protocols would do so without reservation or interpretation. Most of them renewed their strong opposition to the continuation of nuclear tests in the region.

Indian Ocean

Heads of Government noted the efforts made by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean towards agreement on preparatory work for the long-delayed United Nations Conference on the Implementation of the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. They emphasised the importance of the Conference in view of the continuing military presence of outside powers in the Indian Ocean. They reiterated the need to carry forward the preparations expeditiously in order to enable the convening of the Conference at Colombo, with the participation of all concerned states, at an early date but not later than 1990 as recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee to the 42nd United Nations General Assembly. In this context they called for full and active participation in the Conference by all permanent members of the Security Council and major maritime users, which was essential for the success of the Conference.

South Asia

Heads of Government welcomed the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement recently signed by the President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of India as an act of the highest statesmanship. They were happy to note that the Agreement meets the legitimate aspirations of all the people in Sri Lanka within a democratic system of governance...[and] acclaimed the Agreement as one arrived at bilaterally between two member states of the Commonwealth in a spirit of understanding and accommodation which will ensure regional peace and stability. Heads of Government wished the two leaders every success in the full implementation of the Agreement. They affirmed their fullest support for the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Sri Lanka.

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Heads of Government noted with satisfaction the establishment of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) in which the majority of members were Commonwealth countries. They viewed its emergence as evidence of the continuing appeal of regionalism and were hopeful that it would contribute significantly to the region's peace, stability and progress.

South East Asia

Heads of Government viewed with great concern the persisting tensions in South-East Asia, arising particularly from the continuing armed conflict in Kampuchea...They reaffirmed their support for the right of the people of Kampuchea to determine their own destiny free from foreign interference, subversion and coercion. They reiterated the call they had made at previous Meetings for the speedy withdrawal of all foreign forces from Kapuchea and agreed on the urgent need for a comprehensive political settlement which would ensure peace in the region...

Heads of Government noted with approval efforts being made towards the early establishment of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in the region, and urged all states fully to support these efforts.

Mediterranean

Heads of Government expressed their concern at the persistence of unresolved conflicts in the Mediterranean region. They renewed their call for restraint and stressed that a just and durable settlement to the problems of the region in accordance with United Nations resolutions would make a significant contribution towards the easing of tension and the improvement of international security.

Heads of Government welcomed the continuing initiatives by Mediterranean states to enhance peace, security and co-operation in their region. They noted with interest the results and decisions of the Second Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Mediterranean countries held in Brioni, Yugoslavia, in June 1987, and welcomed in particular the expressed intention of these countries to work with the other countries in the region for improving relations, reducing tensions and resolving conflicts through peaceful means.

The Caribbean

Heads of Government noted with satisfaction the continuing efforts to strengthen regional co-operation in the Caribbean, including the decision at the Eleventh Meeting of the

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in May 1987 to work towards the political union of OECS members states. They agreed that the Commonwealth should support wherever possible this initiative designed to reduce the vulnerability of small economies....

Central America

Heads of Government were gravely concerned that continuing tension in Central America posed a serious threat to the peace and stability of the whole region with potentially dangerous consequences for international security. They welcomed the Central American Accord signed in Guatemala on 7 August 1987 by the Presidents of El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua as a significant attempt to find a solution to the region's problems...They were heartened by the clear indications of genuine efforts to implement the Accord and appealed to all parties concerned to adopt a constructive attitude to the Accord so as to generate the mutual trust necessary for achieving conditions of durable security for all states in the region and respect for their sovereignty, independence and self-determination.

Middle East

Heads of Government expressed deep concern at the dangerous tensions arising from the unresolved problems of the Middle East, especially the Palestinian issue, which continued to pose a grave threat to international peace and security. Concern was also expressed at the situation in the territories occupied by Israel. They recognised that a just and lasting settlement should be on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the withdrawal of Israel from territories occupied since 1967, and recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people, including their inalienable right to a homeland, as well as the right of all states in the region to live in peace within secure borders.

Heads of Government noted the growing support for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices in order to achieve a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem.

They were of the view that the participation of all parties directly concerned in the Arab-Israel conflict, including the Palestinians, and the Permanent members of the United Nations security Council, would be a sine qua non for attaining the objectives of the Conference. Most heads of Government reaffirmed their view that the Palestine Liberation Organisation, as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, must be involved on an equal footing in negotiations for a settlement.

