



University of London

## INSTITUTE OF COMMONWEALTH STUDIES

### **Witness Seminar - *The heartbeat of a modern Commonwealth? The Commonwealth Secretariat 1965-2013***

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**VOICE FILE NAME:** COHP Witness Seminar

Key:

AB: Amitav Banerji  
AE: Antony Ellman  
EL: Edwin Laurent  
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JK: Joel Kibazo  
KY: Kayode Samuel  
MB: Madhuri Bose  
MG: Max Gaylard  
MM: Muhammad Muda  
MS: Michael Sinclair  
PMA: Peter Marshall  
PMU: Philip Murphy  
PR: Patsy Robertson  
PS: Purna Sen  
PW: Peter Williams  
RB: Richard Bourne  
RJ: Rupert Jones-Perry  
RU: Richard Uku  
SC: Stephen Chan  
SG: Simon Gimson  
SMA: Stephen Matlin  
SMO: Stuart Mole  
SO: Sue Onslow  
VK: Vijay Krishnarayan  
VS: Veronica Sutherland

s.l. = sounds like

PMU: I'd like to welcome you, very warmly, to this Witness Seminar, 'The heartbeat of the modern Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Secretariat 1965 – 2013'. My name is Philip Murphy, and I'm the Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies. The seminar forms part of a much larger, on-going project to produce an oral history of the modern Commonwealth; by 'modern Commonwealth', we mean since the creation of the Secretariat in 1965. A significant part of this project is obviously to capture the impressions of senior politicians and diplomats from across the Commonwealth, focusing in particular on whether they felt that the Commonwealth made a significant contribution to international diplomacy. This of course is partly about perception, but perceptions, as we all know, matter. At the same time, as we began to think about the project and as we began to pursue it, it became clear to us that we also needed to talk to a range of people who had been associated on a day-to-day basis with the work of the Secretariat itself. The idea of this Witness Seminar began to form in our minds, very much in terms of a collective interview which would be recorded, transcribed and included on our project website as one of our major interviews.

This is what we are doing today. The fact that we came to this idea slightly late in the day has practical implications. We didn't budget for this in our original proposal so our witnesses today have had to come here under their own steam, so-to-speak. We are particularly grateful to them and to you all for doing that. We were delighted by the very enthusiastic reception that we got when we proposed this Witness Seminar. There will be a fuller set of thanks later on, but let me just begin by thanking a few people in particular. Of course, thanks to the Secretary-General and his staff here for making available this wonderful room which we hope will help to jog memories today. Thanks to Cheryl Dorall and her colleagues in the Commonwealth Association for their help and support in putting this programme together. I'd like to thank Stuart Mole who helped develop this programme and really gave it cohesion when we started thinking about it. And then my colleagues at the Institute who have put in an awful amount of time and effort: Mason and Rob Kenyon will be helping out today and you will probably have met them already. My colleague, Sue Onslow is the principle researcher on the Commonwealth Oral History Project and has already made a terrific start. We're less than a year into the interviewing programme, but the material that has already been gathered has been extremely impressive and Sue has worked very hard in putting this programme together today. I'd also like to thank in particular our colleague Vanessa Rockel whom most of you will have been in contact with, and who has been extraordinarily hard-working and efficient in getting us to the point we are this morning. Thanks to them all but thanks also, very warmly, to you all. We really appreciate you coming here and being with us. So, without further ado, I'd just like to hand over to Sue who will make some housekeeping points.

SO: Thank you very much indeed, Philip and welcome to you all. I'm Dr Sue Onslow. As Philip has outlined, I'm the principal researcher on this Oral History Project and it gives me great pleasure indeed to see so many former Commonwealth Secretariat officials and representatives here. As part of my project, as Philip has pointed out, it became glaringly apparent that I needed to capture the internal dynamics of the Secretariat, and its relationship to the world outside as a critical part of this oral history of the Commonwealth.

I'd like to reiterate our thanks to the Secretary General and his office, Simon Gimson, and Leti Gannon for her help in the organisational details; and particularly to Vanessa and to Stuart in the framing of this meeting. I would also like to thank the chairs of each of these sessions who have kindly agreed to direct

these informal discussions between former colleagues and partners. The sessions are outlined on the programme which you have in front of you. The chair will introduce the witnesses who will then make their informal presentations; there will be an opportunity for response and then discussion will be open to the wider audience. If you would like to pose a question, in true Commonwealth-style, please could you up-end your nameplate - not like Pierre Trudeau who once of course put his CANADA nameplate upside down because he wished to protest! I do hope I don't see any of that today.

So, if you would like to speak or pose a question, please could put your nameplate perpendicular. If you could introduce yourself when you speak, not forgetting to press the red button on your microphone stand in front of you, we will be very grateful. Also, if you could please remember to turn off your mobile telephones. They have an appalling habit of interfering with recording equipment. On other housekeeping arrangements – we will be breaking for coffee. As you will see in the programme, there are also five-minute interchanges between sessions. This is to allow a certain shuffling of the seating plan because we have tried to put the chairs and the speakers in the middle of the table, but also to seat those who will then be changing seats, close by. So, if you could just excuse this five-minute game of musical chairs in between the sessions. Without further ado, I would like to hand over to Mr Joel Kibazo to chair the session on the Office of the Secretary General.

*Session 1 – The Office of the Secretary General*

**JK:** Thank you. Thank you very much, Sue. Good morning to all of you. My name is Joel Kibazo and I was Director here of the Communications and Public Affairs Department, also known as the Information Department of the Secretariat. As Sue said, each of us will try and introduce ourselves. Let's not forget that recordings are being made so it will be very helpful if you introduce yourself as you speak. Just to start straight away, the question for us is how effective, really, has the Office of the Secretary General been since the creation of the Secretariat in 1965? We know that it operates and it was charged with operating very much on an informal basis or getting things done through the informal basis. Sometimes, of course, formal channels had to be used, but has that worked?

At the heart of it, in many ways is what's at the heart of the way that the Secretariat has tried to work for many years. All of us are colleagues and I think I know most people that are around the table. So, this is really an informal conversation, trying to draw some of those aspects out, so not really to be shy. The conversation is on the record. It's not Chatham House Rules, so you know. Please be aware of that but at the very least, let's try and see if we could get to the heart of the issue in terms of how things have worked, both from Stuart and from Simon who are the two people who are going to be speaking in this particular session, after which Professor Stephen Chan will come in as a respondent and respond to some of the key things that will be made. From then on we can engage in a discussion. As you have been advised by Sue, please use the nameplates in the way most of us who have been in this room will know how their nameplates are used. I don't know whether we should start with Stuart, or Simon now Stuart is here. I thought I heard one of the most amazing train stories. I've heard of "leaves on the line" but "cows on the line" is something that I haven't heard before! But there we are. So, without further ado, Stuart, now that you're amongst us, please be the one to start and we are grateful that you are here, in spite of all those cows. So 5-10 minutes and then we'll get to Simon. Thank you.

**SMO:** If I could just begin with a short anecdote. In 1983 I was working in the UK Parliament and when it was clear that the SDP/ Liberal Alliance wasn't going to sweep to power, I was looking for other employment. I got my boss, David Steel, to write a host of letters to interesting people including Sonny Ramphal and my knowledge of the Commonwealth at that stage was really confined to my admiration for Sonny Ramphal. What I didn't know, of course, and I don't think in any way it had been advertised, was that in the Private Office there was a vacancy not only for Chris Laidlaw's post, who had gone back to New Zealand but I think Mark Robinson had begun his Welsh period as a Member of Parliament. So, therefore there were two vacancies for Assistant Director in the Private Office.

In due course, a call came to come and see Sonny and I had a very genial chat with Sonny and then I was taken to one side by Moni Malhoutra, and was eviscerated in his office. It was the most humiliating and demeaning experience. Halfway through the interview I gave up altogether. I thought I had nothing further I could possibly say. I got home and threw all my documents I had about the Secretariat into the bin and I thought no more about it. Four weeks later, out of the blue - and indeed on blue notepaper - came a letter of appointment to be Assistant Director in the Secretary General's Office. For a full six months after

coming into the Secretariat there was that terrible nagging fear that there had been some ghastly administrative error and that in fact someone of the same name should have been appointed in my place. There I was, trapped, with someone as my head of office who apparently thought I was a complete worm.

I later realised that arrivals and departures at the Secretariat are, for many people, extremely difficult. Coming into the Secretariat is very difficult, understanding the organisation and also leaving it. Some neither manage to come in successfully or indeed depart well, as far as I can see. I thought that in that anecdote, it did illustrate this. What I think Simon will show is some of the change that have occurred because, even in the Office of the Secretary General, I don't think people are appointed that way any longer. There has been a huge change in the appointments process.

