

MEETING OF COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS, SEPTEMBER 1966

(London, 6-15 September)

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers which began on 6th September, ended today. Cyprus, Malawi and Uganda were represented by their Presidents, and Kenya by its Vice-President. Australia, Britain, Canada, The Gambia, Guyana, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Sierra Leone and Singapore were represented by their Prime Ministers, and Jamaica by its Acting Prime Minister. Ghana was represented by the Deputy Chairman of the National Liberation Council; Trinidad and Tobago by its Deputy Prime Minister, India by its Minister of External Affairs and Pakistan and Zambia by their Foreign Ministers. Ceylon was represented by its Minister of Justice and Nigeria by Brigadier Ogundipe. The Prime Minister of Britain was in the Chair.

This was the first Meeting at which Guyana was represented as a member of the Commonwealth and the other Heads of Government welcomed its Prime Minister. They agreed that Commonwealth countries would collectively sponsor Guyana's application for United Nations membership.

They noted with pleasure that the Bechuanaland Protectorate would become independent on 30th September as Botswana, Basutoland as Lesotho on 4th October, and Barbados on 30th November; and that all three countries had expressed the wish to become members of the Commonwealth. All member governments agreed to accept them as members of the Commonwealth, upon completion of the necessary legislative and constitutional processes, and looked forward to welcoming them to the Commonwealth association and to sponsoring their application for membership of the United Nations.

In the course of a comprehensive review, Prime Ministers discussed the major issues arising from the international situation. They considered that it had never been more important that the United Nations should be as strong and effective a spokesman of the world community as possible and they pledged themselves to continue efforts to place the organisation's finances on a sound footing and to strengthen the organisation in all its aspects, including its ability to discharge its peace-keeping role. They were unanimous in expressing their deep appreciation of U Thant's efforts on behalf of peace and international co-operation and expressed the hope that he would reconsider his decision not to offer himself for a second term.*

The Prime Minister of Malaysia informed his colleagues of the ending of the Indonesian confrontation against his country. This was warmly welcomed as opening the way for the countries concerned to devote more of their resources to the urgent task of national development and offering the hope of constructive co-operation within the region.

** The text of a telegram sent by Commonwealth Heads of Government to the United Nations Secretary-General is annexed.*

The Prime Ministers greeted with pleasure the announcement made to the Meeting that Pakistan and Malaysia had resumed diplomatic relations.

Prime Ministers recognised the dangers of a narrowing of horizons and a failure to view the great human problems of racial injustice, poverty and war in the universal terms which alone offer hope of relief to this and succeeding generations. Prime Ministers affirmed their conviction that the greater the international stresses proved to be, the greater the need for bridge-building associations to try to resolve them. They recorded their view of the continuing and vital importance of such broad groupings as the United Nations and the Commonwealth itself, comprising representatives of so many races, continents and cultural traditions.

Rhodesia

The Commonwealth Conference devoted a major portion of its discussions to the problem of Rhodesia.

As at Lagos, in January of this year, the members of the conference reaffirmed that the authority and responsibility for guiding Rhodesia to independence rested with Britain but they acknowledged that the problem was of wider concern to Africa, the Commonwealth and the world.

They reaffirmed the view expressed in the communique issued at the end of the Lagos conference as follows:

The Prime Ministers declared that any political system based on racial discrimination was intolerable. It diminished the freedom alike of those who imposed it and of those who suffered under it. They considered that the imposition of discriminatory conditions of political, social, economic and educational nature upon the majority by any minority for the benefit of a privileged few was an outrageous violation of the fundamental principles of human rights. The goal of future progress in Rhodesia should be the establishment of a just society based on equality of opportunity to which all sections of the community could contribute their full potential and from which all could enjoy the benefits due to them without discrimination or unjust impediment. To this end several principles were affirmed. The first was the determination of all present that the rebellion must be brought to an end. All those detained for purely political reasons should be released. Political activities should be constitutional and free from intimidation from any quarter. Repressive and discriminatory laws should be repealed.

They further re-affirmed the statement made in their London Communique of 1965 and repeated in Lagos that 'the principle of one man one vote was regarded as the very basis of democracy and this should be applied to Rhodesia.'

They remain unanimous on the objective that the rebellion in Rhodesia must be brought to an end speedily. In order to achieve this objective, most of the Heads of Government expressed their firm opinion that force was the only sure means of bringing down the illegal régime in Rhodesia. Others, however, shared the British Government's objections to the use of force to impose a constitutional settlement, while agreeing that it was not ruled out where necessary to restore law and order.

