

Commonwealth Youth Programme
Diploma in Youth Development Work

Module 6

Commonwealth Values

Commonwealth Secretariat
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The Commonwealth Youth Programme's Mission

CUP works to engage and empower young people (aged 15–29) to enhance their contribution to development. We do this in partnership with young people, governments and other key stakeholders.

Our mission is grounded within a rights-based approach, guided by the realities facing young people in the Commonwealth, and anchored in the belief that young people are:

- a force for peace, democracy, equality and good governance,
- a catalyst for global consensus building, and
- an essential resource for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

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Introduction

Welcome to Module 6 *Commonwealth Values*. This module has two goals. The first is to introduce you to a set of values that have come to underpin the Commonwealth – human rights, equity, democracy, pluralism, citizenship, participation and empowerment.

You should already have a sense of what these terms mean in general. This module will help you to develop your understanding of the specific ideas that underpin these terms, as well as what they mean in the context of youth development work. These values are strongly reflected in the other modules of this Diploma programme.

The second goal is to introduce you to the Commonwealth as an international organisation: how it evolved, how it is structured, and what it is trying to achieve. You should be able to develop a sense not just of Commonwealth values, but also of the value of the Commonwealth itself. As a voluntary association of sovereign, independent states, it is unique in its ability to bring together such a diverse range of peoples committed to dialogue and consensus building, where developing and developed country governments sit as equals around the table.

The Commonwealth is a political and cultural organisation of great complexity and does its work guided by a philosophy based on certain key values and principles. These are designed to hold its complex and sometimes contradictory social systems together as a coherent whole. This module is designed to equip you with a knowledge and understanding of the key Commonwealth values and principles. They are the values that underpin this Diploma programme. The emphasis in the module is on the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth, as defined in the *Harare Commonwealth Declaration* of 1991 – adherence to human rights and democratic principles. For this reason, two of the units will look at the principles of human rights and democracy at a universal level.

The module also explores the values that underpin the way that the Commonwealth actually works: through consultation, co-operation, and consensus-building. It will focus on the key concepts of citizenship, human rights, participation, democracy, empowerment, robust pluralism and equity. This module will describe the nature of the Commonwealth as an institution of diverse cultures and traditions, its decision-making structures and its key areas of work. Finally, it will look at how these values are related to youth development work and can be promoted through it.

Some of the units may seem rather abstract or theoretical to you, but please persevere: they provide information that will help you to understand and integrate Commonwealth values into your work. You will be given suggestions and opportunities for putting theory into

practice at regular intervals throughout the module. In addition, examples and case studies have been included to help you relate the theory to the real world.

Module learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements that tell you what knowledge and skills you will have when you have worked successfully through a module. In addition, this module gives you the opportunity to examine your attitudes.

Knowledge

When you have worked through this module, you should be able to:

- describe the origins of the Commonwealth, and key events in its history since formation
- demonstrate a clear understanding of Commonwealth values and principles, and provide examples of how they are put into practice
- explain elements of democratic theory and human rights philosophy and practice, and identify the mechanisms through which different rights are protected in democratic systems
- give examples of how to apply these principles in your work with young women and men
- describe the value of the diverse cultures and traditions embraced by the Commonwealth.

Skills

When you have worked through this module, you should be able to:

- undertake activities to help young people understand the principles that underpin Commonwealth values
- develop programmes of activity which enable young people to acquire skills and experience in citizenship, and effective participation in public affairs
- operate different styles of democratic and participatory decision-making, in particular consensual styles.

As further outcomes, when you have completed this module, you will have undergone a process of examining and clarifying your own values. You may also experience certain positive changes in your attitudes. While these changes will be hard to measure, we hope that you will be able to:

- feel positively about cultural diversity and see diversity as something to be celebrated, rather than ignored or feared

- develop the ability to accept that your perspectives need not always be the ‘correct’ ones
- have an attitude of openness: to search for ways and means to promote and cross-fertilise the values you see among different individuals and sub-groups.
- be honest with yourself, and able to work to ensure that there is no gap between ‘what you preach and what you practice’.

As you work through the module, try to be aware of any clarifications in your values and to reflect on them.

About this module

This module is divided into four units.

Unit 1: Introducing Commonwealth values and structures

This unit explores the origins and evolution of the Commonwealth and examines Commonwealth principles and values. It looks at the impact of these values both for the Commonwealth as an association, and also for the global community.

This unit also explores how these values are put into practice through the work of the Commonwealth. It introduces the concepts of consensus decision-making, co-operation and consultation, which form the heart of how the Commonwealth works. These processes will be discussed with reference to the structure of the Commonwealth, and the operation of the Heads of Government Meetings and the Secretariat. The latter part of this Unit relates citizenship to Commonwealth values.

Unit 2: Human Rights: universal values

This unit introduces human rights both as a philosophy and in practice. It outlines different categories of human rights and discusses a number of important international human rights instruments, including the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and key Commonwealth human rights documents.

Unit 3: Democratic values and structures

This unit presents democracy both as a style of government and a set of values – including pluralism and diversity, citizenship and respect for human rights. The issue of rights versus responsibilities is debated. Democracy as a style of government is explained, and several of the ways the Commonwealth Secretariat supports democratic cultures in member countries are examined. Finally, three different styles of decision-making are outlined.

Unit 4: Commonwealth values and youth development

The final unit in this module explores participation and empowerment and discusses how these can be facilitated in decision-making. Barriers to participation in group projects are examined, and working with democratic styles of leadership, in particular through consensus, is suggested as a way to encourage youth empowerment.

This table shows which units cover the different module learning outcomes.

Module 6 Learning outcomes		1	2	3	4
Knowledge					
1	Describe the origins of the Commonwealth, and key events in its history since formation.	x	x		
2	Demonstrate a clear understanding of Commonwealth values and principles, and provide examples of how they are put into practice.	x	x	x	x
3	Explain elements of democratic theory and human rights philosophy and practice, and identify the mechanisms through which different rights are protected in democratic systems.		x	x	
4	Give examples of how to apply these principles in your work with young women and men.		x	x	x
5	Describe the value of the diverse cultures and traditions embraced by the Commonwealth.	x			
Skills					
6	Undertake activities to help young people understand the principles that underpin Commonwealth values.	x	x	x	x
7	Develop programmes of activity which enable young people to acquire skills and experience in citizenship, and effective participation in public affairs.	x	x	x	x
8	Operate different styles of democratic and participatory decision-making, in particular consensual styles.			x	x

Assessment

Each module is divided into a number of units. Each unit addresses some of the learning outcomes. You will be asked to complete various tasks so that you can demonstrate your competence in achieving the learning outcomes. The study guide will help you to succeed in your formal assessment tasks.

Methods

Your work in this module will be assessed in the following three ways:

- A report of about 2,000 words outlined in the Assignments section at the end of the module.
- A review of the learning journal you keep – see below (worth 20 per cent of the final mark).
- A written examination set by the institution in which you are enrolled for this Diploma programme or a 1,500 word written study outlined at the end of the module (worth 30 percent of the final mark).

Note: We recommend that you discuss the study and assessment requirements with your tutor before you begin work on the module. You may want to discuss such topics as:

- the learning activities you will undertake on your own
- the learning activities you will undertake as part of a group
- whether it is practical for you to do all of the activities
- the evidence you will produce to prove that you have met the learning outcomes – for example, learning journal entries, or activities that prepare for the final assignment
- how to relate the assignment topics to your own context
- when to submit learning journal entries and assignments, and when you will get feedback.

Learning journal

Educational research has shown that keeping a learning journal is a valuable strategy to help your learning development. It makes use of the important faculty of reflecting on your learning, which supports you in developing a critical understanding of it. The journal is where you will record your thoughts and feelings as you are learning and where you will write your responses to the study guide activities. The journal is worth 20 per cent of the final assessment.

Again, we recommend you discuss the learning journal requirements with your tutor before you begin, including how your learning journal will be assessed.

In this module, *Commonwealth Values*, the learning journal is also intended to carry the ‘footprints’ of your journey through the learning process about values and possibly beyond. Every insight you get that helps you clarify your values can find its way into your journal.

Record your thinking about what you are learning:

- Does what you learn confirm what you already thought?
- Does it relate to young people in your country?
- Does it give you a new way of looking at young people?
- How might your learning affect the way you work with young people?

In this way, your journal will become a diary of your own growth through the course.

Self-test

Take a few minutes to try this self-test. If you think you already have some of the knowledge or skills covered by this module and answer ‘Yes’ to most of these questions, you may be able to apply for credits from your learning institution. Talk to your tutor about this.

Note: This is not the full challenge test to be held by your learning institution for ‘Recognition of Prior Learning’.

Put a tick in the appropriate box in answer to the following questions:

	Yes	No	More or less
Can you list and understand the key Commonwealth values and principles?			
Are you familiar with the practices of the Commonwealth, particularly its consensus policies and methods of decision-making?			
Do you apply these principles in your work with young women and men?			
Can you explain the significance and meaning of membership of the Commonwealth as it relates to your own country and region?			
Can you demonstrate an understanding of human rights philosophy and practice?			

	Yes	No	More or less
Can you explain the value of the diverse cultures and traditions embraced by the Commonwealth?			
Do you use democratic and consensus styles of leadership and can you explain how they operate?			
Do you have the skills to develop programmes for young people that will help them to acquire skills and experience in citizenship, and allow them to participate in public affairs?			
Do you work effectively with groups from different backgrounds?			
Do you know how to help young women and young men to understand and respect diversity?			
Can you explain and interpret the importance of those things which have affected your development, e.g. values, religion, tradition?			

Learning tips

You may not have studied by distance education before. If so, here are some guidelines to help you.

How long will it take?

It will probably take you a minimum of 70 hours to work through the study guide for this module. The time should be spent doing the activities, completing the assessment tasks and studying the readings.

Note that units are not all the same length, so make sure that you plan and pace your work to give yourself time to complete all of them.

About the study guide

This study guide gives you a unit-by-unit guide to the module you are studying. Each unit includes information, case studies, activities and readings for you to complete. These are all designed to help you achieve the learning outcomes that are stated at the beginning of the module.

Activities and case studies

The activities and case studies are part of a planned distance education programme. They will help you make your learning more active and effective, as you process and apply what you read. They will help you engage with ideas and check your own understanding. It is vital that you take time to complete them as they occur in the study guide. Make sure you write full answers to the activities, or take notes of any discussions.

We recommend that you write your answers in your learning journal and keep it with your study materials as a record of your work. You can refer to it whenever you need to remind yourself of what you have done.

The activities may be reflective exercises designed to get you thinking about aspects of the subject matter, or practical tasks to undertake on your own or with fellow students. Answers are not usually given for activities. A time is suggested for each activity (e.g. 'about 20 minutes'). This is just a guide. It does not include the time you will need to spend on any discussions or research involved.

As you will see, in this module some of the tasks given in the activities are potentially quite large or time-consuming. This is particularly the case where you are given an example of an activity that can be conducted with a youth group. However, in most cases we are not expecting you to undertake the tasks described in their entirety. Instead, we would usually expect you to spend the activity time reflecting on the task in hand and brainstorming some ideas – a

process that should only take a maximum of 30–45 minutes. The outcome will usually be a set of reflective notes that indicate what you feel are the key issues that might need to be addressed.

Once you have completed this module, you may wish to use some of these activities as the basis for activities you can undertake with your youth group. If you do so, it is then that you would be advised to spend much longer on undertaking the tasks involved.

As in other modules, the case studies give examples, often drawn from real life, to apply the concepts in the study guide. Often, the case studies are used as the basis for an activity.

Unlike other modules, there are no self-help questions in this module. This is because often you are asked to reflect on your own opinions or feelings about a topic, with no right or wrong answers. In such a case, an activity is a more suitable way of engaging you.

Readings

There is a section of Readings at the end of the study guide. These provide additional information or other viewpoints and relate to topics in the units. You are expected to read these.

There is a list of references at the end of each unit. This gives details about books that are referred to in the unit. It may give you ideas for further reading. You are not expected to read all the books on this list.

Please note: In a few cases full details of publications referred to in the module have not been provided, as we have been unable to confirm the details with the original authors.

There is a list of Further Reading at the end of each module. This includes books and articles referred to in the module and are suggestions for those who wish to explore topics further. You are encouraged to read as widely as possible during and after the course, but you are not expected to read all the books on this list. Module 4 also provides a list of useful websites.

Although there is no set requirement, you should aim to do some follow-up reading to get alternative viewpoints and approaches. We suggest you discuss this with your tutor. What is available to you in libraries? Are there other books of particular interest to you or your region? Can you use alternative resources, such as newspapers and the internet?

Unit summary

At the end of each unit there is a list of the main points. Use it to help you review your learning. Go back if you think you have not covered something properly.

Icons

In the margins of the *Study Guide*, you will find these icons that tell you what to do:



Self-help question

Answer the questions. Suggested answers are provided at the end of each unit. (There are none in Module 6.)



Activity

Complete the activity. Activities are often used to encourage reflective learning and may involve a practical task. Answers are not provided.



Reading

Read as suggested.



Case study

Read these examples and complete any related self-help question or activity.

Studying at a distance

There are many advantages to studying by distance education – a full set of learning materials is provided, and you can study close to home in your own community. You can also plan some of your study time to fit in with other commitments, such as work or family.

However, there are also challenges. Learning away from your learning institution requires discipline and motivation. Here are some tips for studying at a distance.

- 1 **Plan** – Give priority to study sessions with your tutor and make sure you allow enough travel time to your meeting place. Make a study schedule and try to stick to it. Set specific days and times each week for study and keep them free of other activities. Make a note of the dates that your assessment pieces are due and plan for extra study time around those dates.
- 2 **Manage your time** – Set aside a reasonable amount of time each week for your study programme – but don't be too ambitious or you won't be able to keep up the pace. Work in productive blocks of time and include regular rests.

- 3 **Be organised** – Have your study materials organised in one place and keep your notes clearly labelled and sorted. Work through the topics in your study guide systematically and seek help for difficulties straight away. Never leave problems until later.
- 4 **Find a good place to study** – Most people need order and quiet to study effectively, so try to find a suitable place to do your work – preferably somewhere where you can leave your study materials set out ready until next time.
- 5 **Ask for help if you need it** – This is the most vital part of studying at a distance. No matter what the difficulty is, seek help from your tutor or fellow students straight away.
- 6 **Don't give up** – If you miss deadlines for assessment pieces, speak to your tutor – together you can work out what to do. Talking to other students can also make a difference to your study progress. Seeking help when you need it is a key way of making sure you complete your studies – so don't give up!

If you need help

If you have any difficulties with your studies, contact your local learning centre or your tutor, who will be able to help you.

Note: You will find more detailed information about learner support from your learning institution.

We wish you all the best with your studies.

Unit 1: Introducing Commonwealth values and structures

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Unit introduction

Welcome to Unit 1 *Introducing Commonwealth values and structures*. This unit introduces the notion of Commonwealth values, putting them into the context of the history of the Commonwealth as an association of nations that has moved from colonial to co-operative relationships. It looks at how Commonwealth structures support these values in practice.

The unit begins with a look at the rich diversity of the member states of the Commonwealth and asks the question: ‘What do they have in common?’ As you work through the unit, you will examine the origins of the Commonwealth in the British Empire and explore its evolution into the multilateral organisation it is today. You will look at the Commonwealth’s mandate in relation to its member states and its impact in the global arena. Finally, you will also be given the opportunity to reflect on what the Commonwealth and its values mean to you and to explore the organisation’s stated key principles and values: co-operation and consensus, equality and human rights, pluralism and democracy, participation, empowerment and citizenship.

There are activities in this unit to challenge your understanding of Commonwealth values and to help you see how they can be put into practice in youth development work.

Unit learning outcomes

When you have worked through this unit, you should be able to:

- identify and reflect on factors that have affected your development (e.g. values, religion, tradition)
- explain how the Commonwealth is organised and how it operates
- demonstrate a reasonable understanding of Commonwealth values and principles.

A Commonwealth of diversity

This Diploma course is designed on the basis of the core values and principles of a remarkable organisation – the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth was once an empire run by a colonial power. As the nations of the British Empire emerged from colonialism, they developed a unique model of how the world's peoples can live together after conflict and exploitation.

The Commonwealth has slowly put together a supporting framework of social and humanitarian principles that have enabled 53 very different nations to live co-operatively. Your fellow students on this course could be from any of the Commonwealth member countries. Their homes could be in developed or developing countries, large or small in size and population, landlocked or island states, and located in Africa, Asia, Australasia, the Caribbean, Europe, North America or the South Pacific.

While all your fellow students will be able to read and speak English, it is probably not their first language. Almost two billion people live in the Commonwealth, making up nearly one-third of the world's population. They represent many different religions, races, languages and cultures. If this is the reality of the modern Commonwealth, you might ask: 'What brings us together? What values do we share as countries or as individuals?'

Our values are our beliefs about what are the right ways to behave. When we decide to act in the world, if we have clear values we take them into account first. For example, if I consider that a crucial value for me is not to bring any more harm to the environment than I have to, I may well decide to cut my consumption of anything that is luxurious and unnecessary. If we consider our values to be objective, we believe that our choices should be guided from some independent standpoint, for example by religious or humanitarian principles.

Our 'values', then, are our standards or principles, the things that we consider to be of real and lasting worth and importance in life, even though we cannot physically touch them or buy and sell them. If we consider our values as personal, we may feel that that they are so important that we must defend them, even against rational argument. Each one of us has these subjective or personal values, but the communities we live in usually have shared values, or shared understandings about important goals and principles of behaviour. These might well overlap with many people's personal values, but equally they might sometimes contradict them.



Activity 1.1

(about 15 minutes)

We will spend a lot of time in this module thinking and writing about values, so it is worth taking a minute to think about what the word means.

Think about your own personal values, and also the values of your community. You do not need to write a full essay on this. Spend the activity time reflecting and brainstorming some ideas. The outcome should be a set of reflective notes that indicate what you feel are the key points that summarise your personal and community values. Record your ideas in your learning journal.

Examples of individual or community values might include respect for elders, honesty in trade, kindness to strangers. These three tend to be general across many communities because they have been shown to enhance the quality and security of collective life. We are taught about values from many sources: our parents and elders, from teachers, from leaders and people we admire, from our religious communities, from our cultural traditions, and from our own experience of how values work in our own lives.

Values provide us with a sense of direction or judgement that we can apply to our actions; when we adhere to them they allow us to feel that we are ‘being true to ourselves’ and ‘doing the right thing’.

Some people distinguish ‘values’ from ‘principles’, where the former are seen as more abstract, and the latter as a more concrete or specific guide to action – like the difference between a ‘sense’ of morals or goals (values) and a written code of conduct or set of rules (principles). How you see this distinction is a personal decision. In this module, the terms ‘values’ and ‘principles’ will both be used collectively to refer to the ideals that the Commonwealth as an association tries to pursue and uphold.

What values bring us together?

A society may have some values that contradict those of its neighbour, but both may be prepared to abide by a core set of values from which each can benefit.

At first glance, in the Commonwealth there would seem to be little to bring such diverse peoples and nations together in a voluntary association. Yet the Commonwealth has grown and flourished. In part, it works because virtually all its members have a shared history, common institutions and a common language – the legacy of past colonial relationships with Britain, ironically the source of considerable conflict in the history of some countries.

What is interesting is that the key figures among the colonisers and the leaders of the independence movements eventually managed the independence process together in most of these countries. This enabled the common institutions that had once been severely challenged to be accepted, though always in a somewhat new form to suit the new social context. An example of this is the co-existence of formal judicial systems and traditional village justice in parts of the Pacific region.

By themselves these institutions are not enough to keep the Commonwealth relevant and respected as an organisation. There were enormous social and political problems when colonialism ended, such as the existence of the violent apartheid regime in South Africa. In finding ways to deal with these problems without the descent into permanent civil war, the organisation developed crucial principled methods. This approach is what has made the Commonwealth acceptable to its members and important as an example for the rest of the world. These supporting principles make up the Commonwealth values that are the focus of this module.



Activity 1.2

(about 15 minutes)

Either on your own or with colleagues, consider any examples you can think of in the Commonwealth where there might be conflicts between individual societies that are overcome by Commonwealth values. In what ways are the two societies' values different from each other? What is the commonwealth of values that they will eventually tend to live by? What are the gains of having this commonwealth of values? What are the losses?

Brainstorm some ideas in answer to these questions. The outcome will be a set of reflective notes that indicate what you feel are the key issues. Write a summary of these ideas in your learning journal.

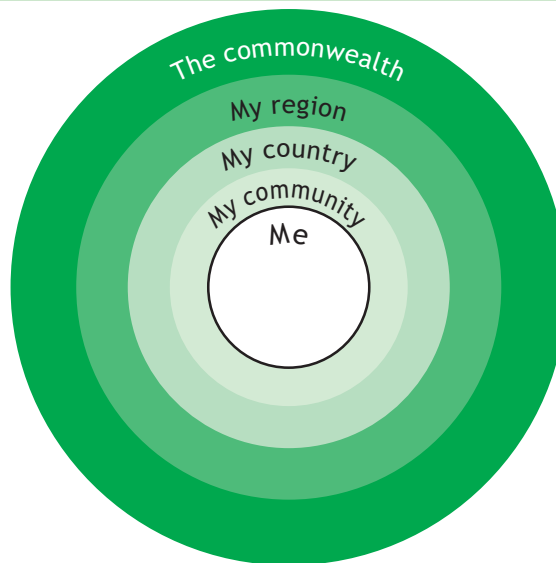
You might be expecting a list of Commonwealth values to appear here. But instead, you are asked to develop your own list and explore your own understanding. Complete Activity 1.3, below. You will be asked to reflect on your answers again at the end of this unit and also later in the module.



Activity 1.3

(about 20 minutes)

Think again about your own values. In your learning journal, record a 'values map' of yourself and your environment. Draw a series of five expanding circles on a page in your journal, leaving some room to write in each of the circles. Label the inner circle 'me', and then, in an outward progression, 'my community', 'my country', 'my region', and 'the Commonwealth'.



- Start with yourself. Make a list of what you feel are your core values - the standards, principles or objectives that you consider most important for you to follow or to pursue.
- In the next circle, think about your community, including your parents and friends, your schools and local organisations, your religious group. What are the values you associate with your community?

Include things that you may feel come from more 'traditional' sources, as well as modern or new sources. It is fine if many of the same items are in your 'personal' circle and the other circles - this is very common, since our communities teach us many of our most deeply-held values. But it is equally fine and also common for there to be sharp differences in the circles.

- Repeat the process to think about national values and regional values. You may note, for example, that your country places a high value on free speech, or on hard work.

It may be hard to identify very many ideas in these circles.

Think about the image that your country or your region tries to project to the rest of the world - this can be a good way to identify what principles or ideas are being valued.

- Finally, spend a few minutes thinking about what Commonwealth values mean to you. Do they mean anything important to you and your friends? What standards or principles might you think of as being part of the Commonwealth? Give examples of these in action, if you can.

When you have finished, take a moment to look at the picture as a whole. Did you list the same values at different levels? Can you see potentially conflicting values at different levels, or within the same level? Did you associate any of your own personal values with the Commonwealth?

As we have already mentioned, the Commonwealth was born out of potentially troublesome circumstances. Before we can go further in understanding the impact that Commonwealth values have had in maintaining the relationship between countries, we should also have some understanding of the history or its creation. We will look at this now.

The origins of the Commonwealth

It is difficult to put a precise beginning to the Commonwealth, as it is an institution that has evolved considerably over time. Its roots lie in the history of the British Empire, but the structure and interests of the modern Commonwealth really emerged after the Second World War in the post-colonial period. However, we will look here at the motivations behind the imperial origins of the Commonwealth.

Trade

Trade was the initial motivation for imperial expansion by European countries from the fifteenth century. British rule of territories in India and elsewhere in Asia began in an effort to secure spice production areas and trading routes.

In 1600, Queen Elizabeth I gave the East India Company the right to establish administrative control over the lands it explored and acquired. British involvement in Africa and the Caribbean also arose out of commercial interests – in this case the slave and sugar trades.

‘Triangular Trade’ is a term used to describe the driving forces of the slave trade. Europeans sent manufactured goods to trade in Africa for slaves, who were then transported across the Atlantic Ocean to South America, the Caribbean and North America to form a labour force in

the plantations and their difficult conditions. The indigenous peoples were unsuited to this work and not enough labour could be enticed or compelled from Europe. Because of inhuman conditions during transport, many did not survive the sea crossing to the 'New World'. Those who did arrive were used as labourers to produce raw materials or agricultural products like tobacco, cotton and especially sugar. These goods were then transported back to Europe.

It is estimated that between 10 and 20 million men, women and children were stolen from their homelands and forced into slavery between the mid-1400s and the mid-1800s. The profit and products from the colonies at different ends of this triangular slave trade created the financial surplus that facilitated the industrial revolution, which resulted in its turn in greater expansion of trade and colonial empires.

In other words, the British Empire founded its contemporary wealth and development on enslaved and indentured black labour. This was widely recognised in the post-Second World War British Labour government that negotiated independence with the British colonies.

The European perspective

The economic benefits to the Europeans of colonial expansion into the nineteenth century were very considerable. Colonies around the world were the source of a diverse range of raw materials and other commodities, but were especially a market for finished goods manufactured in Britain. India, which had had a thriving and advanced textiles industry, was manipulated into becoming an exporter of raw cotton and an importer of British cotton goods.

But economic self-interest was not the only motivation for British and other European nationals who ruled territories scattered around the globe. A convenient colonialist ideology taught them to believe that the people they ruled over actually benefited from this control in terms of improved social order; access to superior modern European goods, advanced education, technology and culture; as well as through conversion to Christianity.

Legal codes, administrative practices and educational systems established in the colonies, often for the first time, were modelled on institutions in Britain, which were very elitist and used to control the poor for the benefit of the wealthy and powerful. Undoubtedly, there were some colonial people who benefited from this – especially 'comprador' administrators and traders, but there were many who certainly didn't think they benefited, and the colonial systems broke up the old political and economic structures very effectively. For example, Malawi had a thriving market system until colonialism distorted it for its own ends. (Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* (1994) illustrates what this was like among some of Nigeria's rural people.)

For Europeans in the age of colonial expansion, there was a sense that they were bringing ‘civilisation’ to the rest of the world. But the historical record shows that colonisation was rarely a ‘civilised’ process, often relying on armed intervention, imported disease, forced labour and discriminatory ‘laws’, to maintain a level of ‘order’ that satisfied the ruling masters and enabled their accumulation of a wealth that was far from ‘common’.

All of these contradictions are reflected in a famous statement by Mahatma Ghandi, whose non-violent struggle for independence in India inspired a generation of leaders around the Commonwealth. When once asked what he thought of western civilisation, Ghandi is said to have replied: “*I think it would be a good idea.*”

The legacy of colonialism

Most of the early records of colonial history were written from the perspective of the European powers. In recent years, however, the other side of the colonial relationship has been put into focus by writers and historians from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. They have traced the impact that colonial attitudes of racial and cultural so-called ‘superiority’ had on the behaviour and aspirations of oppressed people, and have shown how even the most lauded ‘benefits’ of the relationship were, at best, mixed blessings. We will look at some of these now.

- **Roads, railways and ports** were developed, but were strategically located to enhance the export of raw materials and agricultural produce from local areas of production, rather than to transport them to needy areas in the colony itself. The struggle to develop local economies in the post-colonial period has often been the enduring struggle to build proper infrastructure.
- **Schools** greatly improved educational opportunities for some local people, in that they taught literacy and numeracy. But they usually taught only the language, history, culture and values of the colonial masters, rather than those of the indigenous population. The process mostly devalued local languages and culture. In the process, much of the rich core of long-standing knowledge that was native to the colonial regions became invisible.
- **Formal legal and political institutions** were established, and the value of British democracy was much heralded by white ex-patriots. But these were bourgeois institutions, many of them widely hated by the lower classes in Britain itself, and the colonial people were given very limited or no power or authority over their own decisions. There were few opportunities for genuine democratic participation for the majority of the population.

For indigenous populations and tribal populations, colonialism was sometimes a threat to their very survival. For example, in the push to expand land under colonial control, many aboriginal people in

Australia and Canada died or were killed (in Tasmania they were hunted to extinction), and the survivors were often forcibly relocated in settled communities, removed from their lands and their culture.

In Africa and Asia, imperial policies that encouraged special treatment by the ruling classes for one particular ethnic, tribal or religious group over others in the same territory created deep resentments and rivalries, which sometimes continued long after independence. For example, the idea of the 'superiority' of Tutsi people over Hutus in Rwanda was strongly promoted by the Belgian colonial rulers – a legacy whose horrific consequences rose to the surface with the massacres of 1994.

In these historical origins of the Commonwealth there is little sign of what we will introduce later as Commonwealth values: participation, citizenship, human rights, and equity for all. These values really began to emerge in independence movements and the struggles for self-government. They came from the great, visionary, indigenous leaders of the colonies, like Nelson Mandela, and were recognised and reciprocated by the voices of intelligent members of the British state. With the breaking of colonial bonds, new forms of relationship began to emerge, characterised by a new set of values.



Activity 1.4

(about 15 minutes)

Write a brief summary of the impact that colonialism and the British Empire has had on your country.

Try to provide specific examples of both the benefits brought and damage done by the colonial legacy. You might talk about physical benefits, but also social or psychological. For example, have people's attitudes been affected by colonialism?

What impact do these various effects of colonialism have today?

Write your ideas in your learning journal.

The mandate of the modern Commonwealth

In the spring of 1949, a meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London marked the birth of the modern Commonwealth.

At that time there were eight members in the Commonwealth – with India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka having recently become independent and joined, in association with Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa.

India had decided to become a Republic, to no longer swear allegiance to the British Crown, which up to that point had been the foundation stone of membership of the British Commonwealth. The decision to accept India's continued membership, reflected in the *London Declaration*, transformed the character of the Commonwealth from a relic of Empire, or a function of neo-imperialism, to a co-operative association based on the voluntary membership of free and sovereign states working to promote their mutual interests.

The Commonwealth did not have a Charter outlining its purpose and direction at the outset. It has gone through a gradual evolution over time as its membership has expanded and the international environment itself has changed. This is one of the things that makes it distinct from the United Nations, whose Charter was adopted at its creation in 1945.

In the immediate post-war period, the Commonwealth served as a kind of facilitator and forum for decolonisation, helping independence to be achieved in the former British colonies in a comparatively peaceful and friendly manner. As a result, most of the newly independent states opted to join the association. The first Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Arnold Smith, described this decision as at once pragmatic and forward-looking:

“When statesmen who have led their nations to independence have decided to seek membership in the Commonwealth, they have not appeared to be motivated by sentimentality about the past, but by a constructive vision of the future and by realistic assessments about their country's national interest. For many of them the past included memories of racial discrimination, political struggle and jail. The decision was taken because these leaders saw practical value for their countries and for humanity, in retaining and building on the positive aspects of an association that linked races and continents, and in surmounting past inequities, rather than in using unpleasant memories and resentments for nation building based on the perpetuation of suspicions and divisions, as lesser politicians have so often done.”

Annual Report of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, (1966)
Commonwealth Secretariat

While the achievement of independence marked an end to the colonial relationship, it also marked a new beginning – the challenge of political, social and economic development, which became central to the objectives of the Commonwealth as an association.

Co-operation and assistance

The focus of the Commonwealth from the late 1940s has been co-operation and consultation on both political and economic affairs. Of these two main areas of interest, economic co-operation has proven the less controversial one. The Commonwealth was the impetus for the first significant development assistance programme in 1950 – the Colombo Plan, providing capital and technical assistance to countries in South and South-East Asia. It was followed in 1958 and in 1960 by Commonwealth assistance programmes targeted first to Caribbean and then to African developing countries.

Agreeing to disagree

Inevitably, as a greater variety of viewpoints assembled around the Commonwealth table, the achieving of consensus on political issues became more challenging. There are many writers and analysts who have criticised the Commonwealth for failing to secure full co-ordination of foreign policy and economic policy. However, others have noted that there is considerable value just in communication and consultation among states, even when discussions do not result in complete unanimity or agreement. In principle, consultation provides for greater mutual understanding between countries, and the hope that they can support each other's development.