The way I thought I would begin is to lay out what I think are the four essential functions of the Secretary-General and then, between myself and Simon, see how those functions have been affected by the passing of the years. Now, there is a slight ambiguity when we talk about 'the Office of the Secretary General': whether we mean office with a capital 'O' and therefore the Secretary General, or his - and it is 'his' at the moment - his supporting office. I think in a way, there is no real distinction, because in my experience what one did was entirely to the agenda, at the beck and call, of the Secretary-General. So, you were one and the same, I think.

I feel there are four basic functions of the Secretary-General and his office. First of all, he is the motor of Commonwealth consultation. Secondly, he is the guardian of Commonwealth values. Thirdly, he is the Chief Executive of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Finally, he is a protagonist for the Commonwealth. I just want to touch on each of these in turn.

First of all, as a motor of Commonwealth consultation. I think we all know that the Commonwealth's consultative function is probably its most essential. That interaction with governments - but also in particular with Heads of Government - is absolutely crucial. It's all in the original Memorandum of Understanding that consultation is the lifeblood of the Commonwealth. The biennial CHOGM is the heartbeat of that consultation. The personal relationship between an SG and Heads of Government is crucially important. Of course, from the very beginning, in the papers that Sue has very helpfully circulated, we are reminded of some of those beginnings.

Officials have sought to interpose themselves in that relationship, to diminish and control that relationship and try and channel it through them. Every Secretary-General has fought against that, to maintain that individual personal connection with Heads. At times, of course, it's got very difficult indeed. You only have to look at Prime Minister Robert Muldoon (of New Zealand) who famously told Sonny that his job was to keep the minutes. You only have to look at their public exchange in the columns of *The Times* around the time of the Springboks tour of New Zealand and, as it were, the breaking of the Gleneagles Agreement on Sport to see how, remarkably, a Secretary-General was at public loggerheads with a Head of Government. There are other examples one could choose.

Then there is the way the Retreat has developed at Heads of Government Meetings. Sonny Ramphal's first Retreat was at Gleneagles in 1977. At that point, he was taking the formula of a small group of key heads of government to try and hammer out the agreement while the rest of the Heads really did go off and play

golf, or whatever else they were supposed to do. By Nassau in 1985, that system was beginning to break down and David Lange, the then Prime Minister of New Zealand, said that those outside that charmed circle felt they had their noses pressed against the glass, trying to see what was going on. Of course, the Retreat - and I've seen them from '87 to '99 - has increasingly become formalised and increasingly resembling what was originally the Executive Sessions of the CHOGM. I remember the time when the issue was, first, whether any Secretariat officials would get into the room with Heads; then whether these officials would sit at a separate table; and then whether officials would be taking any kind of record of the Retreat. Then I remember, I think, Max (Gaylard) saying, "You know, we now need a minute to read into the record to put before Heads so that we have some sort of formal record coming out of the Retreat". So It was all the time being formalised.

On that question of the relationship of the SG with Heads of Government: I do just want to deal with one myth, which is that it's sometimes said that Sonny had it easy because he only had to deal with South Africa. South Africa and apartheid was very much a defining issue. Apart from Britain, so the argument goes, everybody was on-side and therefore it wasn't too much of a problem for the SG. But actually, Sonny did have difficulties, in my experience, with quite a number of Heads of Government on various things, and it wasn't just South Africa where he was sometimes in conflict. I remember the occasion he first raised HIV-Aids and was roundly condemned by some African governments, in particular, for raising something that was perceived as a gay disease from the United States.

Secondly, the SG as the guardian of Commonwealth values: I think, again, this is a very interesting change that has occurred. Of course, as the guardian of Commonwealth values, there is often the question of dealing with conflict within, and even between, member countries; and the gradual exposure of, at times, the hollow commitment of some Commonwealth countries to democratic values and human rights. I think that exposure came in particular from the battles over apartheid and the way that the media in the UK, for example, was critical of the Commonwealth. But, Arnold Smith, in his early days, had to deal with UDI and Rhodesia, the Biafran Civil War, Pakistan-Bangladesh and the emergence of Bangladesh amid a huge amount of bloodshed and so on. It was that journey from the 1949 Commonwealth where the sanctity of national sovereignty would have been uppermost, to a Commonwealth that became increasingly interventionist and which was relying on other mechanisms, apart from the Secretary-General, such as the formation of CMAG, the Troika etc. to assist in upholding values. One of the questions would be, have all these additional mechanisms actually increased the authority and reach of the Secretary-General? Or have they diminished it? I think that is an important question to ask.

Thirdly, as Chief Executive of the Commonwealth Secretariat: I remember talking to Joy Tilsley from Ottawa, who I think was the very first Secretariat staff member appointed by Arnold Smith. Arnold, who I think knew her from the Canadian Foreign Service, appointed her as his secretary, his P.A., and told her to report to the front gate of Marlborough House on the following Monday, which would be the beginning of the Secretariat's life. However, he forgot that it was a Bank Holiday, the gates were firmly locked and they both had to start the next day! Of course, Arnold had to create a Secretariat from nothing. He had to fight over the offices. He had to fight over the staff. He had to fight over the functions. He was both reliant on the British in lots of ways in the early days but he was also very much in conflict with them. So, it is very much the Secretary-General's Secretariat in terms of reputation, and output. I think it's very much seen through that prism. I think the

emphasis, for a long time - maybe it still is but certainly it was then - was on leadership rather than, in any sense, management. I think Sonny was an outstanding leader and I think his staff wanted to live up to the expectations he had for us all. And he had these wonderful charismatic touches like cooking for everybody at his annual Christmas party and everything else. But I don't think much of this was particularly about management.

By the same token, I think Chief Emeka Anyaoku was forced to have more of a managerial approach, but I wouldn't say that that was his particular strength. Of course, the other great change was that by 1990 the Secretariat was beginning to contract. Having been through a period of growth ever since 1965 - up to a peak of, I think, 420 staff - then this figure was beginning to come down under Anyaoku, with the whole business of reviews and reorganisations and all the rest of it. There was the increasing introduction of managerial systems where, before, no such thing existed.

Fourthly, as a protagonist for the Commonwealth: I think the Secretary-General is very much the person who defines and projects the Commonwealth by acting, rather than by explanation or description. I think the Commonwealth is always much better when it's able to describe what it is by what it does, rather than by having to explain what it does. I think that what the Secretary-General does or doesn't say or do is very much bound up with the Commonwealth's credibility.

Now, I have mentioned those four essential functions. I do just want to add two very brief comments. First, the relationship to the Head of the Commonwealth, and the Chairperson- in -office; and secondly, I do want to say something about the Commonwealth Foundation.

First of all, one of the interesting things about this period is the paradoxical growth and importance of the Queen as Head of the Commonwealth. Chief Anyaoku, using his substantial diplomatic skill, brought the Queen into a central role at the 1997 Heads of Government Meeting at Edinburgh. There has been further growth in that position of influence within the Commonwealth in all sorts of ways. Until 1997, the Head was entirely peripheral to the CHOGM. By contrast, I think the Chairperson-in-Office experiment has not proved a particularly happy one and perhaps, if everything goes ahead as we imagine it will in Sri Lanka, we might see a final unravelling of that particular office.

Second, as far as the Foundation is concerned - and I say this in deference to those who are here from the Foundation- I think in my day the Foundation was much more focused on culture, and much more narrowly related only to Commonwealth Associations and, rather passively, grant-giving. It gave the impression of being rather part-time in its approach. Inoke Faletau and Humayun Khan, previous Directors, we both great characters, but didn't give the impression of being particularly fulltime operators.

One of the emblematic sides of Humayun Khan as Director was his gold-coloured Rolls-Royce parked in the forecourt of Marlborough House, which was an unlikely symbol of civil society, I thought. Then of course there was friction between the Foundation and Chief Anyaoku and the Secretariat, who were trying to develop their relationship with civil society; and later the change in the direction of the Foundation in embracing a broader remit. So, these were interesting developments too. But perhaps I should stop there. Thank you.

**JK: Thank you very much, Stuart. Ending on a somewhat interesting note, if I may say so. We'll go straight into Simon, who will perhaps bring us up to date. Mindful of the fact that we have got Simon and his predecessor [Amitav Banerji] at my side here, so we might also hear that. Simon, if you maybe bring us up to how things work now, where we are, and how you see things from holding that particular office as you do now?**

SG: Thank you, Joel. Certainly, I want to acknowledge Stuart's contribution. I'm conscious also that Amitav Banerji is here. There are three of us who have gone through the ringer of supporting a Secretary-General. I'm conscious that the session we're dealing with here talks about the internal and external faces of the Secretariat and I can't think of a better room to do that in, with the portraits of four Secretaries-General of the past are in front of us. One of the things that has always struck me is that Arnold Smith down the end there, has a globe, Sonny Ramphal has a map of the world and Emeka has flags of the Commonwealth states. Now, Don, at the end there, you may think, "Where's the global angle on that one? Where is the outward-looking external face?" In fact, there was a deliberate discussion with the portrait artist at the time. He's anchored in the Pacific with a (tapa) type of cloth behind him and he's looking out of the window because out there is where he put the flags. So, that was his innovation, if you like, to raise the profile of the external face by putting [Commonwealth] flags out on the lawn. That was as close as we could get to globalisation, the outward-looking face. All four SGs, even if it's hidden in Don's portrait, there has always been that external face, that external obligation, that external expectation. As I say, I thought it's a very good room in which to start a conversation about the role of the Secretary-General.