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Heads of Government expressed their deep concern at the violence which continues in various parts of Lebanon. They reaffirmed their support for the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Lebanon. They also expressed the hope that genuine efforts would continue to be made towards national reconciliation in Lebanon.

The Gulf

Heads of Government were gravely concerned about the increasingly dangerous situation in the Gulf with the continuation of the Iran/Iraq conflict which had already taken a colossal toll in human lives. They acknowledged that the conflict increased tensions in the wider area posing a threat to international peace and security. In stressing the need to intensify efforts to achieve a settlement, they called upon the parties to accept Security Council Resolution 598 as a first step towards a negotiated settlement and expressed their support for the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General in this respect.

Afghanistan

Heads of Government reaffirmed support for the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Representative to achieve a solution to the problem of Afghanistan which would leave the Afghan people free to determine their own future, guarantee the right of Afghan refugees to return to their homes in safety and honour, and which was based on the withdrawal of foreign troops, strict observance of the principles of non-intervention and non-interference and full respect for the independence, sovereignty and non-aligned status of Afghanistan

Small States

Heads of Government reaffirmed their view that because of their particular problems, small states merited special measures of support and should continue to have priority in the developmental assistance given by the Secretariat. They recognised that international developments continued to demonstrate the peculiar vulnerability of these states and...urged the continuation of efforts towards the achievement, at both domestic and global levels, of an environment conducive to the security and viability of these states.

Heads of Government expressed appreciation of the support given by several member governments which had enabled the office facility established in New York for permanent missions to the United Nations of small Commonwealth states to be enlarged. They noted that the enlarged facility, due to be fully functioning in

early 1988, would benefit small states from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific, and welcomed it as an admirable example of Commonwealth co-operation.

Human Rights

Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to the observance of human rights. They welcomed the work of the Secretariat's Human Rights Unit in promoting understanding and respect of human rights within the Commonwealth, in accordance with the principles enshrined in Commonwealth Declarations and the main international human rights instruments. They agreed to give active consideration to early ratification of or accession to those instruments. They asked the Secretariat to continue to facilitate exchanges and information on law reform, national institutions and domestic procedures for the promotion of human rights in Commonwealth countries.

Heads of Government affirmed their respect for the rules of international humanitarian law and universally recognised humanitarian principles. They expressed support for the International Committee of the Red Cross in its efforts to protect and assist the victims of armed conflict on the basis of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols

Mutual Assistance in Judicial Matters

Heads of Government welcomed the Commonwealth Scheme for Mutual Assistance in Criminal matters which Commonwealth Law Minister had adopted at their meeting in Harare in 1986 to establish a framework for greatly enhanced co-operation between courts, prosecution authorities and law enforcement agencies in Commonwealth countries. They pledged the accord urgency to the implementation of the Scheme...

Heads of Government also expressed satisfaction at the adoption by law Ministers of a scheme for the Transfer of Convicted Offenders within the Commonwealth, based on the desirability of furthering the rehabilitation of offenders and easing their eventual reintegration into society in their own countries

Terrorism

Heads of Government reiterated their deep concern over the incidence of terrorism worldwide and their condemnation of all terrorist activities whether perpetrated by individuals, groups or states. They renewed their pledge to counter terrorism by every means possible and to strengthen their co-operation, both formal and informal, in preventing and combating all forms of

terrorism. They also recognised the urgent need to encourage universal adoption of the relevant international conventions, to strengthen their adherence to these conventions, and to promote appropriate action through competent international organisations

They urged all countries to fulfill their obligation under international law to refrain from organising, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in other states or acquiescing in activities within their territories directed towards the commission of such acts. In particular, they stressed the need to develop effective extradition arrangements and deny terrorists of safe haven. They were also of the view that special attention should be given to the growing and pernicious nexus between terrorist groups and drug trafficking.

Law of the Sea

.. Most heads of Government reaffirmed the importance they attached to the [Law of the Sea] Convention as an instrument of international co-operation and development, and renewed their appeal to all states to sign the Convention and proceed with the ratification process without delay. They hoped that action could be taken on other parts of the Convention, in particular the proposal to establish regional centres on marine research.