The ability to maintain friendly relations while 'agreeing to disagree' is crucial for securing international peace. This facility is often upheld as the Commonwealth's greatest contribution to world affairs. It has proven useful in broader contexts such as the United Nations, where consultation among Commonwealth countries was able to circumvent some of the 'East-West' divisions of the Cold War, as well as the 'developed and developing world' divisions in debates about creating a new international economic order.



Activity 1.5

(about 10 minutes)

Try to think of examples of ‘agreeing to disagree’ between Commonwealth countries. They could be significant pieces of history, or they could be smaller, more recent events. Were there any that involved your own country?

Write your examples in your learning journal.

Early challenges

It has not always been easy to maintain good relations between Commonwealth states. In the early years of the new Commonwealth there were several serious differences of opinion that tested the bonds of the association. Look at the two examples provided in the case study below.



Case study 6.1

Testing the bonds

A. *The Suez Crisis*

One early challenge to the Commonwealth was caused by the British decision to intervene (with France and the newly created state of Israel) using military force, when Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal in 1956. The move created a crisis with global implications, as the Soviet Union threatened to attack Britain and France if they did not evacuate the Canal, which runs through Egyptian territory. Britain acted completely without Commonwealth consultation, which created strongly negative reactions from most of her colleagues.

The developing members of the Commonwealth identified with Egypt's desire to benefit economically from its strategic geographical position linking the Mediterranean and Red Sea, though the Canal itself was at that time owned by Britain and France. But the attack had come only a few short months after a meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, at which participants had pledged to devote their national policies at all times to: ‘preserving and consolidating world peace’, and so to ‘persevere in the search for just and lasting settlements of outstanding international problems’, including tension in the Middle East. It seemed in some ways like a slap in the face, like a return to an imperialist stance by the European powers. India threatened to leave the association. This was the first (though not the last) time that the Commonwealth was thought to be on the verge of dissolution.

B. Apartheid

Another substantial area of disagreement, which began in the early 1960s, also between Britain and the developing Commonwealth countries, was over the racial policies of the white minority regimes in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, which at the time was a self-governing British colony.

South Africa left the Commonwealth in 1961 over the firm opposition to apartheid expressed by other members, such as President Nyerere of Tanzania, who indicated they could not countenance joining in any association with the apartheid regime. But South Africa was not the only challenge. There was considerable tension between Britain and many other members during the 1960s over the nature and extent of sanctions that should be applied against Rhodesia in an effort to force political change and the adoption of a non-racial democratic system.

Even during these disputes, Commonwealth leaders agreed that maintaining open dialogue and a candid exchange of views was in their mutual interest, and would enable each individual country to formulate separate policies but with a deeper knowledge and understanding of the views and interests of its partners in the association.

Ultimately, the association was always able to find common ground, through agreed statements based on shared principles. This was the case even where differences of opinion continued to exist on issues of how principles should be acted upon.

For example, in the midst of the crisis and disagreement over Rhodesia, when white Rhodesians declared the country independent from Britain and under white rule, the Commonwealth Prime Ministers met in 1966 and declared their unanimous view that any political system based on racial discrimination was intolerable, that it diminished the freedom both of those who imposed it and of those who suffered under it, and that it was contrary to the multi-racial nature of the Commonwealth itself. The British government, although strongly disapproving of the seizure of the country by the whites, took a 'softly-softly' approach to Rhodesian whites for those actions. This approach was counter to the Commonwealth's stated views, and this could easily have led to the break-up of the association.

These disagreements created deep rifts in the Commonwealth, which was still dominated by Britain. They were proving difficult to heal, but the association undertook a substantial reorganisation in 1965 when the Commonwealth Secretariat was formed. We will look at the implications of this next.

The establishment of the Secretariat

In 1965, when the Commonwealth Secretariat was formed and a Secretary-General appointed, the Commonwealth shifted from being dominated by Britain, to being a genuine multilateral institution, which actually worked for and represented all member states equally.

The Secretariat was given a mandate to support and facilitate the exchange of views among member countries on political and economic affairs. This was in order to help individual countries promote and pursue their own development, while also strengthening the understanding and the ties between them. Senior staff were drawn from a wide range of Commonwealth countries and were instructed to discharge their functions impartially whatever their origin, and to place their loyalty in the Commonwealth as a whole.

At the same time, member countries recognised that long-term co-operation needed to be based on a set of agreed principles which would provide a framework for avoiding or constructively settling the kinds of disagreements that the organisation had been experiencing. These principles emerged from the 1971 Heads of Government Meeting.

The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles (1971)

The 1971 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Singapore was a landmark for the association. Prior to the meeting, Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda drafted a statement of principles for discussion. He took the lead because he believed that the African members needed to take a strong position against racial discrimination. Yet he was also concerned to prevent further splits in the Commonwealth. The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles that was adopted in 1971 (also known as the Singapore Declaration) can be seen as the first formal statement of Commonwealth values.

Heads of government agreed to promote actively the following goals:

- racial equality
- liberty and equality for all citizens
- democratic values and participation
- decolonisation and self-determination
- elimination of global disparities in wealth
- peace through international co-operation.



Turn to Reading 1: 'The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles – The Singapore Declaration (1971).'



Activity 1.6

(about 10 minutes)

Identify which of the various principles are included in the 1971 Declaration to promote and uphold the goals that heads of government agreed to promote (listed above), and note them in your learning journal.

The Declaration was revised and updated in 1991 in Harare. We will look at this next.

The Harare Commonwealth Declaration (1991)

In 1989, the Commonwealth began its own review of its record. It examined the continuing relevance of the *Declaration of Commonwealth Principles* in a changing world. The East-West tension of the Cold War was over, the popular revolutions in eastern Europe were strengthening the global acceptance of democratic principles and values, and the racially segregated regimes of southern Africa were in the process of being transformed. The final product of this period of self-reflection was the *Harare Commonwealth Declaration*, published in 1991.



Turn to Reading 2: 'The Harare Commonwealth Declaration (1991).'



Activity 1.7

(about 15 minutes)

Compare the Harare Declaration with the Singapore Declaration. In your learning journal, record any changes in principle that you notice.

Strengthening Commonwealth principles at Harare

The *Harare Commonwealth Declaration* was issued by Heads of Government at the end of their 1991 meeting in Zimbabwe. It begins by accepting the principles of the Singapore Declaration from 1971. However, while the 'old' Commonwealth values were reinforced in Harare, the meeting considered the new issues that had emerged. In 1971, environmental sustainability, gender equity and combating drug trafficking and abuse were not significant concerns of the international community. By 1991, this had changed.

The Harare Declaration pledges the Commonwealth and member countries 'to work with renewed vigour' in the following areas:

- protecting and promoting the Commonwealth's fundamental political values, including democracy, democratic processes and institutions which reflect national circumstances, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, just and honest government and fundamental human rights
- equality for women
- universal access to education
- ending apartheid and building a new South Africa
- promoting sustainable development and alleviating poverty
- extending the benefit of development within a human rights framework
- protecting the environment
- combating drug abuse and trafficking, and communicable diseases
- helping small states with their economic and security concerns
- promoting peace, disarmament and effective arms control.

Since 1971, the *Declaration of Commonwealth Principles* from Singapore, reinforced and extended at Harare, has been the moral framework for co-operative action by Heads of Government. It underpins the technical assistance and other programmes of the Commonwealth Secretariat, and also many of the Commonwealth civil society organisations.

While the Harare Declaration was not intended to be a legally binding document, adherence to its principles is now considered a prerequisite of membership for countries aspiring to join the Commonwealth. In the next section of this unit, we provide a basic summary of these principles, and reflect on their place within principles and values around the world.

Before we do this, it will be useful for you to see how the Commonwealth continues to use the 1971 and 1991 declarations to help it function on a day-to-day basis.



Turn to Reading 3: 'The Commonwealth – Dead or Alive?' In this speech of 2004, Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon provides a neat illustration of the range of activities undertaken between Commonwealth members.

Commonwealth values and citizenship

Reflect now on the words ‘citizen’ and ‘citizenship’. To be a citizen of a country is much more than having a passport. Citizenship is about being included in a society and participating in it, about equality of opportunity for all, and about rights and responsibilities that can be developed to ensure better economic, political and social conditions.

As we have seen in our review of the documents in Readings 1–3, all of these are present in the principles that form Commonwealth values. The rights of citizens include the right to:

- own property, marry etc., without discrimination
- have freedom of opinion, speech, association, movement and assembly
- choose who governs
- vote and/or participate in electoral or governance processes
- have a minimum standard of living
- gain equal protection under the law
- have the right to a fair trial before an independent court
- have access to basic public services and primary education.

Citizens also have these responsibilities: to

- pay taxes and other legally imposed levies
- obey laws and behave in a socially acceptable manner
- respect the needs and rights of others
- uphold individual and group rights
- protect the environment
- play an active part in citizenship and service, both in the local community and wider society.

Commonwealth values and the concept of citizenship are intrinsically related. Therefore “*the existence of citizens’ rights and responsibilities are a prerequisite for the achievement of Commonwealth values*” (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2004).



Activity 1.8

(about 30 minutes)

- Access your country's constitution (in the public library or on the internet).
- Make two lists, covering a) your rights and b) your responsibilities as a citizen under that constitution.
- What are your views on these rights and responsibilities as outlined in your country's Constitution?

Write your responses in your learning journal. If you like, you could also discuss them with your family, friends and colleagues.

Commonwealth values in the world

The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles and the Harare Commonwealth Declaration contain many admirable statements, goals and objectives for the Commonwealth as an organisation. Entailed in these declarations, the Commonwealth declares its values to be:

- **human rights** as the foundation of democracy and development
- **equality** of all human beings, regardless of gender, race, colour, creed or political belief
- **empowerment** pursued through education and participation
- **equity** or fairness in the relationships between nations and between generations, and protection of vulnerable groups
- **democracy** to allow everyone the opportunity to express their opinions and to allow citizens to participate in decision-making
- **development** based on principles of sustainability
- **diversity** of views and perspectives in both national and international forums
- **dialogue and co-operation**, building common ground and consensus
- **peace**, without which these other values are unobtainable.

In many ways, the Commonwealth values stand like a challenge, not just to the Commonwealth, but to the world.

They capture some of the most stirring and pressing concerns of our times. The roots of these values lie clearly in the principles outlined by Jean Jacques Rousseau prior to the 1789 French Revolution. They are part of an abiding value system of the modern world, and may

well have to be protected from the depredations of the global economy.

In the 1990s, the United Nations organised a series of major world conferences on urgent global issues such as education, the environment and sustainable development, human rights, population growth, social development, gender equality, urbanisation, food security – most of these themes are central to the Harare Commonwealth Declaration.

The same values have been embraced by other international bodies. In 1995, for example, the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development calls for the acceptance of a new ‘global ethics’ i.e. a set of common rights, standards and responsibilities for all peoples and governments. They suggest that the foundations of global ethics are human rights, democracy, pluralism and the protection of minorities, a commitment to peaceful conflict resolution, and equity within and between generations.

You can also see Commonwealth values being reflected in many new global movements, such as the ‘anti-globalisation’ protests that have been dogging meetings of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and other events. The roots of these protests on the current international economic order include:

- a desire, even a demand, that the benefits of economic growth must be shared more widely
- an assertion of the injustice of growth strategies that result in small pockets of enormous wealth, while 40 per cent of the world’s inhabitants live on less than \$1 per day
- a call for the cancellation of long-term debt, to stop the negative resource flow from developing to developed countries
- a call to support and strengthen cultural and economic diversity through local enterprise, local job-creation, and local products, rather than promoting or standing by in the face of the globalisation of one small set of multinational brands and images.

Commonwealth Heads of Government have raised many of these same concerns in their own meetings, and during their deliberations within international trade bodies and UN agencies. (We will go on to look in more detail at these universal values in Units 2 and 3.)

We conclude this unit with a section which provides some examples of the mechanisms that help the Commonwealth put these principles and values into action.

Putting Commonwealth values into practice

Values have little impact if you fail to act on them. One of the interesting features of the Commonwealth is that the ways in which it acts, or the means through which it operates, must reflect the values it strives to uphold. For example, at both Singapore and Harare, Heads of Government affirmed their belief in the liberty of individuals under the law, in equal rights for all citizens, and in an individual's inalienable right to participate in framing the society where he or she lives. What does this actually mean in terms of the Commonwealth's various activities?

First, principles about equal rights and participation mean that every effort is taken to ensure that all participants at any Commonwealth forum have an equal opportunity to voice their perspectives, whether they represent large industrialised states or tiny, developing island economies. Since decisions are taken on the basis of consensus developed through dialogue, each member can contribute equally to the decisions taken, and no member can use a veto to control proceedings.

Second, the right to shape society through participation also means that the member states themselves fully determine the agenda of the Commonwealth through their inputs and contributions. Furthermore, members also contribute the funding to allow the Secretariat to take action in agreed areas.

Next we look at three examples of how the Secretariat, Heads of Government and member states have worked together to promote the principles of the Singapore and Harare Declarations:

- the Commonwealth and apartheid
- the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG)
- the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP).

The Commonwealth and apartheid

Probably the best known example of the Commonwealth's commitment to principles of equality and empowerment was the continuous effort that was made over a period of more than 30 years to bring about an end to apartheid – white minority rule – in South Africa.

Dialogue and debate on apartheid and how it could be opposed took place in every Heads of Government Meeting after South Africa quit the association in 1961, until it rejoined in 1994 after its first non-racial elections. While there was universal abhorrence of the apartheid policies, not every state had the same view on the solutions that would be effective in promoting change.

Most Commonwealth states strongly supported strict economic, trade and military sanctions, including in particular those states in

Southern Africa who were most affected by economic sanctions. Even strong disagreement in regard to sanctions on the part of Britain, the former colonial ruler and largest contributor to the Commonwealth's budget, could not interfere with the clear consensus on this matter among the other members, reflected in the Okanagan Statement and Programme of Action on Southern Africa, from the 1987 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

There is no question that the vocal and principled stance of Commonwealth countries was instrumental in encouraging other countries like the United States to uphold the sanctions, which was essential to ensure their effectiveness.

While state-to-state contact with the apartheid regime was severely curtailed, the Commonwealth continued to promote dialogue and to try to create space for change. For example, an 'eminent persons group' was established to try to urge the South African government to begin negotiations, and another expert group formed to have a close look at the impact of economic sanctions on the South African economy. In addition, training programs were established to provide educational opportunities for South African refugees.

Finally, a Commonwealth Observer Mission to South Africa was put in place in 1992, shortly after the National Peace Accord, which worked actively to stop violence, reconcile communities and initiate social and economic reconstruction. And the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) moved in quickly with technical assistance on community policing, building the capacity of the free press and strengthening the election machinery, all of which were intended to help the transition to majority rule in 1994.

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG)

The second example of Commonwealth values in practice is the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG). This was formed in 1995 at the Auckland CHOGM, as the mechanism for the association to deal with serious or persistent violations of Commonwealth principles.

Foreign Ministers from eight Commonwealth countries are appointed to the CMAG and tasked with investigating any serious infringements of the Harare Declaration and recommending measures for collective Commonwealth action aimed at restoring democracy and constitutional rule.

The CMAG works by:

- collecting information and assessing all sides of a situation through correspondence with high level government representatives
- calling for written and sometimes oral presentations from experts and interested parties

- undertaking missions to the country in difficulty, to meet officials from the military, opposition groups, community leaders and, if possible human rights activists.

The CMAG also tries to meet with detained leaders (such as Chief Moshood Abiolo in Nigeria or Nawaz Sharif in Pakistan). However, since all their activities in-country are possible only with the permission of the rulers (and in cases like Sierra Leone the agreement of rebel forces), the CMAG is often unsuccessful in getting access to detainees or seeing all stakeholders or observing all elements of the situation.

Initially, the CMAG focused its attention on the three Commonwealth countries that were still under military rule in 1995: the Gambia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. By mid-1999 each of these countries had at least formally returned to democratic rule. In Sierra Leone, assistance with consolidating the return to civilian rule came from a Commonwealth Police Development Task Force and Commonwealth technical assistance for capacity building and electoral management. And in the Gambia, a CFTC-funded expert in elections management was provided to the Independent Electoral Commission.

As you can see, there is a strong linkage between the analysis provided by the CMAG, the decisions taken by Heads of Government, and the technical and advisory assistance provided by the Secretariat and the CFTC.

The CMAG's attention expanded beyond these first three countries in 1999 with the agreement of Heads of Government, and now it is considered routine for the CMAG to investigate and monitor any military overthrow or breakdown in democracy. Since 1999, the CMAG's remit has included Pakistan, Fiji, Zimbabwe and the Solomon Islands, as well as continued attention to consolidating democracy in both Sierra Leone and the Gambia.



If you would like some more examples of the kinds of work undertaken by the CMAG, turn now to Reading 4: 'Further examples of work by the CMAG.'

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP)

The final example of how the Commonwealth puts its values into practice is one that you should be very familiar with.

One of the overarching principles that the Commonwealth Youth Programme has adopted to guide its work is to ‘promote the Commonwealth values of social justice, democracy and human rights amongst the young people of the Commonwealth.’

Since its foundation in 1974, CYP has worked to promote youth empowerment through education and training, expanding employment opportunities, and increased participation in decision-making. As some of the early discussions leading to the formation of CYP took place at the Singapore CHOGM in 1971, it was quite natural for the Commonwealth principles enunciated there to be proposed as a key focus for the youth programme.

CYP's mission

The Commonwealth Youth Programme's ‘mission statement’ is as follows:

“CYP works to engage and empower young people to enhance their contribution to development. We do this in partnership with young people, governments and other key stakeholders.”

“Our mission is grounded within a rights-based approach, guided by the realities facing young people in the Commonwealth, and anchored in the belief that young people are:”

- “a force for peace, democracy, equality and good governance”
- “a catalyst for global consensus building, and”
- “an essential resource for sustainable development and poverty eradication.”

Currently, the Commonwealth Youth Programme pursues this mission through three strategic areas of work: Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods; Governance, Development and Youth Networks; and Youth Work Education and Training (including courses like the Diploma programme you are working on now).

The CYP has four strategic goals:

- 1 To empower young people to ensure that they are provided with and have access to opportunities that enable them to achieve sustainable livelihoods, and for them to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from good governance and development processes at national, regional and international levels.
- 2 To work with governments, young people and other key stakeholders to mainstream a youth perspective into development planning.

- 3 To advocate for the professionalisation of youth work in collaboration with educational institutions, governments and other stakeholders.
- 4 To promote the use of applied and participatory research in youth development in order to contribute to the creation of a credible body of knowledge.

CYP regions

The CYP is unique among all the programmes of the Secretariat because of its regional base. There are four Regional Centres: in Zambia (Africa), India (Asia), Guyana (Caribbean), and the Solomon Islands (Pacific). As a student in this course, you are probably already at least slightly familiar with one of these centres. They enable CYP to reach a wider spectrum of young people than would otherwise be possible, and to offer a wider variety of training programmes and projects tailored specifically for the needs of young women and men in each different region.

The Plan of Action on Youth Empowerment (PAYE)

In 1998, Commonwealth Youth Ministers meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, adopted the *Commonwealth Plan of Action on Youth Empowerment (PAYE)*. The PAYE defines youth empowerment as having two dimensions:

“Young people are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of those choices, make an informed decision freely, take action on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of that action.”

“Empowering young people means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others. These enabling conditions fall into four broad categories: an economic and social base; political will, adequate resource allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks; a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy; and access to knowledge, information and skills, and a positive value system.” (PAYE p.11)

The PAYE lays out 13 strategic objectives for governments, aimed at helping to create these enabling conditions for youth empowerment, and provides a wide range of suggestions for appropriate action.



Activity 1.9

(about 45 minutes, not counting discussions and the presentation)

What are the urgent issues affecting young people in different parts of the Commonwealth today?

Think about the issues that are the most troubling for young people in your country (e.g. unemployment, environmental destruction, drugs, access to education, HIV/AIDS or any others). Pick an issue that you are really interested in.

Imagine that you were given an opportunity to speak on that issue to the Prime Minister or President and the Youth Minister in your country, but you were only given ten minutes to meet with them. What would you say? How would you try to convey the concerns of young people on this issue? What action would you urge national leaders to take?

If this really happened, you would probably try to prepare for your speech by consulting with your friends and colleagues and other young people about their views on the issue, and also with some people who have experience in local or national politics about how they would try to make an effective short presentation.

Take this same consultative approach in completing this exercise. Talk to people about their concerns related to the issue you choose, and the solutions they would like to see. Write notes on your discussions. Do those you have consulted agree with your perspective on the issue? Has your own position been influenced by others in the course of your consultations, and in what ways?

Prepare a formal ten-minute presentation on the issue of your choice.

If possible, present it to your fellow students on this course, for discussion and feedback. If not, practise your presentation by delivering it at home, or in your own organisation or youth group. Delivering your speech in front of people can be nerve-racking, but it is important to strengthen your public speaking ability and can help you develop strong leadership and representational skills.

Insert a copy of your full speech into your learning journal, or - if you can - record it onto an audio cassette and submit it at the end of the module with your journal.

Youth participation in CYP

Youth participation represents a progressive new outlook on the role young people can play in society. Young people are no longer seen as passive recipients or victims of social and political forces. In their new role, they are seen as stakeholders in society, with vested interests and a role to share in the exercise of power at all levels.

The CYP's approach to youth participation supports and relies on young people's full inclusion in society – in social, political and economic life. It aims to ensure that all young people (especially marginalised groups) have access to the skills and opportunities they require to make a living, become full citizens and contribute to progress in their communities.

The CYP has four Regional Youth Caucuses and a Commonwealth Youth Caucus which provide a mechanism to ensure that young people are involved in consultations and decisions about the shape of the CYP's own programs. These enable youth representatives to make recommendations to Ministers for Youth Affairs at their triennial meetings. Each region also supports youth networks and exchanges between young people so that they can learn from each other and collectively try to influence national and regional policies.

For example, in Africa there is an HIV/AIDS Network that includes ten 'Ambassadors for Positive Living' who take a high profile role to talk openly about HIV spread and prevention, and about the impact of HIV on young people, while visiting schools, churches and mosques, youth groups, government officials and politicians.

Unit summary

In this unit, you have covered the following main points:

- an overview of the history of the Commonwealth (including official statements of Commonwealth principles from heads of government)
- the diversity of the Commonwealth member states, and also what the Commonwealth countries have in common – some common history, institutions and language
- how the Commonwealth originated with the British Empire, and the legacies of colonialism
- the evolution of the modern Commonwealth and its roles – including co-operation and assistance to member states
- the establishment of Commonwealth principles and ways in which these principles are put into practice.

To check how you have got on, look back at the learning outcomes for this unit and see if you can now do them. When you have done this, look through your learning journal to remind yourself of what you have learned and the ideas you have generated.

In the rest of the module we explore various aspects of Commonwealth values, and look at examples of how these have or have not been put into practice by the Commonwealth and other organisations. We think that this is a context you need to understand to get the most out of your role as a youth development worker.

Beyond the official organisation of the member governments and the Secretariat, there are many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with a Commonwealth connection, as well as several Commonwealth professional associations. Together they have thousands of members from around the world. It is possible for you to find out if a national affiliate body of any of these associations functions in your country. It may be useful for you to get into contact with that body.

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Unit 2: Human rights: universal values

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Unit introduction

Welcome to Unit 2 *Human rights: universal values*.

In Unit 1, you learned about *The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles – The Singapore Declaration* of 1971 and the *Harare Declaration* of 1991. These two documents together list the principles and priorities that guide the Commonwealth in all its work. We noted that human rights were one of the main themes found in these documents.

In this unit, we look at human rights more closely. We ask: Why are they important? Does everyone even agree on what they are? How can they be protected?

As you work through Unit 2, you will also examine the merits of the distinction that has often been drawn between ‘first generation’, ‘second generation’ and ‘third generation’ rights:

- first generation – civil and political rights
- second generation – civil and political rights and also economic and social rights
- third generation – collective rights.

You will also have the opportunity to consider several important international human rights documents, including the UN’s *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the CYP *Youth Rights Guide*.

Unit learning outcomes

When you have worked through this unit, you should be able to:

- define the core principles of human rights philosophy
- describe why human rights are considered important
- identify how different human rights are protected
- summarise the content of various key human rights documents.

What are human rights and why do we need them?

Human rights are the rights that every person is entitled to simply by virtue of being human. At the root of the human rights concept is the idea that all people should be able to live with dignity. Violations of our human rights amount to denials of our basic humanity.

Human rights are often discussed and defended by the key philosophers. For example, Kant argued that human rights are based in the fundamental moral right to be treated as an end in oneself, a view that he felt was completely justified by the value of human reason: a species that has the extraordinary reasoning power of human beings is special enough to have natural, basic rights. So, he argued, because these rights arise from and are an inseparable part of our basic human nature, they are 'inalienable' – they cannot be treated like commodities that are given to us or taken away from us.

Based on this argument, as long as we are human, in principle we always have fundamental human rights. This is true whether we are free or in prison, or whatever our circumstances. However, human rights can't just be based on the rights-holder's personal needs and interests. Rights are normally considered to be above practical considerations of that sort: instead, they exist at the level of the moral duties we owe each other as reasoning beings.

There are two main sets of principles that underpin the concept of human rights:

- natural law principles
- positive law principles.

We look at these next.

Natural law principles

The concept of human rights is deeply rooted in the idea of 'natural law'. Natural law comes from the moral principles common to all people by virtue of their spiritual or rational nature as human beings. Natural law is seen by some people as coming from God, though others (like the philosopher Kant) see it as deriving from pure reason. What makes us special is our reason, and our treatment should be determined by the principles of pure reason.

Natural law assumes that there are underlying rational principles of justice and morality that are universal in their nature, and apply in all societies and at any time in history.

Positive law principles

'Positive law' means man-made law, created by governments and responsive to the needs of the state. However, many theorists believe

that the positive laws should all be in conformity with the ‘higher’ principles of natural law.

Legal positivism denies the existence of natural law and accepts only the justice implied in the law of the state: it says that you can’t determine the law by looking for underlying rational or spiritual processes. The law is seen as a construction of the general will of the people of a state, and cannot be wrong, because a whole people can do no wrong in creating their own laws for their own state. Rights in positive law are freedoms or protections which are written down in statutes and legally enforceable.

This is no mere talking-point. For example, in Britain in 2006, the Al Qaeda terrorist campaign pushed the government into the making of laws that clearly threaten what many people consider their natural law rights of movement around the country. Other examples we have already mentioned (in Unit 1) include the Commonwealth choosing to sanction South Africa, albeit unevenly, so that it was forced to quit the organisation in 1961. Also, in 2002 Zimbabwe was suspended for a year from the Councils of the Commonwealth after the critical report by the Commonwealth Observer Group studying the presidential election. Both states insisted that, while their laws did threaten certain natural law freedoms, those laws were necessary for the well-being of the state i.e. that they were positive law principles.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is probably the best known list of human rights. The United Nations adopted it in 1948, when the whole world was recovering from the wounds of the Second World War, particularly from the horrors of genocide. After a period that showed some of the worst of human potential, the world community tried to focus on and promote the best of human potential. The Preamble to the Declaration implies that making sure that every person knows about and understands the Declaration will be one of the best ways of ensuring that human rights are respected around the world. The Declaration is a key starting point for understanding human rights – most other human rights conventions expand on specific parts of it.



Turn to Reading 5: ‘The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.’



Activity 2.1

(about 15 minutes)

Which of the articles in the Declaration did you know about already? Are there any that surprise you?

Make a note of your observations in your learning journal.

Why do we need to set down human rights?

When the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was written, it was controversial. No one had ever tried to set down a full list of rights that applied universally. Looking back at it now, many of us would be surprised by some of the debates, especially if we have been raised with the language of human rights.

Below are three reasons why human rights are necessary.

1 Moral vision

We need to set down human rights because they give us a moral vision of human nature and human dignity. They create a vision of what life would look like if everybody's basic humanity was equally respected and protected. If our needs for survival and protection were met, then we could focus on developing our individual and collective potential through educational and cultural activities.

The reality is that war, violence, intolerance and poverty around the world result in daily violations of human dignity. Human rights remind us of what is possible and what is due to people, even in the worst of situations.

2 Political vision

Human rights also give us a political vision or an agenda for change. If we evaluate our own schools, communities or countries against the standards set out in the Declaration, we can develop an agenda for social and political change. New policies and procedures, new development projects and new laws can be constructed in order to try to improve the achievement of human rights for all.

No Commonwealth country can really claim to have fully implemented human rights – there is always room for improvements, like reducing the inequalities between the very poor and the very wealthy, or between women and men.

3 Protection

We need human rights for protection when our legal rights are violated by the state, and to encourage justice and fairness within our societies. Ironically, we may be most aware of our human

rights when they are being threatened or denied. Human rights can be matters of life and death.

For example, in many countries during times of unrest the police have been used to detain opponents of the government or to confiscate their property, even though such actions may be against the written laws.

Because of these three widely-accepted reasons, human rights are occasionally protected by raising both national and international awareness of human rights violations. This can help draw attention to and resolve such situations, by creating moral pressure on governments. This kind of strategy has been successfully used by groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. During the period of Ian Smith's illegal occupation of Southern Rhodesia, Amnesty International ran a concerted campaign against the mistreatment of black activists by the state.

In the next section we look at some other ways in which human rights are protected.

How are human rights protected?

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is considered a statement of principles for states to follow, just like the *Singapore Declaration of Principles*, but it was not initially seen as being legally enforceable. It was necessary to put human rights into some kind of international treaty to make them legally binding. These treaties are usually called 'covenants' or 'conventions'. Once a state signs a treaty, in terms of international law it is legally required to observe its terms and to implement it, and it has to report on its progress to some kind of treaty-monitoring agency.

In many Commonwealth countries, a treaty only becomes binding under national law if a local law specifically provides for this. For example, it was only after the *Human Rights Act* (1998) was passed that judges in the United Kingdom became bound to enforce the European Convention on Human Rights: this despite the fact that the UK had been a party to the Convention for many years.

Important human rights conventions

Four important human rights conventions are described briefly below. They each represent aspects of Commonwealth values that you will continually encounter in this course, and in your work with youth development. These values are:

- democratic rights
- social development and the eradication of poverty
- equality for women

- protection for children and youth.

The four human rights conventions that correspond to these values are:

- 1 The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*.
- 2 The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*.
- 3 The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*.
- 4 The *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

The first two of these were drafted together and adopted by the UN in 1966 but did not come into force until 1976. They are intended to be a more concrete elaboration of the *Universal Declaration*. Together, the *Universal Declaration* and the two Covenants are known as the *International Bill of Human Rights*.

We will look at these four human rights conventions one by one.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Civil and political rights include:

- freedom of speech and assembly
- freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention
- equal treatment before the law
- due process of law and presumption of innocence during legal proceedings
- the right to vote and participate in public life.

The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)* differs in two primary ways from its counterpart on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

First, it contains a list of ‘non-derogable’ rights (rights that no government can curtail for any reason, even in times of public emergency). These non-derogable rights are:

- the right to life
- freedom from torture
- freedom from slavery or servitude
- protection from being imprisoned solely because of failure to meet a contractual obligation
- protection from punishment under retroactive laws
- the right to recognition as a person before the law
- the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Second, it also has two 'Optional Protocols' that states may ratify separately. Because they are optional, only states that ratify them are held accountable for implementing them.

The first Optional Protocol (OP) allows for individuals to make direct appeals to the *ICCPR* monitoring committee, provided that they have used all legal procedures available in their own country before bringing a complaint to the committee. This is unusual, because usually only governments are able to raise complaints in discussions of the implementation of international treaties.

The second Optional Protocol is aimed at the abolition of the death penalty.

By 2005, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights had been ratified by all but 18 of the 53 Commonwealth countries. Of these, 26 countries have also ratified the First OP concerning the right of individual petition, and eight have joined the second OP. (Two additional countries have signed but not yet ratified the treaty.)

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Economic, social and cultural rights include the rights to:

- social security
- work, rest and leisure
- a standard of living adequate to ensure health and well-being
- education
- participation in cultural life.

The Covenant formally recognises that securing these rights requires progressive action over time. For example, protecting rights to education and health requires that people have access to schools and medical facilities, which many countries are still struggling to create. These rights are bound to be dependent to some degree on the resources available to any particular country, either on its own or in combination with international financial or technical assistance.

By 2005, 31 Commonwealth countries had ratified the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*, and two more had signed but not yet ratified it.