I think one of the things which strike one when looking back at the papers from the mid-60s in looking at what the role of the Secretary-General is – the internal face/external face – is that in fact there is no real job description. So, Secretaries-General can make it up as they go along somewhat. If you look at the paperwork from the 1960s, you'll see that in fact there was a conversation between two of the member states, then working on the terms of reference, who said that they were simply looking for a "good man". You know, one would hope at some point we'll get to a "good woman"! But nonetheless it was very much as simple and as straightforward as that. Indeed, there was another quote I found in those 1960s texts about it being, "unwise to tie the Secretary-General at the outset to overly rigid terms of reference". So, there was very much a sense of, "let's just let this thing, this Office of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat itself, grow organically".

And it is perhaps ironic, and probably not a well-known fact, that it could well have been a New Zealander<sup>1</sup> who could have been the first Secretary-General were it not for a particular incident in Singapore which seemed to have brought on a dose of ill-health; but there we are. The history books will show that in due course, I'm sure.

Certainly, the role of the Secretary-General was to be very much a leader and to be largely autonomous and self-starting; and it was interesting that back then the idea of High Commissioners of member governments becoming too closely embroiled in telling the Secretary-General what to do, was very much avoided. There was a reluctance to get High Commissions in London involved in a so-called supervisory group. In fact, there was a description of the Secretariat and

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<sup>1</sup> Alister McIntosh was nominated, but withdrew before the ballot on the grounds of ill-health.



the SG – they should be ‘vertebrate with teeth’. Whilst Stuart has talked about a couple of those earlier Secretaries-General, I think certainly one saw, has seen, in Don McKinnon’s time, a stepping up of interest of member governments expressed through their High Commissions in getting their hands on the way in which the organisation is run. For Secretaries-General, the space for them to be autonomous is narrowing and processes around which they are operating are becoming more and more bureaucratic. Whilst the leaders themselves, in a retreat, will say to a Secretary-General, “Well, look, Don, you’ve got a bit of a problem there and those pesky High Commissioners in London. You deal with it”, the fact of the matter is that you cannot avoid now working on a very clear and effective working relationship with High Commissioners. That’s become even more evident in the time of the current Secretary-General. There has to be more consultation in order to get to the sunny upland of an agreed way forward and that’s just the way things are.

It’s ironic that we’re working at a time now, where staff composition is an even lower point than the numbers that Stuart was citing before. The budget is continuing to go south and yet the level of intervention by member governments and the demands of the member governments continue to rise. Another thought that occurred to me in thinking about the Secretary-General as a role, both external and internal, is the challenge of being both, at one time the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, and the CEO of the Secretariat with its intergovernmental responsibilities. You see this most evidently and most tangibly in human rights abuse situations. When an incident occurs and there’s a cacophony of calls for the Secretary-General to do something or say something, on the one hand – and that tend to come from the wider Commonwealth family, for whom the Secretary-General is seen as the umbrella voice – and at the same time as the CEO of an organisation which is trying to advance values with member governments in a Commonwealth way, i.e. via soft power, ‘good offices’ and the like. The expectations on him are not to embarrass, not to publicly chastise, and that’s a very difficult balancing act. It was telling that at the Perth CHOGM, the mood music from the leaders was, “Actually, we can afford to, and we should, be lifting our political values. We should also mandate the Secretary-General to be more forthcoming in his public comments”, and for this particular Secretary-General, there has been, since Perth, a trebling in his statements on political values.

So, the leaders do give that sort of direction but they’re also conscious that this is a balancing act and a line that the Secretary-General has to walk. It’s interesting, too, that the Secretary-General was originally envisaged as being at the rank of a Permanent Secretary or a senior Ambassador; over the years, over the decades, we’ve seen that creep up and when the Secretaries-General have historically and in more recent decades, visited member countries, they tend to be viewed at a Foreign Minister-level and at that sort of rank. It has taken on a higher level of appreciation and understanding by the member governments. They see it as a more senior political role than the bureaucratic note-taker that perhaps Robert Muldoon thought back in the 80s – his mind was still lingering on that original concept.

We’ve been talking a little bit about the achievements of some of the former Secretaries-General, and just looking at the last two; Don McKinnon and Kamallesh Sharma. The perennial balance in the Commonwealth between political values and economic values, that balancing act between development and democracy has continued to be the nub of the challenge for them. In terms of the external face, we certainly saw with Don McKinnon, the political values, the

external face, and work on political values being ramped up. We saw in his 'good offices' work and the use of envoys. There was the cloud of Zimbabwe, and the human rights agenda was certainly lifted on his watch.

On Kamalesh Sharma's watch, I think we could say that the economic values have been lifted. The G20 work, the novelty of within two months of taking office he called a mini-summit of leaders which hadn't been done before, to look at reform of international institutions. But that's fairly simplistic to say, "Gosh, Don was politically orientated and Kamalesh was economically orientated", because in fact both of them also advanced the other side of the coin as well. I'm very conscious, for instance, that it was Kamalesh Sharma who tiptoed his way through the minefield of securing agreement by the member governments to reform CMAG – almost, I might say, at the cost of his job. I don't believe any other Secretary-General has ever had call for his resignation. So, it is high-stakes stuff and the Secretary-General can be caught in the crossfire in those sorts of things – the Affirmation in 2009 of political values at the CHOGM in Trinidad and Tobago, is another example where this Secretary-General has sought to lift the political values.

So, I think both of them have continued to advance the challenging balancing act between development and democracy. Both of them also have had to deal with an organisation externally, which is in a very different place to where the Commonwealth used to be. There are far many more international organisations than there were in the early days, all competing for space and the membership has changed dramatically in its diversity. The Indias, South Africas, Malaysias of this world, for instance, are in a place where they weren't when the Secretariat was established and that has created a great deal more diversity, but also a great deal more of a challenge for a Secretary-General in trying to take the whole group along. As the numbers go up, the challenges of achieving a consensus go up as well. On consensus, it's interesting perhaps that the appointment of the Secretary-General is probably as close as you're going to get to a vote in the Commonwealth. We talk about it as a straw poll when the leaders take their views on these matters, but that would perhaps, arguably, be as close as one gets. We all know around this table that the numbers tend to dribble out and we go through this little sort of song and dance routine that there is a straw poll and all the leaders are told, "Well, this appears to be the candidate who has the greatest support", and then everybody joins in a consensus around the person with the greatest number of straws. Nonetheless, it's another feature of the Commonwealth and a good thing, too. I'm conscious this is meant to be a conversation, so I'm going to stop right here.

**JK: Thank you very much, Simon. You are right. It is meant to be a conversation amongst colleagues. To lead us, really, into that conversation, I'd like Professor Stephen Chan, who is also previously 'of the parish', and then also looks inwards and observes us at various times. Stephen?**

SC: Thank you. I'm delighted to be here. It's a very great pleasure to see old friends and colleagues again. For those who are not old friends and colleagues, I think I should make clear my reputation when I was in this place was very much as an *enfant terrible*, as a rogue element in the Commonwealth Secretariat. I did not mean to be so, but I was very young and very much cast in that light. This seems to have coloured how I view the Commonwealth afterwards. I want to make it very, very clear that the way I view the Commonwealth is as a critical friend. In other words, I would like it to do better and I don't think it's doing as well as it could. So, it's nothing to do with seeing from the past and I do think that the very

interesting combination of international and academic career that I've had since I left the Secretariat has helped to give me certain perspectives on what I think this place could do. It is in that light that I've made criticisms of the whole succession of Secretaries-General after Shridath Ramphal's time. These have been made honestly. They are on the public record. There is nothing hidden in the things I have got to say. Having said that, I do remember very, very well, coming into the Secretariat when Shridath Ramphal was the leader. I have memories of the year just before Stuart's arrival when Chris Laidlaw and Mark Robinson were the Assistant Directors of the Secretary-General's Office.

Unlike Stuart, I was actually warmly welcomed by Moni Malhoutra and I've never really quite worked out why, because I could certainly see his acerbic response to almost everybody else in the known universe, including those people who were closest to him; but he took almost an elderly brotherly attitude to me – brotherly and elderly because it was far, far too much of an older brother figure as someone who was simultaneously brotherly but also grandparently as if he understood I could do nothing right. He would very, very wisely and adroitly try to steer me into doing things less wrong; but he gave me many responsibilities and used to invite me to this room when in 1979 the Commonwealth High Commissioners meetings on Southern Africa would have caused an almost parallel session to what was happening in Lancaster House, chaired by Lord Carrington. Those were extremely insightful meetings because, of course, Secretary-General Ramphal would be here and mobilising, in fact, the High Commissioners and I think that gave me the template to wonder why that kind of relationship was not able to be propagated for a longer period of time, taking into account everything that Simon says, of course, about the narrowing of space and the narrowing of capacity. That's happened to almost every single public institution. Having been a Dean at a number of British universities, now there has been a parallel narrowing of space in the academic world just as there has been in the diplomatic and international organisational world.