Children in Detention in South Africa

Recognising that children in South Africa had become specially tragic victims of apartheid, heads of Government were deeply disturbed by the indictments made by young South African children at the International Conference on children, Repression and the Law in Apartheid South Africa held in Harare two weeks before their meeting. They were disturbed to learn that all the children testifying at the Conference had stated that they had been detained without charge, tortured and grossly maltreated by the South African authorities and that the distinguished South African lawyers at the Conference had stated that they had been detained without charge, tortured and grossly maltreated by the South African authorities and that the distinguished South African lawyers at the Conference had identified serious deficiencies in the legal protection afforded to children.

Heads of Government recalled that the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group in its Report had also commented adversely on child abuse and that by the regime's own figures large numbers of young children had been detained and many had died at the hands of the security forces over the years. They called upon the Pretoria regime immediately to open all its places of detention to regular international inspection and to provide an effective legal

framework to guarantee to children the special protection to which their vulnerability entitled them.

Economic Prospects

Heads of Government noted that 1987 was a further year of recovery from recession and of low inflation in industrial countries. But they expressed disappointment that the level of growth overall had been lower than hoped for and that the recovery had not reached large parts of the developing world where prospects remained generally poor. They were particularly troubled about the continuing plight of low-income countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, and least developed countries more generally. They agreed that successful growth-oriented adjustment and sustained development required, in addition to higher growth in industrial countries, improved market access for developing country exports, and substantially increased financial flows as well as measures to tackle the debt problem. They stressed the importance of domestic adjustment measures in both developed and developing countries and acknowledge the courageous steps being taken by many governments, especially those of low-income states. They warned that, in order for the adjustment efforts of developing countries to succeed, a more supportive external environment was imperative.

Policy Co-ordination

Heads of Government welcomed recent moves to strengthen economic policy co-ordination among the Group of Seven leading industrial countries and the agreement at their Summit Meeting in Venice in 1987 to take additional action if world economic growth proved inadequate. They were of the view that current circumstances warranted, inter alia, a higher rate of growth in domestic demand in some countries. They also welcomed the Louvre Accord on exchange rates and stressed the need for continuing efforts to secure a more stable exchange rate regime, based on an appropriate pattern of sound underlying fiscal, monetary and trade policies. They noted with interest the proposals for a more permanent regime of managed floating, designed to ensure maximum non-inflationary stability of key exchange rates. They expressed the hope that continued progress would be made towards securing improved consultations between the major industrial countries and the wide international community in relation to global economic management.

UNCTAD VII

Heads of Government were glad to receive a report on the outcome of UNCTAD VII from the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development of Zimbabwe...They welcomed the revival of a spirit of co-operation which had characterised the debate and facilitated agreement on a consensus declaration. They expressed the hope that this would encourage renewed commitment to multilateral dialogue and co-operation between developed and developing countries. They called for expeditious implementation of the conclusions and decisions of UNCTAD VII and hoped that UNCTAD would play an increasingly effective role in promoting harmonious and equitable international economic relations.

Environmental Issues

Heads of Government took note with appreciation of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development entitled Our Common Future.

They agreed that the goal of environmentally sustainable development should be central to national and international economic policy. They also agreed that, in addition to industrial pollution, much environmental stress originated in poverty and rapid population growth. Remedial action required not merely effective environmental control but also radical measures to improve living standards in developing countries. They welcomed the recent international agreement to counter threats to the earth's ozone layer and the proposals to arrest the rapid depletion of tropical forests. They expressed serious concern at the possible implication of man-made climatic change, especially for low-lying and marginal agricultural areas.

. They asked the Secretary-General to consider the problems posed for member countries by the apparently growing incidence of natural disasters, especially floods. Specifically, they asked him to convene a group of experts to examine the implications for Commonwealth countries of rises in the sea-level and other natural disasters resulting from possible climatic change...

Structural Adjustment Issues in Relation to Women

Heads of Government reiterated to view, expressed at their 1985 Meeting, that the impact of structural adjustment policies on women required specific investigation. Women, they emphasised, played a vital role in all aspects of the national economy and, in particular, in many sectors where structural adjustment measures had a great impact. They endorsed the recommendation of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs that the Secretary-General should establish, in consultation with

Finance and Economic Planning Ministers and Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs, an Expert Group on the Impact of Structural Adjustment on Women. They asked for its report, which they would consider at the 1989 Meeting, to be circulated for comment first to Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs and then to be presented to Finance Ministers.

