

Foreword

The Commonwealth has spelt out its commitment to development and to its fundamental political values in various declarations. There is already an understanding of how development and poverty alleviation can be promoted through concerted action at the national and international levels. This has been best articulated in the Monterrey Consensus. In addition, there is now considerable knowledge about how we can promote democratic processes and institutions, the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, just and honest government and fundamental rights. Despite the knowledge and understanding that we have at our disposal, however, the record in terms of promoting development and democracy remains mixed.

It is now widely recognised that development is about much more than growth of GDP. Equally, everyone appreciates that democracy is more than simply a matter of universal suffrage and the holding of regular multiparty elections, essential though these are. So we need to understand exactly what is meant by development and democracy today, in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, while development and democracy are goals in their own right, they must also be mutually reinforcing. A key challenge is to understand how best to make this a reality.

These are crucial issues that must be addressed if the mixed record of promoting development and democracy within the Commonwealth, and the wider world, is to be improved.

Commonwealth Heads of Government called on me to constitute a high level Expert Group to recommend ways in which democracies might best be supported in combating poverty. I was fortunate in being able to secure the services of a highly distinguished group of people under the very experienced Chairmanship of Dr Manmohan Singh, the former Finance Minister of India. All the members served on the Group in their individual capacities. Representatives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank also participated in the work of the Group.

I am commending this Report for the consideration of the Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Abuja (5-8 December 2003). I hope it will enable the Commonwealth to provide leadership in mobilising partnerships to meet the twin challenges of promoting development and democracy. Improved performance on both fronts is essential to secure global peace and prosperity.

Don McKinnon, *Commonwealth Secretary-General*