Many developing countries that have ratified this Covenant and see the value of its provisions for their citizens, have at the same time been faced with pressure to do things that are directly contradictory: to implement economic structural adjustment programmes. This has meant allowing market forces to determine state spending to a more significant extent, and that involves cutting down the spending on welfare programmes e.g. health, education and social support to the poor.

The Commonwealth has been a strong, vocal advocate for a newly designed approach to structural adjustment, one that protects poverty alleviation programmes and maintains those services essential for human development, because, without them, the slower development of human resources makes it less rather than more possible to repay debts.



Activity 2.2

(about 15 minutes)

Do you know which of the two International Covenants (on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) your country has ratified? What could you do to find out?

Comparing the two, which do you feel might be the most valuable? Look critically at them based on the information above. What are the benefits and shortcomings of each document? If possible, discuss this with your colleagues.

Make a note of your ideas and conclusions in your learning journal.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

Also known as the 'Women's Convention', the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1979.

The conventions we have mentioned state that all human rights apply equally to women and men, but the reality is that all over the world girls and women are still discriminated against in access to education, food, health care, land, employment and decision-making. The *Women's Convention* recognises these areas of discrimination and obliges states to work to correct them through legal and social action. Discrimination is defined as 'any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex' that denies recognition of women's human rights or stops either married or unmarried women from exercising particular rights and freedoms guaranteed by the other conventions.

The Convention protects the rights of women and girls:

- to participate fully in decision making
- to have equal access to education and training
- to have equal access to employment opportunities, without discrimination on the basis of pregnancy or marital status
- to support services that enable them to combine work and family responsibilities

- to health services and adequate nutrition during pregnancy and delivery
- to financial credit and to equal access to property in marriage
- to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent
- to decide on the number and spacing of their children.

An Optional Protocol was added to the *Women's Convention* in 1999, which serves a similar function as the first ICCPR Optional Protocol, mentioned above. That is, it provides a mechanism where individuals or groups of women can complain in writing to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women about violations of the Convention. This Optional Protocol also enables the Committee to conduct inquiries into grave or systematic abuses of women's human rights in countries that have signed the Protocol.

By 2005, the *Women's Convention* had been ratified by 49 Commonwealth countries. Eight of these have also ratified the OP, and a further seven have signed it, expressing their intention to ratify.

Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's/Gender Affairs took the lead in developing the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2004–2015, which was negotiated and agreed in 2004. The Plan of Action reflects the Commonwealth's principles and values and incorporates its responses to the differential effects of global changes and challenges on women and men, girls and boys.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Also known as the 'Children's Convention', the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 1989. The *Children's Convention* covers some of the same civil, political, economic and social rights outlined in the *Universal Declaration* and the International Covenants.

These are the right to:

- life
- protection under the law
- freedom of expression
- freedom of thought
- freedom of association (the right to meet with others)
- health, education, social security, and an adequate standard of living.

In addition, the Convention goes into new areas such as the rights of children:

- to have their views considered in all decisions that affect them
- to adoption and care for those without families

- to have contact with their parents
- to protection from economic or sexual exploitation, neglect and abuse
- to support for those with disabilities
- to protection during situations of armed conflict.

The *Children's Convention* has two additional optional protocols, which have been added due to growing international concern about particular rights violations: one deals with the involvement of children in armed conflict, and the second addresses the inter-related problems of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

All 53 Commonwealth countries have ratified the *Children's Convention*. Globally, it has more ratifications than any other human rights instrument, with only two countries that have not acceded or ratified: the United States (which has signed but not ratified), and Somalia (which has not signed). By 2005, three Commonwealth countries had ratified and an additional 15 had signed the first optional protocol, with one ratification and 15 signatures supporting the second.



Activity 2.3

(about 20 minutes)

Look back at the rights of women and children that are supposed to be protected in countries that have signed the conventions (which includes almost all Commonwealth countries).

Consider the following questions. If possible, discuss them with your family, friends, colleagues or fellow students, then write your responses down in your learning journal.

- Do you think that all these rights of women are really protected in your country? Do you think that the rights of children are protected in your country? Are they protected in your own community?
- If not, what kinds of rights violations have you seen or heard about? Who were the victims? Who was responsible for the abuse or violation of their rights?
- How could the conventions be of practical help to the people you noted above who have been victims of rights violations?
- Why do you think that more countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child than any other human rights instruments?

In addition to the four conventions outlined here, there are a number of other important international human rights conventions that you may want to research on your own (for example, the *Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, that was adopted by the International Labour Organisation (the ILO) in 1999, or the *1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*).

A significant result of the development of these and other conventions on human rights is as follows. While the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was not initially considered legally enforceable, this has changed over the past fifty years. Because many other conventions, treaties and legal documents include references to the Declaration, it has become part of international law itself. By its nature, the Declaration applies in principle in all countries, whether or not they have signed the International Covenants or any of the other conventions discussed in this unit.

Protection at regional level

International conventions are not the only means of making human rights legally enforceable. Regional governmental organisations are also able to negotiate binding treaties that apply to their members. Three regional organisations have developed human rights conventions that strengthen and elaborate the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in ways that show the unique history and characteristics of each region. These are set out in the table below.

Regional Human Rights Protection	
Regional organisation	Human rights instrument
African Union	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
Organisation of American States (OAS)	American Convention on Human Rights
Council of Europe	European Convention on Human Rights

If you can, get hold of a copy of the regional convention that most closely relates to your country, read it and become familiar with it.

Can you prioritise human rights?

As activities so far might have shown you, it is sometimes hard to decide which rights to prioritise. The debate over whether human rights are universal or depend on the culture you live in is partly concerned with the question of whether some rights are more important than others.

Frequently, rights are divided into three different categories:

- **civil and political rights:** these are rights such as the right to freedom of speech or the right to vote – they can also be viewed as liberty or freedom rights. Earlier in this unit, we have seen that these rights are protected by the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*.
- **economic, social and cultural rights:** these include things like the right to work or health care for all – also conceptualised as ‘equality rights’. These rights are protected most comprehensively by the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*.
- **collective rights:** these are rights that apply to people together or as a whole, such as the right of all peoples to self-determination, or the rights to development, a healthy environment, peace or food security. These rights are also known as ‘fraternity’ or ‘solidarity’ rights. To date, the UN General Assembly has endorsed a *Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace* (1984), and a *Declaration on the Right to Development* (1996). These address collective rights, but they are declarations rather than conventions and do not have the same legal force.

Human rights were an ideological battleground during the Cold War. The Western powers saw themselves as the champions of civil and political rights, which were sometimes called ‘first-generation rights’ because they have a long tradition in European history (even going back to Ancient Greece), and were the focus of most of the first written human rights documents.

The Soviet and Eastern Bloc countries, for their part, argued that the right to work, for example, was more fundamental than the right to vote. They argued that economic, social and cultural rights were better protected under the communist system. These rights became known for a while, especially in Western democracies, as ‘second-generation rights’ to distinguish them from civil and political rights, and to indicate that there was a shorter history of international recognition for such rights.

This question of which rights have priority has become more complicated with the increasing acceptance of ‘collective’ or ‘people’s’ rights, which some analysts define as ‘third-generation rights’.



Activity 2.4

(about 20 minutes)

Look back at Reading 5: 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.' Read through each of the articles listed, and assign each one a rights category from 1-3, according to the definitions in the categories list above. Make a note of your choices in your learning journal.

This distinction between first-, second- and third-generation rights, while it seems to be a convenient grouping of rights, is really a false categorisation. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* includes within itself all three categories of rights, so all of these rights really date from the same generation, or even the same year – 1948! Most human rights conventions and covenants since then really only expand on particular aspects of the Declaration.

East and West championed the first two groups of rights. Collective or solidarity rights also have their own champions, mostly among developing countries and non-governmental organisations advocating greater equity in the international economy. However, collective rights are controversial. As these rights are essentially about creating new forms of international co-operation and a more equitable balance of power internationally, they are seen as 'threatening' to established political and economic elites in both developed and developing countries. There is also a perennial tension between group rights and individual rights – which are to have priority?

Collective rights are particularly challenging when we consider the conflict of inter-generational collective rights: the rights of future generations versus the rights of our own generation. This is a central ethical issue raised in almost all discussions about the environment: limits to our use of resources today are justified because future generations will be the ones who have to deal with the consequences and who are not here yet, to be able to voice their concerns. Our *de facto* definition of collective rights seems however to be entirely selfish, since we take only a short-term perspective and prioritise our own needs.

The universality of all human rights

At the start of this unit, we noted that human rights become most important when they are most threatened. When we think about the rights we or others need the most, it is natural for us to prioritise the rights of those we feel are important to us. People in different circumstances and in different parts of the world are likely to prioritise their rights in other ways that they perceive to be important. But perspectives change and priorities change, and new challenges to human rights are emerging constantly. The only way to deal with that

is to insist that all human rights are in principle protected all of the time.

Consequently, rather than concentrating on distinctions and hierarchies among rights, human rights organisations, scholars and governments are increasingly referring to all human rights as 'universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.' This was the language adopted by governments at the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993, in their final Declaration and Programme of Action. The danger with that is that it is so sweeping that it is easy to submerge real issues under the generality of the philosophy. There's a danger that 'human rights' simply takes the place of 'justice' and that discriminates badly against some people unless we are very careful. Reading 6 illustrates the position of women in this regard.



Turn now to Reading 6: 'Gender Inequality: from Roles to Rights'. It was written by Graça Machel, and she delivered it as the 2001 Commonwealth Lecture.

The article in Reading 6 raises the issue of gender, and challenges us to see that, even though we may talk about the indivisibility of rights, and the right to equality between men and women, there is still a significant gap between this rhetoric and the reality of women's lives around the world. The *UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* is one of the most ratified human rights conventions, yet gross injustice still occurs widely.

The article suggests that, while mechanisms for promoting and protecting human rights do need to be strengthened, the long-term sustainability of equal rights lies in positively influencing people's values and behaviour. It challenges us to see how our own actions in our own families either can promote gender equality or can stop it from becoming a reality.

Do young people have special rights?

Should young people have special rights and their own convention? This is a difficult question to answer. There is no single document called a 'Convention on Youth Rights' that you can turn to for a list of youth rights that have been agreed to and are being protected by all governments.

Recent attempts to develop a youth rights charter or convention have proved controversial in many governments, some youth organisations and some human rights groups. Some people argue that these rights are already defined and protected in other declarations. Others argue that they deserve re-iteration.



Turn now to Reading 7: 'Extract from the *Youth Rights Guide*.'

The Guide is a Commonwealth Secretariat publication, which looks at the special position of young people. It also has further discussion of some of the documents we have already mentioned, in relation to the rights of women and children.

If you wish to read more about human rights as they relate to youth, you may also find it useful to consult various youth policies that have been implemented in some Commonwealth member countries. Such policies should address issues regarding the rights, as well as responsibilities, of youths.

Judge human rights records with a critical eye

Commonwealth values and principles, though they have roots in natural law principles, have emerged from political and economic struggles, often against the powerful (as you have read about so far in this module). These values continue to be formulated and reformulated through such struggles.

It is important to recognise that claims made about human rights records are often statements made from within a particular political ideology and may well be only strategic claims made by one of the struggling groups. The obvious case is the USA, which has a very good basis for challenging the human rights records of some other countries such as North Korea, but is also responsible for cases like the illegal long-term detention of terror suspects in Guantanamo Bay, without bringing specific charges against them. This has been condemned by the USA's own courts.

Often, economic and political interests underpin what are represented as responses to human rights concerns. When you evaluate the situations you face in your own country, try to look into the political and economic complexity of the situation. Individual rights often come into conflict with each other, or with today's collective rights or the collective rights of future generations.

Government policies or actions are often based on making practical choices among competing interests. It is important to maintain an open but critical mind in analysing these choices: Who wins? Who loses? Are there any other options that might produce different outcomes?



Activity 2.5

(about 30 minutes)

As an individual or in a group, consider the concept of the 'universality of rights'. Answer the questions below.

- Do you think that the content of human rights should be the same in all countries and in all cultures within each country? Give your reasons.
- Do you think that there are common basic standards, as, for example, represented in all the major religions? Give your reasons.
- What do you think are the real reasons why some groups resist the idea of the universality of human rights?

Make notes of your responses in your learning journal.

The activities in this unit may have helped you see how subjective making an assessment of human rights priorities can be. Except for a few rights like the 'right to life' and the 'right to be free from torture' – which everyone needs just for staying alive – it is likely that any two people's lists of priorities will contain many differences, even if they are small.

However, saying that human rights have an element of subjectivity does not mean that governments should feel free to choose which ones they will protect and which they will ignore. Quite the contrary. It is perhaps only by protecting *all* the human rights and fundamental freedoms described in the conventions we have examined in this unit, that a government can be sure to create the conditions for real and sustainable development that benefits all its citizens.

Unit summary

In this unit you have covered the following main points.

- the nature of human rights, and the main principles generating human rights
- the theoretical reasons for defining human rights, including moral vision, political vision, and the protection of those rights
- a summary review of important international human rights conventions, including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- the argument for the universality of human rights and the debate over whether rights are culturally relative
- identifying issues related to the three categories of human rights and the setting of priorities for human rights.

To check how you have got on, look back at the learning outcomes for this unit and see if you can now do them. When you have done this, look through your learning journal to remind yourself of what you have learned and the ideas you have generated.

In the next unit, we look at democratic values and structures.

Reference

There are several translations of, and comments on, Immanuel Kant's 1781 work '*The Critique of Pure Reason*' and they are widely available.

Unit 3: Democratic values and structures

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Unit introduction

Welcome to Unit 3 *Democratic values and structures*. In this unit, we explain democracy as both a set of values and a set of institutions and practices. You are asked to grapple first with the question of what reasonable limitations governments can place on individual rights in a democracy; and then with what the relationship should be between rights and duties. We examine democracy as a style of government – including citizen participation, organised opposition, the rule of law, ‘just and honest’ government. Three styles and techniques of democratic decision-making are described. You will learn about some of the ways that the Commonwealth Secretariat works to support and progress democratic culture in member countries. Finally, we look at some techniques for encouraging democracy in youth work.

Unit learning outcomes

When you have worked through this unit, you should be able to:

- provide a summary definition of democracy
- explain the key principles that underpin democracy
- identify how different rights are protected in democratic systems, and the means by which democratic systems operate
- identify the various threats and challenges to democracy.

What is democracy?

What do you think of when you hear the word ‘democracy’? For many people, the word calls up images of elections, parliaments, and systems of majority voting. Or perhaps you think about slogans such as: ‘One person, one vote’, and ‘Government of the people, by the people and for the people.’

But is democracy just about governments? Someone unhappy with the way decisions are taken in their home, workplace, or community, may complain that the process has been ‘undemocratic’. This might mean that they not feel that they were consulted, or that a few people controlled the decision, ignoring the views of many colleagues.



Activity 3.1

(about 10 minutes)

Consider your own ideas about democracy. If someone asked you, how would you summarise the ideas and principles behind it? What examples would you use?

Write down a series of bullet points, with examples, that capture your key ideas. Record them in your learning journal.

Core meaning of democracy

There are common elements entailed in all types of democratic decision-making. They involve:

- debate
- participation in decision-making
- respect for alternative views
- protection for minority interests
- a willingness to work towards understanding and agreement.

It is important to realise that ‘democracy’ has a range of meanings, but the list of elements above comprises the ‘core’ meanings which should be present every time the word is used.

In reality, various states have called themselves democratic even when they appear to practice all sorts of things that contradict some, occasionally all, the elements of this core meaning. The ancient Greeks invented the concept of democracy, yet they had slaves in their city states! Therefore, you have to be careful about the word being used as an ideological term to persuade you that a state or group is more democratic than it actually is, and attempting in this way to prove its ethical and political credentials.

To help you analyse the true state of a so-called democracy, always ask yourself the following questions:

- What sort of language game are the users of the word 'democracy' now playing?
- What are the users of the word directing my attention to?
- What (if anything) are they trying to hide?

A definition of democracy

Democracy means more than a particular set of government institutions. It refers to relationships: between the state and its citizens, among diverse groups and among individuals.

A good inclusive definition of democracy as a way of organising society is provided by John Gastil (1993). He defines democracy in the following terms:

“Democracy connotes wide-ranging liberty, including the freedom to decide one’s own course in life and the right to play an equal role in forging a common destiny. Democracy means social and civil equality and a rejection of discrimination and prejudice. Democracy embraces the notion of pluralism and cultural diversity. It welcomes a wide range of perspectives and lifestyles, moving different social groups towards peaceful coexistence or respectful integration. Democracy represents the ideal of a cohesive community of people living and working together and finding fair, non-violent ways to reconcile conflicts. In sum, democracy embodies all three elements of the famous French Revolutionary slogan (liberty, equality, fraternity).”
(Gastil, 1993: p.5)

Again we see here the link with the philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau (mentioned in Module 1). As you know from Unit 1 in this module, Heads of Government identified democracy as a fundamental political value for the Commonwealth in the *Harare Declaration*, recognising ‘the inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic processes in framing the society in which they live.’ This means that the Commonwealth is committed to democracy both as a style of government and as a style of decision-making.

What are democratic values?

Democracy is all about being able to make informed choices. For example, if there are three political parties in an election, you make a choice from the individual candidates, and/or from the programmes and positions of the parties they represent.

In order for you to make genuinely informed choices, you need to be able to:

- engage meaningfully in open dialogue and debate
- access relevant and objective information so that your views are informed
- perceive that your participation in the debate and subsequent decision-making has value
- feel safe
- make a free decision without suffering or fearing harm to yourself or your family.

Amartya Sen, a Nobel Prize-winning economist from India, provides this view of how these elements combine:

“We must not identify democracy with majority rule. Democracy has complex demands, which certainly include voting and respect for election results, but it also requires the protection of liberties and freedoms, respect for legal entitlements and the guaranteeing of free and uncensored distribution of news and fair comment. Even elections can be deeply defective if they occur without the different sides getting an adequate opportunity to present their respective cases, or without the electorate enjoying the freedom to obtain news and to consider the views of competing protagonists.” (Sen, 1999, pp.9–10)

Based on what we have read so far, in the next section we are going on to look in some detail at the principles that underpin our ideas of democracy. Before we do this, though, complete the following activity.



Activity 3.2

(about 10 minutes)

Look back at your responses to Activity 3.1 in your learning journal. Based on what you have read since then, are there any changes or alterations that you would make? Go through them now and think carefully about what you have written.

Note any changes or additions in your learning journal.

Principles underpinning democracy

Based on the accounts we have read so far, we can identify three principles that lie at the heart of democratic values:

- pluralism/diversity
- citizenship
- respect for human rights.

If these three principles are in operation, they create the conditions under which critical debate and dialogue can flourish. These connections can be shown in a diagram (below):



Principles underpinning democracy

Now let us look at each part of this more closely.

Pluralism and diversity

A dictionary definition of pluralism is:

“Pluralism: a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain an autonomous participation in and development of their traditional culture or special interest, within the confines of a common civilisation.”

In a pluralist society, no one group or characteristic totally dominates social organisation because all groups have to act as if they value and accept diversity. In other words, pluralism guards against totalitarianism and against tribalism, though not against tribes asserting their separate identities, providing that they accept the equal value of other tribal cultures.

The majority of Commonwealth countries are plural societies, where different ethnic, racial, cultural and religious groups live peacefully together. Recent examples of ethnic cleansing in countries like Bosnia or Rwanda are examples of anti-pluralism or the complete breakdown of pluralism. The Rwandan genocide was tribal in nature, but its roots derived from the colonisation processes in the country which used a smaller tribe to manage a much larger tribe in the control of the country.

Pluralism contributes to democracy at several levels. We will look two of them now.

At the **‘grassroots’ level**, pluralism works for democracy because:

- it allows people to develop a wide variety of attachments and associations
- it enhances a sense of belonging and provides opportunities for people to participate actively in building the kinds of communities they want to live in
- where effective interest groups or pressure groups are formed, people also have an increased ability to influence political decision-making.

At a **direct political level**, pluralism works for democracy because:

- it allows for a variety of political parties. A sign of healthy pluralism is the operation of a range of political parties.
- the political parties are formed around different values and beliefs, but seek to be broad-based in their membership. In other words, the membership base of parties in a pluralist society cuts across racial, class or other lines and brings people with similar convictions together.

Of course, these levels of influence are present in an ideal type of a democratic society. While most countries are unlike Bosnia and Rwanda, nevertheless there are many democratic countries where racial or ethnic-based political parties are common, and where they serve to draw attention to what divides people rather than what brings them together. The reality is that pluralism is something we have to strive towards, rather than something that automatically exists within democracy.

Challenges to pluralism

Structural imbalances of power as well as structured social exclusion can be challenges for pluralism. How can there be full democracy when a society effectively excludes some groups from education because they can't afford it?

You may well find in your youth work that some of your groups have suffered educational and cultural exclusion throughout childhood. To integrate them into pluralist society, you have to help them counteract the effects of long-term exclusion.

How can there be effective democracy when some groups are so powerful that they can ignore what the voting population votes for?

The British social scientist Steven Lukes has explored the concept of power at length. He argues that, to understand how power affects democratic processes, you have to recognise that it is a complex phenomenon which can be described at three levels. We will look at these next.

At level 1, the level where you can see clearly whether or not pluralism works, the power of the different groups affecting policy can be observed by asking the following question: Whose declared policies are the ones being pursued in the decision-making process?

This has been an important issue in places like Central and Latin America, where governments have often been forced to pursue policies that favour the USA which controls the trade around the region, since it is such a huge market for those countries' products. Countries like Bolivia, despite their immense natural resources, are extremely poor because foreign transnational companies (TNCs) get most of the profit out of the country's production, and the government has to dance to the TNCs' tune.

At level 2, the answer to who holds power is much less visible, because a minority of people with power may prevent certain issues being discussed. The result is that those who take decisions are taking them on the basis of inadequate evidence or in a way limited by those with power.

This was a problem in the former Soviet Union in a number of ways, as it was a very secretive society. For example, the environmental dangers of industrialisation were not allowed onto the public agenda when nuclear power programmes and tests were being discussed. The possibility of this example being repeated is high (even in democracies) where control of technical and scientific knowledge is in the hands of a few wealthy agencies.

At level 3, a deeper level still, are those with the power to persuade people to do what they want – for example, power over the media, over prevailing ideas or ideology.

An obvious example is the power of a media tycoon such as Rupert Murdoch, head of News International. Mr Murdoch genuinely believes in the value of market forces leading to greater prosperity everywhere. But people with that sort of power may be able to persuade others to do things that are actually self-harming, as market forces seem to be generating over-consumption of oil and natural gas, which is rapidly depleting our energy reserves and may be massively contributing to global warming.

Such power may even be obvious, as the power of Rupert Murdoch is, but still the decision makers can do nothing about it, because they do not have the financial, military or political power to do so.



If you would like to read more about the challenges to democratic pluralism, turn now to Reading 8: 'Some further challenges to democratic pluralism.'

Is pluralism attainable?

If any nation can be said to be pluralist it must be modern South Africa. The strength of South Africa lies in the richness and diversity of its cultures, but that ethnic diversity can also be a real impediment to the benefits of pluralism unless very carefully managed.

Former Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, in a speech on *Democracy in Africa: The Challenges and the Opportunities* (delivered in front of the South African Parliament in Cape Town on 1 June 1998), noted that democracy can help to prevent or eliminate divisive pluralism. He noted that every African nation is a multi-ethnic nation, which can be a source of strength if it is protected in the right way.

Ethnicity is particularly dangerous to national unity when it becomes a blunt instrument exploited by politicians in their quest for power. An obvious example of this abuse is that of President Idi Amin who used a racist attack on Asian business people to drive them out of their businesses in Uganda, in the 1960s. This was meant to consolidate his own ethnic political credentials but badly damaged the Ugandan economy.

Some countries have banned ethnic politics. Another way of averting this danger is to provide for power-sharing arrangements in the constitution in such a way that no particular ethnic group can feel permanently excluded from government. This can of course be enormously difficult to achieve, as the situation in Iraq following the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime exemplifies: the numerical dominance of Kurds and Shia has clearly raised the fear among some Sunnis that they will be edged out of power in any power-sharing arrangement.



Activity 3.3

(about 10 minutes)

Based on what you have read, write in your learning journal a brief summary in point form covering the definitions of pluralism in democracy, its benefits and the challenges to it.

Next, we look at the second of the principles underpinning democracy: citizenship.

Citizenship

As we have seen, the threats to democratic governance caused by a) the uneven distribution of power and b) the existence of so many potentially conflicting groups (as in the Balkans or Iraq) often means that democracy cannot function in a community without a high level of active participation of its members.

In this sense, citizenship – legal membership of a democratic society – combines holding certain rights with having some defined duties and responsibilities. For example, in a democratic state adult citizens have the right to vote in elections. It is therefore reasonable to argue that they have a responsibility to vote, to exercise that right, because, without wide participation, it is difficult to demand that the activities of a new government should reflect the general will of the people.

But levels of voter turnout differ widely between different countries that continue to call themselves democracies. In Britain today it is the lowest it has been for many decades. In many local elections the turnout is well below 50 per cent. Clearly, voting is not seen by British citizens as the most central part of exercising active citizenship.

Given examples like this, it is clear that there is a range of concepts regarding citizenship.

Conceptions of citizenship

There are now rapid and potentially threatening political, economic and social changes everywhere. If we are going to achieve higher levels of social inclusion, equity, and sustainable development in face of this change, we have to evaluate and challenge our systems of governance. One concept that enables us to challenge the effects of change, and to assess the quality of the human and official relationships in our society is that of ‘citizenship’.

While ideas and definitions of citizenship vary and have been debated throughout the centuries, there is a core concept of citizenship amongst these definitions:

- A citizen is generally seen as a member of a political entity, such as a state; he or she owes allegiance to that state’s government and is entitled to protection from that government.
- A citizen is entitled to the state’s privileges: access to the state’s security and support, access to the state’s franchise, the right to participate in government and its processes including choosing and also perhaps running the state’s government.

In summary, citizenship should entail statutory rights and responsibilities between individuals/groups and their governments.



Activity 3.4

(about 10 minutes)

You probably have some ideas of your own about what citizenship and being a citizen entails. Before we move on, think about the roles and responsibilities of both the citizen and the state to each other. Write your ideas in your learning journal.

Citizens' rights and responsibilities

As we have seen, the core concept view sees citizenship as a 'social contract' between the state and the individual. This means that there is a widely accepted agreement among citizens of what the rights and responsibilities of the state and citizens are to each other.

Citizen's rights have come to include the right to:

- own property
- have freedom of speech and association
- choose who governs
- vote and/or participate in electoral or governance processes
- have a minimum standard of living
- gain the protection of the law
- have a fair trial
- have access to public services
- be allowed free movement.

Citizens' responsibilities include the obligations to:

- pay taxes and other legally imposed levies
- obey laws and behave in a socially acceptable way
- respect the needs of others
- uphold individual and group rights
- protect the environment and natural world
- play an active part in citizenship i.e. in the local community and also wider involvement and service.

Citizens' rights can most easily be found in the Constitution or the Bill of Rights of a state. The Constitution or Bill of Rights of each Commonwealth country aims to uphold the rights of its citizens. An overview of the kind of Constitutions existing in the Commonwealth is presented in the *Legal Concepts of Citizenship*. As stated there, the constitution has been described as a:

“...mirror reflecting the national soul, the identification of the ideas and aspiration of a nation; the articulation of the values binding its people and disciplining its government.”

Citizenship, both as an idea and in practice, is evolving and changing. The most notable challenges to citizenship are coming from what people have broadly called 'globalisation', a term used to describe an increasing economic interconnectedness among individuals, organisations, groups, and states.



Turn now to Reading 9: 'Citizenship in the Commonwealth', for a summary of the development of ideas of citizenship across the Commonwealth.



Activity 3.5

(about 15 minutes)

Reflect on the examples provided in Reading 9, and consider which of them might be most appropriate for describing the concept of citizenship in your own country. Make notes in your learning journal.

Citizens' attributes

A paper by the Commonwealth Foundation (Merrifield, 2001) describes three broad areas of citizen attributes:

- “**Knowledge:** in order to exercise your rights you have to understand them; in order to participate effectively you have to understand how power operates and government works, so that you know how to have an impact; in order to act collectively with others you need to know about the interests and of other groups of citizens.”
- “**Abilities:** most important are the skills and abilities to communicate and negotiate with others, which include listening and speaking skills, the ability to influence and exercise leadership, the ability to compromise and revise your opinions on the basis of new information, and the skills to collaborate and work together to achieve mutually-agreed objectives.”
- “**Dispositions:** the ‘habits of mind’ or values and attitudes that underpin citizenship include a sense of justice and fairness, a sense of connection with others, an awareness of common interests, a willingness to resolve differences peacefully, an attitude of critical inquiry and questioning, confidence in your vision, and a feeling that your actions can have an impact.”



Activity 3.6

(about 30-45 minutes)

Imagine that you were applying for a job as 'Citizen', and that the three attributes knowledge, abilities and dispositions formed the job description that described the best candidate for the position.

In your learning journal, write a CV or résumé for yourself, and a covering letter to the President of the Citizens Association, as if you were applying for the job.

Tips for making your CV and covering letter fit the job

In your CV, after outlining your background education, you could have three sections under a heading 'Citizenship Experience' - one on 'knowledge', one on 'abilities' and one on 'dispositions'.

In each section, highlight the qualities (set out in the descriptions of citizens' attributes above) that you feel best describe you as a person, and provide evidence on how you have gained these qualities or have demonstrated their application in your work.

For example, if you have done service or volunteer work with disadvantaged children who have a different background from you, you could note that experience to prove that you have knowledge of different groups in your society. You could also note your participation in this course as evidence that you have knowledge of how democratic structures work.

In your covering letter, you should try to convey to the Citizens Association why you want to get this job. In general, a covering letter should convey the passion that you feel for the job you are applying for, and should give a few brief examples of items from your CV that show you have the skills required.

You should also convey your confidence in yourself and your ability to undertake the job of Citizen. Tell the Association what you would like to do as a Citizen, how you would try to work for the betterment of various members of society - this shows them why they would benefit from hiring you over other candidates.

Reflection

When you have finished, take a few minutes to reflect on the exercise. What did you find most difficult? What did you find most rewarding? What did you learn from this exercise that you think might have practical applications for planning your own career?

Add your thoughts on these questions to your learning journal after your CV and covering letter.

This brings us to the conclusion of this section on citizenship, the second principle underpinning democracy. There are, of course, many challenges to citizens and the concept of citizenship. If you wish to read more about these challenges, they are discussed in some detail in the Reading below.



Turn to Reading 10: 'Challenges to Citizenship'.

Respect for human rights

The third principle we are going to discuss in this unit is that of respect for human rights. As we have already seen at the beginning of this unit, there is a powerful connection between human rights and democracy. You may remember the three categories of rights from Unit 2:

- Civil and political rights are sometimes also referred to as 'liberty rights', since they provide protection from state violations of the individual.
- Economic and social rights are called 'equality rights' because they seek to guarantee access to essential social and economic goods, services and opportunities for all.
- Collective rights are also called 'fraternity rights' because they propose new forms of national and international co-operation and solidarity.

Clearly if liberty, equality and fraternity are embodied in democracy, then a broad understanding of human rights is also central.

As Article 1 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* suggests, we should all 'act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood' and sisterhood. We all have a duty to respect each others' rights. In their discussion of 'global ethics', the Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development describes the necessary connection between rights and responsibilities this way:

"Bonds without options are oppressive; options without bonds are anarchy. Modernisation has widened choices, but destroyed some connections. Indeed, choices without bonds are as oppressive as bonds without choices. The aim should be a

society in which liberty is not libertine, authority not authoritarian, choices are more than ‘actes gratuits’, bonds more than painful restrictions.” (World Commission, 1995, p. 41)

Note: ‘Actes gratuits’ is a French term for acts that appear to have no real motive, and are done impulsively.

Should there be limitations on rights in a democracy?

At the end of Unit 2, we noted that we would return to the issue of whether there are or should be any limitations on human rights. There is a kind of ‘rule of thumb’ that some people use to consider whether particular constraints or limitations on the exercise of rights can be considered just and reasonable in a democratic system. This rule declares that: ‘Practices that attack the fundamental values of democracy cannot be considered valid.’