Financial Flows, Debt and Growth-Oriented Adjustment

Heads of Government were deeply concerned at the serious deterioration in, and poor prospects for, financial flows to developing countries...They stressed the desirability of substantially increased net resource flows from developed to developing countries, to give greater support to growth-oriented adjustment and long-term development.

Heads of government had an extensive discussion of the very serious debt situation facing many low income countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa...They endorsed the measures proposed by the British Chancellor of the Exchequer to deal with problems of official bilateral debt of low-income countries pursuing appropriate policies.

In particular, they welcomed the policy which is leading to agreements at the Paris Club for longer repayment and grace periods on rescheduled debt for debt-distressed low-income countries. They stressed the importance also of reaching early agreement to reduce interest rates on such debts.

Heads of Government noted with appreciation that some Commonwealth donors had converted official development assistance (ODA) loans into grants...They urged all donors, who had not already done so, to cancel all the aid debt of all debt-distressed low-income countries. They agreed that debt relief measures must lead to additional resources and that the increased assistance to debt-distressed countries should not be at the expense of aid to their needy countries.

Heads of Government expressed disappointment at current levels of ODA now far below the United Nations targets, and urged all donors to give renewed priority to reaching them...

Heads of Government unanimously supported a very substantial enlargement of the IMF's Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF) by the end of 1987, following the recommendation of the Managing Director of the IMF for a tripling of SAF's resources as the minimum necessary to deal with the serious debt problems of low income countries. They emphasised that resources made available by donors should be additional. They noted the recent announcements by Britain and Canada that they would contribute sizeable amounts to the enlargement of SAF and they urged donor to follow suit as soon as possible.

Heads of Government also reviewed the debt situation facing middle-income countries, some of which were covered neither by the Baker Plan nor by the Lawson initiative. They welcomed the renewed attention being given to ways of making the debt problem manageable within the context of growth-oriented solutions. They commended for serious consideration by the international community the proposal put forward by the Prime Minister of Jamaica on behalf of the member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to deal with the problems facing countries with large and uncomfortably bunched debts to the international financial institutions.

Heads of Government agreed that the World Bank had an important role to play in expanding flows of finance for developing countries, both directly and indirectly, especially given the poor immediate prospects for a revival of private lending to these countries. They strongly endorsed the recommendation of Commonwealth Finance Ministers for a very substantial capital increase for the World Bank and urged rapid completion of the relevant deliberations. They welcomed the completion of the IDA VIII replenishment negotiations and hoped that the replenishment would be made fully effective at a very early date.

Heads of Government also emphasised the important role of private inflows of finance to supplement domestic savings in accelerating development...They endorsed the request made to the Secretary-General by Finance Ministers in Barbados to examine ways in which Commonwealth capital-importing countries could improve their access to private capital, including the possibilities for venture capital and portfolio investment. They suggested that particular attention to be given to the role of surplus economies in producing more, and more varied, private flows.

Heads of Government reviewed the conditionality policies of the IMF and the World Bank. They agreed that such conditionality must be responsive to growth and other development objectives and that performance criteria in IMF programmes should be sufficiently flexible to reflect these objectives. They were particularly concerned that the impact of adjustment policies on women, children and vulnerable social groups should be taken into account fully by international financial institutions. Noting that a review of adjustment policies was underway in the IMF, they welcomed the proposals by the Managing Director to revitalise the Extended Fund Facility and to make greater use in fund programmes of contingency mechanisms to avoid such programmes being thrown off track by unpredictable external factors. They renewed their earlier call for improved access to the IMF Compensatory Financing Facility as a source of finance for temporary export shortfalls. At the same time they noted recent proposals for incorporating broader contingency factors in compensatory financing arrangements, and recommended that these proposals should be given further consideration.

Commodities

Heads of Government expressed concern over the continuing instability as well as the current weakness in the purchasing power of most commodity exporters...and agreed on the need to counter unfair trading practices and protectionist measures affecting commodities. They also agreed on the importance of co-operation among producers of commodities.

Heads of Government requested the Secretariat to bring together and update the results of studies analysing the causes and effects of depressed prices for many commodities of particular concern to Commonwealth developing countries, especially low-income countries, and to consider new approaches to commodity problems. In the meantime, they called for renewed efforts, including greater technical and financial help, to secure more stable commodity markets and greater diversification of developing countries' economies....