At the same time, I'm still a firm believer that leadership can take you very, very far and notwithstanding, again, Simon's, I think very, very perceptive nuancing on what Kamallesh Sharma has done, I think there are a couple of comments I would like to make. I agree absolutely that the Office of the Secretary-General was very undefined at the outset; however it was defined after the outset although not in any specific memorandum. In other words, this is not part of the written rules of engagement but the early academic work on the work of someone like Shridath Ramphal, work by the Canadian academic Margaret Doxey for instance, as well as work by Sir William Dale, a very eminent jurist in this country.

In defining the parameters both of leadership - that was Doxey's take on it - and in terms of crafting out a certain kind of international legal space (well before we actually had a formal charter which came only in very recent times. Those were conditions that I think both academics tried to establish) - gave the Secretary-General space and I think that Ramphal took that space. Now, obviously his kind of leadership was unusual. It's not replicated or found in many places elsewhere and it's quite possible to regard him as a very, very charismatic and very successful and, to an extent, a very lucky one-off. But in terms of the categories of duty that Stuart was outlining, I think what came very much through at that point in time in Ramphal's tenure of the post, was the duty of being protagonist. As a protagonist, he put this place on the map, not just in terms of Southern Africa, his work on what we then called the New International Economic Order, what should be rightly more known today as a search for a more equitable international economic and trading system. That established a huge legacy and

his work with the Brandt Commission, for instance, I think, set up the kind of profile that I would like to have seen pursued by his successors.

In other words, even then he was assuming, as it were, parity, not just with the Foreign Minister, but as an equal among former heads of government who sat on the Brandt Commission. Now, I take very, very much, again what Simon was saying, that since the Perth CHOGM, since the formation of CMAG released the giving of greater powers and greater, as it were, immediate response capacities to the ministerial group, The Secretary-General now really is, to all intents and purposes, someone with the kinds of capacity of a Foreign Minister. But I think that was always implicit in the role. It's been very, very much how Secretaries-General have played that role. It's now made more formal. It's now made, as it were, black-and-white and that's how it should be. It's been very much a case of how prepared have successive Secretaries-General been in trying to take up that kind of mantle of being a "protagonising" person, with the rights and freedoms of a ministerial figure who at the same time is not attached to the dictates of any single government and its specific foreign policy.

In that particular rendition of what the Secretary-General could be, there's an immense amount of freedom, should you wish to take it. It's the measure of that freedom which is what is looked at by such an academic community that studies the Commonwealth today. It's not what comes out of the adjacent and the attendant divisions of the Commonwealth Secretary but in scaled back and in budget cuts that everyone here is very familiar with. In my own organisation, now - I'm a senior figure in the School of Oriental and African Studies - we run a bigger developmental show than this place does. We compete for larger grants as first as it were, after or subsidiary after this place does. This place is noted for what the Secretary-General does and the kinds of spaces for action that he, and hopefully in the future - she - could carve out. That's where it is and successive Secretary-Generals are noted for what they've accomplished in this space. I think there was one more, perhaps even more of an *enfant terrible* in this place alongside me and I worked closely with him at one point. That was a gentleman called Geoff Martin, who once famously set up a memorandum saying that this place should be stripped right down to nothing but the Office of the Secretary-General but then that office should be expanded because that's what made the Commonwealth, as an action force, in today's international politics.

Now, I don't want to rehearse my arguments with Don McKinnon. Don and I were enemies well before he came here because I'm also a New Zealander and I became immersed in the Commonwealth Youth Programme by virtue of having been the National Student President in that country. I've certainly had difficulties, I think, with how Kamlesh has tried to carve out that particular space. I think that he took up the position at a time when the world would perhaps have been receptive to another charismatic, let's-go-for-it type of figure like Sonny Ramphal. I know they are very different personalities. I know that he is a careful man by habit and by inclination. I know that he was also a very well-respected and very senior High Commissioner before he became Secretary-General. I helped brief him before he became Secretary-General. He knows how the High Commissioners operate in this city. In that sense, he had a head-start in terms of being able to mobilise space within a constraining, as it were, ambience that these High Commissioners represented. I think that at this stage, certainly notwithstanding, greater public involvement, greater public comment again just as Simon says, my view very much is that this is still a moment of lost opportunity. Thank you.

**JK:** Thank you very much, Stephen. One would say – characteristic in your comments, as per usual. Now, as I said before, this is supposed to be a conversation. We've heard from two holders of the post of the head of the Secretary-General's Office and of course from some of your comments. As I said, we do also have somebody here, who is Amitav Banerji who has held that post and is currently the Director of the Political Division. Comments, views, please. This is the time when we really should at least start engaging in the light of the comments some of you have heard and I think just about everybody around this table will have a view on the operation of how the Secretary-General's office functions. Muhammad Muda, sorry, I hadn't seen you. Go on.

**MM:** Thank you, Chair. My name is Muhammad Muda. I was never a member of the Commonwealth Secretariat but I had a close association with Marlborough House through my time at the Malaysian High Commission and later with the two functional bodies of the Commonwealth, namely the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management, CPTM and later Commonwealth Business Council. So, I have two questions here. Anyone on the panel can answer this question. Who among the four previous Secretaries-General had the most interaction or difficulties with the heads of government?

My second question is, during my time with the Foreign Ministry and also with the High Commission, we didn't get a lot of correspondence from the Secretary-General on certain issues. In particular, the letters said, "After consultation with the heads of government, the Secretariat has decided blah, blah, blah..." Can anyone here, who was working with the Secretariat here, highlight whether the consultation was done with all heads of government or just a select few? Thank you.

**JK:** **Wow - that is an interesting question! Now, on the first one, who had more difficulties? I suppose we are conscious of the fact that there are different times and different issues that have arisen. If we're taking the period between 1965-present, there have been different situations. As I said, we've got three people here and in their times, I think, there would have been different leaders and different issues. So I wonder if we can start with Stuart, and then maybe Amitav can also comment; and then Simon. Yes?**

**SMO:** Well, from the point of view of Arnold Smith, Sonny Ramphal and Emeka Anyaoku, I can think of each of them having their own particular difficulties with Heads of Government and sometimes of an extreme kind. With Arnold, he had immense difficulties over Rhodesia. He had great difficulties with Pakistan and the breakup of East Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh. There are lots of examples, I think. So, I couldn't recall that anyone had an easier time than anyone else. I'm interested in the second question in particular, though, if I may just deal with that one, because it does slightly bear on what Simon said about maintaining the myth of no elections in the Commonwealth. I don't think it is entirely clear how consensus emerges. Maybe a Secretary-General could answer this but I think even those who are quite close to the SG wouldn't necessarily be able to answer how rigorous that feeling of the pulse might have been in terms of developing a consensus or the Secretary-General's articulation of the consensus, but it was something that I thought was quite interestingly-illustrated. There is a balance between whether you do actually need, in effect, an election to really find out what governments are thinking, as opposed to what the Secretary-General interprets governments as thinking. That, for me, happened with the selection of a previous Chairman of the Commonwealth Foundation. That is a position where

there had been elections and I do remember a multi-candidate election on one occasion where Chief Anyaoku's original interpretation of who he felt the desired candidate was of governments, was entirely different to that which eventually emerged from what, in effect, was an election. So, I think it's a very interesting question but in more cases than we're prepared to admit, it is sometimes resolved by a straightforward election.

**JK: Amitav, I wondered if you could comment on any of those two points?**

AB: Thanks, Chair. I don't think I want to encroach in any way on the presenters of this session but since you've drawn me into this I think I would immediately firstly subscribe to Stuart's thesis that every Secretary-General has had difficulties from time to time with heads of government, indeed with ministers. I can only comment more on Don McKinnon's time. Zimbabwe has already been mentioned. On Pakistan, he got beaten on the head quite strongly for allowing a situation where Pakistan was seen as treated with kid gloves as a country of geo-strategic importance in comparison to Zimbabwe. At the time, a lot of African countries felt that Zimbabwe was given much harder time – President Mugabe was given a much harder time - than General Pervez Musharraf.