For example, most democracies have laws to prevent inciting hatred against certain groups. Such laws may result in restrictions of free speech or censorship, but they are considered by many (not all) as essential to protecting pluralism. Those who do not support this view sometimes argue that ‘the solution to bad speech is more speech’, meaning that the general population will not be swayed by a few people preaching hatred as long as there are enough moderate views also being expressed.

So it has been argued that such hatred inciting speeches should be ignored and opposite views encouraged. In the UK, following the events of September 11th 2001 in New York, and 7th July 2005 in London, there was a lot of openly anti-Muslim rhetoric from one of the right-wing political parties. The government passed a bill making this an illegal act but were attacked by some commentators as anti-democratic.

Decisions about the kinds of restrictions on rights that are ‘reasonable’ in society can be very difficult to make. This is probably a good thing, as it means democratic governments are less likely to make them flippantly or on matters of convenience.

The essential guideline is in Article 29 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which describes when laws may limit fundamental rights: such limits should always be proportional to the good that is being sought. For example, it should be allowable to limit free movement of people when there is an outbreak of a deadly disease, where movement would be likely to spread contact with the disease. Here, the harm caused by limiting freedom of movement is justified by the likelihood of the greater harm that might be caused by the disease if there was no limitation on movement.



Activity 3.7

(about 30 minutes, not including research and running the debate)

Here you will have the chance to plan some research into the laws in your country that relate to censorship and restrictions on freedom of speech or expression.

You can do this on your own by organising a debate with your family, friends or colleagues, or you can do it as a group project with other students on this course. If you work with a group of other students, everyone should still try to find out basic information about their national laws so that you get some research practice.

Good sources of information on national laws include your public or university library, and local lawyers or others who have had legal training. Please note in your learning journal who your group partners are (if any), and what information sources you use.

1. Do you have laws against hate literature or the publication of material that could cause serious harm to people and society as a whole? Where could you find out about these? Do you think these laws are reasonable?

Write your findings and ideas in your learning journal.

2. How would you prepare for a mock debate on the following topic with a small group (4-6 people) from your organisation or a group of fellow students?

Topic: 'Is it reasonable in a democracy to restrict young people's access to certain kinds of material and ideas on the basis that young people are more impressionable than adults? Argue 'Yes' or 'No'.'

In your learning journal, write a brief summary of three arguments you would use to defend both of the following:

- a) the argument for the above
 - b) the argument against the above.
- 3 If you would like to organise and conduct the debate for real, here are some guidelines:
 - Divide yourselves into two teams that will argue opposing viewpoints.
 - Don't worry if you don't agree with the side of the argument you are given. The idea is for you to develop skills of analysis by being able to think through the argument, and skills of synthesis by trying to defend it

convincingly.

- When each team has had the opportunity to think through and plan its position, set aside about an hour for your actual debate and discussion.
- You may want to invite others to listen to your debate and join in discussion afterwards. If so, leave a little more time for discussion - but this is up to the group.
- Each side gets 15 minutes to put forward their ideas initially, then 5 more minutes to give a reply after the other side has presented.
- Avoid any kind of personal attacks on the other side, and avoid basing your argument on emotion rather than reason.
- Find a fair method to decide which side should start first.

After your debate, spend 20-30 minutes discussing the following questions

- Whose side made the strongest argument, in your opinion?
- What criteria have you used to make that decision?
- Was there evidence of methods of debate that are convincing?
- Did your colleagues agree with your opinion?
- Was anyone arguing a position that they did not believe?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- Was it difficult to keep from drawing on emotional arguments?

Finally, record some of your own and the group's feelings and reactions to this activity in your learning journal.

Running a democratic government

What defines a democratic government? Obviously, a commitment to democratic values is important. But there are certain institutions and practices that are shared throughout the wide range of democracies found today. These include:

- elections
- citizen participation
- organised opposition
- the rule of law
- just and honest government.

In this section, we will examine each of these one by one.

Elections

Elections are probably the most obvious aspect of national democracies. As we noted in the introduction to this unit, many people equate democracy with the idea of elections, and slogans like *'one person, one vote'*. Elections embody the essential principle that those who rule should be accountable to their citizens. Holding elected leaders to account is the only way to be sure that they won't misuse their positions.

For elections to truly reflect this principle of accountability, they have to be free (without pressurising the voters) and fair (without tampering with voting procedures), and they should happen at regular intervals such as every four to five years.

As important as elections are, they are only one part of democracy. Between elections leaders and governments can introduce all sorts of changes that require to be called to public account. An example is UK Prime Minister Anthony Eden's decision to combine with France to invade Egypt when Colonel Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal. There was considerable unrest in the country, and people took to the streets in enormous numbers in protest marches. Left-wing opposition leaders led a revolt in Parliament. And international opinion was roused against the action, causing the USA to veto it.

Leaders in one-party authoritarian states have tried to create real elected dictatorships in the past – getting their people to elect them 'leader for life'. President Museveni has been accused of this in Uganda, because of banning a rival opposition leader. This is like saying 'one person, one vote, but only once'.

Despite a general trend towards the expansion of multi-party elections around the world during the 1990s, it is still possible to find such contradictions of democracy.



Activity 3.8

(about 15 minutes)

Make brief notes about how democracy is practised in your country. What are the different means by which people participate in the running of the country? In your opinion, how inclusive or effective are they? What are the challenges to participation and democratic government in your own country? Make note of your ideas in your learning journal.

Citizen participation

Democracies must involve some level of citizen participation in decision-making. At the most visible level, this is usually done only through elections in which each eligible citizen is allowed a say in choosing a government to represent their interests. Sometimes a more direct form of democracy is also employed for certain kinds of decisions. In these cases, citizens themselves make decisions directly in a national vote on a specific issue. This is called a ‘referendum vote’, which by-passes the elected representatives.

As we noted earlier in reviewing the qualities of citizenship, what happens with citizen participation *between* elections is at least as important as what happens *in* them. Active citizen participation means that people create or take hold of opportunities to be involved in decision making on local, regional, national and even international issues.

Some forms of participation are highly structured, such as membership of a political party, running for local government office, or becoming an elected member of your local school board. Other opportunities exist to become involved in NGOs, community groups or social movements, working on issues of importance in your community. For example:

“When resistance to apartheid shifted to the countryside in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Tribal Authorities and their incumbents were, in some areas, invariably the targets. Youth, students, and retrenched migrant workers became the main leaders of these struggles. At this level, rural residents, mainly youth, in many rural areas in the Eastern Cape and elsewhere were involved in running battles with traditional authorities. There were calls for their removal from office and the replacement of Tribal Authorities with democratically elected structures.”

(From Lungisile Ntsebeza’s article on Democracy in South Africa’s Countryside: Is there a role for traditional authorities?)

Many of these groups encourage the development of skills like critical analysis, consultation and co-operation. In addition, participation in groups that are directly involved in promoting changes in laws or policies can be a great opportunity to learn about how power works and how government operates. For young people in particular, this can be a very direct form of ‘learning by doing’. The more people participate in the political and social affairs of their community and nation, the more they learn and practice the skills and attributes of citizenship, and the more everyone benefits from an active and engaged citizenry.



Activity 3.9

(about 20 minutes)

Consider the two issues below and make note of your ideas in your learning journal.

- 1 From your own experience, to what extent are young people interested and active in politics in your country? What issues concern them most? How do they express their ideas? What discourages them from political involvement?
- 2 What could you do to encourage a group of young people to become aware of and interested in matters of government and politics? Look back through this module and identify the activities that you might be able to use with them. How would you organise each activity for a group of young people?

Organised opposition

Democracy is implemented through debate and dialogue about the political and economic issues that are essential to run a country. That is the only way to ensure that a country’s decisions are properly informed.

Opposition to a government normally consists of a political party which sits ‘in opposition’ to the government in the national legislature. The role of formal opposition parties is as important as the role of the governing party to a stable democracy, provided they are loyal to the interests of the country and disciplined enough to act lawfully.

The opposition should present an alternative view to the government, even if that is only a minor critical adjustment of policy, and it should back this up with a programme of what it would itself do if it were in government. This should be a peaceful channel for dissent and criticism (though fist fighting and personal abuse are not unknown).

For opposition to work, political parties must genuinely represent more than the interests of their elite leadership, and must be

interested in more than just the holding of power for personal benefit. This is demonstrated where government and opposition parties can agree on areas of national interest, and can work collaboratively to achieve goals that benefit the national interest.

Other forms of organised opposition include trade unions and interest or pressure groups, such as the various peace and environmental groups, NGOs like Greenpeace. These are part of 'civil society', and are among the important ways to influence governance between democratic elections. Not all civil society groups will always be playing an 'opposition' role, but they can still serve as a major channel for collecting the voices and concerns of the community, and placing them before the people in power.

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press and media have also been found to be indispensable elements in maintaining a healthy opposition and an informed public.

The next reading touches on many of the issues considered above.



Turn to Reading 11: 'Good governance: the challenge for Africa.' It looks at changes in Africa in the post-colonial period, the growth of multi-party democracies since the end of the Cold War and the decline of military governments. It highlights some of the challenges involved in developing strong multi-party democracies. These include the development of a national civil society, electoral commissions, sound electoral practices and opposition parties.

The rule of law and just and honest government

If democratic government is to be 'of the people, by the people and for the people' as a former US President, Abraham Lincoln, suggested, then it requires both the rule of law and transparent, accountable government. Demands for the rule of law and fair government were the foundation of the earliest human rights charter, the *Magna Carta*, signed in England in 1215.

'The rule of law' is the principle that a ruler must not govern arbitrarily but according to agreed procedures and standards. The way to make sure that a government does not become tyrannical is to insist on the 'separation of powers' between the body making the laws (the governing party) and those interpreting and enforcing them (the judiciary).

Corruption was another complaint in early human rights charters, and it remains a major challenge to just and honest government today, and to democracy itself in many parts of the world.

The difficulty of establishing such a just and honest government is explored in Cheddie Jagan's account of the independence process in Guyana in *The West on Trial – My Fight for Guyana's Freedom*, which was first written in 1966 and later updated.



Turn now to Reading 12: ‘Putting Guyana Up For Auction’, taken from Jagan’s book. The language is more difficult than in earlier readings, but try to focus on the vision of democracy that is being presented.



Activity 3.10

(about 15 minutes)

Make notes on the main points that are being put forward in Reading 12 within the context of Guyana. As you do so, think carefully about whether or not you think they are more generally applicable.

The main point that Jagan made is that, because Guyana is economically dependent on the policies of major powers, due largely to its colonial history, it could only make decisions within a very limited field of operations. He felt that this was a fundamental challenge to the democratic ideals of ‘people’s participation’ and ‘accountability to the people’.

So instead, he suggests that setting up a ‘just and honest government’ means first setting up a government that can guarantee economic survival in a situation where the choices are remarkably few due to the country’s lack of power.

This book was of course the particular viewpoint of a politically committed person, and there is no such thing as an unbiased evaluation of a political situation. But it’s worth studying, to see what democracy means to a major political figure in the real world of development politics.

In the next section, we look briefly at the different tools used to help uphold the above principles as part of the decision-making process in a democracy.

Democratic decision-making

There are three main styles of decision-making that are used in democratic systems of any kind:

- majority vote
- consensus
- proportional outcomes.

We look at each of these next.

Majority vote

Majority voting is common in groups all through society, such as workplace employee associations or community associations. It works in the following way.

Group members discuss different suggestions for courses of action on a particular issue, and then the options are put to a vote. If any one suggestion receives a clear majority of votes cast, it is adopted as the decision, with those who initially supported other alternatives agreeing to abide by the will of the majority.

Majority decision-making works best where there are only a few options under consideration. It can be adapted by including successive rounds of decision-making, or by taking members' first, second and third choices into account during the voting.

Majority rule is perhaps most classically associated with democracy in relation to elections. In many electoral systems, the winner in each electoral constituency is decided by a simple majority of votes, and then the winning party that forms the government is decided on the basis of who has the largest number of individual constituencies won (which may not always be a majority).

We also see majority rule decision-making in use within the structures of democratic government, such as in the Houses of Commons or National Assemblies. Here, the passage of new laws and of important policies is usually done on the basis of a casting of votes, where a simple majority (or in some instances a larger majority, such as two thirds) is required for success.

Consensus

In a consensus style of decision-making, group members discuss all sides of a problem thoroughly and attempt, by considering possible compromises and exploring people's different 'bottom-line' positions, to find common ground and the agreement of all to a course of action. Obviously, it is less straight-forward than the majority vote approach outlined above.

As we noted in Unit 1, this is the style of decision-making used by Commonwealth Heads of Government. It is also occasionally used in political systems such as where there are governments of national unity and parties agree to suspend voting due to its potentially divisive nature, and agree to develop consensus agreements on important decisions.

Consensus decision-making is obviously easier to do if there are fewer people involved in the discussions and negotiations. Clearly, it would be difficult to hold a national election through consensus, but many small groups can decide their leaders and their policies in this manner. (More details about how to work in a consensus style with young people are included in Unit 4.)

Proportional outcomes

In this method, decisions are designed to reflect the proportions of the group membership that hold different views.

This system of decision-making works like a cross between consensus and majority rule. A proportional outcome could mean that a majority-favoured solution is adopted along with a decision to accept part of a minority position, or to compensate those supporting the minority position in some other way. Alternatively it can be built into a process of decision-making where minority interests are given slightly more weight in determining the outcome.

Proportional outcomes are also used in elections in many countries. With a system of proportional representation, citizens cast their votes for different political parties, and then the seats in the Parliament or National Assembly are assigned according to the proportion of total votes that each party receives.

One of the positive aspects of this system is that it ensures a parliament that reflects the real mix of views in society.



Activity 3.11

(about 15 minutes)

Imagine you are going to conduct a vote on a series of issues with your youth group. Choose your topic, and then spend some time thinking how you would organise a vote, using each of the methods described above. For each one, make a note of the key things you would need to do as part of it. Write your ideas as a series of steps and record them in your learning journal.

In the final section of this unit, we consider the way in which the Commonwealth operates to ensure democracy in its activities.

The Commonwealth and democracy

Among the shared institutions that link many of the countries of the Commonwealth is the Westminster-model parliamentary system. However, saying that democracy is a core Commonwealth value does not mean that every member country is or should be governed by that same parliamentary system.

The connection is both more subtle and more lasting. Each Commonwealth member is a sovereign state capable of making its own policies and decisions, and each member participates on an equal footing at decision-making meetings. As an association, the Commonwealth embraces diversity and firmly rejects discrimination on the basis of race, culture, size or level of development. Where members hold different perspectives on issues, there is agreement to disagree but to continue dialogue, and efforts are made to pursue peaceful reconciliation of disputes.

Critics have suggested that the Commonwealth's support for democracy has been inconsistent, particularly since there have been military governments and one-party states in several Commonwealth countries in Africa, Asia and the South Pacific, during the 1980s.

Yet since the *Harare Declaration* of 1991, there has been a dramatic increase in the Secretariat's operational support for democracy, including:

- sending teams to assist with preparations for elections and then acting as observers during the election period: by 1997, 18 countries in three of the four Commonwealth regions had benefited: many more have benefited since
- the publication of manuals on the mechanics of free and fair elections
- training for election officers and policy-makers
- assistance with constitutional and legislative document drafting
- providing emissaries to countries facing political crises and the possible breakdown of democracy
- training for lawyers and judges on international human rights law.

There has also been an increase in the number of democratic states, and a reduction in military governments among Commonwealth members. For a brief period in 1999, all Commonwealth countries were classified as democracies. In strengthening their commitment to democracy, Heads of Government have also strengthened their political and diplomatic machinery to support such a stand. The *Millbrook Commonwealth Action Programme on the Harare Declaration*, endorsed in 1995, outlines the range of actions that the Commonwealth will take when faced with violations of the Harare

Principles by a member state, from public expression of disapproval to suspension from the Association.



Now read Reading 13: 'A Time of Change' by Bernadette Hussein. It describes Fiji's attempts to grapple with the problems of establishing a harmonious state after a period in which there have been several coups and a deteriorating socio-economic situation.



Activity 3.12

(about 15 minutes)

In Reading 13, try to identify what are the key problems faced by the Fijian state, and also what the root causes of those problems might be. In addition, make suggestions of your own as to what the potential solutions might be. Keep a note of your ideas in your learning journal, then compare them with the discussion below.

The problems Fiji faced in recent times appear to be partly based on the legacy of colonialism and associated migrations into the area. The country is divided along racial lines between mainly the indigenous Fijians (48 per cent) and the mainly third and fourth generation Indians (46 cent).

Until the 1987 coup, the Indian population outnumbered their indigenous Fijian neighbours, and they had prospered by taking advantage of education and economic opportunities. After the 1987 coup, policies in favour of Fijians tried to shift the balance of power at different levels. Developing a democratic constitution to facilitate a harmonious society has proven to be difficult.

There is no magic formula in democracy for resolving the tensions outlined in the article. Fiji is continuing to build multi-racial understanding and pluralism, and preventing divisive ethnicity from becoming the dominant social force. But it is not always successful: since the article was written, Fiji has been through both an election and a coup, with ethnic interests again a defining characteristic of the conflict. At each point, people have to reconstruct the constitution in order to deal with the changes always taking place in society. They must also deal with the fact that power begins to accumulate in certain areas, or is grabbed by groups in favourable positions according to the circumstances.

To use the terms you first met in Unit 2, 'structural conflict' theorists would see economics as the most vital issue: with the struggle for control between two competing groups, one of whom has benefited economically more than the other.

'Functionalists' would argue that Fiji must forget this struggle, at least temporarily, and achieve social harmony, or there will be too little investment in the country for it to deal with its problems. Their view

would be that, as the market in the Pacific Basin develops, the opportunity for political readjustment of the balance of advantage between the two factions will re-emerge. In the meantime it is important that countries create the conditions favourable for investment.

If we refer to Luke's model of three levels of power (which we discussed earlier in this unit), this is acceding to the second unstated level of power where local struggles have to be foregone in order to deal with the problem of creating a viable economy. No one should claim ethnic power in that situation. The power that matters is the invisible power of the market, which has to be dealt with.

As we have seen in this unit, democracy is all about being able to make informed choices. Democratic decision-making processes aim to ensure that all people have a voice and that they feel some responsibility for any final decisions.

We have discussed here the principles that underpin this view, as well as the procedures and strategies that are used to ensure that these principles are upheld.

Unit summary

In this unit you have covered the following main points:

- a definition of democracy
- democratic values and underpinning principles, including pluralism and diversity, citizenship, respect for human rights
- the nature of democratic government, its common elements and three different democratic decision-making styles
- various challenges to democracy
- the role of the Commonwealth in promoting and supporting democracy.

To check how you have got on, look back at the learning outcomes for this unit and see if you can now do them. When you have done this, look through your learning journal to remind yourself of what you have learned and the ideas you have generated.

In Unit 4, the last unit in this module, we look at some practical strategies for implementing democratic decision-making in the small groups you will be involved in as a youth development worker.

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Unit 4:

Commonwealth

values and youth

development

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Unit introduction

Welcome to Unit 4 *Commonwealth values and youth development*. In this unit, we discuss ways in which you might consider using the various principles we have talked about during this module when undertaking your youth work. We start by considering ‘participation’ and look at its various meanings. The concept of ‘levels of participation’ is introduced – a concept that makes the distinction between externally directed and self-directed participation. We consider the factors that facilitate or constrain participation in group projects and decision-making. In particular, we consider the issue of who has power and control, highlighting the effects of gender, ethnic and other factors.

The term ‘empowerment’ is examined and analysed. We advocate working with democratic styles of leadership – particularly through consensual processes – to encourage youth empowerment. Finally, this unit describes the main features and principles of consensual decision-making and gives you the opportunity to try it out with your groups.

Unit learning outcomes

When you have worked through this unit, you should be able to:

- define ideas of participation, power and empowerment, particularly in relation to young people
- select and use different styles of decision-making, in particular consensual styles
- plan and undertake activities which enable young people to acquire skills needed for effective participation and decision-making.

Participation, power and empowerment

Youth development work is often described as a process of increasing the participation of young people in national development and decision-making. This is assumed to entail youth empowerment. In Unit 1, we identified empowerment and participation as central Commonwealth values. In this unit, we explore these values in more detail. Like human rights and democracy, they are about higher order modes of interacting with young people.

At bottom, the use of the concepts of ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ in the youth development context implies giving young people more control over their personal development. Of the different styles of decision-making identified in Unit 3, consensual decision-making is the most challenging, but it comes closest to facilitating people’s participation and also to empowering them. We examine this process in the next section. But first, let’s look at the principles underpinning young people’s involvement in the decision-making process.

Participation

Participation in democracy, in employment, in education, in cultural development – these are all enshrined as individual rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They are also included in the Harare Declaration as priorities for the Commonwealth. But what does ‘participation’ mean? Here, we examine this notion from the point of view of project planning.

The history of international and national development efforts includes many different approaches to and interpretations of ‘participation’. When we think of a ‘participatory project’, we think of one where the main beneficiaries of the project have also been involved in some way in designing and managing the project.

But some people seem to just attach the word ‘participatory’ to projects because it sounds better, even though complete control of projects remains with outside planners or elites. For example, there exists a ‘participatory family planning project’ where participation only means coming to the clinic for contraceptives.

Levels of participation



Activity 4.1

(about 10 minutes)

Think about the ways you have heard the word ‘participation’ used, and consider how many different shades of meaning it can have. Write a summary of your examples in your learning journal. Then compare them with the table below.

Some of the different shades of or levels of participation are illustrated in the table below, which shows whether outsiders or insiders are mainly responsible for decisions, management and so on.

Levels of participation

Outsiders dictate and manage the project for insiders.	Outsiders make final decisions.	Decisions made by outsiders, which include...	Insiders set priorities, and control and direct the development of the project themselves.
	Insiders involved in consultations and committees.	the decisions of committees headed by insiders.	

Key

Outsider involvement	Insider involvement
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As you move up the levels in the table (moving from left to right), the amount of control residing in ‘outsiders’ decreases, and the amount of control held by ‘insiders’ increases. The nature of ‘participation’ changes from:

- 1 being involved in a programme designed and managed by someone else, to
- 2 being involved in consultations or committees, to
- 3 being able to control and direct development priorities and efforts oneself.

Participation and young people

Traditionally, young people have been excluded from active participation in many of the decisions that affect their lives. When we are very young, our parents, family members and other adults always make decisions on our behalf. Usually they are genuinely concerned with our interests.

But as we grow into adolescence, the period of transition from childhood to adulthood, we begin to develop our own sense of what 'our best interests' are, and we may not have the same perspective as the adults in our lives have.

However, adults do not always want to relinquish their role as decision-makers, sometimes because they see dangers that young people do not, and they do not always recognise when young people become able to begin to make their own decisions, and to take responsibility for the consequences of those decisions.

That point of change is a difficult one that requires careful negotiation. This struggle for greater influence and autonomy takes place not just within our families, but also at school and in community contexts, where adults may be even more wary of giving up some of the power invested in them.



Activity 4.2

(about 15 minutes)

Think about your own context and the young people who you might be working with.

Outline some of the concerns that the parents have with regard to the young people. How do the parents demonstrate this concern? How do the young people react to this? What are their responses with regard to their parents' concerns?

Make a note of your observations in your learning journal.

The kind of actions and reactions that you have noted down in response to Activity 4.2 are all framed within the relationships to power that the young people and their parents have. We look at notions of power next.

Power

Participation is centrally concerned with issues of power. Different levels and sources of power will have an impact on who can get involved in a project or in making a decision, who speaks at meetings, whose ideas are listened to, who benefits and who does not.

In most cultures, men have more power than women, and elders have more power than youth. In a development context, gender and age differences in power translate to gender and age differences in

participation. As a result, separate avenues of participation often have to be established, such as women's groups and youth groups.

Understanding power

'Power' is at the heart of empowerment, so we have to understand ideas of power before we can tackle empowerment. We have suggested that differences in power are often the source of inequalities in participation, whether at the level of a group discussion, a community project or national politics. But the word 'power' has more than one meaning. At least four different ideas are combined in the way we use the word:

- *power over*: control over people, resources and decision-making, sometimes based on violence and intimidation
- *power to*: knowledge, skill or ability to solve a problem, learn or accomplish new things
- *power within*: spiritual or inner strength based on self-acceptance, self-respect and self-confidence (may be called 'charismatic power')
- *power with*: group or collective strength, the sense that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts when people work together with common goals.

The first in the list – 'power over' – is probably the most common usage. It is the only interpretation where power is a limiting concept: if one person gets more, then someone else must have less – like dividing a limited plot of land.

Someone with power over others is in a position to make other people follow their will or direction. Their authority may come from weapons, physical strength, economic resources or some kind of social authority.

'Power over' is often not welcomed by the individuals who are controlled by it. Their responses can range from passive acceptance to very active resistance. The level of resistance depends in part on the other sources of power that the disadvantaged people feel they possess or can generate together.

In every society there are powerful groups who wield this controlling kind of power, but other people also have varying amounts of the other sorts of power. In the case of 'power to', 'power within' or 'power with', if one person gets more, no one else need have any less. In fact, the growth of these sorts of power in one person should enhance the power of others.

A good example of this comes from education. It is often said that 'knowledge is power', but it is a kind of power where everyone can get more without the supply ever running out. And when one person improves their knowledge, other people close to them should also benefit from their learning.

In ‘management speak’ it is often stated that, if we convert our economies to knowledge-based economies instead of commodified economies, then the wealth of one country should automatically generate greater wealth in other countries, because, while we are in competition for commodities, we need not be in competition for knowledge.

In practice it is rather different from this, though clearly, knowledge-based technical development has spread certain kinds of wealth very widely.

When development workers refer to the most disadvantaged groups as ‘powerless’, this is because only the traditional sense of power is being considered. Poor people, children, young people or women might not wield much ‘power over’ others, but they may possess other kinds of power based on their special skills and knowledge, their ability to work together, or their sense of humour and perseverance.

It is ultimately psychologically very disempowering to describe someone as ‘powerless’. We all have huge potential for intellectual and psychological development, providing we are not labelled as deficient in some way. However, education systems in most countries are designed and run by elites who have an interest in persuading people that they have a natural right to control the educational resources because they are intellectually superior. The problem is that conflicts of various kinds are intrinsic to society, and ‘power over’ is deployed in those conflicts.

Sources of power

When you think of a powerful person, you might imagine a wealthy, well-fed business man in a suit and tie or it might be an army general with access to weapons. But would you think of a mother? Or a mechanic?

You could think of a mother’s power as the power of love, and the power to shape the learning of her children. A mechanic has power to fix things using his or her skills. Laws, knowledge, social position, resources, creativity, commitment – these are some of the diverse sources of power in our societies.



Activity 4.3

(about 20 minutes)

Work through the following tasks, making a note of your responses in your learning journal.

- 1 Consider the four kinds of power identified above (power over, power to, power within and power with). List the various sources of each type of power (e.g. money).
- 2 Identify the different sources of power that the following types of people might have:
 - a local religious leader
 - a foreign development worker
 - a local entrepreneur
 - a women's group
 - a midwife
 - a farmer
 - a policeman
 - a builder
 - a factory owner
 - a lawyer
 - a bank manager.
- 3 What are the sources of power available to young people? How can energy and idealism be power sources? To what extent is the power of young people recognised by older adults?
- 4 How would you work together with a group of young people to explore the different aspects of power? Think about how you would organise the group and the activities that you might offer to help them think about power.

Power within families

Within families, there are also power imbalances. Often, men have more of some kinds of power (for example, control over resources and decision-making) than female members. Adults have more power than children.

However, millions of families all over the world operate so that the members with more power use it in the interests of those with less: parents make decisions that are in the best interests of their children, and a husband protects and supports his wife and children. But it is

important to recognise that this is not always the case. The global incidence of physical, emotional and other abuse, and of economic and sexual exploitation of women and children is testimony to the misuse of power within families.

Next, we look in more detail at issues of empowerment.

Empowerment

The process of empowerment has to address all of the meanings of power described above. Empowerment is about:

- helping to increase the skills and capacity of individuals
- helping people to become more self-confident
- helping groups to work together
- helping to create a more equitable division of resources and decision-making.

Notice that the word ‘helping’ is used in each of these points. Empowerment is not something that someone can give to anyone else. It is not like a package that can be neatly wrapped up and delivered. In reality, empowerment is usually ‘self-empowerment’. Just as you cannot force anyone to learn, you also cannot force them to become empowered.

Empowering young people

As a youth development worker, your role is to create an enabling and empowering environment for young people. At the same time as you are trying to do this, there are likely to be other forces working in the other direction, such as troubled home environments, negative mass media images (particularly affecting young women), or shrinking employment markets. It is also more difficult for you to create an enabling environment for others if you do not feel empowered in your own personal or professional life.



Activity 4.4

(about 15 minutes)

After reading so far in this module, what do you now feel are the key things you can do to contribute to the empowerment of young people?

This may be at a global, national, or local level, and also within the context of your own group of young people.

Make a note of your ideas in your learning journal.

In Unit 3, you looked at different styles of democratic decision-making. Of the three styles listed there – majority vote, consensus and proportional outcomes – ‘consensus’ is the one that requires the

greatest participation, and the one that most promotes empowerment. In the rest of this unit we examine the meaning of ‘consensus’ in more detail, and look at how to work in a consensual manner.

Consensus

The word ‘consensus’ comes from the Latin for ‘to think together’. We use it to mean a conclusion or agreement. Its Latin root helps us to keep in mind that it is a process as well as a product.

In other words, consensus is not just where you end up; it is how you get there. For this reason, it often involves many different processes, and so it is often easier to define consensus by explaining what it is not. That is what we will do next.

What consensus is *not*

Many people think that consensus is the same thing as complete agreement. In theory, it is possible that when you start out to reach an agreement by consensus you will find that all participants are in complete accord on all matters under discussion.

Think about your own experience – is unanimous agreement common? Unanimity, by its very nature, is destroyed if one single person doesn’t agree. In practice, this means that if a group is trying to reach a unanimous decision, then every single person participating in the group process has a potential veto that can stop the decision from being reached.

So, if not everyone has to agree absolutely to create a consensus, does that make consensus a kind of majority rule, perhaps where the majority has to be pretty substantial (such as more than three-quarters)? Not really, because in reality that kind of ‘super majority’ mechanism also creates a veto for the minority.

The difficulty with both unanimous and majority-rule decision-making is that they are confrontational, setting up opposing camps of people – them and us. Neither side in a discussion has any motivation to modify their position, to incorporate some of the ideas of the alternative view or to find creative new solutions.

In a majority-rule system, each camp is motivated to press its position firmly enough that it convinces the required number (50 per cent or more) that it is right. In both unanimous and majority decision-making, winners and losers are usually assessed by voting. However, many analysts of management practice have expressed opinions such as the following:

“Voting has no place in the consensus-building process. Voting is a convenient way of disposing of an issue with dispatch, but it commonly suppresses conflict rather than resolves it. ... Voting forces categorical ‘aye’ or ‘nay’ choices. Although people are

acculturated to accept the will of the majority, they may not feel obliged to support the majority position.” (Wynn and Guditus, 1984: p. 45.)

How consensus decisions are made

Consensus-seeking tries to reconcile differences by locating and building on areas of agreement, sometimes called ‘integrative goals’. The process may be more time consuming than that of majority voting because the position of all parties in a consensus decision must be taken into account and a practical solution found that everyone would abide by. Those with opposing views may not like the decision, but they *must* agree that they can live with it.

So far, this discussion has been fairly abstract. Now we will look at how consensus works within the Commonwealth. This may help to make it more concrete.

An example: Consensus in the Commonwealth

Commonwealth Heads of Government and other Ministerial meetings operate through consensus building. At Heads of Government Meetings, the Secretary-General often plays an active part in trying to assess or create consensus on difficult issues. The first Secretary-General, Arnold Smith, described his role in this way:

“A Secretary-General, it is clear, must be impartial to the extent that he is responsible to the collectivity of member states and must not favour the interests of one group against another. But this need not mean he is neutral, nor that he steps carefully down the middle between various views.”

“In short, the elected Secretary-General of a dynamic international community must embody for the association what Rousseau called ‘the general will’, and should act accordingly. It is also his responsibility to try, when necessary, to develop a general will, by discussion with heads of government and ministers and, when appropriate, with journalists and in public speeches.” (Smith, 1981: 43–44.)