Economic Problems of Small States

Heads of Government expressed appreciation of the continuing work done by the Secretariat on the economic problems of small states. They urged the Secretary-General to continue to give high priority to these countries' needs. They thought it important to improve co-operation among the small states themselves and for the Commonwealth to maintain recognition of these states as a group and to ensure that their problems were given adequate attention in international fora generally.

Heads of Government recognised that the question of graduation from eligibility for World Bank and IDA funds was of special concern to the Commonwealth and particularly to its smaller members. They called on the World Bank to ensure that countries were not prematurely graduated and that the graduation process took into account not only per capita GNP but also the circumstances of individual countries, including their ability to tap alternative sources of finance.

Heads of Government also noted those particular difficulties faced by small states in international trade, especially in view of their greater reliance on international markets and their need to diversify from highly specialised commodity exports. They deplored the severity of trade barriers confronting small states, and called for more attention to the special needs of states within the framework of more liberal trading arrangements.

Heads of Government recognised the crucial importance of maritime resources for the small states concerned, especially island developing countries, and the need for greater assistance to them to protect and maximise their utilisation of these resources

Least Developed Countries

Heads of Government emphasised the need for full and expeditious implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and of the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review as adopted. They recognised, inter alia, that, while the LDCs bore primary responsibility for their overall development, the developed countries should attain the internationally agreed targets for ODA to these countries as expeditiously as possible. They welcomed the decision of the United Nations...to convene a United Nations Conference at a high level on the LDCs in 1990 to review and appraise the implementation of the SNPA.

Food

Heads of Government expressed grave concern over the continuing food emergencies in certain countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the adverse effects on food production of floods and drought elsewhere, especially in Asia. As an immediate measure, those Commonwealth countries in a position to do so resolved to help the affected countries in all possible ways and requested other donor nations and multilateral organisations to increase their relief efforts...[They] agreed that the countries concerned should intensify their efforts to increase food production - including livestock and fisheries - by completing the necessary adjustment in their agricultural structures, and developing and implementing appropriate food management and security systems.

Emphasising the importance of a helpful external environment to this process, heads of Government recognised the need for the Secretariat's existing technical assistance programmes to be strengthened, especially in the areas of food management and security and where they could complement the activities of other agencies.

Shelter for the Homeless

Heads of Government noted with satisfaction that the United Nations General Assembly had celebrated the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987. They also noted that the UN Declaration on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless envisaged international measures under a programme of action up to the year 2000. They expressed their appreciation of action already taken in the context of Commonwealth programmes of functional co-operation and invited the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to improve the shelter and neighbourhood of all the poor and disadvantaged throughout the Commonwealth by the year 2000.

STATEMENT ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

We continue to recognise the situation in Southern Africa as one of the major challenges facing the world community today. We reaffirm our shared international responsibility to work together for the total eradication of apartheid and the brutalities that it continues to inflict on its victims within and in the neighbourhood of South Africa.

We consider that the crisis engendered in the region by apartheid has seriously deteriorated since our last Meeting in Nassau. Repressive measures resulting in more suffering and loss of life have been intensified within South Africa, and the toll taken by acts of war and destruction directed against South Africa's neighbours in an attempt to sustain and defend apartheid has continued to rise. Southern Africa desperately needs regional peace and stability.

It is therefore our collective view that the urgency of international action against the intolerable situation that exists in Southern Africa has heightened and that as Commonwealth members we have the continuing obligation to make an effective contribution towards the ending of apartheid and relieving South Africa's neighbours of the burden of being forced to devote much of their resources to their resolute and determined efforts to defend their security and advance the cause of freedom and independence in their region. We recognise that these states are making intolerable sacrifices in a cause that concerns all countries and peoples.

We have reviewed developments in Southern Africa since our Nassau Meeting which produced the Accord on Southern Africa [see pp 344-5, 1985] and reaffirmed our shared commitment to its objectives. We also recall the London Review Meeting in August 1986 which considered the Report of the eminent Persons Group (EPG), Mission to South Africa, established under the Nassau Accord [see pp 256-8, 1986]. The EPG was to initiate, in the context of a suspension of violence on all sides, a process of dialogue across lines of colour, politics and religion, with a view to establishing a non-racial and representative government.