Most Heads of Government urged that Britain should make a categorical declaration that independence would not be granted before majority rule is established on the basis of universal adult franchise and that this declaration should not be conditional on whether the illegal régime agreed to surrender or not. They further urged that Britain should refuse to resume discussions or to negotiate with the illegal régime.

The British Prime Minister stated that the British Government would not recommend to the British Parliament any constitutional settlement which did not conform with the six principles; that they attached particular importance to the fifth principle, namely that any settlement must be, and be seen to be, acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole; that they regarded it as implicit in this fifth principle that the test of acceptability must enable the people of Rhodesia as a whole to indicate whether or not they were prepared to accept any settlement which provided for the grant of independence before majority rule was achieved; and that there would be no independence before majority rule if the people of Rhodesia as a whole were shown to be opposed to it.

The Conference noted the following decisions of the British Government:

- (a) After the illegal régime is ended a legal government will be appointed by the Governor and will constitute a broadly based representative administration. During this interim period the armed forces and police will be responsible to the Governor. Those individuals who are detained or restricted on political grounds will be released and normal political activities will be permitted provided that they are conducted peacefully and democratically without intimidation from any quarter;
- (b) The British Government will negotiate, with this interim administration, a constitutional settlement directed to achieving the objective of majority rule, on the basis of the six principles;
- (c) This constitutional settlement will be submitted for acceptance to the people of Rhodesia as a whole by appropriate democratic means;
- (d) The British Parliament and Government must be satisfied that this test of opinion is fair and free and would be acceptable to the general world community;
- (e) The British Government will not consent to independence before majority rule unless the people of Rhodesia as a whole are shown to be in favour of it.

Most Heads of Government made it clear that in their view political leaders and others detained should be immediately and unconditionally released before an interim representative Government was formed, in which they should be adequately represented. They further expressed the view that any ascertainment of the wishes of the people of Rhodesia as a whole should be by a referendum based on Universal Adult Suffrage i.e. one man, one vote.

The Heads of Government also noted that the British Government proposed immediately to communicate its intentions as indicated above through the Governor to all sections of opinion in Rhodesia and to inform the illegal régime there that if they are not prepared to take the initial and indispensable steps

whereby the rebellion is brought to an end and executive authority is vested in the Governor, the following related consequences will ensue:-

(a) The British Government will withdraw all previous proposals for a constitutional settlement which have been made; in particular they will not thereafter be prepared to submit to the British Parliament any settlement which involves independence before majority rule.

(b) Given the full support of Commonwealth representatives at the United Nations, the British Government will be prepared to join in sponsoring in the Security Council of the United Nations before the end of this year a resolution providing for effective and selective mandatory economic sanctions against Rhodesia.

The Conference had before it an analysis of the working of economic sanctions prepared by the Sanctions Committee set up in Lagos. It was agreed that, though sanctions had undoubtedly depressed the Rhodesian economy, they were unlikely at their present level to achieve the desired political objectives within an acceptable period of time. Accordingly, the Heads of Government were generally agreed on the need for stronger and mandatory economic sanctions under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Most were convinced that mandatory sanctions of a general and comprehensive character should be applied under Chapter VII Articles 41 and 42 of the United Nations Charter, and should cover both exports and imports. Others favoured sanctions on selected individual commodities important to the economy of Rhodesia. The Heads of Government recorded their appreciation of the work of the Sanctions Committee and requested it to continue its work.

There was unanimity of view that Commonwealth countries should continue to co-operate to the fullest extent possible in the pursuit of these objectives for Rhodesia notwithstanding some differences of opinion as to the most effective means of achieving them.

It was also agreed unanimously that assistance should be given to Zambia to produce a more complete cut-off of trade with Rhodesia and to assist her to withstand any serious effect on her economy resulting therefrom. To this end they requested that the Zambian Sub-Committee of the Sanctions Committee should continue its efforts in co-ordinating further Commonwealth assistance. Continuing consideration should also be given to the problems of Malawi.

The Heads of Government agreed that the problem of Rhodesia should be kept under constant review, and that they would meet again soon if the illegal régime were not brought to an end speedily.

The Heads of Government have had one overriding purpose in their consideration of the Rhodesian situation; a consideration which has now extended over four meetings of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. That purpose is to end the perpetuation of power in that country in the hands of a minority, with only ineffective and inadequate guarantees of the political rights of the majority. Such a situation must be replaced by an arrangement based on a multi-racial society in which human and political rights will be vested in all the people without discrimination and in accordance with the true principles of democracy.