Case study 4.1

The Vancouver Summit

Consensus is often interpreted as ‘the sense of the meeting’. However, in the case of sanctions against South Africa raised at the Vancouver Summit of 1987, the general sense of the meeting was that stronger economic sanctions should be applied against South Africa. Some writers have described the result of this meeting as the abandonment of consensus. Another way of looking at it, however, is to describe it as pragmatic consensus. The Commonwealth took a firm stand on economic sanctions on which one of its members, Britain, reserved judgement. The Okanagan Statement and Programme of Action on Southern Africa reflects both the ‘consensus’ and the dissenting position. The integrative goals that allowed both sides of the disagreement to tolerate each other’s position were a genuine commitment to the Commonwealth as an organisation, and a unanimous disapproval of racism and racial discrimination. Without these integrative goals, the Commonwealth might have disintegrated under the pressure of tensions over South Africa more than once in its history.

Principles of consensus

You might be looking for some clear-cut ‘rules’ for how to work in a consensual manner. But there are no set rules for consensual decision-making. There are, however, some well-tested principles and key ingredients that everyone should understand before embarking on the process.

The main principles are:

- Everyone who will be significantly affected by a decision should participate in the consensus process, if at all possible.
- All positions and concerns need to be heard out fully – each individual should be able to express dissent and should respect and welcome the different viewpoints of other participants. People must be prepared to present their ‘bottom-line’ positions, the minimum terms upon which they can agree, as well as their preferred terms (rather than withholding or hiding this information, as is common in adversarial negotiations).
- All participants need to listen actively and with an open mind to each others’ views: they should strive to understand each others’ positions even where they are not in agreement.
- Where differences exist, participants need to think creatively together about how diverse positions and expectations can be integrated, or how some common ground can be reached.



Activity 4.5

(about 10 minutes)

Think about your own group of young people, or any other young people you have worked with. What were the different personalities involved? What sort of problems would you anticipate for reaching a consensus with them? What sort of approaches do you think would work best with them?

Make a note of your ideas in your learning journal.

Best conditions for consensus

The principles of consensus outlined above are easy to agree with in the abstract, and comparatively easy to implement when discussions and decisions are fairly uncontroversial. It becomes more difficult to practise when divisions within a group are deep, and animosity begins to undermine mutual respect. It is also difficult to practise when decisions need to be taken urgently and immediately.

Consensus usually emerges slowly, as positions are refined and modified step by step to accommodate others. Attempting to rush a consensus process results in the same feelings of winning and losing as do using majority-rule or veto decision-making.

A consensual style of decision-making works best when participants genuinely respect each other, and everyone fundamentally agrees about the identifiable goals, or at least has shared values. It demands considerable commitment from group members to participate in the process, sharing their ideas and actively listening to others.

The last activity in this unit is designed to give you a chance to practice consensus in a role-play exercise with a group of young people.



Activity 4.6

(about 30 minutes)

Below is an example of a role-play that you could conduct with a group of young people. Take about 30 minutes to read through it carefully and plan how you would conduct it with them. What would you need to prepare in advance? How would you organise the group? What would you need to explain to them? What would your role be?

Consider each of these points, and then write a stage-by-stage activity plan in your learning journal.

(If you have the opportunity, you could plan the role-play and carry it out with a group of young people for real, with a

discussion at the end. Of course, this will take much longer than 30 minutes.)

The task

Organise a role-play with 8-10 young people. You will need to give them enough time to settle, develop the role-play and to discuss it afterwards. Allow at least an hour.

The role-play is about a youth group and you will play the part of its leader.

The objective

The objective is to explore the nature of group decision-making. When faced with difficult challenges, it is important to consider the values underlying different options. People who do not share our views have their own reasons for their choices. A price is paid for every decision made.

The context

Your youth group has been trying to raise funds to build a new youth centre in your community since your old one was destroyed by fire six months ago. Through various collective efforts, you have raised 75 per cent of the new construction costs.

Everyone is anxious to begin building as soon as possible, raising the rest of the money as the work progresses. You have had real problems finding good places to meet in the past six months. This is affecting group morale and attendance. You have been meeting in the group leader's home during most of the period since the fire.

Youth unemployment is a problem in your community and young people find it difficult to learn practical job skills since a nearby government training centre closed recently.

Additional context

A government official has approached you with an offer of an intensive training course in construction for four young people from your community. Builders with such training will easily find work in your area. Their skills could also help your own group with its new centre.

However, the official tells you that your community has to contribute towards the cost of the training. Also, it is in the capital city where travel, room and board expenses are high and must be met by the participants themselves.

The total amount needed is 50 per cent of the funds you have reserved for building your new centre.

You were trying to keep this information to yourself while you found out more, but two group members have learned about

the offer. Both have been unemployed for over a year since leaving school. They do not know about the cost of the training. They are very excited about themselves possibly getting on the course. Choose two participants to play these roles and tell them as much as they need to know about this before beginning the role-play.

You want the group to discuss the proposal reasonably and come to a consensus conclusion that everyone supports. There are two main issues:

- 1 Not all those group members interested in attending the training will be able to get a place, since there are only four available.
- 2 The whole group will be affected by delays in building the new centre and by having to restart their fund-raising efforts.

It is possible that a consensus emerges quite quickly. Alternatively, members may split into distinct camps, in which case, you, as the leader, may conclude that holding a vote may be the best option.

Discussion

You might like to use the following questions as a framework for the discussion after the role-play.

- Was the process of trying to reach a consensus easier or harder than the group had imagined?
- If the leader felt it was necessary to switch from a consensus approach to a vote, how did the other members feel?
- What other reflections can the group make on the process they experienced?

If you have carried out a real role-play, record the main learning points from it in your learning journal.

Unit summary

In this unit you have covered the following main points:

- definitions of participation and the challenges of participation for young people
- the nature of power, different meanings of the term, and the various sources of power
- the notion of empowerment and creating an empowering environment for young people
- consensus – what it is and how it works
- approaches to developing the best conditions for consensus decision-making.

To check how you have got on, look back at the learning outcomes for this unit and see if you can now do them. When you have done this, look through your learning journal to remind yourself of what you have learned and the ideas you have generated.

In this final unit of Module 6, we have summarised the main practical issues that have been raised by the module, and have looked at them within the context of youth development work. From this, you should now have some idea of how to go about applying these ideas when working with young people.

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Summary

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Module summary

The principles that Commonwealth governments have proclaimed that they stand for – those contained in the Singapore and Harare Declarations and discussed throughout the module – are powerful values. They reflect some of the deepest aspirations of individuals and communities – to be treated as equals, with their human rights and their differences respected, to be empowered to participate in decisions that affect their lives, to be able to pursue their own path to development in a peaceful environment.

To say that these are Commonwealth values does not mean that each Commonwealth government automatically fully reflects these ideals in everything they do. It means that these ideals are the aspects of the Commonwealth's history that are most worth celebrating and renewing. Part of that renewal process is through the work of the Commonwealth Youth Programme and the Commonwealth Secretariat, working with young people and their governments, to achieve these goals through Youth Development Work.

If you recall, this module on Commonwealth Values had two goals. The first was to introduce you to a set of values that have come to underpin the Commonwealth – human rights, equity, democracy, pluralism, citizenship, participation and empowerment. You should now have a good sense of what these terms mean in general, as well as what they mean in the context of youth in development work.

The second was to introduce you to the Commonwealth as an international organisation, how it evolved, how it is structured, and what it is trying to achieve. You should now have a sense not just of Commonwealth values, but also of the value of the Commonwealth itself.

As a voluntary association of sovereign, independent states, it is unique in its ability to bring together such a diverse range of peoples committed to dialogue and consensus building, where developing and developed country governments sit as equals around the table.

It is hoped that you now will be able to understand and appreciate these values, and importantly, to have some idea of how to pass your own understanding and appreciation on to the young people with whom you will be working.

Now that you have completed this module, you should be able to:

- describe the origins of the Commonwealth, and key events in its history since formation
- demonstrate a clear understanding of Commonwealth values and principles, and provide examples of how they are put into practice

- explain elements of democratic theory and human rights philosophy and practice, and identify the mechanisms through which different rights are protected in democratic systems
- know how to apply these principles in your work with young women and men
- explain the value of the diverse cultures and traditions embraced by the Commonwealth
- undertake activities to help young people understand the principles that underpin Commonwealth values
- develop programmes of activity which enable young people to acquire skills and experience in citizenship, and effective participation in public affairs
- operate different styles of democratic and participatory decision-making, in particular consensual styles.

In addition to the learning outcomes that were described in the module overview, some additional outcomes were identified – those we described as changes in attitude. To review these now, we hope that at the end of this module you will:

- feel positively about cultural diversity and see diversity as something to be celebrated rather than ignored or feared
- accept that your perspectives need not always be the ‘correct’ ones
- have an attitude of openness: to search for ways and means to promote and cross-fertilise the values you see among different individuals and sub-groups
- be honest with yourself, and will work to ensure that there is no gap between what you preach and what you practice.

Think for a few moments about these outcomes. These changes in attitude may be hard to measure, but try to identify them. Has this module helped you clarify your own values? Have you experienced some positive changes in your attitudes to the various issues covered in this module? And above all, how will these changes affect the way you behave in certain situations now and in the future?

We wish you success in your assignments and in your work. Best wishes also as you complete the other modules in this course.

Further reading

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Conventions:

- Slavery Convention, 1927
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1951
- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1967
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969
- International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, 1976
- International Convention against Apartheid in Sports, 1985
- Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1987

Assignments

A final reminder about the assessment requirements for this module. Your work in this module will be assessed in the following ways:

- 1 A report of about 2,000 words, outlined below.
- 2 A review of the learning journal you keep (worth 20 per cent of the final mark).
- 3 A written examination set by the institution in which you are enrolled for this Diploma programme or a written study of 1,500 words, outlined below (worth 30 percent of the final mark).

Note: make sure you discuss the assessment requirements with your tutor so that you are clear about what you are expected to do and when, and any particular requirements in your institution.

Assignment 1

This assignment counts towards your final assessment in this module and is worth 50 per cent of the final mark.

Design a two-day workshop for a group of twenty youth club leaders in your area of work. Your purpose is to take the group through a process which clarifies their values by a graduated introduction. Select two Commonwealth values and design your workshop along the guidelines given below.

- 1 Objectives of the workshop.
- 2 Justification of the relevance of these two values in the context of your country's situation.
- 3 Thematic content of the workshop. Here you should give a brief description of the two values chosen.
- 4 Activities to take the group through a process of experiential learning about these values, e.g. role-play, case study, picture drawing.
- 5 Materials required for the workshop and its activities.
- 6 Evaluation process for the workshop.

Your programme could be a workshop along the guidelines given above, or a programme with interactive format of a different nature. You might also choose to use and adapt some of the activities that have featured in this module.

The preparation for this workshop should involve about 10 hours work. Discuss your ideas with your tutor or facilitator.

Write a report of no more than 2,000 words describing the purpose of the workshop, its various activities, any problems that might arise and its desired outcomes.

Assignment 2

This assignment counts towards your final assessment in this module and is worth 20 per cent of the final mark. You should discuss with your tutor the exact requirements for your institution.

The assignment takes the form of your learning journal which contains the notes and records from the activities included in each unit.

As explained in the Module Overview, in this module the learning journal is also intended to carry the 'footprints' of your journey through the learning process about values so that your journal records your own growth through the course.

Assignment 3

This assignment counts towards your final assessment in this module and is worth 30 per cent of the final mark. You should discuss with your tutor the exact requirement for your institution.

Assignment 3 may take the form of a seen or unseen examination of up to 2 hours.

Alternatively, it may take the form of a written study of 1,500 words. The written study can be based on informal interviews with young people in your community to investigate what they understand by the values: human rights, equity, democracy, pluralism, citizenship, participation and empowerment.

How does their understanding differ from the various declarations that you have read? You can investigate this through group discussion or individual interviews. Work with your tutor to determine the structure and academic focus of your paper.

Readings

The readings in this section will help you develop your understanding of Module 6 Commonwealth Values. The reading numbers, their titles and author(s) and the unit in which they appear are listed below.

- 1 'The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles – The Singapore Declaration (1971)' (Unit 1).....128
- 2 'The Harare Commonwealth Declaration (1991)' (Unit 1)..130
- 3 'The Commonwealth – Dead or Alive?' (Unit 1)134
- 4 'Further examples of work by the CMAG' (Unit 1).....142
- 5 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (Unit 2)143
- 6 'Gender Inequality: from Roles to Rights' (Unit 2)149
- 7 'Extract from the Youth Rights Guide' (Unit 2).....153
- 8 'Some further challenges to democratic pluralism' (Unit 3) 157
- 9 'Citizenship in the Commonwealth' (Unit 3).....158
- 10 'Challenges to citizenship' (Unit 3)161
- 11 'Good governance: the challenge for Africa' (Unit 3).....177
- 12 'Putting Guyana Up For Auction' (Unit 3).....180
- 13 'A Time of Change' (Unit 3).....192

Reading 1: The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles – The Singapore Declaration (1971)

The Commonwealth has no charter. It has, instead a series of declarations to which all member countries subscribe. The first of these, and broadest in scope, is the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles, agreed by heads of Government when they met in Singapore in 1971.

The Declaration defines the voluntary character and consensual working methods of the Commonwealth, and specifies the goals and objectives of the association. These include its belief in human liberty and democratic rights, its abhorrence of racial discrimination, and its determination to narrow the gulf between rich and poor, strengthen international co-operation and work for world peace.

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

Members of the Commonwealth come from territories in the six continents and five oceans, include peoples of different races, languages and religions, and display every stage of economic development from poor developing nations to wealthy industrialised nations. They encompass a rich variety of cultures, traditions and institutions.

Membership of the Commonwealth is compatible with the freedom of member governments to be non-aligned or to belong to any other grouping, association or alliance. Within this diversity all members of the Commonwealth hold certain principles in common. It is by pursuing these principles that the Commonwealth can continue to influence international society for the benefit of mankind.

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

We believe in the liberty of the individual, in equal rights for all citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief, and in their inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which they live. We therefore strive to promote in each of our countries those representative institutions and guarantees for personal freedom under the law that are our common heritage.

We recognise racial prejudice as a dangerous sickness threatening the healthy development of the human race and racial discrimination

as an unmitigated evil of society. Each of us will vigorously combat this evil within our own nation. No country will afford to regimes which practise racial discrimination assistance which in its own judgement directly contributes to the pursuit or consolidation of this evil policy.

We oppose all forms of colonial domination and racial oppression and are committed to the principles of human dignity and equality. We will therefore use all our efforts to foster human equality and dignity everywhere, and to further the principles of self-determination and non-racialism.

We believe that the wide disparities in wealth now existing between different sections of mankind are too great to be tolerated. They also create world tensions. Our aim is their progressive removal. We therefore seek to use our efforts to overcome poverty, ignorance and disease, in raising standards of life and achieving a more equitable international society.

To this end our aim is to achieve the freest possible flow of international trade on terms fair and equitable to all, taking into account the special requirements of the developing countries, and to encourage the flow of adequate resources, including governmental and private resources, to the developing countries, bearing in mind the importance of doing this in a true spirit of partnership and of establishing for this purpose in the developing countries conditions which are conducive to sustained investment and growth.

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

In pursuing these principles the members of the Commonwealth believe that they can provide a constructive example of the multi-national approach which is vital to peace and progress in the modern world. The association is based on consultation, discussion and co-operation.

In rejecting coercion as an instrument of policy they recognise that the security of each member state from external aggression is a matter of concern to all members. It provides many channels for continuing exchanges of knowledge and views on professional, cultural, economic, legal and political issues among member states.

These relationships we intend to foster and extend, for we believe that our multi-national association can expand human understanding and understanding among nations, assist in the elimination of discrimination based on differences of race, colour or creed, maintain and strengthen personal liberty, contribute to the enrichment of life for all, and provide a powerful influence for peace among nations.

22 January 1971

Reading 2: The Harare Commonwealth Declaration (1991)

The Commonwealth has mapped out a course which will take the 50-member association into the next century. Heads of Government issued this historic declaration of purpose, which includes a 10-point pledge, during their meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1991.

To meet new challenges, the Commonwealth will draw on its unique strengths and character. These are rooted in its shared ideals, common traditions and language, in its membership of 1.4 billion people on every continent and major ocean and its ability to fashion a sense of common purpose out of diversity.

- 1 The Heads of Government of the countries of the Commonwealth, meeting in Harare, reaffirm their confidence in the Commonwealth as a voluntary association of sovereign independent states, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the interests of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace.
- 2 Members of the Commonwealth include people of many different races and origins, encompass every state of economic development, and comprise a rich variety of cultures, traditions and institutions.
- 3 The special strength of the Commonwealth lies in the combination of the diversity of its members with their shared inheritance in language, culture and the rule of law. The Commonwealth way is to seek consensus through consultation and the sharing of experience. It is uniquely placed to serve as a model and as a catalyst for new forms of friendship and co-operation to all in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.
- 4 Its members also share a commitment to certain fundamental principles. These were set out in a Declaration of Commonwealth Principles agreed by our predecessors at their Meeting in Singapore in 1971. Those principles have stood the test of time, and we reaffirm our full and continuing commitment to them today. In particular, no less today than 20 years ago:

we believe that international peace and order, global economic development and the rule of international law are essential to the security and prosperity of mankind;

we believe in the liberty of the individual under the law, in equal rights for all citizens regardless of gender, race, colour, creed or political belief, and in the individual's inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which he or she lives;

we recognise racial prejudice and intolerance as a dangerous sickness and a threat to healthy development, and racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil;

we oppose all forms of racial oppression, and we are committed to the principles of human dignity and equality;

we recognise the importance and urgency of economic and social development to satisfy the basic needs and aspirations of the vast majority of the peoples of the world, and seek the progressive removal of the wide disparities in living standards amongst our members;

- 5 In Harare, our purpose has been to apply those principles in the contemporary situation as the Commonwealth prepares to face the challenges of the 1990's and beyond.
- 6 Internationally, the world is no longer locked in the iron grip of the Cold War. Totalitarianism is giving way to democracy and justice in many parts of the world. Decolonisation is largely complete. Significant changes are at last under way in South Africa. These changes, so desirable and heartening in themselves, present the world and the Commonwealth with new tasks and challenges.
- 7 In the last twenty years, several Commonwealth countries have made significant progress in economic and social development. There is increasing recognition that commitment to market principles and openness to international trade and investment can promote economic progress and improve living standards. Many Commonwealth countries are poor and face acute problems, including excessive population growth, crushing poverty, debt burdens and environmental degradation. More than half our member states are particularly vulnerable because of their very small societies.
- 8 Only sound and sustainable development can offer these millions the prospect of betterment. Achieving this will require a flow of public and private resources from the developed to the developing world, and domestic and international regimes conducive to the realisation of these goals. Development facilitates the task of tackling a range of problems which affect the whole global community such as environmental degradation, the problems of migration and refugees, the fight against communicable diseases, and drug production and trafficking.
- 9 Having reaffirmed the principles to which the Commonwealth is committed, and reviewed the problems and challenges which the world, and the Commonwealth as part of it, face, we pledge the Commonwealth and our countries to work with renewed vigour, concentrating especially in the following areas:
 - the protection and promotion of the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth:

- o democracy, democratic processes and institutions which reflect national circumstances, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, just and honest government;
 - o fundamental human rights, including equal rights and opportunities for all citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief;
- equality for women, so that they may exercise their full and equal rights;
- provision of universal access to education for the population of our countries;
- continuing action to bring about the end of apartheid and the establishment of a free, democratic, non-racial and prosperous South Africa;
- the promotion of sustainable development and the alleviation of poverty in the countries of the Commonwealth through:
 - o a stable international economic framework within which growth can be achieved;
 - o sound economic management recognising the central role of the market economy;
 - o effective population policies and programmes;
 - o sound management of technological change;
 - o the freest possible flow of multilateral trade on terms fair and equitable to all, taking account of the special requirements of developing countries;
 - o an adequate flow of resources from the developed to developing countries, and action to alleviate the debt burdens of developing countries most in need;
 - o the development of human resources, in particular through education, training, health, culture, sport and programmes for strengthening family and community support, paying special attention to the needs of women, youth and children;
 - o effective and increasing programmes of bilateral and multilateral co-operation aimed at raising living standards;
- extending the benefits of development within a framework of respect for human rights;
- the protection of the environment through respect for the principles of sustainable development which we enunciated at Langkawi;
- action to combat drug trafficking and abuse and communicable diseases;

- help for small Commonwealth states in tackling their particular economic and security problems;
 - support of the United Nations and other international institutions in the world's search for peace, disarmament and effective arms control; and in the promotion of international consensus on major global political, economic and social issues.
- 10 To give weight and effectiveness to our commitments we intend to focus and improve Commonwealth co-operation in these areas. This would include strengthening the capacity of the Commonwealth to respond to requests from members for assistance in entrenching the practices of democracy, accountable administration and the rule of law.
 - 11 We call on all the intergovernmental institutions of the Commonwealth to seize the opportunities presented by these challenges. We pledge ourselves to assist them to develop programmes which harness our shared historical, professional, cultural and linguistic heritage and which complement the work of other international and regional organisations.
 - 12 We invite the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and non-governmental Commonwealth organisations to play their full part in promoting these objectives, in a spirit of co-operation and mutual support.
 - 13 In reaffirming the principles of the Commonwealth and in committing ourselves to pursue them in policy and action in response to the challenges of the 1990s, in areas where we believe that the Commonwealth has a distinctive contribution to offer, we the Heads of Government express our determination to renew and enhance the value and importance of the Commonwealth as an institution which can and should strengthen and enrich the lives not only of its own members and their peoples but also of the wider community of peoples of which they are a part.

20 October 1991

Reading 3: 'The Commonwealth – Dead or Alive?'

Speech by Commonwealth Secretary-General Rt. Hon. Don McKinnon,
City University, London, 9 November 2004.

I am very pleased to be here today.

It's always a bit daunting to speak to a room full of journalists. As a politician in New Zealand, I have developed a very healthy respect of media people.

But I've also been looking forward to this evening, since I know that your presence is almost a guarantee of a very lively and stimulating discussion.

Thank you to David Rhind, your Vice-Chancellor, and Steve Miller, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, for hosting this event.

Thank you also to Linda Christmas and Richard Bourne for inviting me to come and speak to you.

The title of my address to you today is clearly intended to be provocative.

When I ask the question: 'Is the Commonwealth dead?' you obviously expect me to say 'no' and to tell you why not.

Well, in a way, you're right. That is what I intend to do.

But at the same time, asking whether the Commonwealth is dead is not simply a rhetorical question.

In fact, the 'British Commonwealth' – as the Commonwealth is still often referred to by many people in the media and beyond – has long ceased to exist.

As I said in a speech to the Royal Society of Arts in Glasgow recently, the British Commonwealth was left behind with the last century, even if the term still lingers on. Today, we are no more the British Commonwealth than the United States is the British USA.

In other words: 'The British Commonwealth is dead – long live the modern Commonwealth!'

It is true that the Commonwealth as we know it emerged largely out of the decolonisation process. But the Commonwealth has long grown out of its colonial legacy. Imperial history is as relevant to the modern Commonwealth as the Hundred Years' War is to the European Union.

It may be true that the countries that form the Commonwealth today would not have come together had it not been for historical linkages. But they would certainly not have stayed together if they did not share something deeper and altogether more important than those historical ties.

Apart from their shared conventions, institutions and working language, Commonwealth countries are bound together by their joint commitment to democracy, human rights and sustainable development. They share a sense of common purpose and the determination to work together to achieve growth and generate real opportunities for all Commonwealth citizens.

In fact, many people who think they know the Commonwealth are surprised to discover that it is quite different from what they expected. They have the same reaction as someone entering a grand old building whose façade is a reminder of past centuries, but which has been completely renovated inside, with glass lifts, a sunny atrium, and designer furniture. In fact, asking the question 'What is the Commonwealth for?' is no different from asking 'What are international organisations for?'

When you consider this question, it is useful to look at it through the lens of member countries themselves: 'What are countries looking for when they decide to join an organisation like the Commonwealth?'

First, they want an organisation that fits into the network of partners that make up their external relationships.

Second, they are looking for a springboard that will allow them to raise issues of concern to them in a global forum and will add to their political weight.

Third, they want to be part of a network of partners they can co-operate with to further their interests in the areas of trade, investment and foreign policy.

They are also looking for an organisation that has strong values and principles, an organisation that commands respect internationally.

And finally, they want a body that will deliver on its objectives and use its financial resources efficiently.

Each country will look at an organisation like the Commonwealth from their own perspective; like supporters around a cricket pitch, they all watch the same game, but they all get a different piece of the action.

I believe the Commonwealth has a great deal to offer on all fronts. Let me show you how.

- 1 The Commonwealth is a unique forum for global dialogue and conflict prevention. When 53 member states spanning every continent, countries of all sizes, at all stages of development, representing a multiplicity of religious and cultural groups, speak with one voice, they can really make a difference. Preventing conflicts is one area where we can play a significant role.

Of course, the Commonwealth has no army, no battalions. But in some cases, this can be an advantage. Not all conflicts are best solved militarily – indeed, most cannot be resolved that way. What we try to do is to get involved before tensions reach their

point of no return, before they degenerate into fully fledged conflicts.

The Commonwealth is strategically placed to play an increasing role in helping prevent and solve conflicts. Here's why: first, most conflicts today are within states rather than between states. The Commonwealth only intervenes at the request or with the consent of a member country. Our approach is based on building trust between the parties involved, acting with discretion and sensitivity.

Second, many conflicts today grow out of ethnic or religious tensions. The Commonwealth, with its experience in managing diversity and generating consensus, is well suited to help find a common ground of understanding between warring parties.

Third, many countries facing internal conflicts are often reluctant to accept outside assistance as they perceive it as a threat to their national sovereignty. The Commonwealth has no battalions and therefore does not intervene militarily. It uses the force of argument rather than the argument of force to help opposing parties pull back from the brink and bring them to the negotiating table. As Winston Churchill famously said: *'to jaw-jaw is always better than to war-war'*. That belief is also at the centre of the Commonwealth purpose.

Let me give you a few examples of our Good Offices work:

- a Cameroon. Cameroon joined the Commonwealth in 1995. For some time now, there has been international concern about a number of issues in the country. The Commonwealth has offered its support to the country, and my Special Envoy, the Hon. Christine Stewart (a former Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Canada), is assisting the Government of Cameroon in the implementation of wide-ranging reforms in the areas of election management, human rights, the judiciary and decentralisation.

There have been encouraging developments and in December 2002, a Cameroon/Commonwealth Presidential Commission was established in order to develop a framework and timetable for the implementation of the agreed reforms. Last month, we sent Commonwealth Observers for the Presidential Election. Their report will form the basis of our continuing engagement to strengthen democracy in Cameroon.

- b Fiji Islands. In Fiji, our good offices engagements were facilitated by my Special Envoy, Justice Pius Langa – Vice-President of the Constitutional Court of South Africa. This engagement focused on facilitating dialogue between the political parties, encouraging the formation of a government in accordance with the Constitution and promoting national reconciliation. Last May, CMAG decided to remove Fiji

from its agenda, following progress in regard to strengthening democracy and respect for the rule of law.

- c Guyana. In Guyana, Sir Paul Reeves (a former Governor-General of New Zealand) has been engaged as my Special Envoy since August 2002. The objective of his engagement is to promote dialogue between the main political parties with a view to developing more inclusiveness in the political life of the country. This dialogue has started and has already resulted in an agreement on a process of reform in the areas of election management, the constitution, capacity building for parliament and good governance.

These are just some examples of the work we do to help prevent conflicts. Not much is known about many of these interventions because, by their very nature, they have to be discreet.

- 2 The Commonwealth can generate consensus on some of the most difficult global issues and ensure no one is left out in the cold. One example is terrorism. Shortly after 9/11, all Commonwealth leaders, representing a multiplicity of religious and cultural groups, issued a Statement on Terrorism. This Statement is an example of how Commonwealth member states can reach agreement through consensus even on the most difficult issues.

It is the only case of any international organisation taking the position that ‘any member country that aids, supports, instigates, finances or harbours terrorists, or permits such activities within its jurisdiction, violates the fundamental values of our association and should have no place in it.’

Since then, the Commonwealth has been developing model legislation and implementation kits to assist member countries with the adoption of appropriate counter-terrorism measures.

This shows that the Commonwealth, which embraces a broad diversity of countries – rich and poor, large and small, island and land-locked – can offer a real alternative to unilateral forms of decision-making.

- 3 The Commonwealth also provides an international platform for small and vulnerable states. It ensures their voices are not drowned by the noise of big players asserting their own interests. Small states have an important role to play in the Commonwealth. They are a key part of the Commonwealth’s identity, representing 32 out of 53 members.

We recognise that small states are often sidelined when it comes to making decisions at a global level. They find it difficult to defend their interests in the face of the overwhelming influence of bigger players. The work of the Commonwealth is aimed at giving small states the tools to stand their ground and help level the playing field. In other words, we try to help redress the balance in favour of small states. When a small state government

enters into negotiations with a large multinational about the exploitation of its natural resources, chances are it will lose out. The Commonwealth's role is to provide experts who will strengthen the hand of the government and ensure the country does not get a raw deal.

In the petroleum sector, for instance, we helped the Government of Namibia negotiate agreements with international oil companies for offshore exploration projects worth over US\$100 million. This means the government now has more resources to dedicate to health and education, improving the lives of Namibian citizens.

When there is a dispute over maritime boundaries between a country the size of Dominica and a country the size of France, it's clear that the odds are stacked against the small Caribbean State. This is a case where the Commonwealth has provided the knowledge and expertise to prevent Dominica from becoming sea-locked.

- 4 We also help developing countries cope with the growing problem of international recruitment of teachers and nurses. Every year, developing countries spend millions of dollars training teachers, doctors and nurses, only to lose them to wealthier countries, which can afford to pay them more. This can often have a disastrous effect on a poor country's capacity to educate its people and provide decent health care. In order to address this problem, the Commonwealth has developed codes of conduct to ensure that international recruitment is carried out in an ethical way, which takes into account the needs of developing countries.
- 5 The Commonwealth has also been at the forefront of the initiative to assist Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). It was Commonwealth Finance Ministers who provided the leadership which eventually led to the initiative to reduce the debt of HIPC. The Commonwealth continues to maintain pressure on the IMF and the World Bank to provide even greater debt reduction to these countries.
- 6 The Commonwealth does not pay lip service to the values of democracy and good governance. As we have shown time and time again, we live up to our principles and take action when they have been violated. In fact, the Commonwealth is the only international organisation that suspends its members when they break the rules.

One of the key features of the Commonwealth is that it is an organisation based on shared values and principles. These are outlined in the 1991 Harare Declaration. They include the protection and promotion of democracy, the rule of law, good governance, equality for women, sustainable development and universal access to education.

But our leaders felt that it was not enough simply to declare their commitment to a set of fundamental political principles. They thought it was important to show that the Commonwealth actually lived up to these principles. So in 1995, they decided to set up the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG). This ‘democracy watchdog’, which consists of nine Foreign Ministers, is empowered with measures to deal with serious or persistent violations of the Harare Principles.

There are plenty of examples to show that the Commonwealth does not merely pay lip service to its fundamental political values. In 1995 Nigeria was suspended from membership but has since rightfully returned to the Commonwealth family and was the host of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in December last year. Sierra Leone was suspended from the councils of the Commonwealth in 1997; it too was subsequently reinstated. Zimbabwe was suspended following flawed elections in March 2002, until it chose to withdraw from the Commonwealth in December last year. Pakistan was suspended from the councils of the Commonwealth following a military coup in 1999. The suspension was lifted last May, in light of progress in Pakistan’s democratic reform. The country remains, however, on CMAG’s agenda.

It is interesting to note that every country which has left, or been suspended, has sought to come back; we hope this will also be the case with Zimbabwe.

- 7 The Commonwealth can have a direct impact on the lives of millions of people. Today, one out of three people in the Commonwealth lives on less than US\$1 dollar a day. Tackling poverty is one of the greatest challenges we face.