Meeting for the first time in full session since the publication of the Report, we warmly commend the work of the EPG and agree that the EPG mission offered a real opportunity for the South African Government to initiate a negotiating process between the Government and the true representatives of the black majority, leading, ultimately, to a peaceful resolution of the problem of apartheid and to a break in the cycle of violence in the region. Pretoria's rejection of the 'Negotiating Concept' submitted by the EPG, which was underlined by its brutal attacks against Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe on 19 May 1986, was nothing less than a tragedy for the region.

At Nassau we appealed to the authorities in Pretoria to take a number of steps in a genuine manner and as a matter of urgency if the crisis of apartheid was not to end in even greater tragedy. In spite of the Pretoria regime's increased intransigence since Nassau, we remain convinced that only through negotiations can catastrophe be averted. We are encouraged in this by the obvious yearning for peace with justice which is evident among South Africa's peoples of all races as was dramatically highlighted by the recent Dakar Meeting. Accordingly, we again call on the South African Government to accept the 'Negotiating Concept' of the EPG which remains as valid today as it was when the Group put it forward.

Commonwealth Response - Sanctions

With the exception of Britain we believe that economic and other sanctions have had a significant effect on South Africa and that their wider, tighter, and more intensified application must remain an essential part of the international community's response to apartheid.

We realise that if the sanctions and other measures we have adopted are to have maximum effect, they must be part of a wider programme of international action. While mindful of the widespread view within the international community that comprehensive and mandatory sanctions would be the quickest route to bring Pretoria to the negotiating table, we, with the exception of Britain, believe that, pending the acceptance of such a position by the international community as a whole, genuine efforts should be made to secure the universal adoption of the measures now adopted by most Commonwealth and other countries, including the United States and the Nordic countries. We commit ourselves to continuing efforts to secure a more concerted application of a global sanctions programme.

Further, in the interest of greater effectiveness, we have decided to continue co-ordination by the Secretariat of the implementation of measures as agreed by each member and to identify any efforts to frustrate them.

With the exception of Britain, we agree to evaluate on a continuous basis the application of sanctions in order to assess their impact. Moreover, given the significance of South Africa's relationship with the international financial system and the need for a better understanding of developments and possibilities in this sphere, with the exception of Britain we will initiate an expert study, drawing on independent sources, to examine this aspect of the South African economy.

Finally, mindful of our commitment at Nassau which we reaffirm here in Vancouver, we agree that we will continue to take further action individually and collectively as deemed appropriate in response to the situation as it evolves until apartheid is dismantled; in the case of all but Britain that includes sanctions.

South Africa and its Neighbours

In addition to our programme of action addressed directly to apartheid itself, we believe that the desperate plight of South Africa's neighbours calls for a comprehensive response from the international community. Substantial and invaluable help is already being provided by several Commonwealth countries through programmes of development assistance and security. However, the capacity of South Africa's neighbours to resist Pretoria's policy of destabilisation and destruction must be strengthened.

South Africa's aims are clear enough. In part, their actions are intended to coerce the Front-Line States into abandoning support for the black majority in South Africa, and to force them into co-existence with apartheid. They are also intended to perpetuate the dependence on South Africa of the majority of these countries whose development efforts are now being undermined by the need to confront Pretoria's aggression. Therefore, if assistance for the region's development is to be effective, the international community must also address the security needs of the Front-Line States.

The Commonwealth is well placed to give a lead in this field. The Commonwealth has always considered assistance to the region as an integral part of its support for the struggle against apartheid. But so far, such assistance has been directed mainly to efforts to reduce dependence on South Africa. In the face of a systematic campaign to undermine the economies of these countries, the Commonwealth should itself take - and encourage the wider community to take - a broad view of the region's needs; assistance is needed both to advance disengagement from the South African economy and to provide for its security against South African aggression.

Against this background, and while acknowledging the continuing value of the forms of bilateral and multilateral assistance now being provided, we have decided to initiate an enhanced programme of co-ordinated Commonwealth assistance consistent with and complementary to the objective of SADCC [Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference] and other agencies collaborating to this and with the region, including the Africa Fund. We see these efforts as directed towards the Front-Line and neighbouring states, particularly Mozambique. We further see these efforts directed to key sectors such as transportation and communications, embracing both their rehabilitation and their physical protection. In this respect we have decided to give

priority attention to the Limpopo Line and the Port of Maputo. On a related matter, we propose to examine the question of transit rights of the land-locked states of the region.