Vietnam

The Prime Ministers discussed the situation in Vietnam. They noted with particular concern that since they had last met the conflict had intensified. They expressed deep anxiety at the tragic and mounting loss of life and devastation in Vietnam, and were conscious of the danger that the conflict might spread and develop into a major international conflict.

They reviewed recent developments, including the many efforts, representing a wide range of international opinion, which had been made since their last meeting to end the conflict and achieve a negotiated settlement. They reaffirmed their continuing belief in the urgent need to establish conditions in which the people of Vietnam might be able to live in peace and be free from outside pressures in order to be able to work out their own destiny within the broad framework of the Geneva Agreements of 1954.

They regretted that the Mission which they had appointed at their 1965 Meeting had not been able to undertake its task. Nonetheless they believed that the Commonwealth should continue its efforts to promote peace in Vietnam.

Disarmament

The Prime Ministers reaffirmed their support for the aim of general and complete disarmament subject to effective international inspection and control. They expressed regret that, since the conclusion of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963, the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Conference had not reached agreement either on general and complete disarmament or on more limited measures; but they expressed the view that this conference had performed thorough and useful work in defining the areas of disagreement on specific measures. They agreed that this conference is a useful forum for detailed disarmament negotiations, and they expressed the hope that, when it reconvened after the conclusion of Twenty First United Nations General Assembly, it would be able to agree on a solution of the most urgent problems.

Prime Ministers recorded their view that events were throwing into ever sharper relief the need for firm and far-reaching agreements on disarmament. They were convinced that the persistence of political tensions gave a reason not to relax but to redouble efforts to this end.

They expressed their concern at the growing danger of nuclear proliferation. The Meeting deplored recent nuclear weapons tests conducted in the atmosphere by two major powers. Commonwealth Governments recorded their hope that all steps would be taken to bring about a universally binding nuclear test ban treaty and to persuade those nuclear states concerned to participate in discussions on disarmament.

Nevertheless Prime Ministers were of the opinion that useful progress could be made in the control of nuclear arms and that such progress would increase the momentum towards world-wide agreements on disarmament. To this end they reaffirmed the principles set out in Resolution 2028 (XX) on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 19th November 1965.

Prime Ministers emphasised in particular that while there was still time it was imperative to halt the spread of nuclear weapons by the signature of a non-proliferation treaty. They urged all countries, nuclear as well as non-nuclear weapon powers, to agree to measures to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Prime Ministers regarded it as no less important to complete the test ban treaty by agreement to stop underground tests. They welcomed the fact that initiatives had been taken by some non-nuclear weapon countries both in suggesting procedures for bridging the differences among the major nuclear weapon powers as well as in setting in motion arrangements for international seismological co-operation. They trust that these initiatives, along with the rapid developments which are taking place in the field of detection and identification of seismological events could help to lead towards an early extension of the present partial test ban treaty to include an agreement to ban underground tests.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government pledged themselves to work for these ends both within and outside the United Nations, and appealed to all governments to do likewise.

Africa

Apart from Rhodesia itself, the Meeting also considered other problems in Southern Africa. It expressed its concern at the continuing refusal of Portugal to concede the right of self-determination to its territories. The Meeting expressed the hope that the remaining dependent territories in Africa would soon be granted the right of self-determination.

The Meeting also expressed concern at the denial by South Africa of its international obligations in respect of the mandated territory of South-West Africa. There was some discussion of the recent decision on this territory by the International Court of Justice. Prime Ministers drew attention with regret to the fact that the Court had not pronounced on the merits of the issue.

While the Meeting noted that it was still open to the United Nations to raise collectively with the Court the question of South Africa's discharge of its responsibilities under the mandate, most members thought it necessary that the United Nations should now revoke the mandate of South Africa in respect of South-West Africa and take over responsibility for its administration until such time as it achieves independence. They noted that this matter would be considered at the forthcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Prime Ministers noted that there was danger of an escalation of conflict arising from territorial claims in Africa, particularly in the Horn of Africa, and they expressed the hope that disputes on changes in international boundaries would be settled by peaceful means and outside powers would refrain from taking steps which could aggravate the situation in that area.

Heads of Government condemned the continued practice of apartheid by the Government of South Africa and the adoption of oppressive and discriminatory measures against the non-white population of that country.

Cyprus

The Prime Ministers noted the developments with regard to Cyprus since their last meeting, including the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18th December 1965, and reaffirmed their view that the Cyprus problem should be solved within the framework of the United Nations and its Charter and in accordance with the principles of democracy and justice and in conformity with the wishes of the people of Cyprus.

Dependent Territories

Britain made a statement to the Meeting about the progress of the remaining British dependencies towards self-government or independence.