Providing aid, of course, is one way of addressing the issue. But the most effective weapon against poverty is actually trade. But at the moment, there are many reasons why developing countries are unable to trade their way out of poverty. The problem is not that they don’t want to. The problem is that they can’t. They can’t because governments in the rich world – the US, Europe and Japan – spend US\$1 billion a day supporting their own farmers at the expense of poor farmers in developing countries. The result is that farmers in the US can sell their cotton at a lower price than West African farmers even if it costs them more to produce it. EU subsidies and market restrictions on sugar cost Mozambique US\$38 million and Malawi US\$32 million.

This is not only economically absurd. It’s morally unacceptable. We must end this trade apartheid. The Commonwealth has long been urging industrialised countries to eliminate trade subsidies. We also help poor countries argue their case in trade talks. Recently, the Commonwealth received 17 million euros from the

European Commission to support poor member countries in trade negotiations and ensure they get a fair deal, not a raw deal.

Today, there are clear signs that things may be about to change. The EU and the US seem more committed than ever to dismantle agricultural subsidies. The current trade talks hold out the promise of greater trade opportunities for poor countries. Our responsibility is to help ensure they don't get derailed.

We also promote development through our Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC). With around £20 million to spend every year, we don't have huge financial resources. In fact, just to give you an order of comparison, United Kingdom citizens contribute annually: £51 to the EU, £10 to the UN, £2 to NATO and 18 pence to the Commonwealth

In spite of operating on a very limited budget, the CFTC remains a very flexible tool which enables it to respond to the needs of member countries quickly and efficiently – and provides good value for money. Projects include, for example: youth enterprise where we helped 500 young people set up in business by providing training and brokering funds. Three-quarters of those who benefited are women.

Commonwealth Private Investment Initiative: we raised more than US\$200 million for projects in our developing member countries in Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific and South Asia. Public sector reform: 6,000 public officials benefited from training in managerial skills to improve delivery of public services.

Through our Debt Recording and Management System, we help our members manage debt flows and improve transparency. This system is currently used by 53 countries and has been translated by La Francophonie for use among its membership.

Training journalists: we helped train 750 media professionals from 40 Commonwealth countries.

- 8 The Commonwealth helps provide real opportunities to young people. In fact, the Commonwealth is the only intergovernmental organisation to have a dedicated youth programme. A lot of our work is targeted to young people. That's only natural, given that almost half the Commonwealth population is under the age of 35. Through our Youth Credit Initiative, we provide micro-credit to young people to start or expand their own businesses. The Commonwealth Youth Programme has recently produced a toolkit designed to help policy-makers implement micro-credit programmes.

Through partnerships with the private sector, we have also established a Technology Empowerment Centre in India, which offers affordable courses in programming and e-commerce.

One of the biggest problems facing young people in the Commonwealth is HIV/AIDS. The devastation caused by the disease defies imagination. Since I started speaking, 60 young people got infected by the disease. Today, there are 13.2 million AIDS orphans. There is no cure yet, but there is hope. And that hope begins with: Education, Education, Education. The more you know about HIV/AIDS, the more you are in a position to take action against it.

That is why we set up the 'Young Ambassadors of Positive Living' programme, which enables young people living with HIV to share their experience and support prevention efforts.

Conclusion

I've outlined to you just a few examples of what the Commonwealth can achieve.

These are not necessarily big programmes backed by big money. But they are significant, and they make a difference. As you engage in your course of studies and later, in your careers, I hope you will come to appreciate – and benefit from – the value of the Commonwealth. And I hope you will write and speak about it for the benefit of the wider world.

Historically, the Commonwealth is the oldest international organisation around. But it's also the youngest in its make-up. When Nelson Mandela was asked what he hoped for the young people of South Africa, his answer was: 'I hope they will do better than I did.'

That is also what we want for the young people of the Commonwealth. We want you to do better than ourselves.

Reading 4: Further examples of work by the CMAG

By the module authors.

- In 2001, even though no coup had taken place, CMAG expressed concern about organised intimidation and challenges to fair elections in Zimbabwe, and recommended a Ministerial Mission to consult with the government in a spirit of dialogue and co-operation, about how best to strengthen the structures supporting multi-party democracy. Following a critical report by the Commonwealth Observer Group to the Presidential Election, in March 2002 Zimbabwe was suspended from the Councils of the Commonwealth for one year. It decided to withdraw from the Commonwealth in 2003/4.
- The Commonwealth Heads of Government at their 2002 Meeting in Coolum clarified the conditions under which CMAG would in future address serious or persistent violations of the Harare Principles, other than the unconstitutional overthrow of member governments. The Commonwealth Secretary-General has a 'good offices' role, through which he can use his personal influence to remedy a bad situation quietly and non-confrontationally. This role was strengthened, and only when these 'good offices' activities have been exhausted, do CMAG examine a case of perceived violation of the Harare Principles.
- At its London meeting in May 2004, CMAG considered the situations in Pakistan and the Fiji Islands. It found that there had been considerable progress in the latter case and was prepared to drop Fiji from its agenda, but agreed to continue monitoring reports from there by the Secretary-General. It does this in a discreet way, under the minor agenda item: 'Other Matters of Interest to Ministers.'
- In the case of Pakistan, CMAG recognised that there had been progress in rebuilding democratic institutions and restoring democracy, and decided to lift Pakistan's suspension from the councils of the Commonwealth. The group felt, however, that Pakistan should work towards a wider embrace of the Harare principles and decided to keep the country on the agenda. At its meetings in September 2004 and February 2005, CMAG acknowledged the progress being made by Pakistan since its reinstatement, but asked for further progress in ensuring the supremacy of the Constitution and Parliament. It also said that Pakistan needed to separate the offices of the President and Chief of Army Staff, which should not stay vested in the same person after the end of the current presidential term in 2007.

Reading 5: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act, the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicise the text of the Declaration and *“to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories.”*

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and

effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

- (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
- (2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

- (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
- (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16.

- (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

- (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.

- (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media **and regardless of frontiers.**

Article 20.

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
- (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23.

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26.

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.

Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27.

- (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

- (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
- (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
- (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Reading 6: Gender Inequality: from Roles to Rights

The Commonwealth Lecture 2001

Address by Mrs Graça Machel, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Foundation,
London, 13 March, 2001

Good evening, friends and colleagues. I am happy to be able to join you tonight and I thank the Commonwealth Foundation for their kind invitation to deliver this Commonwealth Lecture. But first of all I'd like to ask you to lower your expectations. This may be irregular, but tonight, you are not going to listen to a lecture. However, I would like to speak with you this evening about gender and equality; to explain why discussions about equality should shift away from a focus on differing roles and instead, emphasize the rights that men and women share. I believe sincerely that such a change will lead us to a better understanding of how women and men can contribute equally and powerfully to the democratic, just and peaceful nations we all desire.

So here we are: March 13, 2001. More than 50 years after the world embraced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; more than 25 years after the United Nations Year of the Woman; and 20 years after the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. We have had Beijing and Beijing plus five, and several other world conferences on women. Yet despite the years that have gone past, despite the speeches, the elections, the legislation and the commitments that have been made, women's human rights are far from being fulfilled.

Yes, it is the year 2001: and still your sisters, my sisters, your mothers, your wives and your daughters are assaulted in the streets, simply because they are women; 2001 – and still women are beaten to death in their homes by husbands and fathers, still raped with impunity in wars and conflicts, still battered and abused as part of our daily lives. In parts of the world doctors can speak of cloning human beings or choosing the sex of babies, while millions of women in this, our Commonwealth of Nations, continue to die in childbirth, as if science had stood still. 2001 – and no matter the country or the region of the world, violence against women is pervasive and it occurs most often in the very place where women should feel most secure: in the home. 2001 – and the majority of children who are out of school are girls; the majority of children who are bought and sold in a sordid trafficking business are girls.

So where are women's rights in all of this – as full and equal members of the human race and as articulated by all of these international agreements? I believe that the problem lies with the very way women's rights are perceived – that somehow women's rights are not important; that somehow women are a sort of second class human

being. Everyone, everywhere should consider women's rights as an integral and equal part of human rights, but we have not yet managed to cross that bridge. That is why there are so few women in our judicial, governmental and political systems. That is why women throughout the world struggle to make their voices heard and to have their contributions taken seriously. And that is why the appalling violence against women that we witness in every corner of the globe is only one manifestation of the gross violations of women's fundamental rights that occur on a daily basis. The amazing thing is that we, as human kind, think we can afford to wait. We do not have a sense of urgency about changing this situation.

Let us not become apologists for this state of affairs. People sometimes offer as an excuse a perception that women have different roles to play than men. Let us all acknowledge that we build our families and our societies precisely around different people fulfilling different roles – and that in itself is not necessarily bad. In all of our countries we are in desperate need of the services of doctors, teachers, nurses, engineers – even politicians. We need them all, but we do not expect them to fulfil the same roles. We do not expect the doctor to fulfil the role of an electronics engineer; we do not expect the politician to pilot a commercial airline; we do not expect the teacher to construct our railways. More importantly, we do not discriminate against any of these people simply because their roles might sometimes differ. We need different people to play different roles at various times. And that includes women sometimes to fulfil different roles and sometimes to fulfil the same roles as men. But whatever the roles, the rights remain the same and equal. I urge you – let us concentrate on the things that unite us, not the things that differentiate us. Let us focus on our shared human rights, not on the different roles we sometimes play.

Another excuse that people offer is that the discrimination we witness against women is all about culture and tradition. So I ask you – why is it that some cultures celebrate women while others discriminate against them? The fact is that culture and tradition have never been static – a culture that does not develop over time will stagnate and die. And throughout the ages people have shaped culture and tradition – and so people can, and have, changed them. Many generations ago some of our ancestors lived in caves, but as human beings our knowledge and skills developed over time. It was in our interests to find more effective and constructive ways of living and we moved from caves to other habitats.

So I come back to the fact that this is the year 2001 – the beginning of a new millennium. We can look back and celebrate a range of medical, technological and scientific discoveries. We can speak instantly to people thousands of miles away from us. New communications technology has opened the world in miraculous ways and we have found cures for diseases that would previously have meant death. Yet our environment is being degraded all around us; throughout the world hundreds of armed conflicts tear families,

communities and countries apart; pervasive violence undermines even the most stable of nations; poverty wracks the lives of millions of our citizens and HIV/AIDS threatens to set back medical and development achievements and undermine the peace and security of the whole world. These are enormous challenges that require concerted and innovative action from humankind, and we will only be successful in tackling them if we work together – women, men and children. The world cannot afford to ignore 50% of its human resources, its human potential.

And so we must focus on ensuring women's rights. When those rights are equally respected, we can see the enormous contribution that women make to their society. Liberation struggles like those in South Africa and Mozambique, amongst many others, are eloquent testimony to that. So why do we struggle to ensure that contribution? The group of 54 Commonwealth countries comprise one quarter of the world's population and crosses levels of development, geography and culture. The Commonwealth has made a commitment to increase women's participation in the political process, on every level – from placing her ballot in the ballot box on Election Day, to serving her country in office. Yet only one country, South Africa, has reached the 30% parliamentary representation rate that has been set as one critical benchmark. New Zealand follows closely behind, but many of our nations are nowhere near meeting this goal. And why are we limiting ourselves to a 30% target by the year 2005? Would we say that we should aim to stop only 30% of killings in a war by 2005? Would we say that we should aim for just 30% of our children to be treated for preventable diseases? When it comes to women there seems to be a perception that we can wait. There is little or no imperative for urgent action despite the tragic consequences that result from our inability or unwillingness to guarantee women's rights.

It is time we recognised that we cannot merely legislate for change: social justice and social change require more than international or national laws and policies, it requires more than a few women assuming the roles of politicians and leaders. True social justice requires a change in what is considered acceptable behaviour toward women and between women and men. Dealing with the pervasive violations of women's rights requires that we break the mould in our thinking and our actions. It is important that we have women in positions of political power, but it is equally important that we respect their rights to personal power, including their right to make decisions about marriage and childbearing; that we respect women's right to protect themselves from exposure to HIV, and their right to protect themselves and their daughters from harmful sexual practices.

If we want fully to realize our human rights and our potential as a human race, we must go deeper than we have thus far. We must instil in each one of our citizens, male and female, a deeply seated respect for all our rights. We must re-think our relationships and tackle inequality at its root. If such radical change is to come, as it must, I believe it will start where so many other things begin – at home.

Rights and respect are learned early in life, in childhood, within families and communities. The unacceptability of violence against women must be learned early. The ways of peace must be learned early. So as adults we have an obligation to begin to work with our children to develop that respect for all rights. We must work at home, in schools, in youth clubs and in our religious and community institutions. I have seen young people at work and at play, and I know how powerful they can be – I know that with that generation we can make a difference.

So, finally, my friends and colleagues, I say to you that to shift from a focus on different roles for men and women to an emphasis on the universal rights of women and men must begin with every one of us. It is our individual commitment to change as well as our institutional and joint actions that will allow us to transform the world for women, for men and for our children. For all our sakes, we must not fail.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Mrs Graça Machel

Notes:

Mrs Machel is one of Africa's most prominent leaders of civil society. A former first lady of both Mozambique and South Africa, Mrs Machel has extensive experience in both government and non-governmental affairs at the national, regional and international levels. In addition to being Chairperson of the Commonwealth Foundation, Mrs Machel is currently a member of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters at the United Nations, where she also led the team of experts that prepared a report for the UN Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on children. Mrs Machel is also a member of the boards of the UN Foundation, the UN University and the South Centre.

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Reading 7 Extract from the Youth Rights Guide

A CYP Commonwealth Secretariat publication, 1996

Section ii – Human Rights are Youth Rights!

Human rights belong to everybody: being human is what unites us across national boundaries, racial and ethnic groups, economic classes, gender and age. We have these rights from birth. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says: “*all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.*” Since children and adolescents are often dependent on adults to meet their needs, it has been common for many people to see them as having fewer rights. In fact, the United Nations and the international community have determined that children and young people have special additional rights while they are growing and in the transition to adulthood, before they gain recognition in their societies as full adults.

All children and young people have special rights to:

- survival
- protection
- development
- participation.

Human rights are protected in international law by a number of Conventions that are signed and ratified by Governments. If you were a country, signing a Convention means you are in general agreement with it and intend to follow it. If you ratify a Convention, the next step, it means you promise to follow it; only ratification (also called accession) is legally binding.

Each year, the United Nations hosts a six-week meeting, the Commission on Human Rights, where Governments report on and evaluate the implementation of the main human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (these three together are referred to as the International Bill of Human rights). Each Convention usually also has a Committee of officials from countries that have ratified it that follows implementation of its specific concerns. Two other instruments that are particularly important for young people to know about are the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. These will be covered in more detail in the next section.

Despite the publicity they have generated, the World Conferences that have been held on different subjects over the last few years did not create any new human rights, and they are not legally binding documents. They are still important to young people and can have an

impact on their rights. First of all, they reflect areas where a lot of agreement exists between countries about what human rights look like in practice and how they should be achieved in the next few decades, and what ideas or goals like sustainability and development mean. Second, governments who participate in the conferences and adopt the different declarations and programmes of action have a moral obligation to follow up on their commitments, even if they cannot be taken to any international court if they fail to act.

Section iii – What you should know about the Conventions

3.1 The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 1989. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, also known as the Children's Convention, defines 'child' as young people up to the age of 18. Whilst most adolescents do not want to be seen or treated as children, they are still included under the Convention, because, despite their growing autonomy, they remain dependent on adults to meet many of their basic needs for health and development. These needs are defined by the Convention as 'rights'.

The Convention recognises that all children should grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding, as provided by families. Parents or guardians have the right to provide direction and guidance to their children, but they also have responsibilities to respect the child's rights and to recognise the growing capacity and judgement of young people as they grow from the dependency of childhood to the independence of adulthood. The grounding principle of the Convention is that in all matters concerning children, the best interests of the child should have priority.

All of the rights set out in the Convention apply to all children and adolescents regardless of race, colour, sex, language, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability, or other status. They include the rights:

- to life, survival and development (Article 6)
- to a name, nationality and identity (Articles 7 and 8)
- to maintain contact with their parents (Articles 9) and (10) to protection from trafficking (Article 11)
- to express their views and be heard (Article 12)
- to freedom of expression, and to access to information and ideas (Article 13)
- to freedom of thought and religion (Article 14)
- to protection from all forms of physical and mental violence, abuse, injury or neglect, and child victims have the right to support and treatment (Article 19)

- to health and to access to health services (Article 24)
- to a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development (Article 27)
- to an education that develops their talents and abilities, teaches them about their human rights and their cultural identity, and promotes respect for tolerance, peace, gender equality and protection of the natural environment (Articles 28 and 29)
- to rest, play and pursue leisure activities (Article 31)
- to be protected from economic exploitation or forced labour (Article 32)
- to protection from all forms of sexual abuse or exploitation, as well as from abduction, sale or trafficking (Articles 34 and 35)
- to liberty and protection from torture or other degrading treatment or punishment (Article 37)
- to be protected from armed conflict or from being forced to become a combatant (Article 38).

Since 1987, the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been signed and ratified by almost every government in the world (187 in total) – only six governments are not included – which could be considered world record speed for international law! In 1990, governments got together at the World Summit for Children at the United Nations, where a plan of action for child survival and development was reached that set concrete goals for achieving many of the rights in the Convention. The later World Conferences covered in this document have all reminded governments of the need to implement both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Declaration and Plan of Action for Child Survival and Development that came out of the Conference.

Government implementation of the Convention is monitored by a Committee on the Rights of the Child that has ten members. The Committee meets every year and reviews progress reports from governments. Each country has to submit a report within two years of ratifying the Convention, and another one every five years after. Besides looking at the reports, the Committee gives general recommendations to governments on action they should take and how the Convention should be interpreted, based on the changing status and conditions of children worldwide.

3.2 The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, also known as the ‘Women’s Convention’, was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1979, and came into force in 1981. Even though all of the earlier treaties state that all human rights apply equally to women and

men, girls and women are discriminated against in access to education, food, health care, land, employment and decision-making all over the world. The Women's Convention recognises these areas of discrimination and obliges states to work to correct them through legal and other action.

The Women's Convention describes discrimination as “*any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex*” that denies recognition of women's human rights or stops either married or unmarried women from exercising their rights and freedoms guaranteed by the other conventions (the political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights). Because only women can bear children, the Convention allows special rights for women around maternity without this being considered discriminatory against men. Also, special measures in favour of women are allowed if they are designed to make up for past discrimination, such as special efforts to provide education or jobs to women.

So while girls and young women are guaranteed equal rights with boys and young men under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, they should also be aware of the Women's Convention. It protects the rights of girls and women:

- to be protected from commercial sexual exploitation (Article 6), to participate in decision making (Article 7) and (8) to have equal access to education and training, in an environment free from stereotyped images of the roles of women and men (Article 10)
- to have access to the same employment opportunities, with protection from discrimination on the basis of marital status or maternity, and to support services that enable them to combine work and family responsibilities (Article 11)
- to have access to health services during pregnancy and delivery, and to adequate nutrition during pregnancy and breast-feeding (Article 12)
- to have access to financial credit, and to participate in recreational activities and cultural life (Article 13), to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent, to decide on the number and spacing of their children
- to have the same rights and responsibilities as parents (regardless of marital status) in decisions about their children; and to have equal access to property in marriage (Article 16).

The Women's Convention has been ratified or signed by nearly 150 countries. Like the Children's Convention, government progress in implementation is monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which meets annually to review reports and make recommendations.

Reading 8: Some further challenges to democratic pluralism

By the module authors.

We live in a world dominated by global capitalist markets, and this means that there are no real barriers to the movement of money. So, if a government decides on an economic policy such as massively increasing the availability of public funds for the education of poor people, it can seriously damage investment flows into its economy.

In such a case, the government has to restrain its ideals of increasing equity, not because anyone has said so, but because economic forces compel them to.

In poor countries this decision is often managed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which generally refuses to sanction development loans that benefit the poor but do not advance the short term economic status of the country. The IMF refuses to deal with the issue in terms of long-term development, insisting that that is the country's own problem. IMF policies in Jamaica have led to no significant development of work, trade or increased wealth, and left the country much more in debt than it was before IMF intervention.

What this reveals is that capitalist markets give the wealthy enormous, unspoken power. Even more crucially, decisions made by governments today are increasingly made under the pressure of deciding how the stocks and bond markets will react, because money can flow around the globe so quickly.

For example, when a government like Bolivia decides that it wants a fairer share of the profits from its gas reserves, it has to make that decision in the knowledge that much of the foreign investment it depends on could flow out of the country into some other country's industry in a matter of a few minutes or hours. Nor can private investors be blamed for this, since those are the rules of the capitalist market place.

The ideological dominance of liberal free-trade ideas may well be among the biggest enemies human kind has ever faced. While free-market principles are undoubtedly very effective in developing economic capacity, and therefore of enormous social value, it is difficult to see any evidence in economic studies that they can, on their own, solve the massive problems of redistribution on which world prosperity and stability depend.

The ideological power these ideas have at present perhaps needs to be tempered by media tycoons who espouse one of the socialised models of prosperity that exist: perhaps the European social model or one of the models in Islamic economic theory.

Reading 9: Citizenship in the Commonwealth

By the module authors.

You may wonder why a concept like citizenship is being discussed in a course on Commonwealth values. The reason is that Commonwealth values and citizenship are intrinsically inter-related. Citizenship rights and responsibilities are embodied in the principles underpinning Commonwealth values.

It is therefore important that citizens' rights and responsibilities are shown to be necessary to underpin the Commonwealth values of equality, social inclusion, and sustainable development. The central importance of establishing all people in a state, of whatever class, as 'citizens' of equal status was what created the political energies of the French Revolution. That concept has stayed with the democracies despite their dominance by bourgeois elites.

The colonists imposed western models of governance and administration onto non-western societies. This included western models and practices of citizenship. However, these entailed the unacknowledged forms of social exclusion inherent in advanced capitalist economies, usually the exclusion of the lowest social classes from the fullest participation in social development.

For example, in a British colony such as Kenya, citizenship rights were accorded to people like the white teachers and technicians who had come to work there, and they included the Kenyan elite, for example the highly educated Kikuyu managers and Asian police officers, but were not offered to the majority of the population, whose land was sometimes carved up and 'sold' cheaply to Europeans wanting to farm in Africa.

These did not immediately eradicate the traditional forms of social division in the colonies, of course. That would have been impossible in a vast country such as India, for example, with its complex political history and structure.

But British rule brought its own democratic tensions into India, because it tried to impose Britain's combination of bourgeois and aristocratic values on top of a society organised by a caste structure. That caste structure is today threatened in places in India and Pakistan by the growing power of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois classes, but caste and clan relationships are used to boost class power, and bourgeois and petit-bourgeois wealth and power to buttress caste authority. The modern sector of the Indian economy is relatively small, so the society may only very gradually be transformed into one which is dominated by social classes.

Nevertheless, India is a democracy where the concept of citizenship is significant. India, like many newly independent states emerging from the decolonisation era, voluntarily adopted the western model as the basis of the constitution and the governance processes.

The idea of citizenship has sometimes been criticised as being euro-centric – the argument being that theories of citizenship are rooted in western ideals. It is essential to point out that some of the basic ideas behind citizenship – those of rights and responsibilities – have also been practised by non-western rural states.

However, the ideas around the citizenship concept have been most widely developed in the west, where they developed from the 1789 revolution in France, through a series of popular revolutions against feudal social structures, against successive tyrannical bourgeois governments and against the ultimate tyranny of industrialisation.

This process eventually created welfare states, with full rights under the law and the possibility of genuinely pluralistic societies. Nevertheless they still practised a degree of effective social exclusion for the poorest groups. What is also interesting is how the decision-making in democratic societies is sometimes controlled by a small inner cabinet and its ability to direct legislative material through the formal processes of the state.

For example, in the UK the Thatcher and Blair governments have at times been called ‘elective dictatorships’. This is unfair, but does suggest how democracies do have the capacity for the prime minister to develop a remarkable degree of control over decision making at times of apparent crisis.

Most decolonised states adopted the so-called ‘western concept of citizenship’ in their governance processes at independence. However, governance structures and processes existed in pre-colonial times in all developing countries and to some extent they continued to exist throughout the colonial period. They were eradicated only when they proved inconvenient for the colonial powers.

In addition, certain human rights existed often at a high level in many developing countries. India had a feudal system with village councils and public gatherings. In the Indian feudal system, people were allowed to address the ruler or ruling council, but only selected individuals in the community had the right to speak in such gatherings. Those who did speak in such meetings would therefore be properly attended to, which is often not the case for the citizens in democratic systems.

Other groups, such as the Yoruba, who resided in what is now western Nigeria, and in neighbouring countries such as Benin and Togo, also had village gatherings and councils to govern them. Members of the community had an opportunity to petition village elders and leaders or rulers as a means of airing grievances and raising concerns and issues.

Very often this was probably much closer to citizenship practices than what happened in Europe in its feudal periods. Chinua Achebe’s 1994 novel *Things Fall Apart* very vividly describes the surprising degree of freedom of speech and action in pre-colonial Ibo tribal and village

culture, admittedly limited by practical concerns and cultural values established over a long period to protect the tribe.

Communities and people in the Islands of the South Pacific still have a range of strong governance structures and practices whereby small groups of 'elders' are petitioned on issues of concern. These councils have a responsibility to ensure the overall good of the community and mediate between conflicting factions in the community. While they are not states, they are political entities that acknowledge and protect their citizen's rights and responsibilities. Such examples of these governance processes are illustrated amongst the Aborigines in Australia, the Maori in New Zealand, as well as the indigenous population of Fiji.

Such systems are an important part of the heritage, values and practices of those cultures. However, it is always important to ask whose interests political structures are serving in practice and whether these structures enable all members of the community to participate.

Not all members of the community have equal opportunities to participate in or influence governance structures, whether in the above examples or within a 'western context'. Frequently, the ability of young men and women to participate and directly influence and petition governance structures is severely limited. Additionally, people (whether in western or non-western countries) who are trapped in a cycle of poverty are usually not able to participate fully in governance processes and structures. It is here where the practice of citizenship principles can be transformative, not only at a national level, but also at the Commonwealth and global levels.

Reference

Achebe, Chinua (1994) *Things Fall Apart*, Anchor

Reading 10: Challenges to citizenship

By the module authors.

Citizenship, both as an idea and a practice, is evolving and changing. The most notable challenges to citizenship are coming from what people have broadly called ‘globalisation’, a term used to describe an increasing interconnectedness between individuals, organisations, groups, and states. Fuelling and facilitating these interconnections are the advances in technology, specifically information and communication technology (ICT).

These technological advances are challenging many aspects of citizens’ lives, particularly how individuals are communicating with each other and how individuals and groups are increasingly identifying with other people outside of their national boundaries. It is becoming apparent that citizens can be a powerful force trans-nationally, by participating in civil society groups and networks to attempt to influence change at the ‘global’ level.

In exercising their citizens’ rights to question their own government, citizens can also try to influence decisions made outside of their state boundaries by questioning other governments, international institutions, and corporations. This section will explore these challenges to citizenship and how they affect the Commonwealth.

Globalisation and information technology

The idea of citizenship is now being changed and challenged more than in any other period. Changing technologies are arguably not only challenging citizens’ allegiances to their state, but also increasing the formation of other allegiances, be they to civil society groups, international organisations, or local groups. In addition to this, we find that even the Commonwealth and Commonwealth values and principles can influence our individual citizen identities.

The advent of globalisation, a loose term used to describe an increasing interdependence above and below the level of the state, is arguably having an effect on the citizen/state relationship. Globalisation can be described as the process of change towards global economic integration and a world economy characterised by the liberalisation of trade, and interdependence of capital markets, and a rapid diffusion of advanced technologies and consumption patterns. The idea of globalisation is the topic of many debates.

The ability of the state to control flows – capital, trade, skills, people, ideas, images, information – is now increasingly challenged. One of the most notable demonstrations of what has been termed globalisation is the declining capacity of the state, to act as employer, provider and protector of its citizens. Developing countries are particularly vulnerable to the effects of external market forces and these states have even more of a challenge to counter-balance forces

of globalisation. Altvater (1999: 47) describes the globalisation challenge:

“Politically, globalisation and concomitant deregulation also means that, first, privatised decision-making is ‘de-politicised’: it no longer needs citizens’ legitimation. The ‘unconstitutional powers’ in the economy or the world of media needs merely present an attractive market supply to the customers, yield a profit to the shareholders, and achieve a high audience rating; they have only to obey the rules of the economic (and media) sphere. The unconstitutional powers are not tied to political decisions; the citizens – who form a political community – are primarily interesting as economic subjects, particularly as consumers. Hence, globalisation raises completely new questions which are not on the agenda as long the ‘systemic constraint of the world market’ was not a serious question and the sovereignty of the state over a certain territory was a natural and self-explanatory assumption.”

If we agree with Altvater’s analysis, globalisation challenges the basic pillars of citizenship. If employment conditions or opportunity are subject more to the policies of multinationals than government, and if fiscal restrictions are imposed upon government by external bodies, resulting in cutbacks in the provision of health and education, who can the citizen turn to for security and protection?

Those actors that are increasingly responsible for shaping the lives of citizens are usually not accountable to the individual citizen in the way that governments have been. Who, then, is to protect citizen’s rights and where can the citizen go for redress? Ironically, it has been globalisation that has facilitated the spread of human rights and citizens’ rights, making them an international standard. These citizens’ rights are now being challenged by the same forces.

Therefore, many writers are arguing that ‘globalisation’ is challenging the existing relationship between citizens and their states. While this relationship has always been one that is constantly re-defined and re-negotiated, it is having to be re-negotiated on a different level – one outside of state boundaries. As Held claims, states have now become ‘*decision-takers rather than decision-makers*’ and they are limited in the ways they can negotiate with their citizens. He suggests a ‘global citizenship’, or what has been called a ‘cosmopolitan democracy’, which will be described in the following sections of this module.

The other side of ‘globalisation’ and the spread of ICTs is that these technologies are playing an important role in facilitating trans-national mobilisation, particularly around perceived threatening issues of globalisation. One example of this is found in the ability of NGOs to use this technology to share information globally and strengthen the ability of national NGOs to lobby their governments. There are numerous illustrations of this, ranging from the various women’s movements throughout the last 200 years, to debt relief to

Highly Indebted Poor Countries campaigns at the end of the twentieth century.

Another illustration of a trans-national campaign involved climate change. The environment is nothing but global, and while states can regulate emissions within their borders, and negotiate with other states about their emissions, it is clear that there has to be a global effort of change. The effects of climate change have been considered important enough by individual citizens, to mobilise them to come together through environmental groups and networks to lobby governments, international institutions, and multi-national corporations, all coming together and exchanging information via ICT.

While young people living in North America may not be in direct danger of rising sea levels flooding their cities, a large number of citizens in other countries are directly affected by the effects of climate change. Thus, they have joined others in their efforts to influence polluting governments and companies in order to challenge the factors that cause climate change and rising sea levels.

One group belonging to the larger Climate Change alliance is the Centre for Environmental Citizenship. The Centre is based in Washington D.C. and provides an on-line forum for young people that are concerned about the degradation of the natural environment. Here they discuss environmental issues and organise campaigns to address these issues. Large numbers of young people from across the globe are now becoming members of this network. This case illustrates that there is an internalised ethic of individual citizens to take an interest in issues that may or may not affect them directly, and believe that the welfare and interests of others is also important to them.

Trans-national civil society and global governance

Civil society is generally thought of as the arena between the state and the family. This concept practically speaking includes groups such as trade unions, NGOs, and community groups. The concept of citizenship is very closely tied to that of civil society, as is captured by Friedmann and Douglas (1998:1–2) in the following statement:

“Citizenship is political and thus a concept in the public sphere. It pertains to only a segment of social life which itself is deeply rooted in what we call, for want of a better term, civil society. Civil society is that part of social life which lies beyond the immediate reach of the state and which, we would argue, must exist for a democratic state to flower. It is the society of households, family networks, civic and religious organisations, and communities that are bound to each other primarily by shared histories, collective memories and cultural norms of reciprocity.”

Where the citizen is faced with a situation where their rights are not recognised or are even violated by the state, they can no longer look to the state for their security. In such situations, citizens look to NGOs and other civil society groups that emerge at every level of society, that focus on a spectrum of issues. Increasingly, people with common interests and concerns are communicating with each other and mobilising within and across boundaries – human rights groups, environmental groups, professional associations and NGOs seeking to affect change within and across borders.