We see Mozambique in a key geographical position in relation to the Front-Line States. If the region is to cease to be hostage to South Africa, special and urgent attention must be given to the needs of Mozambique. We have therefore decided to establish a special fund to provide technical assistance to Mozambique. We also stand ready, if requested, to embark upon a process of consultations with a view to enabling those of our members in a position to do so to make appropriate contributions to the security needs of Mozambique and other Front-Line States requiring such help.

Reaching into South Africa

We are agreed that the Commonwealth should give support to the victims and opponents of apartheid within South Africa.

We endorse individual and collective efforts to provide assistance to the victims of apartheid and we resolve to augment those efforts to the fullest extent possible. We recognise the particular value of the Nassau Fellowship Programme in providing educational opportunities to young South Africans, and intend to expand it.

In light of the problems created by the state of emergency and other repressive measures in South Africa, we consider the provision of humanitarian and legal assistance to detainees and their families a high priority, and those in a position to do so undertake to increase their individual efforts in this regard.

Recognising its growing importance, we shall also increase our support to the trade union movement in South Africa, in particular, for labour education.

We plan wherever possible to increase our individual contributions to economic and social development programmes in such fields as education.

Despite having to confirm the conclusion of the EPG that Pretoria is not prepared to negotiate fundamental change in South Africa, we believe that we should take advantage of any opportunity to promote real internal dialogue. In the absence of movement by the authorities in Pretoria, we shall increase our contacts with South Africans of differing viewpoints. We shall make an enhanced effort to give support to the opponents of apartheid through such activities as the organisation of conferences on the future of South Africa, the arrangement of visits and the publication of studies related to ending apartheid. We have agreed to consider means by which these activities could be co-ordinated and their importance highlighted.

The need for Commonwealth action to counteract South African propaganda and censorship by exposing the truth about apartheid has been made more pressing by the draconian curbs imposed on the press at the beginning of 1987. These amount to an all-out attempt to replace independent reporting of events in the country with its own propaganda. Largely as a result of these restrictions, much of what is happening in South Africa no longer reaches the television screens and newspapers of the outside world.

In view of what is at stake, we are agreed that the Commonwealth should give high priority to counteracting South African propaganda and censorship.

Namibia

We are gravely concerned that the impasse in Namibia's progress to independence under the terms of Resolution 435 seems to have assumed the proportions of a permanent stalemate. We again stress the illegality of South Africa's presence in Namibia and we remain unanimously convinced of the view that Resolution 435 provides the only basis for an internationally acceptable settlement of the Namibian question.

Linking the withdrawal of Cuban forces to a settlement under Resolution 435 - a linkage which we have unanimously rejected - has, in effect, provided an opening for the South African regime to continue to frustrate any progress towards implementation of the Resolution. The challenge, therefore, is to develop an effective process of negotiation leading to the Resolution's implementation.

At Nassau we made it clear that the action which we envisaged in the Accord on Southern Africa should be directed equally towards ensuring South Africa's compliance with the wishes of the international community on the question of Namibia. We also recall that at New Delhi we agreed that if South Africa continued to obstruct the implementation of Resolution 435, the adoption of appropriate measures under the charter of the United Nations would have to be considered. These continue to be valid conclusions.

The Way Forward

The unfolding - but often unseen - tragedy of South Africa impels us to ensure that the world continues to focus its attention on apartheid until we meet again in full session. With the exception of Britain, we see great value as a measure of our continuing concern in establishing a Committee of Foreign Ministers able to meet periodically to provide high level impetus and guidance in furtherance of the objectives of this statement

The Committee will comprise the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Guyana, India, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe and will be chaired by the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada.

We believe that this Statement provides a framework for a significant Commonwealth initiative to assist the region, and is one to which a number of Commonwealth countries, which hitherto have not been in a position to contribute to multilateral efforts, will be enabled to do so. It will require detailed consultations between both donor Commonwealth governments and the countries in question. We are instructing the Secretary-General to initiate these processes as a matter of the highest priority

STATEMENT ON FIJI

Commonwealth leaders acknowledged that, on the basis of established Commonwealth conventions, Fiji's membership of the Commonwealth lapsed with the emergence of the Republic on 15 October. They viewed with sadness the developments in Fiji and hoped for a resolution of the problem by the people of Fiji on a basis consistent with the principles that have guided the Commonwealth. They agreed that the Commonwealth would, if requested, be ready to offer its good offices towards such a resolution and, on such basis, if the circumstances warrant, to consider the question of Fiji's membership of the Commonwealth if asked to do so.