On the flipside, he did battle with people like Clare Short on the whole issue of so-called 'harmful taxation', where a lot of small states felt hard done-by the fact that financial arrangements in places in the Caribbean were being targeted by the OECD in a way that was seen as quite invidious. So, I think every Secretary-General has had their share of difficulties from time to time and that is the nature of the game. If I may just take this opportunity to interject one or two more thoughts to feed the debate on this, I think two or three points that need to be borne in mind is one that the leaders themselves now are a very different generation than the leaders Sonny dealt with or Arnold Smith dealt with. Those were the first flush of leaders after independence who were very, very knowledgeable about and committed to the Commonwealth. I think you have had a new generation of leaders, not all of whom necessarily know that much about or are that interested in the Commonwealth and you've got to constantly keep those levels of interest and commitment up and every Secretary-General, I think, in successive generations, needs to deal with that aspect as well. It does add to the degree of difficulty.

Secondly, and I think Simon did mention this, since the late '90s or the early years of this millennium, partly because of the much larger number of organisations each government has to deal with, officials have become much more strongly assertive because issues such as results-based management have taken over very, very strongly and every organisation has to show, in log-frame matrix, and sometimes the technicalities simply perhaps supervene over the larger strategy and the politics, that they are delivering value for taxpayers' money. The last thing I will say is that whatever you do, one thing about the Commonwealth will never change, and that is that developing countries will always be the vast majority, I think for a long time to come, and small states will always be a majority and no Secretary-General can ignore those very strong factors. Thank you.

**JK: Thank you very much, Amitav. Simon, I wonder if you could address the two questions?**

SG: Thanks, Joel. I don't think I need to add anything on the first question. It's horses for courses – different Secretaries-General with different leaders. I think on the

second question about consultation, when you get a letter in a capital, saying, "From the Secretary-General, I have consulted and I have the general sense of direction from leaders that blah, blah, blah ..." That does happen. The unwritten job description of a Secretary-General involves spending roughly a third of his/her time at 30,000ft flying from one member country to another. There's a lot of travel because the Secretaries-General want to be out there, talking to the leader and understanding what their priorities are and discussing with them the Commonwealth agenda, and getting their direction on the way in which it should be taken forward. So, it perhaps goes back to one of the points I made before. There is a personal relationship between the leaders and the Secretary-General and it's nurtured through travel, through attendance at regional meetings, through the so-called bilateral visits.

So when the Secretary-General writes and says that, it would be pretty risky business to say that without having consulted. Now, you're not going to get a Secretary-General phoning up 54 leaders for every single issue, so you're relying on the judgement of the Secretary-General as to where the balance lies and that, too, is part of the expectation of a Secretary-General and that, too, underlines a point I was making before – trust – that there is a great deal of trust vested in the Secretary-General that he or she will do the right thing by the leaders collectively and from their individual national perspectives.

**JK: Thank you. Dr Peter Williams?**

PW: Peter Williams. I was former Director of Education between the mid-80s and mid-90s. Actually, I think Amitav anticipated the question that I had, which I would be interested in hearing others comment on, in his remarks about the changing character of Commonwealth leaders. I'm wondering how important that was. The generation of post-independence leaders were more charismatic, less bureaucratic, as Amitav said. They were less bound by procedures and officialdom. I must say, we found in education, when we were dealing with some of the difficult problems over Commonwealth student mobility and so on, it was often the case that the people who were prepared to coral and take a lead on this were not always those from the 'older' states. It was Zimbabwe, which had just become independent in 1980; Namibia and people from the Front-Line States that were often in the lead in trying to articulate the views of the Commonwealth developing countries generally. So, maybe Sonny Ramphal had an easier run in some ways than some of his successors, in his efforts to get a fair world order and to get countries to mobilise and stand up for that.

**JK: Thank you, Peter. Richard?**

RB: Thank you, Joel. Richard Bourne. I've been involved in Commonwealth activities since the end of 1982 and I was briefly a Special Advisor to EAD in 1991-92. My queries are two, really. One is about the role of the Chairperson-in-Office and whether there has been much interaction between the chair-person since Thabo Mbeki, I think was the first, and the Office of the Secretary-General; and whether this has in any way offset the desire of London High Commissions to micromanage the work of the Secretariat. The second is following a point of Simon's that there has been a great growth in international organisations over the last 30 years and whether the Secretariat has managed to respond to that by making allowances and carving out its own space. I am aware that the Secretary General of the Commonwealth and the Secretary-General of Francophonie have been making joint presentations to, I think the G8 and the G20 and I think EAD here has been doing work with the G20 on development issues. I am very aware

of the competitive nature of international diplomacy and therefore the huge challenge now facing the Commonwealth in responding to that. So those are my two queries.

**JK: Thank you very much. Who'll take that? Stuart? Simon? I thought of you simply because of the whole Chair-in-Office issue. All right, Simon? Anything?**

SG: I think it'd be a very good idea to draw in Amitav. He can burden-share on this one. Well, very handy my microphone was turned off because I just answered a question. I hope that you all heard the answer. The role of Chair-in-Office: indeed as Stuart put his colours on the table before, I think probably there are mixed views. The jury is probably still out. The Eminent Persons Group took a look at this and they debated it to and fro. Its purpose broadly speaking, was to address, if you like, at that time, by the late-1990s, a sense that, I think it does relate to this crowded marketplace, a sense that the Commonwealth was losing its way or was losing its profile; and that maybe it could be enhanced if we had the chair of CHOGM to take over with this profile-raising role, to speak on behalf of the Commonwealth in places where the Secretary-General could not go, for instance in the UN Summit or the like.

Now, it perhaps was recognising a symptom and then thinking they'd provide the right sort of solution to it. I think most of us would conclude that it hasn't actually delivered on that. The second role of the Chair was, if not so overtly, to be there in a supportive way in advancing Good Offices and the like and the ability to leverage if the Secretary-General is struggling to get some purchase somewhere, to be able to say to the Chair-in-Office, "You're a leader. You can talk to a fellow leader and say, 'Please let the Secretary-General's Good Offices in your country' and get to work, because there is clearly a problem". Again, the challenge is it probably hasn't done as well there as it could but again, perhaps the theory was fine but the practice is that is just doesn't really work that way. That's not how international relations work and it is not how these things are ever likely to work. So, I think in terms of an answer to Richard's question, a way of offsetting the micromanagement, the short answer is 'No'. Each Chair-in-Office, I think, has probably looked for the Secretary-General to tell him/her what they would like the Chair to do.

That was one of the first questions when the Secretary-General turned up in Trinidad and Tobago with Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar, who had taken over, had inherited the role of Chair-in-Office. She didn't Chair the CHOGM in 2009 but she then succeeded in an election and became the Prime Minister; so that the first thing she wanted to know from the Secretary-General was, "Well, what do I do as Chair-in-Office?" The SG said, "Well, I'll be in touch with you if I need your help in leveraging, but in the meanwhile, anything you can do or speak on our behalf and we will provide you with guidance and provide you with opportunities and encourage you". But actually it's very, very difficult to get any head of government to do that, to speak out. That in part goes to the extent that leaders themselves are creatures of and subject to the vagaries of their praetorian guards and their own administrative systems.

So, the Secretary-General can say to Prime Minister Gillard, "Please say something about the Commonwealth in your General Assembly speech this year in September", and she will say, "Absolutely, Kamalesh, I'll do that for you". Then the political priorities that are recorded by her own officials result in her either saying something or not saying something according to the Australian



perspective, as opposed to whether it's warm and fuzzy to say something on behalf of the Commonwealth. So, in terms of profile-raising and in terms of assistance of Good Offices and in terms of providing the Secretary-General with some ability to talk to those High Commissioners and say "I don't need to talk to you because I've spoken to the Chair". I don't think it's done particularly well and that's a personal observation.

**JK: Amitav, do you have any observations you'd like to add to that?**

AB: Well, firstly, completely to agree with Simon. I think those who expected that the Chair-in-Office would play some kind of executive role were perhaps expecting too much and on that side, very early in the innings of a Chair-in-Office, the institution even caused some controversy. I know we're not under Chatham House Rules but I think it's an open secret that the whole handling of the Zimbabwe issue by the Troika under the chairmanship of the then Chair-in-Office, Prime Minister John Howard of Australia, was not seen as terribly helpful and there were a number of people who felt that the Prime Minister of Australia didn't do enough to distinguish his position of Prime Minister of Australia from that of Chair-in-Office, in trying to reflect the views of 50+ other countries, which made it a lot easier for those who were carping to look at this 'evil axis' of John Howard, Don McKinnon and Tony Blair – these three 'bad white people' trying to determine the destiny of Zimbabwe, notwithstanding the fact that Don was skewered on HardTalk and the first thing he said to the interviewer is, "How come when the first white farmer gets killed in Zimbabwe you scream? What about the 20 black people who have already been killed by these goons?"

I think representationally, profile raising-wise. Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, I must say has been particularly diligent and good. President Obasanjo was quite an active Chair. The Secretary-General of the time was able to consult him, especially on African issues. He did provide leadership but I think on the whole the report card would be one of maybe 'Fair' or 'Average'. Thank you.