The response of governments to what Salamon (1994) has called an ‘association revolution’ of civil society groups, has been diverse. Many governments have welcomed the growth of civil society and often rely upon this sector to address issues they do not have the capacity to address themselves. The symbiotic relationship between government and civil society groups on specific issues has been crucial to the success when tackling them. One such example can be seen when examining the partnerships that African governments are forming with NGOs and civil society groups around issues of HIV/AIDS prevention and impact mitigation.

The successes recorded in Uganda’s fight against HIV/AIDS, would not have been possible had it not been for the Uganda government’s recognition and fulfilment of its particular role in raising awareness, mobilising resources and demonstrating leadership through example. This alone, however, would not have been enough. Citizens and civil society, both nationally and internationally, played a role in implementing programmes on the ground and educating at the grassroots level. Without this, it is questionable whether Uganda could have achieved some success reducing the level of HIV/AIDS incidence and infection rates.

Issues around environmentalism and conservation also illustrate how citizens’ responsibilities are transcending state boundaries. Large numbers of people have protested against the actions of organisations and governments whose actions they believe are damaging the environment. If an anti-hunting group releases captive animals they believe have been being mistreated, they will believe that they are upholding their rights to protest action that they feel is against the common good. However, this same action may be regarded by others as a disrespect for the law and human rights. Who decides the rights and obligations of citizens in these different contexts? How involved are young people in defining those rights? Do they have the freedom and opportunity to influence the values and the laws where their actions will be judged by society?

The advent of acceleration of globalisation in all its forms is affecting how citizens see themselves in relation to each other, the state and government, persons, groups, multinationals and the external forces that increasingly encroach on their daily lives. States’ borders are becoming increasingly porous. Not only are external forces and factors crossing boundaries, but certain allegiances are being formed among people not just within the borders of the state, but beyond

them as well. Many citizens are recognising that the forces that step into their lives, originate outside of their country and beyond the direct control of their government.

Although there are outside forces influencing the state (and many would argue that there always have been), the state is still with us. Consequently, although there might be multiple allegiances, citizenship on the national level is still vital as it can be the source of a culture and understanding that binds a group of people together. Kymlika (1999:119) described the importance of the national level:

“...these forms of deliberation and legitimation require some degree of commonality amongst citizens. Collective political deliberation is only feasible if participants understand and trust one another, and there is good reason to think that such mutual understanding and trust require some underlying commonalities. Some sense of commonality or shared identity may be required to sustain a deliberative and participatory democracy.”

The commission on Global Governance (1995) stated:

“The collective power of people to shape the future is greater now than ever before, and the need to exercise it is more compelling. Mobilising the power to make life in the new century more democratic, more secure, sustainable is the foremost challenge of this generation. The world needs a new vision that can galvanise people everywhere to achieve higher levels of co-operation in areas of common concern and shared destiny.”

Current notions of good governance reinforce the importance of civil society and the partnership between governments and citizens. Good governance includes citizens expressing their rights to voice their opinions and to actively participate in decision-making processes beyond that of voting in elections. As a Zambian businessman told the Commonwealth Foundation for a study of Citizenship and Governance, ‘a good society is where citizens know their rights, and know how to react to violation of those rights’.

Many would argue that citizens are increasingly looking to the NGOs and other civil society groups that focus on a spectrum of issues. Development agencies and western governments have contributed to the increasing focus on civil society through their funding. Agencies such as the UK Department for International Development, the Canada International Development Agency, and Australia Aid, have made the link between empowering the poor and marginalized with civil society as a key factor of their work. The argument that the strengthening of civil society increases citizens’ empowerment is seen as very important in the work of these agencies.

As noted in the previous section, increasingly people with common interests and concerns are communicating with each other and mobilising across boundaries – human rights groups, environmental

groups, professional associations and NGOs seeking to affect change within and across borders. These changing centres of allegiance reflect a shift from the internalised ethic of citizens to states, to the internalised ethic of citizens to issues (Yanacopulos, 2001). However, this is not an either/or allegiance – what we are witnessing are multiple allegiances, where citizens can have an allegiance to their country, but also have an allegiance to an ideal that is not exclusive to their country.

This has been called ‘cosmopolitan democracy’ and ‘cosmopolitan citizenship’ by writers such as Held (1999). Held argues that there has been a change in the role of states as ‘decision-takers’, and that citizenship has to be re-defined not only at the national level, but also at the global level. Thus, for meaningful citizenship to exist in an era of globalisation, it will require democratising those trans-national institutions that are increasingly responsible for decisions and extending citizens’ rights at this global level. This trans-national or global idea of citizens is highly debated. However, its contribution is not just that it is attempting to explain changing allegiances and the growth in trans-national campaigns, but also that it is trying to offer a normative (the way the world should be) perspective. This normative ideal is one where citizens have rights and obligations not only to those within their own countries, but those in others as well. This idea is also attempting to keep the rights (and responsibilities) of other trans-national institutions and corporations in check.

It is the emerging generation of leaders that have the opportunity and responsibility of continuing to shape the way in which people engage with economic, political and social movements and of defining their place in them. This process is being demonstrated through the emergence of new conceptions of citizenship. The idea of citizenship is evolving and changing from being merely a citizen of one state to the notion, some would argue, of being a citizen of the world. This ‘global citizen’ is someone who extends their citizen responsibilities to the trans-national or global level, evidenced by the increased mobilisation of peoples around global issues that affect others around the world. It demonstrates how ‘global citizens’ have taken on the additional responsibilities and rights. It also reflects on how these citizens can potentially increase respect for other citizens, institutions and governments within the larger ‘global society’. This connectivity should be encouraged and supported as it is only in partnership and respect for citizens’ rights that the many challenges posed by globalisation can be addressed.

The Commonwealth

Citizenship itself forms the basis of how citizens collectively believe society should be constructed and governed. This has been illustrated by the nationalist and de-colonisation movements and liberation struggles in the majority of Commonwealth countries. Nationalist movements developed to challenge colonialism. Large groups of people in the former colonial territories mobilised and fought for

independence. These liberation movements include people from all parts of society, and young people played an important role in mobilising both people and support for their independence movements. They often led civic education programmes that sought to highlight injustice among the population, and organised and participated in protests against the colonial rulers.

One example of young people's involvement in independence movements was in Zimbabwe. The second *chimurenga* liberation struggle included a large number of young women and men involved in both political mobilisation and combat. These young people led political meetings in rural areas prior to the armed struggle, in order to educate the rural population. Their focus was on how colonialism denied them their basic human rights and their rights to be citizens of their country. They sought to build support for the independence struggle, emphasising that only independence could offer them democracy and full citizenship. This example highlights the mobilisation of individuals around their human and citizen's rights violations. It illustrates how a new international standard of human and citizen's rights can bring people together. The international norm of citizenship allows individuals to make demands for their rights as citizens.

As mentioned earlier, another example for the quest for citizenship was in South Africa. The 'young lions' in apartheid South Africa showed how young people mobilised themselves and the wider community to protest against the injustice of apartheid. Young people were instrumental in mobilising support for the anti-apartheid struggle. Prominent anti-apartheid leaders, including Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, founded the ANC youth league in 1944. They were concerned that the ANC, which at that time was a well-established organisation protesting against racist apartheid, had become tired and complacent. At the time, the ANC leadership was dominated by older, conservative men, and Mandela and Sisulu felt that forming the Youth League was a way of 'lighting a fire under the leader of the ANC'.

The ANC Youth League launched a series of campaigns and actions from the time it was formed in the 1940s, up to the period of transition to full elections in 1994. These actions included mobilising black, Asian, coloured, and other marginalized people to participate in 'stay-aways' (not going to work), strikes, and similar civil disobedience campaigns. Additionally the Youth League participated as combatants in the armed struggle. Campaigns like these publicised the injustice of apartheid across the world and won global support for the anti-apartheid movement. The actions of groups such as the ANC Youth League showed the rest of the world the reality of apartheid, finally resulting in forcing the South African government to dismantle Apartheid.

Citizenship in practice

As we discussed in the previous section, citizenship, and the rights and responsibilities implied by it, is more than just a legal status. It is also a way of thinking, behaving and interacting with others in the community and society – these issues form the foundation of fundamental Commonwealth values and principles. In this section, we will be examining how the values of citizenship are evidenced in practice within the Commonwealth by exploring how they relate to two frequently excluded groups – young people and women. We will also look at the practice of citizenship in relation to mobilisation of citizens and examine specific cases where citizens have grouped together to affect change.

Young people

The rights of young people have been officially declared in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The Convention has been ratified by every country (with the exception of two) in the world and it clearly states the basic human rights of every child. The convention states that children everywhere have the right:

- to survival
- to develop to the fullest
- to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation
- and to participate fully in family, culture, social life.

According to UNICEF (www.unicef.org/cre/convention.htm), the Convention outlines a new vision of the child – where the child is not the property of their parents nor are they helpless objects of charity, but human beings and the subject of their own rights.

The majority of Commonwealth countries now have a national youth policy or set of initiatives specifically designed to address the interests, needs, rights, and responsibilities of young people. These policies identify processes for participation, set out what young people should expect from the state, and present a menu of acceptable actions or behaviour that young people themselves should engage in. Citizens – and young citizens – must be empowered to act. This means they require many of the freedoms and entitlements that appear as rights, and a forum in which potentially everyone can take part.

Young people and other marginalized groups are rarely given the opportunity and freedom to directly influence the way in which the laws and common values govern society. They are often not able to influence *formally* the way in which citizen's rights and responsibilities are being developed. Even if young people are economically active, they only have one vote each and can only vote at a certain age. Before this point, young people do not have the ability to participate directly in formal electoral processes – they cannot vote in elections. In order to present their beliefs and interests, they have to participate

in alternative forms of political expression. These include participation in youth groups, networks, and other civil society institutions that bring a wide range of actors together to affect change in policy making and practice at the formal and informal levels.

The national Youth Policies of various Commonwealth countries give the following examples.

Malta

“In implementing the Youth Policy, the Ministry responsible for Youth shall seek not only to carry out its own activities and its various programmes for youth but also act as a catalyst for action by the National Youth Council, youth organisations and young people in general to assist and support the same in their activities...creating opportunities and free choices which respect the sense of autonomy and responsibility of youth and their organisations.” (National Youth Policy, Ministry for Youth and the Arts, Government of Malta, 1993).

Trinidad and Tobago

“The government pledges its commitment to create the social, economic, legal and political framework, the facilitative and culturally sensitive environment to promote the development of a spiritually and morally stable, educationally and technically competent, socially aware and tolerant youth, willing and capable of participating in a meaningful way in the social, economic, cultural and political development of Trinidad and Tobago.” (Draft National Youth Policy 2000: Towards a shared vision, Government of Trinidad & Tobago).

Uganda

“The policy recognises the large number, strategic importance and immense potential in its youth for the development of the country. However, it notes that youth have only been inadequately involved and their huge resources less harnessed in socio-economic development and in the promotion of peace, democracy, good governance and upholding the values of society. The policy therefore advocates for mobilisation of resources to promote youth participation in the mainstream of national development.” (Draft National Youth Policy: A Vision for youth in the 20th Century, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2002).

South Africa

“The National Youth Policy recognises the rights ascribed to all citizens within the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. The Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa, enshrining the rights of all people in the country and affirming the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. These are the rights many South Africans, and young South Africans in particular, have struggled for. Young men and

women benefit from these rights along with citizens of all ages.” (National Youth Policy, National Youth Commission, 1997).

The Gambia

“The goals of the 1998–2008 National Youth Programme of Action are to empower young men and women to realise and harness their potential for human sustainable and gender responsive development; to foster responsible citizenship in young men and women to enable them to initiate actions which promote their own development, that of their communities, the Gambian nation and the Africa region as a whole; and to facilitate a co-ordinated and holistic approach by all stake holders in the implementation of youth programmes at various levels.” (National Youth Programme of Action, Department of State for Youth and Sports, Government of the Gambia, 1998).

Some countries have set up programmes and processes specifically designed to give young people a voice. One example can be found in the Youth Parliament of Uganda. In accordance with the National Youth Statute (1993) and the Parliamentary Act of 1995, five young people aged 18–30 are elected to parliament. Four Youth Parliamentarians represent the four major regions of the country, while the fifth represents young women throughout the country. These Parliamentarians have participated in parliamentary sessions, organised and addressed constituency meetings and made recommendations to Parliament. Though the numbers are few and cannot fully represent all young people, it is a promising start to the establishment of formal and structured processes to bring more young people into decision-making bodies (Obbo, in Mokwene 2001).

Youth groups have played a role in the quest for citizens’ rights – youth groups spearheaded the formation of protest movements in the colonial period and constituted the preliminary frameworks around which many anti-colonial movements were constructed. The Gold Coast Youth Conference and the Nigeria Youth Movement are two such examples. In the initial years of independence, these youth wings were incorporated into the ruling parties and young people were brought into the business of government and governance. Simultaneously, the creation of national universities witnessed the establishment of student unions at all major universities.

Over the years, organisations such as the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) or the National Union of Ghanaian Students (NUGS) have engaged in highly visible political activity. They have lobbied to protect student disbursements; they have also set themselves up as units to monitor the quality of public life in most African countries. Students have therefore emerged as a vital barometer of the status of particular regimes, being among the first groups to voice dissatisfaction with government policies. Although not an economic force, student groups have played an important role in shaping popular attitudes.

Youth organisations are not just confined to student activity. In many communities, small youth associations have surfaced in recent years, many of which are associated with religious organisations. Separate youth organisations have also been established to cater to the interests of particular groups of young people in cities (the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides are major examples). Women's and youth associations differ from other forms of social and economic organisation in that they cut across conventional structures of affiliation and identity and establish settings for linking otherwise disparate groups. Their numbers, cohesion, and modes of activism reflect the content of many broader societal concerns – they establish what is known as 'patterns of lateral transactions' (Chazzan, 1999).

Young people have been instrumental in highlighting individual and community needs. They have been intimately involved in working with NGOs and other civil society groups that seek to respond to the needs of communities. Again, the awareness-raising of the impact of HIV/AIDS proves a good example of young people's involvement. The Commonwealth Youth Programme's Ambassadors for Positive Living involves young people who are living with HIV visiting communities around Africa telling their stories. The programme entails young people raising awareness about HIV/AIDS among peer groups who are at risk, and advocating safe and healthy lifestyles. Additionally they are trying to promote a commitment among the wider community to cope with the devastating impact of the virus and syndrome, and highlighting the clinical and social needs and contributions of sufferers.

In Australia, school children in several cities walked out of their lessons to take part in a series of protests against a right-wing politician. Hundreds of students marched on the Prime Minister's office opposing what they said were the anti-immigration and anti-Aboriginal policies of a number of politicians. Children as young as eight joined the protests. One of the students told the BBC (1998) 'We're an organisation that fights for the rights of young people. As young people we have the right to protest ... We believe that if we can get heaps of people out, then we can expose the lies (of the politicians).'

As the concept of citizenship continues to evolve, it is the youth of the Commonwealth that will continue to safeguard rights, and shape and fulfil responsibilities to each other and to a wider community. A recent study polling the youth of Britain showed an alarming trend. It showed that British youth are 'turned off', uninterested in government, citizenship and community.

Pirie and Worcester (2000) found that:

"Today's young people are not interested in politics, and do not regard political activity as worthwhile. They know little about the institutions of government at various levels, and feel little loyalties to the communities of which they are part. They reject community activism, and do not participate. They regard

citizenship only as a way of behaving, and of having regard for others.”

Pirie and Worcester’s perception of young people is not necessarily true of other Commonwealth countries, such as South Africa, where societies are highly politicised as a result of struggles for independence and democracy. However, this finding does highlight a need to advance an understanding of, and commitment to, the concept and practice of citizenship in Britain, and in the rest of the Commonwealth. Thus, young people now have to deal with an increasingly complex and changing notion and reality of citizenship as it moves beyond national borders in the face of a globalising world. What they choose to do, how they choose to define the concept and engage with this changing reality, will influence the way in which citizen’s rights and responsibilities continue to evolve and shape Commonwealth societies.

Women

In several countries, women have for many years been excluded from enjoying equal rights with men (though this is changing).

“The unpaid and time-consuming work of caring – be it for children or physically dependent adults – is carried out primarily by women and has serious implications for women’s abilities to exercise in full their political rights of citizenship.” (Lister, 1992:24).

In all countries, the rights of women are determined by cultural norms and traditional practices. The universal equality of human beings is frequently given mere ‘lip service’ in national constitutions – in practice, its application to women is ignored. They are traditionally denied opportunities to practice in education, economic activity beyond low or subsistence level, and in public and political life. They face even greater burdens of family, community, and culture restrictions. Despite often being the most active agents in economic life – particularly in the informal and agricultural sector – women have limited influence (and presence) in the public arena, formal and/or traditional decision-making and governance processes.

There is growing recognition that women’s depressed status in some societies is closely related to their lack of presence in the public arena, which can be rectified through mobilisation. Women, both young and old, have been mobilising in women’s groups as a means to make their voices heard. They are challenging the inequality they face in order to win their rights as citizens and equal human beings. Such groups include official women’s associations such as the All Women’s Association of Ghana, and the Organisation of Mozambique Women.

A large number of voluntary women’s associations, such as the YMCA and the Ahmaddiyah, provide services for women, in extending non-formal training, operating child-care facilities, and

furnishing support networks. Additionally, various ‘grassroots’ organisations have formed in rural and urban areas to meet the specific needs of women. These groups have local roots and a self-help orientation, and they tend to be more spontaneous in their origins. They also tend to have younger women activists, and tend to respond to the needs of younger women.

Women have also been forming groups around issues and situations where they believe the national treatment of them or communities denies or violates human rights standards. A large number of women’s groups (both domestic and international) have been instrumental in highlighting gender inequalities. These groups have put pressure on Commonwealth governments to amend laws and give women equal status – in a sense, equal human and citizen’s rights.

Often, it is older women that do force the fight for equal rights onto national and global, political, economic and social agendas, and achieve some progress in securing recognition of their rights. It is even more difficult, however, for young women to engage in such movements and actively take advantage of opportunities when they are won. They face a double burden of being marginalised as women, and marginalised further by being young people.

Mobilisation

Various examples have been presented to you, exploring how citizens have been mobilising and taking action. Rights were a motivating factor in the mobilisation of these individuals. The international standard of human and citizen’s rights has acted as a focus to form groups and exert pressure on all levels of governments as well as on international institutions. Civil society groups, such as trade unions, community organisations, and NGOs, have been a focal point for individuals to come together and mobilise around issues they believe are important.

Membership in civil society groups offers another way for individuals to empower themselves through collective action. It enables them to speak with a stronger voice and act with greater power in articulating their concerns and needs and those of their communities. One example is the story of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) community working with local communities in Rajasthan, India, to fight corruption and ensure that local projects were undertaken.

Another example of how citizens have joined together to uphold their rights can be found in Bangladesh. Hundreds of young people and women in the Chittagong Hill tracts protested the killing of three tribesmen in a clash with security forces. They called for an immediate closure of army camps in the region and for a judicial inquiry into the incident. This pressure from the local community contributed to the decision of the army to begin an investigation into the incident and the actions of military personnel (BBC, 1999b).

In Nigeria, local communities protested against a liquefied gas complex. Members of the local community protested against what they saw as years of neglect and lack of resources to develop local infrastructure. A blockade by young people prompted the closure of the plant at Bonny Island, River State (BBC, 1999a). The company operating in the plant is continuing discussions with traditional leaders to hear their grievances.

As highlighted in the *Civil Society in the New Millennium* project conducted by the Commonwealth Foundation, NGOs, trade unions, co-operatives and other formal, voluntary, independent and intermediary organisations are important components of civil society in the Commonwealth. They make important contributions towards giving citizens a means of working collectively and mobilising around certain issues. Citizen's actions, either individually or through groups, are being carried out in numerous ways in local communities and neighbourhoods. Many are informal, relate to concrete local issues, and are sustained through their own resources and energy. This form of active citizenship – the participation of citizens in NGOs and other forms of groupings that facilitate and strengthen their actions – can be seen as a means of effective governance (Commonwealth Foundation, 1999). Ironically, while citizens' rights are negotiated between citizens and the state, when these rights are not available to citizens, they will fight for them through means other than through the formal democratic process. Arguably, citizens' working within civil society are themselves a form of democratic governance. The Commonwealth Foundation 1999 report stated:

“If everyone participates in political life they learn better participation and everyone benefits. Popular social movements by definition call into question old habits and beliefs, and raise new options for participation and action.”

This kind of participation in civil society groups who act as intermediaries and as focal points for individual and collective action strengthen citizens' confidence in their own ability to pursue their rights.

Human resource development

As we have seen, one very important element of citizenship is the social one. Social citizenship is very much concerned with Human Resource Development – that citizens have access to education, health, and opportunities – some of the key ideals behind the welfare state. In this section, we will explore some practical elements of citizenship in relation to human resource development by using various examples from the Commonwealth Foundation Study, 'Citizens and Governance: Report of civil Society in the New Millennium (1999:70)'.

- Participating in and setting up local community groups that enable citizens to come together, thereby strengthening the ties and solidarity of the community on important issues.

One example of this is Battilal. Battilal, a young man living in a slum in New Delhi, India, who was able to go to an NGO run school. The school encouraged him to build a youth group playing Dholak (local drum). Now Battilal's troupe is performing plays to raise awareness of slum dwellers on issues of corruption and health. The action of Juliana Dogbadzi, in Ghana, provides another example. This young woman, who was a former slave, led a campaign to end the tradition of 'Trakosi', which enslaves women in religious shrines.

Another example can be found in Pai, a young leader of Apolina Urban Workers Association in Samoa, who uses the Association to bring together young workers in the village to undertake social and cultural activities. Pai tries to make all members aware of the importance of worker's rights as human rights and seeks to promote greater participation of young women workers in the group's activities. Another example is the work of Abubacar Sultan in Mozambique. He is the Director of a counselling program that heals child soldiers forced to serve in Mozambique's civil war.

- Participating in wider social movements or strategies to bring the concerns of citizens and communities to national government, to ensure that government policy and programmes respond to the needs of communities and safeguard rights and services.

The involvement of citizens in NGOs in South Africa that joined forces in the South Africa National NGOs Coalition (SANGOCO) illustrates this point. SANGOCO lobbied the government to safeguard grants for the children of poor parents that were to be discontinued. SANGOCO made presentations to various decision-makers including parliamentary standing committees and the responsible Minister. They convened press conferences and forged alliances with the churches and Trade Unions. They organised a national day of action. The result of these actions was intense media pressure and campaigns from a wide range of actors that lobbied MPs and won broad political support. Consequently, the Minister agreed to review the issue and eventually the level of the grant was increased by 25 per cent per month.

- Participating in trans-national networks and alliances as a means of sharing information and empowering people and groups to challenge unjust or potentially harmful action by external actors.

The actions of Innocent Chukwuma, who was given an international human rights award in 1996, illustrates this point. Her actions in monitoring, documenting, and publishing abuses by the Nigerian police force precipitated international sanctions against Nigeria's military government.

- Individual citizens sharing information about each other as a means of forging links of understanding, tolerance and celebrating of diversity and difference and solidarity.

Schoolnets, established by the Commonwealth of Learning in Kenya, is one such example. The schoolnets established by SANGOCO, and community tele-centres supported by the government of Trinidad and Tobago, have each provided an internet based network for school children and community members. This has enabled them to share information about themselves, local events, and has helped them to forge understanding and unity with others.

The Commonwealth Foundation study has identified this range of citizen's actions. Citizens need to understand their rights in society and be aware of their responsibilities to society. The study stresses that this could be done through citizens acting individually and collectively to exercise their rights, and to uphold the rights and interests of others. Participation in civil society groups and networks on specific issues can demonstrate to others the importance of standing up for rights and acting in a responsible way towards others in the community. Sharing the experience of active citizens and what they have achieved through information networks, forging alliances with diverse groups and teaching the importance of active engagement to citizens as they grow up are some ways in which this can be done.

Citizen leaders play a crucial role in promoting citizens' action in society. They inform, motivate, mobilise and organise fellow citizens. They enable connections and build trust among citizens. They should identify and promote other leaders as well as build their own capacities for effective leadership. Thus, citizens need to re-engage with public issues and public affairs in society. By participating in public fora, by exercising their responsibilities to challenge injustice, and by joining in public deliberations on the public agenda, citizens contribute towards strengthening responsive democratic governance. Public agencies, public policies and public problems must all be the arena for public engagement. This responsibility must be a collective effort, and not merely left to a few citizen leaders.

Reading 11: Good governance: the challenge for Africa

The following is an abridged version of a paper presented by the Commonwealth Secretariat to the Roundtable on Democracy and Good Governance in Africa, for Heads of Government of Commonwealth Africa, in Botswana, 24-27 February 1997.

Following decolonisation, three – sometimes overlapping – patterns of post-colonial government emerged in Commonwealth Africa. The first was continuous multi-party democracy – an option which admittedly only two Commonwealth African governments followed throughout the Cold War period. The second was the one-party state, and the third, military government.

National leaders who opted for one-party rule have invariably argued that the imperatives of national integration and of economic and social development meant that African countries could not afford the divisive trends inherent in opposition parties and confrontational politics. According to this view, a single-party structure was the most effective way of harnessing the energies of the people for the purpose of nation building.

While in some cases the one-party state model may have stabilised national politics, it did so at the expense of insulating governments from constructive criticism and by stifling enterprise outside the narrow confines of the political elite.

In a number of states, not long after independence, the military emerged as the government-in-waiting. In such countries, the military would often seek to justify their take-over of government by pointing to the corruption of the political classes which, they argued, rendered the latter unfit to govern. On the contrary, they claimed, the army was fit for office because, unlike political parties, it was a genuinely national institution whose officers were motivated by the desire to build and defend the nation-state.

Some military governments may have genuinely believed themselves capable of serving the interests of the nation more effectively than civilians. However, it soon became evident that they were at least as problem-ridden and no less free from corruption as the civilian classes which they attacked. In fact, systematic abuse of fundamental human rights rendered their claims to serve the interests of the people devoid of any meaning.

However, since 1991, the great majority of Commonwealth African states have taken the road to democratisation. A number of factors have contributed towards this result. For one, the post-Cold War environment favoured the transition to democracy. At a time when

the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were breaking free of the shackles of communism and one-party rule, people in Africa started to question the rights and wrongs of their own political systems and an enthusiasm for democratic governance was awakened.

Western creditor governments and international financial institutions reinforced these pressures. From the early 1980s, they began to impose stringent economic conditions on the provision of debt relief and new loans. They then widened conditionality to include transparent administration, the protection of human rights and the restoration of democracy.

The winds of change and renewed commitment to democratisation were reflected in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991 which committed Commonwealth members to 'democracy, democratic process and institutions which reflect national circumstances, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, just and honest government...fundamental human rights, including equal rights and opportunities for all citizens, regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief.' This commitment was reaffirmed and strengthened in 1995 at Millbrook, New Zealand, where Commonwealth Heads of Government agreed to an Action Programme to 'fulfil more effectively the commitments' contained in the Harare Declaration. This Action Programme was a clear indication that Commonwealth leaders were determined to act on the commitments they had undertaken at Harare.

Indeed, since 1991 substantial progress has been made in Commonwealth Africa towards implementing the Harare principles. By March 1997 with one exception, all African member countries now have governments which have been elected under universal franchise. Most of these elections have also been judged to have been 'free and fair' by local and international observers, including those provided by the Commonwealth itself. However, structural and attitudinal obstacles remain which have prevented democratic culture from taking root in all the Commonwealth countries of Africa.

For one, in a number of countries, the electorate votes according to ethnic lines rather than on the basis of favouring a particular political or economic programme. As long as this 're-tribalisation of African politics', as Professor Ali Mazrui has called this phenomenon, remains, some groups are bound to be in almost permanent opposition. In such circumstances certain sections of society will continue to have an incentive to engage in extra-constitutional politics.

A second structural problem facing a number of Commonwealth African countries is the absence of a national civil society which can offer opportunities for self-fulfilment and advancement. In its absence, many are tempted to attain such goals by usurping or holding on to political power.

If such structural obstacles are to be overcome, a number of issues will need to be addressed. Electoral arrangements, for example – that

is, the Electoral Commission and the laws pertaining to the elections and their conduct – should be truly independent of the government of the day and should provide a level playing field for all political parties. Presidential terms should also be limited to specified periods of office, and measures should be taken to safeguard the independence of the judiciary.

Another important issue which would need to be considered is arrangements for the transfer of power. Ways would have to be found to provide for the smooth transfer of power from one administration to another. Such arrangements should extend to provisions regarding the status and, indeed, pension rights of a retiring Head of State or Government.

Defining and safeguarding the role of the Opposition is also important. It is often said that this aspect of democracy presents unique problems in Africa since there is no indigenous tradition of loyal opposition. To the extent that this is true, the relevant question is how to create such a tradition. In part, the answer may be technical. African opposition parties have a high rate of attrition and defection. Once access to power has been lost in an election, both the incentive and the means to stay in active politics are severely curtailed. If the leading opposition parties were to be partly financed from state revenues, there would be an incentive for parliamentarians to remain actively engaged in opposition politics, and for unsuccessful electoral coalitions to establish an institutional base and countrywide party organisation.

Another issue worthy of consideration is the role of the military and how this can be defined in a way which serves rather than threatens African democracies. Military governments are by definition incompatible with democracy. The function of the armed services is to defend a country against external aggression and unconstitutional attempts to overthrow a democratically elected government. Indeed, they are expected to carry out these functions under the political direction of an elected government. To symbolise the subordination of the military to the civil power, in democratic countries the Commander-in-Chief is normally the Head of State or Government.

While it would be misleading to suggest that economic development is a prerequisite for democracy (consider India, for example) there is no doubt that economic development can contribute to the strengthening of a democratic system. Democracy cannot thrive on an 'empty stomach'. Greater prosperity allows for the development of vital sectors such as education and health services, and a country's basic infrastructure, leading to the creation of a society which is more able to exercise effectively its democratic rights.

Economic liberalisation and the promotion of inward capital investment can therefore prove crucial in creating a more open and more effective democratic system.

Reading 12: Putting Guyana Up For Auction

From 'The West on Trial – My Fight for Guyana's Freedom Putting Guyana up for Auction' by Cheddie Jagan (first ed 1966, revised 1997)

Chapter XVIII

“The American ideology equates capitalism not only with freedom but very nearly with virtue. The nationalization of an American company by a small nation seems to most Americans proof of a political sin so obvious as to require no further discussion.”

London Observer, Editorial April 30, 1961

May 26, 1966, was fixed as the date for independence. Although we had boycotted the Conference, we welcomed the announcement. To us national liberation implies political independence, economic emancipation and social justice. And, political independence is a prerequisite to the attainment of economic emancipation and social justice.

However, political independence alone is not enough. It is possible by nominal political independence to sever the formal ties of colonialism with the 'mother' country, to assume the trappings of national sovereignty and still remain a colony. On this point, I recall my conversations in Jamaica in January 1964; one Jamaican put it to me: *“Doctor, we have our own Governor-General, Prime Minister, flag, National Anthem, and Coat of Arms, but everything has remained the same.”* It is this stage of neocolonialism which Guyana has now embarked upon.

Neocolonialism assumes various forms and disguises - economic, monetary and fiscal controls; military support, foreign bases, foreign troops and military treaties; a trade strait-jacket and aid with strings. To attain genuine independence, a government must be able and willing to make basic changes in its internal economic life and to be master of its own foreign affairs and foreign trade. Above all, its independence will be meaningless in the context of military and economic entanglements with either the 'mother' country or some other imperialist state or states, or consortia of economic interests. What is necessary is a change of the traditional relationship between the former colonies and their colonial masters. Colonies had forced upon them an unbalanced, lopsided economy; their economic development took place not primarily in the context of what was good for their peoples but what was in the overriding interest of the metropolitan country - their economy became merely complementary to, and an extension of, the metropolitan economy. They were relegated to being sources of raw materials, minerals, and foods, and markets for metropolitan exports; they produced super-profits for foreign investors and were forced to buy dear and sell cheap.