VANCOUVER DECLARATION ON WORLD TRADE

In this separate declaration the heads of Government said that continuing implementation of global protectionist measures would increase the risk of exchange rate instability and exacerbate the problems of development and indebtedness, affecting particularly the exports and growth prospects of developing countries and their ability to service debt. They pledged themselves to work for a more open, viable and durable multilateral trading system to promote growth and development, and agreed on the crucial need for reform of all trade-distorting agricultural policies.

The heads of Government affirmed that a strong and credible General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was essential to the well-being of all trading countries and was the best bulwark against mounting protectionist pressures. They stated that the functioning of the GATT should be improved through enhancing its role in maintaining an open multilateral system and its capacity in the area of dispute settlement.

The Secretary-General was requested to give priority to the Commonwealth Secretariat's work in assisting member governments in the trade field through advice and technical support, and the larger states in the Commonwealth undertook to assist both developing and smaller states through consultations and trade policy training programmes.

COMMONWEALTH FUNCTIONAL CO-OPERATION

In a separate communique, the heads of Government reaffirmed they placed on functional co-operation as a vital expression of the Commonwealth spirit of partnership and the importance of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation as the primary Commonwealth agency for development co-operation.

Distance Education

The report of the Expert Group chaired by Lord Briggs was welcomed by the heads of Government, who pledged themselves to work towards its central recommendation that 'any learner anywhere in the Commonwealth shall be able to study any distance teaching programme available from any bona fide college or university in the Commonwealth'. They agreed to create a Commonwealth institution to promote co-operation in distance education, which may become the University of the Commonwealth. A number of countries, including Britain, promised financial support or other facilities for the scheme. The Secretary-General was requested to convene a working group, including representatives of the main donor countries and others with experience and interest in distance education, to develop the financial and organisational framework, establish guidelines and set priorities for the institution, with the aim of starting the first co-operative programme as early as possible.

Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

Welcoming the Commonwealth Scheme for Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters adopted by Law Ministers in Harare in 1986, the heads of Government agreed on the urgent need for its implementation, noting that some governments had already taken action to deal with the tracing and forfeiture of the proceeds of drug trafficking. There was concern at the marked rise in drug abuse and illicit trafficking and at the problems caused to states which had been made into transit points for the drug trade; and the Secretariate was recommended to assist Commonwealth countries in organising training to deal with the problems of drug trafficking and addiction. A commitment was made to maximise international co-operation and especially to work for the early conclusion of the United Nations Convention

Against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

Deep concern was expressed over the global Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) situation. The heads of Government encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts to facilitate regional AIDS control activities in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other international agencies, offering support at national level to the Secretariat's initiatives in combating AIDS.

Commonwealth Functional Co-operation

A number of other functional co-operation programmes were also discussed. The importance of the Commonwealth Youth Programme was reaffirmed, but it was agreed that a balance had to be struck between the Programme's requirements and the financial capacity of governments. The heads of Government welcomed the concept of a Commonwealth Health Development Programme which would increase skills and experience in all Commonwealth countries to deal with the priority health problems of the development of the initiative. The Commonwealth Science Council was praised for its work in promoting scientific co-operation and helping member countries to establish a firm scientific and technological capability for sustainable development. The Secretary-General was requested to develop a long-term programme of action on conservation and development based on the proposals contained in the report Conservation for Sustainable Development, and Commonwealth Agriculture Ministers were requested also to examine what practical assistance could be given to the programme at their November 1987 meeting.

The heads of Government discussed the report of the Expert Group on Youth Unemployment, noting with concern its evidence that unemployment among young men and women was significantly worse than among the working population as a whole and that the problem was intensifying in developing countries. They requested the Secretariate to collect and disseminate material on member countries youth employment policies, and reiterated their support for the work of the Commonwealth Trade Union Council, including its programmes for trade unions in South Africa and Namibia and for the training of women workers throughout the Commonwealth. They expressed their appreciation of the increased role of the Commonwealth Foundation in promoting collaboration between the professional community, non-governmental organisations and governments, and hoped that all Commonwealth countries would become members of the Foundation