**JK: Okay, thank you. I presume you mean sort of, 'could do better' in sort of education parlance. Sue?**

SO: Thank you very much. Sue Onslow. This is a question particularly for Stuart and then also for Simon. Successive Secretary-Generals have developed Good Offices and obviously this is now linked to the CMAG process and it provides complex and sophisticated machinery for dealing with violations of Harare Principles. Please could you comment on the role of the Secretary-General in developing over time this particular discrete mediation approach and also the supporting role of his office in enabling these efforts?

SMO: Well, I'll do my best. I think from the very outset, Arnold Smith was involved in Good Offices work, as Simon was saying; it was there for the making. The job description had to be made and a very crucial part of that was trying to mediate in circumstances of conflict within or between member countries (particularly between countries, at the outset). So, it's very much been a feature. It is certainly the case that what we used to call the Private Office, the Office of the Secretary-General, alone has not been sufficient to support a Secretary-General and his Good Offices work; and what was previously the International Affairs Division - now the Political Affairs Division - has played a very important part in that support. I think there have been some interesting developments in terms of new mechanisms, the use of more formalised approaches to the use of special envoys and all the rest of it, which I think has been a feature of Simon's tenure.

Certainly, I think the Secretary-General, supported by his Private Office and by the Political Affairs Division in particular, has been the main support for his actions. In the case of Chief Anyaoku, he came into office at a time when 25% of the then Commonwealth were one-party states or military dictatorships - 10 out of the 40 countries or so then in membership. In all that he did to develop Good Office work, in particular within member countries and in the creation of new mechanisms like CMAG, this led him to a very personal kind of challenge in terms of Nigeria and what might have been, at one stage, the departure of Nigeria from the Commonwealth. This, I think, would have made his own position as Secretary-General untenable. So, I think Secretary-Generals have sometimes been forced into very difficult circumstances.

The only other thing I'd add is that at one stage - and there has been very little public comment on it - Chief Anyaoku made a really determined attempt for the Commonwealth to be involved in the Sri Lankan peace process. This did actually get quite far down the road before the Norwegian Initiative and it did involve talks with the Tamil Tigers in London and in Paris and with, of course, the Sri Lankan government. For a short while it looked as though it might be going somewhere. One of the reasons it failed, I think, was because of the inability of the Commonwealth to mount any kind of substantial supporting mechanism for that Good Office intervention. In our time, too often, the Good Office supporting intervention was individuals like Max Gaylard or Moses Anafu; and the ability to deploy the kind of sustained resources on the ground that would have really helped was often absent.

**JK: Philip?**

PMU: Philip Murphy. I'd just like to raise the issue of relations with the Palace because I don't think this is going to come up in subsequent sessions. As you'll know, when the headship of the Commonwealth was created, it was viewed as being a very minimalist role and that view was supported by the Palace. The Palace say in, I think, 1959, the Queen can't act substantively in a Commonwealth sense because she doesn't have advisors who can advise her in a Commonwealth sense. Now, the question is, when the Secretariat is created, does she then gain Commonwealth advisors? Certainly in Arnold Smith's and Sonny's time, you see them manoeuvring themselves into a position where they are recognised in some respects as Commonwealth advisors if only with a small 'a' rather than a capital 'A'. I wonder whether you can comment upon this, about relations between the Secretary-General's office and the Palace and the way in which and the sorts of advice that are given on Commonwealth affairs.

**JK: Okay. Simon, do you want to take that and then Stuart?**

SG Very happy to jump in. I might, just if I could, go back first of all because I think Sue had asked if I had anything to add on the Good Offices business and I think it's quite an important point because it's quite an important part of the Secretary-General's role and it's a combination of internal and external faces. If you like, because it goes to the heart. I talked before about trust and the relationships with the heads of governments. The other key part of the Secretary-General's work with the heads of government is receptivity. You can't get involved in a Good Offices role unless there is a will from the other side to receive you. It means that Secretaries-General, historically and certainly in the last two in dealing with Good Offices work sometimes have to stay their hand in terms of their public pronouncements and their public work, speaking on behalf of the wider

community of Commonwealth parties precisely because they wanted to make advances and gains at the national level through their Good Offices. It's a particularly challenging role for a Secretary-General that you may be making progress because you can get in to see someone, shake their hand, have ten minutes with the and encourage them to make some fundamental changes. I can think of one country where legislation which was going to introduce the death penalty for homosexual acts, as a very good example, of a great success using the Secretary-General's Good Offices, but none of that is published and in the meantime you have a number of organisations saying "Why is the Secretary-General not saying anything about this particular case?"

It is a very difficult area and a lot of it is based on receptivity but a lot of it is based on personalities as well and that's why Good Offices is not just about the Secretary-General, it's become more and more about the envoys, about other people that can be brought into play who can become your point of entry to a particular leader where you're looking for that personal connection and the receptivity that flows from it. The other thing about Good Offices is that this Secretary-General we have at the moment has grown the portfolio and now has Good Offices for the environment and it's perhaps coincidental but in the room right next to us, here today in the Delegate's Lounge, you have an Expert Group which the Secretary-General has convened, chaired by former president Jagdeo, looking at what the Commonwealth can do practically to address climate change challenges for small and vulnerable states on the basis that the world has not managed to deliver on its 30bn Fast Start Fund. So, the Good Offices works in a variety of ways but it does tend to be below the radar screen and personality-based.

Turning to the Palace, I think that it has, as Philip says, it's been revolutionary but I think that certainly my experience over the last decade or so and indeed as you know I was the Commonwealth Secondee in the Queen's office in the 1990s so I saw it from that side of the coin as well as this side of the coin. There is a very, very clear understanding that on Commonwealth matters, the Queen is guided by her Commonwealth Advisor, the Secretary-General. Now, that does not mean there isn't competitive advice and of course, she's sitting in an office just down the road from Whitehall and you would be expecting advice to be proffered for what it's worth, by her Foreign and Commonwealth officials. Equally, I would find it very hard to imagine she would move on Commonwealth matters without having taken the advice of the Secretary-General and we have regular audiences arranged with the Queen, and meetings with other members of the Royal Family who have an interest in different parts of the Commonwealth portfolio.

The involvement of the Prince of Wales going back to the 2007 CHOGM in Kampala was no accident. His involvement has included increased programmes of engagement with Commonwealth countries. It's all part-and-parcel of on-going discussions and liaisons with His Royal Highness's Office. There is certainly a regular conversation occurring between the Secretariat and the Private Secretary from time to time. We're all talking with each other, with colleagues across the road in the Palace at various times. The extent to which that advice is taken, I think the record so far is it is 10/10.

**JK: Thank you. Stuart, do you want to add something?**

**SMO:** Yes, just to support Simon on that and I wanted him to speak first because he has far more knowledge of the inside track than I. I think Don, in his memoirs, *In The Ring*, said he had up to 40 meetings with the Queen in his period of being

Secretary-General. Certainly, I think every Secretary-General would cherish their role as her principal Commonwealth advisor but I think it's also true that the Palace would draw from others. It's multi-layered in that respect. So, Peter Marshall knows very well - because he's drafted enough of them - how significant are the Queen's Commonwealth Day messages and so on and how, in fact, her statement on some really important issues of the day have advanced. Certainly, consultation on the content of her speeches, especially taking a much more prominent role in CHOGM after 1997, her speeches in specifically Commonwealth circumstances would merit discussion about the content of those speeches, even broadcasts where the Palace has gone, for the Christmas broadcast, to look at specific Commonwealth advice and not just from the Secretary-General.

I think this makes for a very interesting paradox. When the Eminent Persons Group prompted the discussion about these three offices - Secretary-General, Chairperson-in-Office, and Head of the Commonwealth - and really addressed the feeling that they ought to be combined into two rather than remain in three. In lots of ways, the historic argument might say that the headship should go; but in terms of performance, it's the Chairperson-in-Office that ought to go and it's the Headship, which paradoxically has gone from strength to strength, which should remain..

**JK: Thank you. Vijay and then Sir Peter.**

VK: Thank you, Chair. I'm quite happy to defer to Sir Peter. Sir Peter, do you want to, especially given what's under discussion, if that's what you want to discuss?

PMA: Thank you, Chairman. Also, thank you for your suggestion that I precede you. I'm very grateful. I'm never backward in coming forward. What Stuart said is absolutely on the ball. I think the performance of the Queen shows just how it is impossible, really, to discuss this issue in the abstract. In practical terms, what we see is the most marvellous combining by the Queen of her constitutional responsibilities as Queen of the United Kingdom and of other realms with the extent to which she can do or say something in her capacity as head of the Commonwealth. I don't think I'm aware of any conflict between the two sides that I've ever mentioned. Stuart is also absolutely right to refer to the question of what sort of non-governmental input there can be in such a rather esoteric body with which we are so closely associated, the Joint Commonwealth Societies' Council.