In Guyana, economic life is dominated by Britain and North America. Foreign investors dominate the profitable fields of production (sugar, bauxite, and manganese) while the risky and unprofitable sectors - rice, ground provisions and fruit farming, permanent crops (citrus, coconut and coffee) - are left to the local population. The sugar industry is nearly 100 percent British-owned, bauxite is under American and Canadian control, and the manganese under American domination. Sugar and bauxite alone account for nearly three-quarters of the export income of the country. In addition to this, services - banking, insurance, shipping and foreign and wholesale trade - are also virtually under foreign control. The result of this foreign monopolistic economic control is exploitation of the working people, farmers and consumers, and the reaping of very high profits. In 1964, foreign investors made nearly \$50 million in profits. Over the last 16 years (1948-64), with total investment of about \$275 million, profits amounting to nearly \$360 millions have been made. This does not include assets which are estimated at about \$300 million and profits retained in the parent companies as a result of the under-pricing of our bauxite, rum and molasses over many years.

I have never ceased to emphasise these realities of our economic life. As a result, others have been forced, if they wished to gain and maintain the confidence of the people, to sing the same tune. Burnham, before and after his betrayal of our movement in 1955, proclaimed these same doctrines. When chairman of the PPP he said during our tour in India, as reported in the Times of India on January 12, 1954: *“Political independence which you win at the expense of so much blood and suffering may be in jeopardy if foreign economic strangulation continues.”*

More recently, in 1961, he declared: *“The final control of economic development of any country must be the responsibility of the state.”*

During the 1964 general election campaign, the Young Socialist Movement, the youth section of Burnham's party, said it was *“resolutely against colonialism and remains committed to the tenets of socialism and working class solidarity.”*

But what is the record today of the coalition government? Burnham has completely somersaulted. Foreign economic strangulation is not only continuing, it is being strengthened. While he glibly talks about ‘decolonisation’, his government is further entrenching the roots of foreign economic control.

Burnham's ‘decolonisation’ of the sugar industry simply means limited government participation and a growth of the peasant system of cane farming. The government will own only 5 per cent of the shares while full control will remain in the hands of the absentee owners. The enlargement of peasant cane farming, within the framework of producer cooperatives, would be progressive if the government owned and controlled the sugar mills, land, transportation and irrigation systems. Actually, the essence of Burnham's proposals has already been in operation at the Bellevue

cane farming scheme in Demerara, where the Wales sugar estate has exacted enormous charges from the cane farmers for supervision, transportation, milling, land rental, irrigation and drainage and other services. At present, when there are determined demands for improved wages and working conditions, and when the world price of sugar is falling, Burnham's plan can only mean that the sugar planters will be assured fixed fees and charges while the farmers face the risks and hazards of production. No wonder the planters have welcomed it!

A 25-year agreement was hastily signed with the Reynolds Metals Company. The coalition government has not published the terms, but it would seem, according to the Wall Street Journal, that the recommendations made by a top-level Guyanese inter-departmental committee have been pushed aside. For the dubious advantage of \$1/2 million advance income tax payment, the company will tie up nearly a quarter million acres of our bauxite land for 75 years; income tax and royalties will be frozen for 25 years and the government has committed itself to the annual expense of dredging the Berbice river and maintaining the channel. Meanwhile the company has entered into an agreement with the Venezuelan government to set up a jointly owned (Reynolds and Venezuelan government) aluminium smelter in Venezuela. All these developments mean the death-knell to our hopes for the establishment of our own aluminium complex of industries. During the PPP's last term of office, a UN team of experts from Hungary indicated that an aluminium smelter could be established in Guyana and would pay for itself out of profits in 10 years. This report has been shelved. Forgotten are Burnham's brave words that the bauxite industry should make a bigger contribution (in 1952 he suggested that the export duty on all bauxite shipped abroad should be \$1 per ton; it is 45 cents per ton) and that government ownership must be expanded.

But bauxite is not the only surrender. Potential areas of mineral oil have also been handed over to 3 foreign oil companies - Royal Dutch-Shell Group, Continental Overseas Oil Co. and Global Petroleum Ltd. (U.S. companies, with Continental having Dutch participation). This runs counter to the advice of the UN team of Soviet geologists, who, contrary to the views of the Esso Standard Oil of California which had been granted an off-shore concession by the Interim government, said that there was every indication that there was mineral oil and recommended a series of tests. Without in fact saying so, they implied a government-developed oil industry. The Burnham government has, however, ignored the recommendations in favour of private enterprise.

Burnham is aware that the oil industry is dominated by a group of powerful international companies, 7 American and 3 British, which form a tight ring and which through cartel arrangements hold vast reserves, control production and fix and manipulate prices. This was why British Labour MPs considered the oil cartel as chief contender for the title of 'public enemy number one'. They operate with the

backing of metropolitan governments, make and break governments in 'third world countries' from which they extract fantastic profits - so high that in the early 1960s the Texas Oil Company was able to make a sensational take-over of the Trinidad Oil Company with a purchase price of \$302.4 million, a payment of \$19.6 for every \$1.20 share.

Oil should be reserved to the state and developed as a state monopoly. This is simply patriotism and national self interest. In the Latin American area, oil is regarded as a 'sacred cow', and many governments not even remotely socialist have advocated a policy of government ownership of this vital resource.

In other vital sectors, foreign penetration, mainly U.S.A., is rapidly taking place. A branch of the powerful Chase Manhattan Bank has broken into the British (Barclays Bank) and Canadian (Royal Bank of Canada) banking monopoly. The government proposes to launch a banana cultivation scheme under the control of Elders and Fyffes, which is linked with the U.S. monopoly, the United Fruit Company. A tobacco growing scheme is likely to be placed under the control of the Demerara Tobacco Co. Ltd., a subsidiary of British-American Tobacco Co. At one point it was reported that the government proposed to denationalise the Guyana Electricity Corporation, but fortunately this was shelved after our sharp attacks.

If there were any doubts about the demagoguery of Burnham and the PNC these were soon dispelled. In the 1965 budget, the coalition government made numerous concessions to business interests. It withdrew the major advances made in our 1962 budget including the gift tax; the capital gains tax was reduced to 10 percent at a time when it was increased to 30 percent in the United Kingdom. When the U.K. government was tightening up on expense allowances, our businessmen were given a carte blanche. Depreciation allowances were extended to cover all buildings used for business; prestige advertising was once again to be permitted as an expense allowable against income tax.

Our compulsory savings levy of 10 per cent on profits earned by companies and 5 percent on salaries of individuals earning over \$300 per month, declared unconstitutional, was converted by the government to a voluntary savings scheme. Instead of the 3.75 percent rate of interest, the government paid a high interest rate compounded at approximately 8 percent per annum.

The exchange control regulations which we imposed in 1962 to curtail the movement of capital out of the country and effectively to control interest rates were also lifted.

In these moves to placate foreign investors and big local commercial interests, the coalition government paid a high price at the expense of the people. Burnham has acted contrary to his pledges in the 1962 Budget debate, when he had said: "*The People's National Congress did not oppose the capital gains tax or the gift tax, nor in principle do we oppose the tax on net property.*"

It is clear that the PNC is carrying out the economic policies of the United Force, which is itself committed to the policies of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, the U.S. State Department and Wall Street. This surrender has been noticeable for some time. After his defeat at the 1957 general election, Burnham joined with racist and conservative elements whom he had earlier described as “*loyal kikutus*” and “*traitors*”. After his 1961 defeat, he moved closer to the United Force, so that Peter d’Aguiar could say in London after the abortive 1962 Independence Conference: “*In this Conference there was unanimity of the opposition. It seems to me that Burnham is gradually coming to my way of thinking and I hope it will develop that way.*”

What is d’Aguiar’s “*way of thinking*”? In London, just before his entry into the coalition, d’Aguiar was very explicit on his economic beliefs; he stated:

“I believe that any country is backward because not enough money has been spent on public and social works. It would be unrealistic for the government to involve itself into excursions in private industry. That should be left to those who are experts. British Guiana has got to generate confidence abroad to attract capital, but this will be impossible if the government involves itself in commercial affairs. Mr. Burnham’s programme in this regard is still not clear. Assuming that we form a government I suppose it would be on a basis of an agreed line of economic action.”

Peter d’Aguiar joined the government, but on his own terms - U.S. terms; in this statement, he was simply paraphrasing what U.S. policy makers have been saying for over a decade and a half - poor countries must encourage foreign investors by improving the investment climate; U.S. must withhold aid to those who enter into government-owned industrial and commercial projects.

So dependent and subservient has Guyana become under the coalition government that even in the field of marketing rice, in which so much experience had been gained over many years, U.S. private enterprise has intervened. A U.S. trading company, the Connell Rice and Sugar Company, has been given the exclusive right to market rice abroad for which it will be paid a fee of \$300,000 and a commission of one cent per pound of rice sold.

Meanwhile, the props of neocolonialism are being built up. A top-heavy, reactionary, extravagant ruling elite, no longer white but ‘black’, imposes additional burdens on the people. Four former Bookers’ directors hold key ministerial posts. Peter d’Aguiar heads the Ministry of Finance and Rudy Kendall the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Other conservatives are also strategically placed; Lionel Luckhoo is Commissioner in London, and John Carter is earmarked for the Embassy in Washington. In place of 10 ministers and ministries under the PPP government, there are now 14; 6 junior ministers are now installed as compared with only 3 before. The Prime Minister’s residence and office have been lavishly decorated,

and in addition to salary and allowances, he is paid an extra \$1,246 per month for domestic staff! Sonny Ramphal, the new Attorney General, is paid about \$4,000 per month in salary and allowances; Lionel Luckhoo, among others, receives similar 'handsome' treatment.

Every aspect of our national life is being penetrated by outside influences, which come not only to advise, but to take over. Guyanese Clive Thomas, whom we wanted to appoint as the Governor of the Bank of Guyana, has been ignored; his place has been taken by a West German, whose salary will be paid by the West German government.

The distinguished British professor, Lancelot Hogben, who was employed by the University of Guyana, has resigned, and his place as vice-chancellor has been taken by a Canadian whose salary will be paid by the Canadian government. An American, Professor Horace Davis, has been relieved of his post as Dean of the Social Science Faculty and has been virtually deprived of his responsibility as head of the Economics department. A British lecturer, Stuart Bowles, has been dismissed. This is the beginning of a witch-hunt in our educational life.

Meanwhile, in the form of experts, advisors, and educators, U.S. personnel are infiltrating into the government machine. U.S. specialists will also take over from the United Nations in the vital field of geological exploration and the mapping of known and potential mineral resources. An American, Dr. R. W. Davenport, is the chief economic advisor to the Prime Minister. And Sir Arthur Lewis, who introduced the ill-fated Puerto Rican model of economic planning to the Commonwealth Caribbean, is formulating the new 7-year development plan.

But this is not all. Burnham has now entrenched into the constitution the interests of those who have exploited the country. In his draft constitution, he has retained the clause which was inserted by the Colonial Office into the 1961 constitution without consultation with Guyanese leaders. This clause states that on the requisition of property by the government prompt and adequate compensation must be paid. This means in effect a block against nationalisation. The sugar planters also will now have virtually absolute title to land leased from the Crown under DHMP (During Her Majesty's Pleasure) leases at a nominal rental of a few cents per acre. This is why big business loudly sings the praises of the government.

Of course, what is essentially big business support in a highly publicised campaign at home and abroad, is referred to by Burnham as confidence. The government claims that this accounts for the largest ever budget and development programme, and also for the fact that it has been able to raise money at home and abroad. What businessman would not have confidence in a government which has made such concessions?

What is far more important than the ability to raise loans for our purposes are two related questions: where do the loans come from and for what purposes are they to be used? Loans and grants for the recurrent and development budgets will reach \$41 million (B.G.) of an estimated expenditure of \$112.7 million; and \$31 million of this \$41 million will come from foreign sources. This emphasis on foreign dependence is dangerous, and can only mean a crushing annual charge for servicing an increasing national debt.

As regards allocation in government spending, emphasis is being placed on construction of roads, sea walls and buildings. These are by and large unproductive; as has been said: “*You cannot eat roads.*” But this is in keeping with U.S. doctrines; the government must concentrate on infrastructure - roads, harbours and stalling, airports and airstrips, sea defences - and leave the profitable sectors to private, foreign enterprise. Even now the government is diverting money from drainage and irrigation to roads; money earmarked for the Black Bush Polder land settlement scheme was slashed in 1965.

Before his break from us in 1955, Burnham was fully aware of these imperialist manoeuvres. In Thunder of October 10, 1954, sounding a warning on British offers of substantial aid to the Interim government, he wrote:

“Since the war there has been a great deal of talk by America and Britain of their desire to help underdeveloped and backward countries and also those nations whose economies have been affected by the war. In British Guiana we can recognise this form of political-economic pressure; without wandering as far afield as Italy, Greece, Turkey and Pakistan, in which countries the United States is expanding her influence by loans and assistance. Because the official policy of the PPP was pro-Guyanese and unequivocally in favour of self-determination, because the PPP was not prepared to be agent of Britain in perpetuating the oppressive imperialist system, Her Majesty’s Government was angered . . . Furthermore, the generosity prompting the giving of any such loan is merely illusory. Not only will interest be demanded, but Britain by the control exercised over our foreign trade will undoubtedly stipulate where machinery, etc., must be purchased - primarily Britain.”

But his government was not only accepting financial aid, experts and advisers, but also sowing illusions; it deliberately fostered the myth that the U.S.A. will bail Guyana out of its difficulties, that close association and collaboration with the United States will result in prosperity, a view which has been carefully nurtured over a period of time, particularly since the 1961 election. As a result, a large section of the Guyanese working class has been deluded into believing that the millennium is around the corner.

How strange! The same L.F.S. Burnham said in India in 1954:

“Friends of India and elsewhere should remember that though the British lion is weak and imperialism is on its deathbed, it is aided by the young eagle from the U.S.A. So long as these people rule the world, the independence and freedom which you won with so much bloodshed and suffering is in jeopardy.”

A decade later, the government headed by Burnham gave the “*young eagle*” the right to devour a small young nation. The wartime 99-year bases agreement, signed between Britain and the United States regarding two U.S. bases in Guyana, was not terminated. Instead, the coalition has given the U.S. the right to build military installations, to land military aircraft, personnel and troops; and to fly over our territory. This will permit virtual military intervention of the United States in our domestic affairs, and the utilization of our country as a staging point for imperialist designs and attacks against Africa and Latin America. Burnham has hitched Guyana to the U.S. imperialist bandwagon. After his trip to Washington in 1965 and his ‘horse riding’ with President L.B. Johnson, he supported U.S. aggression in Vietnam and saw the justification for the landing of troops in the Dominican Republic! Like d’Aguiar, he now sees the U.S.A. in a new light.

Supporters of the PNC and the UF are thus not prepared for the rude shock awaiting them. They have not been told of the realities of our position and the problems confronting the United States.

Today, there are grave problems affecting the North American people. The problem of civil rights and liberties for blacks has become explosive and unemployment is chronic. “*By all odds,*” said President Johnson, in January 1964, “*the country’s number one problem is persistent unemployment.*” The unemployment figure of about 5 million is represented officially at about 6 percent of the labour force.

Economist Leon Keyserling, however, not long ago placed this figure at nearer 9 percent and said that it would increase by 5 per cent in the next 5 years and by 10 percent in the next 10 years, “*unless we do something quickly.*” Official unemployment figures among youths are much higher, about 17 percent. And about 26 million teenagers are expected to join the labour force in this decade. “*This could develop into one of the most explosive problems in this nation’s history,*” said Secretary of Labour, Willard Wirtz.

For Guyanese, far more significant than the internal social and economic problems in the U.S.A., is the awareness of the neocolonialist relationship between the U.S.A. and the ‘third world’, particularly Latin America. In this part of the world, the situation is becoming more and more unstable and explosive. An independent Guyana will be subject to the same economic and cultural forces of Western imperialism that are today causing poverty, disease, illiteracy and insecurity on a world wide scale. The stark reality of the second half of the 20th century is the growing impoverishment of the people in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. “*The fact that at least 100 million Latin Americans are suffering hunger,*” observed the UN

Food and Agricultural Organisation at its Chile meeting in April 1965, “*is explosive.*”

To stave off violent upheavals like the Castro Revolution, a call has been made for change, for reforms. But these reforms are meant only as stop-gap measures within the capitalist-imperialist framework, as palliative not cure.

Writing in the New York Times, C.L. Sulzberger underlined the basic motivation of expediency. In the issue of December 18, 1961, he wrote:

“We don’t owe Latin America any kind of Marshall Plan, but if anything drastic is accomplished by the Alliance for Progress, the man to be thanked is Fidel Castro. Without dramatisation of a communist threat, it is arguable that Washington might well have continued dilly-dallying. If the alliance succeeds it should perhaps be marked by statues respectively honouring Kennedy and Castro. The mere reiteration of platitudes like the need for a good-neighbour policy would not have accomplished the needed reveille.”

John Moors Cabot, when Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs in 1954, said:

“Social reform is coming. It may come by evolution or revolution. There are reactionary elements in every country in the hemisphere, which do not want social reform. They are willing to tie down the safety-valve and wait for the boiler to burst. In many countries liberal elements, confronted by such intransigent opposition have more and more fallen under Communist influence. To my mind there is nothing more dangerous from the viewpoint of long-range American policy than to let the Communists, with their phoney slogans, seize the leadership of social reform. We simply cannot afford to identify ourselves with the elements which would tie down the social safety-valve. That wouldn’t protect our national interest; it wouldn’t even for long protect our investments.”

Don’t tie down the social safety valve, but protect our national interest, our investments! This is precisely the motivation behind the Alliance for Progress. And it is this duality - the necessity for change and the necessity for preservation of the status quo - that underlines the basic failure of its implementation and fulfilment.

The first point to be noted about the Alliance for Progress is that the sum of money earmarked by Washington is totally inadequate. Dr. Fidel Castro had called for a U.S. \$60,000 million plan for Latin American development. The Alliance earmarked about U.S. \$500 million per year as aid to the 20 countries! For the financial year July 1964 to June 1965, U.S. \$588 million was allocated. In addition, U.S. \$20 billion of private investments was to be lured into the area during the 10 year period 1961-71. But even this sum, which is unlikely to materialize, is inadequate. According to conservative estimates, it will

take an investment of about U.S. \$30 billion, over the period 1957-75, to achieve a 2 percent increase in the annual gross product. No wonder Milton Eisenhower bewailed that

“our dilemma, as I see it, is that we cannot possibly afford not to meet commitments to Latin America, but neither can we seemingly afford to finance them.”

The Alliance for Progress also rested on the assumption that land, fiscal, monetary, and other reforms would be carried out. But this did not happen. Why? Because, according to Dr. Lleras Camargo, Former President of Colombia:

“In some Latin American countries, even the initiative to accomplish land and tax reforms is fought against as a revolutionary and subversive idea.”

Archbishop Dom Helder Camara of Rio de Janeiro recently cried out:

“Our rich in Latin America talk much about basic reforms but call Communists those who decide to carry them out. They continue to hold 80 percent of the land: in many cases, they control Congress and have their degree of idealism and faith in the future measured by their deposits in U.S. and European banks.”

The Alliance For Progress is an admitted failure. “*Today only a wizard can make the Alliance function,*” said one skeptically minded Latin American diplomat in 1963, “*it is like breathing new life into a corpse.*” Archbishop Dom Helder Camara not too long ago pronounced it “*dead*”, and concluded that until there is drastic reform, pouring money into Latin America “*is the same as throwing it in the ocean*”. Asked by President Kennedy in 1962 to find out the reasons for the failure, Senor Juscelino Kubitschek, former President of Brazil, said that in 1962 Latin American countries lost a sum of U.S. \$500 million as a result of a drop in prices of their exports as compared with prices in 1956, the exact amount they received as aid under the Alliance. Latin America, he concluded, was “*therefore in the peculiar state of a man who is receiving a blood transfusion in one arm and donating blood through the other.*”

The main reason for the failure is that the local landlords and capitalists are united with U.S. big business interests against the majority of the population. To them basic reforms are synonymous with socialism and Communism; thus, the Alliance based on U.S. enlightened self-interest has been attacked as being ‘socialist’, as going too far.

A battle is now being waged to determine whether in the future U.S. Governmental aid or direct private investment is to be dominant. In a report to President Kennedy in February 1963, Wall Street asked for a ‘get tough’ Latin American policy. Signed by David Rockefeller, President of the Chase National Bank, Emilio G. Gollado, Vice-

President of Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, and Walter B. Wriston, Executive Vice-President of the First National City Bank, the report said:

“The Alliance for Progress can succeed if - and only if - it places far greater emphasis on the encouragement of private initiative and investment, both national and foreign.”

“The first requirement is that governments - and, as far as possible, the people - of Latin America know that the U.S. has changed its policy so as to put primary stress on improvement in the general business climate as a prerequisite for social development and reform.”

“A second requirement concerns a change in the criteria for granting aid. The U.S. shall concentrate its economic aid programme in countries that show the greatest inclination to adopt measures to improve the investment climate and withhold aid from others until satisfactory performance has been demonstrated”.

Other influential people, including Senators Kenneth Keating and William A. Dodd, began repeating this theme. On August 31, 1961, Senator Smathers asked that an editorial advertisement penned by A. N. Spanel, chairman of International Latex Corporation, be printed in the Congressional Record. This spelled out for Latin America a plan for the creation of a favourable investment climate.

This plan called for Latin America to become one huge market with complete free trade and unrestricted movement of both profits and capital from one country to another. It also called for a drop in profits tax on companies, except oil and minerals, to not more than 10 percent. And Puerto Rico, with its give-away tax holidays, was cited as the model which the other countries should follow.

Washington has made it clear what kind of economic development it will permit and foster. The Clay Committee on foreign aid said in 1963: “We believe the U.S. should not aid a foreign government in projects establishing government owned industrial and commercial enterprises which compete with existing private endeavors.”

Previous U.S. policy makers emphasised this point about keeping poor countries non-industrialized. On March 30, 1950, former Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Point 4 programme, put it this way: “I think there is a pretty widely held idea that we are going to build large mills, mines and factories for these underdeveloped peoples. This is not true.”

“It is not the policy of my government,” said Mr. Albert J. Powers, a Commerce Department Consultant, as head of a delegation to the 1955 International Industrial Exposition in Bogotá, “to intervene in the financing of activities which should properly be promoted by private enterprise. It is up to you people to create business and industrial opportunities which will attract investment capital from the United States. Remember, too,

that you must offer the possibility of greater profits than can be obtained at home. This is a time of exceptional inducements in my country for domestic financial venture.”

In spite of these realities, the PNC-led government has embraced the USA in the position formerly occupied by the UK, and is carrying out neo-colonialist policies dictated by Washington. It entered into a Caribbean Free Trade Area in the interest not of the Caribbean peoples, but the giant US multinational corporations. It joined the US blockade against Cuba by abandoning our rice and timber trade; the loss of the Cuban market has produced unfavourable economic repercussions. It is following the Puerto Rican strategy of economic planning based on the creation of an investment climate.

All those who suffer from illusions about the effects of this policy should take a close look at Puerto Rico. This country, in spite of attempts to make it a show piece, with the free entry into the United States of its surplus population and its low wage (lower than U.S.) produced goods, and other facilities not available to other countries, is still, after nearly 6 decades of U.S. tutelage, burdened with immense problems.

May 26, 1966, was chosen as the date for Guyana's independence, we are told, to commemorate the first assault against colonialism in the slave revolt of 1763. For us who cherish real freedom – political, economic and social - May 26, 1966, will mark a new phase in our struggle against neo-colonialism.

Reading 13: A Time of Change

By Bernadette Hussein (Pacific Islands Monthly, September 1997)

They say time heals all wounds, especially as Fiji adopts a new constitution seen by many as one serving the interests of the nation rather than any one racial group. But it remains to be seen whether the passing of the new constitution will bring to an end the political crises, racial divisions, ailing economy, high unemployment and increasing crime rates which have become the sad reality in this island country. Fiji's political leaders seem confident it will. But it has been pointed out that the constitution itself is only the means to this end. And while Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka admits that decisions are often made along racial lines, he believes there will come a time when there will be more national unity among the peoples of Fiji.

"The constitution will force us to work together whether we like it or not, because we are there together." PM Rabuka said.

The sentiment is echoed by Josevata Kamikamica, the leader of the Fijian Association Party:

"In politics there has always been a racial divide but this constitution will help move away from that and this is a healthy development in terms of a democratically elected government."

He added that people would have to work together to achieve national unity.

"The constitution itself will not provide that. It will be based on the willingness of people to see their future together and work together for the future of the country."

Opposition and National Federation Party leader, Jai Ram Reddy feels the same. He says that the structure of the 1997 constitution is cooperation, with the concept of power-sharing at heart.

"I think it will take a lot of the rivalry out of the political system. Under the 1970 constitution, it was essentially rivalry for political office between the indigenous community through their political parties and the Indo-Fijian community through their political party. I believe that a lot of tensions will go out of the political system."

A multiparty cabinet

The FAP recently merged with Rabuka's ruling Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei party and have two members in the new cabinet announced early last month. However, the SVT/FAP merger was itself based on race. In July, Rabuka had invited the NFP to form a multiparty and multiracial cabinet, as provided for in the 1997 constitution. The offer was declined by Reddy, who has preferred to remain in opposition until the next General elections in 1999. *"He is very noble and mature enough to realise that he can make constructive*

contributions to issues of national importance from either side of the house,” the PM said of Reddy at the time, agreeing to defer the multiparty concept. But it was only a few weeks later that the PM made similar overtures towards the FAP. This time the offer was accepted. The SVT and FAP have had something of a history of always nearly merging since their split in 1993; the latter was formed by SVT breakaway members. (The SVT is also in a coalition with the General Voters’ Party, which is made up of general voters or, racially speaking, mainly those of European and Fijian descent).

The common ground for the SVT/FAP merger seems to have been Fijian interests. At the time of the offer, Rabuka had stated the SVT’s aim to be the unity of the Fijian people. *“If there is a merger with the FA, then it will show the nation that we have at least tried before we go for national unity,”* he said. Ironically, the SVT had only recently proclaimed it was turning multiracial by opening membership to all races.

Reddy said the reason he had turned down the multiparty cabinet offer was because they were not ready for the merger at the time. On claims that NFP’s merger would weaken the voice of opposition, Reddy said:

“Opposition in Fiji since 1970 has meant the Indians. They have provided the opposition and the government has meant the indigenous Fijians with their partners”.

“We need to move away from that. My own feeling is that when you talk government and opposition, you are really translating a system which is meant for a more homogeneous society. I think that the concept of opposition is completely overrated. But we need more than opposition - the cooperation between the two communities and one that should not overlook that dimension of multiethnic politics. But it would be wrong to think that opposition will not exist. I believe there will be party or parties who will not want to be government”.

Electoral arrangements

Mahendra Chaudhry, parliamentary leader of the Fiji Labour Party (the ruling party before the 1987 coups), while acknowledging that the constitution is a major breakthrough in Fijian politics, has also admitted his reservations about the document. The constitution was certainly a long awaited development. Chaudhry said:

“It has now been passed and, to a large extent, the grievances of the people against the 1990 constitution have been satisfied. The new constitution has a lot of provisions which were not in the 1970 and 1990 constitutions and will provide good governance. It has a very comprehensive section on the Bill of Rights and public service. So, from that view, I would say that we have a good document, with most of the recommendations by the Constitution Review Commission being approved.”

But the issue of race comes into play again. Of concern to the Labour leader are the electoral arrangements, which, he said, were contrary to the Constitution Review Commission's recommendations.

“Commission head Sir Paul Reeves emphasised the need for us to move away from the very decisive communal politics, and I'm afraid that has not happened.”

“Under the new arrangement, the enacting of parliament is largely on a communal basis. Two-thirds of parliament will be elected along communal lines.”

“In respect of the open seats, Sir Paul had recommended that there be multi-member constituencies. Here again what we can see is that that has been converted from multi-member constituencies to single-member constituencies; so they are really communal seats in disguise.”

And Chaudhry blames Rabuka and Reddy for letting this through.

“The JSPC committee was largely made up of SVT and NFP members, with the Labour Party having only two members. The thinking was dominant that they keep the segregation, which is that SVT remain a Fijian party and NFP an Indian party. I think this arrangement suits these people fine. They want the status which protects their interest.”

And, Chaudhry said, in this process, the Indian community was cheated of a seat.

“Whatever the arrangement was, at the end of the day, it was agreed that communal seats would be shared on the basis of coagulation of the respective communities and, on that basis, the Indians were entitled to 20 seats, Fijians 23 seats, and the general voters and Rotumans one seat each.”

“But what has happened is that the Indian seat was traded off.....(and) it went to the general electors.”

During parliamentary debate on the Constitution Amendment Bill, Chaudhry was shouted down and pretty much ostracised when he moved that Indian seats be increased from 19 to 20. “*Which is the number of seats*”, he said, “*Indians are proportionately entitled to*”. When put to the vote, the amendment was defeated and, interestingly, among those voting against were two Labour parliamentarians. “*The fact remains that the Indians were cheated of their rightful representation*,” Chaudhry maintains. But Reddy feels that there is nothing wrong with the electoral system.

On claims that the JPSC went totally against the Commission on this, Reddy said:

“All we did was to take their 25 reserved seats and turn them into open seats and took the 45 proposed seats and turned them into communal seats. What must be remembered is these compromises were reached in a political environment in which

we were working. The communal seats guarantee representation and they are not arbitrary, they are based on fairness and on proportionality.”

Indigenous rights

Extremist Fijians, who carried much clout in Fiji’s coup era, have been strangely silent since the passage of the new constitution. There was a protest march by extremists and a burning of the JPSC report while the bill was before parliament. The only other incident of note occurred after the Constitution Amendment Bill was passed by the senate, when Fijian nationalist Sakeasi Butadroka reportedly verbally abused the attorney-general, Eruete Tavai, outside parliament. No charges were pressed and the incident was soon forgotten. The extremist view was that the new constitution had gone against all that the two military coups of 1987 had stood for. They saw the 1997 constitution take away the Fijian dominance provided for in the 1990 constitution. However, Kamikamica is quick to say that this is a completely wrong interpretation of the constitution.

“I think the interpretation arises out of the assumption that Fijians should be given the numbers, the power and all the things they want. But the world does not operate that way. You have to work and compete with others to get what you want. That is the reality of the situation and you advance because of your hard work and skills. The extremists force that line. They, I believe, are suppressing indigenous initiatives to excel and to succeed. I think the Fijians need to rethink their strategy. We need to free the Fijians to compete.”

This view was also shared by Rabuka who said the objectives of the coups were achieved because the position of Fijian leadership had been secured, in the sense that the pinnacle leadership of Fiji - the president - would be appointed by the Great Council of Chiefs, the highest assembly in the land. (The new constitution, however, allows for an Indian PM, which is a major step from the 1990 constitution.) The new constitution has found much favour with the international community, putting Fiji on the path back into the Commonwealth. Fiji has been invited to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Edinburgh next month. But while the country’s political leaders generally accept that the new constitution is a step in the right direction, they are also very conscious that there is much hard work that still needs to be done.

As Kamikamica said:

“All these years, our political development has been based on racial stance, and it is a major challenge for us to move away from it and focus on issues that affect the lives of people and their development as one group rather than two separate groups.”

Only time will tell how much headway Fiji has made with its new constitution and whether it has indeed healed all wounds.

The economic question

The Fiji Trade and Investment Board chief executive Jesoni Vitusagavulu is certain that the passing of the constitution is a move towards bringing back investor confidence in Fiji. But it is also only the first step, he cautions. Vitusagavulu says:

“When there is political instability, people are not able to commit long term. There might have been investors who delayed their projects in Fiji because of the constitution, so the new act would naturally encourage them to finalize their dealings in Fiji. We expect an increase in investment interest, but not at the fast rate as some people would believe it to happen. These things take time”.

“Also, political instability leads to draining of skills. Let us not underestimate the potential of local investors. With reference to the Indian community, more investments would have been made by them if it hadn’t been for the unstable climate they perceived. It has been said that what has withheld these people from investing is not so much the uncertainty of the situation but more the belief that there would not be a solution amicable to all communities in Fiji.”

“Now, with the passing of the constitution, companies will be reassessing their strategy in Fiji.”

“And political stability is not all that matters. Uncertainty over property rights and land tenure play a crucial role in dissuading potential investors”.

“Studies have indicated that when it comes to considering whether they (business people) should expand or start a new venture, one of the things that really bothers them - and one that we should really work hard to eliminate – is the time and frustrations in dealing with numerous government departments.”