In the last year there have been nine constitutional conferences involving twelve territories and agreement on the final status of eleven had been reached. These included Guyana, the Bechuanaland Protectorate (Botswana), Basutoland (Lesotho), Barbados, Mauritius and Antigua, St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Dominica, St Lucia, St Vincent and Grenada. When all these agreements have been put into effect over the next few months, twenty-two dependencies will remain, many of them with very small populations. A new constitution is about to be introduced in Fiji. The British Government is engaged in working out new constitutional arrangements in the near future for a number of other territories including Bermuda and the Virgin Islands. They are also engaged in discussions about the special positions of British Honduras, Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands. The British Government stands ready to give independence to territories that want it and can sustain it. For the others Britain is willing to work out arrangements appropriate to each territory that will enable them, if they wish, to continue in some form of association with Britain.

The Prime Ministers noted with approval the report of the New Zealand Prime Minister on the progress being made by the Independent State of Western Samoa and the fact that the Cook Islands had become a fully self-governing state freely associated with New Zealand.

They noted with approval the progress that had been made and was in train to bring British territories towards independence or some other solution of their choice. They welcomed the assurance of the continuing objective of British policy in this regard.

Prime Ministers were informed about the association arrangements being made with Antigua, St Kitts Nevis Anguilla, Dominica, St Lucia, St Vincent and Grenada. They noted that while these include provision for Britain to be responsible for the external affairs and defence of these territories in consultation with their Governments it had been agreed that a substantial measure of authority in the conduct of their external relations should be delegated to the associated states. Prime Ministers agreed that consultations should be held about the question of representation of the Associated States of the Eastern Caribbean at Commonwealth Meetings.

In relation to British Honduras some concern was expressed about the current mediation between Britain and Guatemala, and the hope was expressed that particular care would be taken to ensure that the people of British Honduras are given the fullest opportunity to express their views freely about any

proposed arrangements affecting their future. Britain gave a firm assurance that no settlement would be reached that was not in accordance with the wishes of the people of British Honduras.

Economic Affairs

The Prime Ministers held a general discussion on the world economic situation. They noted that Commonwealth Trade Ministers at their Meeting in June 1966 had had extensive and valuable consultations on world trade. It was recognised that, while Commonwealth trade must be seen in the larger context of international trade of which it was a vital part, there was continuing scope for expansion of Commonwealth trade and need to strengthen to this end the well-established links among Commonwealth members. In this context the value of the Commonwealth preference system was recognised. Heads of Government endorsed the continuing need for close consultation and co-operation among Commonwealth countries in international forums, particularly with the view to improving conditions for international commodity trade including questions of better access and more stable prices for primary products remunerative to producers and fair to consumers and to increasing the openings in international markets for exports of manufactured and semi-manufactured goods from developing countries so essential in the development of their economies.

Prime Ministers reaffirmed the hope that the Kennedy Round of trade negotiations would lead to a substantial growth in international trade. Failure of the negotiations could lead to the further development of trade blocs and intensified trade restrictions. Such growth was of vital concern for the economic progress of Commonwealth countries. Despite the slow progress of the negotiations, Heads of Government attached importance to achieving an early settlement covering both industrial and agricultural products and resulting in increased benefits for all concerned, including the developing countries.

They observed that the British Government had indicated at the Trade Ministers' Meeting its readiness to seek membership in the European Economic Community provided that the essential interests of Britain and other Commonwealth countries were safeguarded. The British Government stated that they would make available the maximum information possible to other Commonwealth Governments on the progress of exploratory discussions and would at all stages of any negotiations consult closely with other Commonwealth Governments. The other Heads of Government noted this assurance and stressed the importance of consultations at all stages of exploratory talks, discussions and negotiations. The hope was expressed that the interests of developing countries would receive special attention during these talks.

Heads of Government also noted the statement by the representative of Nigeria that his country had recently signed an Agreement of Association with the European Economic Community.

They noted with approval that, in accordance with their decision in 1965, which had been carried further by Commonwealth Trade Ministers at their meeting in June 1966, a preliminary conference of officials engaged in economic planning was to be convened to consider the various methods adopted in Commonwealth countries and see whether a mutual exchange of current plans

could be used to improve them and thus promote trade and economic progress within the Commonwealth.

Heads of Government recognised the importance of the strength of sterling and the need for additional liquidity for international payments and they expressed the hope that substantial progress in this direction would be made at the forthcoming meeting of the International Monetary Fund in Washington. They attached particular importance to this matter since they recognised that the maintenance of economic expansion in the fully industrialised countries as well as in less developed countries was a basic requirement for the steady increase in world trade and development that is so vital to all countries of the Commonwealth. They noted that Commonwealth Finance Ministers proposed to discuss these and allied matters in Montreal later this month.