That leads me on to the related question and that is Sonny's difficulties with heads of government. Nobody has so-far mentioned Mrs Thatcher whom someone would naturally have in mind when this issue arises. There, I think there was certainly a readiness to disagree but also a great deal of mutual respect. I don't think Mrs Thatcher was ever in doubt of the value of the work done on the economic side of the Secretariat, much as she might have not been in favour of being lectured about Southern Africa. I think, naturally, of course, the mini-summit in this room, in 1986 when I suppose the differences of approach were exposed with the greatest clarity in that meeting in the Marlborough House mini-summit. On occasion each head of government was allotted an office. Naturally, Mrs Thatcher used mine. We stocked it with her favourite brand of whiskey and also installed a hotline. I said to her at the end of the meeting, "Would you like to leave the hotline here?" "Certainly not, she said." "I might use it."

**JK: Thank you, Sir Peter.**

VK: Thanks very much, Chair. I want to share Stuart's four-point framework for viewing the role of the Secretary-General and in the light of Richard's comments, add a fifth, in that of the role of the Secretary-General in forging alliances and partnerships, particularly in light of his comment in relation to the growth of international organisations, particularly over the last 30 years. As this concept of civil society has become an ever-greater force in global affairs, I wondered how the outlook of the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General's Office has changed over the years to respond to that growth, firstly. Secondly, sorry, I should say my name is Vijay Krishnarayan. I'm the full-time Director of the Commonwealth Foundation. Acknowledging the changes that have taken place over the years and in particular over the last 20, the relationship between the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General's Office and the Foundation has never been absolutely clarified. It's defined at the moment by two moments. Firstly, the moment at which the Secretary-General or his representative sits on the Chair of the Commonwealth Foundation's Board; secondly, when the Secretary-General presides over the Board meeting of the Foundation that discusses the appointment of its Chair. Now, both of those moments hint at a degree of subsidiarity when in fact they are two parallel international organisations. I'd like to gauge a sense, round the table, from the panellists in particular as to the prospects for a more equal partnership between the Foundation and the Secretariat. Thank you.

**JK: Let's see, who's going to address that? Either Stuart or Simon? Well, Simon, since you're currently in the chair, I'll go to you first and then we might seek some views of the others.**

SG The great thing about conversations is that you can pass the buck to someone else and carry to someone else to speak up. I don't think there is a straightforward answer because you'd need to as the Secretary-General. Yes, that is the role that has been defined, a subsidiary role, if you like, that has been defined by leaders, by the member governments. Whether that's where the future lies, I think you'd find most Secretaries-General past, present and indeed future would say if the membership wants to change the arrangements then that's fine. The question of partnerships, however, is certainly an area that I think, as the space has become more crowded and Richard Bourne was asking this question before. I'm afraid we didn't really give it a due response. As the space has become more crowded, Secretaries-General have had to find ways to lead the organisation, the Secretaries at least but potentially the wider community of the Commonwealth family towards partnerships in the sense that it is going to continue to be in this crowded marketplace, one of the most effective ways of advancing Commonwealth values and principles and secondly, potentially, to unlock resources as well. So, those partnership relationships have taken on much more importance for the Secretary-General than they have, perhaps, in the past. The work that's being done now with the G20 in terms of getting the views of the developing countries on to the G20 agenda is an example. The work with the European Union practically to deliver trade capacity building is another example of a strategic partnership that is being advanced.

The extent to which member governments in their wisdom when they set up the Foundation and the Secretariat as two separate organisations, one with universal membership, one with a slightly more voluntary approach to membership probably is indicative of that sort of subsidiarity even from the outset. I think that whilst a Commonwealth Secretary-General, any Commonwealth Secretary-General would approach it pragmatically, "How can I work with the Foundation? How can I work with the family of organisations to deliver?" I don't think you'd find

the Secretary-General in the vanguard of those seeking to change the arrangements.

**JK: Thank you. Stuart, did you have anything to add to that?**

SMO: Just a few words. Yes, I think it was certainly apparent in the 1990s, the way that with Chief Anyaoku how civil society became much more acceptable in intergovernmental circles. I think before that time there was a great deal of suspicion, which Chief Anyaoku was certainly anxious to overcome, but in a very cautious and gradual way. That led to the appointment of a joint position between the Secretariat and the Foundation for civil society liaison which was a cause of a great deal of friction between the Foundation and the Secretariat at the time, but I must say that Terry Dormer, as that first appointment, dealt admirably with those tensions in his irenic way. I think we have seen a sort of steady growth since then and I think Don McKinnon must be given a lot of credit for the growing acceptance and recognition of civil society in the Commonwealth.

I think one of the difficulties is that the Commonwealth is primarily an intergovernmental organisation. So it will always be difficult for the non-governmental contribution to be recognised but I think there are two things on the side of civil society which help, given this much broader agenda which the Foundation is now pursuing.

One is that as the Secretariat's budget, its functions and its staffing are increasingly under assault, with perhaps a diminished output, so the non-governmental, the civil society organisations, especially Commonwealth organisations, can show increasing strength and responsibility in shouldering part of the burden. As they come into greater partnership, so inevitably there will be a more equal working relationship. And I think it would be helpful; to reclassify the top tier of Commonwealth organisations who are able to create viable partnerships as Commonwealth agencies, rather than as they are currently labelled. This is the tier of Commonwealth organisations which are specifically Commonwealth in their mandate but who have the means to help the Commonwealth deliver programmes in partnership with the Secretariat. I think if there was more development of that, which I think there will be, then that will bring equality and also increase the scope for dialogue between civil society and government. I think there is much more recognition from governments that such a development is useful and I think civil society is getting much more realistic about how to conduct that dialogue and what they can hope to achieve by that. That in itself will help the process of a more equal relationship.

**JK: Thank you, Stuart. I'm conscious of time, but, Patsy?**

PR: I just would like to add a few footnotes and I must apologise for being late but I have a good reason. I am on standby if Mandela dies.

**JK: As are all of us!**

PR: So, I have to rush out to make sure that I get the messages, but I do apologise. My few footnotes are on the Queen. People forget that the Queen grew up with the Commonwealth and that she knew all the early leaders very well. She used to receive them even when they came up sometimes to negotiate and there are two instances, early in the evolution of what I like to call the New Commonwealth. She made it quite clear that she was going to handle, or her staff was going to handle, relations with the Commonwealth. It was '71 when Ted Heath advised her not to

go to the Singapore meeting. That time there was a huge row over arms to South Africa and many African countries were threatening to leave the Commonwealth, led by Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere. She didn't go and she regretted it and she was very unhappy about that. The second, was, of course, after Margaret Thatcher, whose benignity I do not recognise in terms of relations with the Commonwealth, advised her – No - Margaret Thatcher went to a World Bank or IMF meeting in Japan and on the way down she visited New Zealand and she and Muldoon gave a press conference which was reported on the BBC 7 o'clock news to say they were advising her not to go to Lusaka. Lusaka had been bombed by the Rhodesians and it was very unsafe, theoretically.

I left my home at about 19:30 and I drove to the office here and I put on my radio and Buckingham Palace had issued a statement saying that Her Majesty will be going to Lusaka. I think that was a clear indication that although the British government advised her not to do things, that she would decide what to do and at that time one was very close to people like Bill Heseltine who had started as Assistant Press Officer when I was in the same role here in the Secretariat and he eventually rose to be her Private Secretary.

The point I want to make as well is that, when the Secretariat was set up, it was set up because countries like Trinidad and Tobago and Tanzania and Ghana agitated for it and they saw it essentially as an organisation first to break the links with the cosy business around the fireplace at Downing Street which the old Commonwealth had loved. Secondly, that this was a way to get development on a proper footing. At the early meetings they all said they were just coming into the international arena, they started to deal with the UN, they were very unhappy with the UN. Again, I recall a meeting in Kenya of Agriculture Ministers and it was one of the African Ministers that said, "We have to have our own development arm," which became the CFTC, "Because here it is, one of the first things we want to do is to improve our cattle and the UN sent us somebody who couldn't speak Swahili or English." He hung around, I suppose on a good salary, and then he said 200 cows were pregnant if that's what happens to cows and he pushed off and they were not.

They were livid. They said, "At least in the Commonwealth we get somebody who can talk English," and there was a feeling in those days that we were all in it together. I think there has now been the idea of what you'd call the ABCs. Canada was not the Canada that we know today. Canada was hugely supportive of the whole independency, gave the Commonwealth to Arnold Smith, fought Arnold Smith's corner with the British who wanted to deny him even the title of Excellency, to downgrade his role to be a Junior High Commissioner had a very strong link with the development side.

That's how both Arnold Smith and Sonny Ramphal were able to do things which I think present-day Secretaries-General aren't able to do because they don't have the backing. Now, I tell people that Sonny Ramphal had 10 countries that he could talk to and he could discuss, but it was people like Indira Gandhi in India who told him when he went to visit, "Make something of this organisation. We want you to act." He had the Canadians. He had Jamaicans. He had Nigerians. He had Tanzania. He had Zambia; even Sri Lanka. So, he had 10 powerful developed and developing states – Australia came on board very early and was very supportive during the whole period of Southern Africa. I think that this has gone and I think that somehow if the Commonwealth is going to become an important, powerful – maybe not powerful - but certainly highly respected publically, I have no doubt that, as Simon says, the work being done behind the

scenes is very important but the public perception today of the Commonwealth is, well, it's less than a shadow of its former self.

