

# Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to outline some possible issues facing the Commonwealth Expert Group on Democracy and Development, with a view to facilitating discussion at its first meeting.

## The Mandate

The Group was established by the Commonwealth Secretary-General in pursuance of the following mandate by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Coolumburra, Australia, in March 2002:

*Recognising the links between democracy and good governance on the one hand, and poverty, development and conflict on the other, we call on the Commonwealth Secretary-General to constitute a high-level expert group to recommend ways in which we could carry forward the Fancourt Declaration. This group should focus on how democracies might best be supported in combating poverty, and should report to the next CHOGM [Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting].*

In interpreting this mandate, the Group may wish to recall that:

- While the Commonwealth recognises that its fundamental political values and sustainable development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and that economic and social progress works to enhance the sustainability of democracy, in its Harare Commonwealth Declaration (Annex A) it is committed to democracy and the elimination of poverty as important goals in their own right.
- The Fancourt Commonwealth Declaration on Globalisation and People-Centred Development (Annex B), adopted by Commonwealth Heads of Government in November 1999, calls for the forces of globalisation to be channelled for the elimination of poverty and the empowerment of human beings to lead fulfilling lives.

This note has four parts. Part A reviews the extent of poverty and outlines some of the particular challenges confronting democracies in the current historical situation. Part B discusses the links between conflict, poverty and development on the one hand and democracy and good governance on the other, and possible ways through which support may be provided to democracies in combating poverty. Part C discusses possible strategies for winning global support and the role of the Commonwealth in mobilising such support. Part D provides a summary of issues for the consideration of the Expert Group.