The Prime Ministers noted with concern the deteriorating position with regard to the world's food supply and stressed the urgent need for a massive increase in food production, particularly in the developing countries to meet the needs of the world's growing population, and the desirability for continuing assistance towards this end.

In the course of discussion of the problems of aid and development, Prime Ministers were concerned that the economic progress in the developing countries had fallen short of the minimum average targets of the United Nations Development Decade. They also noted that, notwithstanding the increased efforts of certain countries, the flow of resources from the developed to the developing countries was inadequate. They recognised that the growing economic imbalance between the rich and poor countries called for a continued and concerted effort to provide development assistance. In this connection they noted the growing difficulties arising from maturing debt obligations. They agreed that the Commonwealth, which was a representative group covering all levels of economic development problems, could continue to provide useful initiatives in international co-operation as it had in the establishment of the Colombo Plan for economic and technical co-operation in South and South-East Asia and the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan.

Prime Ministers had before them a number of suggestions submitted to them by the Secretary-General on possible ways to implement their wish as set out in the 1964 and 1965 communiqués that the Commonwealth can make a further distinctive contribution of its own to increase the economic strength and material well-being of Commonwealth countries. They considered that one of the most promising avenues of Commonwealth co-operation lay in the opportunity to play a creative role in the future strategy of economic development.

Prime Ministers agreed that the suggestions made by the Secretary-General in his paper on Commonwealth Assistance Programmes should be further examined at a meeting of Senior Officials of Commonwealth countries concerned with aid administration and that this meeting might usefully be combined with the meeting of Senior Planning Officials which Trade Ministers had earlier on the suggestion of Prime Ministers asked the Secretary-General to convene on Planning Techniques, Regional Co-operation in Planning and Trade Promotion.

Commonwealth Medical Conference

Heads of Government were happy to accept the invitation of the President of Uganda that the Commonwealth Medical Conference in 1968 be held in Kampala.

Commonwealth Secretariat Matters

Following the decision at their 1965 Meeting, Heads of Government considered the Report of the Review Committee on Intra-Commonwealth Organisations concerned with economic and related affairs. They expressed appreciation of the work of the Committee and accepted the major recommendations including the integration of the Executive Secretariat of the Commonwealth Economic Committee and the Commonwealth Education Liaison Unit with the Commonwealth Secretariat, noting that this would produce economy in expenditure.

Heads of Government took note of the Annual Report of the Secretary-General and authorised its publication.

Heads of Government expressed their high appreciation of the work of the Secretary-General and his colleagues in the Commonwealth Secretariat.

15 September 1966

ANNEX

TEXT OF MESSAGE TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Commonwealth Heads of Government now meeting in London have unanimously asked me, as Chairman, to convey to you our fullest confidence in you as Secretary-General. We earnestly invite you to reconsider your decision not to offer yourself for reappointment and to continue to be available to offer your distinguished services to the United Nations in the future.

Harold Wilson, Chairman

Heads of Delegation

Australia	The Hon Harold Holt, Prime Minister
Britain	The Rt Hon Harold Wilson, Prime Minister
Canada	The Rt Hon Lester B Pearson, Prime Minister
Ceylon	The Hon A F Wijemanne, Minister of Justice
Cyprus	His Beatitude Archbishop Makarios, President
The Gambia	Sir Dawda Jawara, Prime Minister
Ghana	The Hon J W K Harlley, Deputy Chairman of National Liberation Council
Guyana	The Hon L F S Burnham, Prime Minister
India	Sardar Swaran Singh, Minister of External Affairs
Jamaica	The Hon Donald B Sangster, Acting Prime Minister
Kenya	The Hon J Murumbi, Vice-President
Malawi	HE Ngwazi Dr H Kamuzu Banda, President of Malawi
Malaysia	Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, Prime Minister
Malta	Dr The Hon Giorgio Borg-Olivier, Prime Minister
New Zealand	The Rt Hon K J Holyoake, Prime Minister
Nigeria	Brigadier B A O Ogundipe, Leader of Delegation
Pakistan	The Hon Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, Foreign Minister
Sierra Leone	The Rt Hon Sir Albert Margai, Prime Minister
Singapore	The Hon Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister
Trinidad and Tobago	Dr The Hon P J V Solomon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs
Uganda	HE Dr A Milton Obote, President
Zambia	The Hon S M Kapwepwe, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Commonwealth Secretariat HE Arnold Smith, Secretary-General