It's got to go out now and do things that people all over the world can understand. Finally, I have to put my own in about this Chairperson-in-Office. First, it's a horrible title. Nobody should have a title like that – that's the first thing. Secondly, it doesn't work. Who is going to listen? Are we going to Mauritius? I'm sorry if there is anybody from Mauritius here but we're going to Mauritius for the next Heads of Government Meeting. If the President or Prime Minister of Mauritius makes a statement on behalf of the Commonwealth, it's not going to be reported anywhere. The media now is king and we have to do things which the media can understand and respect. Those are my footnotes to history.

**JK: Thank you very much, Patsy. I have a feeling that should the President of Sri Lanka make such a statement, there might be some take-up, one would have thought. That's for another day. At this stage I'd like to bring this first part of the conversation to a close. Thank you to our Simon and to Stuart and to all the contributions we've had around the table. The day of course continues. This is only the first part. So, we're going to have a five minute break as nameplates and things like that are shuffled and some would even say a comfort break. I'm Joel Kibazo. Thank you very much.**



**PS:** I'm Puma Sen. I'm going to be chairing this session. I have previously been the head of Human Rights here at the Secretariat, currently at the LSE. Stephen introduced himself as the [former] *enfant terrible*! I don't think he's retired. There are a couple of things I'd just like to say by way of opening comments which might chime a little bit with Stephen's role. I'd also like stress that I speak as very much as a critical friend and also somebody with some remaining hope about the future of the Commonwealth but with a lot of tempering of that about which I want to just say a couple of things. Firstly, we have four topics to look at in our session: - Political affairs, Legal affairs, Democracy and Human Rights. It's no small task to take on. I will try and make space for as many people as possible to touch on those different themes in our conversation. Secondly, this must be, I don't know, the third or fourth event that I've attended over the last six months looking at how effective the Commonwealth is or what the role of the Commonwealth is or what the impact or the future of the Commonwealth is – over the last six months or so.

It strikes me that there's a bit of a public conversation going on at the moment about the Commonwealth, its future, it's impact, which must say something about where we see or where we have anxieties about the association, where it sits now and where it's going. It's into that climate I think this conversation fits. I'm not sure that's a particularly healthy state of affairs. Let me also note, as people would probably expect me to do, a couple of speakers in the previous session talked about their hopes for a female Secretary-General in the future. Let me also add that this conversation today and presumably on-going at the ICS draws on the pool of knowledge and expertise around the Commonwealth which is also predominantly male. If you look at the speakers list today, only 2/14 of the experts are women. I think there is something to say about the nature of the Commonwealth and its respected voices and figures which needs a huge amount of attention and work and I think we need to give that space in that conversation, too. I don't want to take the time.

I now introduce Max Gaylard, who is the former International Affairs Division Director, who will open our conversation for this session. Thank you, Max.

**MG:** Thank you very much, Doctor. There is only a limited time available, so let me divide this introduction into four parts with maybe another small addition at the end. I wanted to talk, first of all, a little about the nature of the Secretariat as I saw it when joining in July 1988. I then want to draw attention to several major strategic events just after that, say between '88-'91/92 that governed and set the overall framework for pretty well everything that we did. Thirdly, I propose to discuss briefly the working agenda between '91 until early '96 when I left, in other words, what actually happened. Fourthly, I want to try to identify - with the benefit of hindsight - two or three possible turning points in the way the Secretariat operated under the leadership of the SG. In that context I want to spend a few minutes on human rights and how the SG, Secretariat and the member states grappled with this 'extremely dangerous' concept introduced into the Secretariat around about 1985.

Firstly, the nature of the Secretariat and when I joined. I was just saying to Patsy (Robertson) that we need to hear much more from those such as her who

devoted a goodly proportion of their lives to the Commonwealth and its Secretariat, and that the recorded history would benefit enormously from her input both oral and written. I should also note for the information of my New Zealand friends and colleagues that when I did join in July '88 as a secondee from the Australian Government, there was some initial interest in the position from a young New Zealander by the name of David Shearer who went on to a UN career and is now poised for higher things back home in New Zealand.

Recalling that time in July '88 and arriving here in Marlborough House, I think it was Stuart who said that, among other things it was somewhat intimidating. The atmosphere was quite electric. I want to tell you that the staff of the Secretariat, maybe 300 plus at the time, were almost to a person highly charged and ambitious. These were exciting times and the staff felt highly-motivated and wanted to achieve.

Why was that? Well, one reason over the time that I was here and again to borrow from Stuart's words, was the leadership by the two Secretaries-General under whom we both (Stuart and I) I served. The two of them are here looking at me [referring to the portraits], so I have to be a little bit careful I suppose, but neither needs to be concerned. By and large they left the day-to-day management of the Secretariat to others, and were not unduly bothered too much with the detail. But as strategic leaders with political nous, they were first class, the one flamboyant, the other a consummate diplomat, both with the range of necessary skills.

And these were exciting times in 1988 and following. Over the previous 18 years I think something like 20 new countries had been added to the Commonwealth club, if I could put it that way. Of the 20 - and the point has been made - many of them were small and many were fragile. So, the political and developmental challenges were right there. I know it's much different for these states now, but at that time they had just emerged and, as Patsy noted, they looked to the Commonwealth and its supporting Secretary-General and Secretariat to help them put down a template and get on with developing their systems and their societies. The Secretariat was very much in line with that. The two big 'political' issues were those of Namibia and South Africa - one big issue really if you consider these as the last throes of decolonisation in the Commonwealth world.

Moving quickly to the four major strategic events that in effect shaped the way we all operated, I am referring to the fall of the Berlin Wall in '89, the disintegration of the Soviet Union shortly after, the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, which in turn heralded the end of apartheid in South Africa. With regard to apartheid, I think by then everyone realised that the game was up, that it was going to start to unravel fairly soon. The release of Mr Mandela of course only accelerated things. The fourth strategic item I wanted to mention was the Harare CHOGM Summit of 1991.

On a lighter note for a moment, I recall that Mr Mandela unintentionally helped things along at this Harare Summit, to which he had been invited as a special guest - three years in advance of the democratic elections and the re-admittance of South Africa to the Commonwealth. There is a particular event at the Commonwealth summits, or at least there was then, where Her Majesty the Queen in her capacity of Head of the Commonwealth, invites only the Heads of Delegation - generally the Presidents and Prime Ministers - to a cosy little reception in their honour. Each of the Delegations in Zimbabwe, as is the custom for the Summits, had attached to them a junior Foreign Ministry official from the

host country, just to keep an eye on arrangements and ensure that appointments were not forgotten or over-looked in a busy programme. So the young Zimbabwean Foreign Ministry official - I hope he's done well since - who was in charge of Mr Mandela, looked at the programme on the day of Her Majesty's reception just before it all began and saw this event listed in the programme.

With time running short, he found an unsuspecting Mr Mandela and said he had better get his suit on and off to the reception. So, Mr Mandela did what he was told and turned up, to the considerable surprise of Palace and Secretariat officials who were organising the event. However, Prince Phillip was on hand and rescued the day. He quite calmly welcomed Mr Mandela and ushered him inside as an honoured guest at the reception. The officials remained a bit nervous at the time but all was fine in the end. I don't know if Mr Mandela ever knew that he was not meant to be at the reception, but certainly he was apparently very much at ease, as were the royal hosts.

Coming back to the Harare Summit itself, I mentioned previously the Harare Declaration of 1991, which was a very significant event and document at the time. The preparation of the document itself had taken place over many months, lots of consultation, lots of debate and arguments about content. You could find in the preparations a reflection of what is still there today, that is the ceaseless debate about political rights versus economic and social rights. Something was needed to bring them together so that the one did not dominate the other. I remember there was a particular focus on the term 'good governance', with some advocating inclusion of the term, others such as the Malaysians and the Indians objecting that this was too nebulous and hard to define. If you look at the final Communiqué, I think it actually says 'just and honest government', which was the compromise formula.

Such differences of opinion and approach inevitably arose behind the scenes at all of these summits. From the point of view of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat, the momentous event at Harare, on the back of the Declaration, was the beginnings of the era of democratisation in the Commonwealth. Stuart previously mentioned a high proportion of non-democratic states of about ten members in fifty. At the time of Harare it was even more – perhaps 15 out of fifty were one-party and/or military states, certainly many more than now. Indeed at Harare itself, some Heads of State, how shall I put it, I think they realised that the game was up and that the onset of multi-party democracy was inevitable. A few immediately beat a path to the door of the Secretary-General to seek guidance and assistance so as to initiate a process with the assistance of the Secretary-General and the expert resources of the Secretariat. I wasn't there for these early meetings, but President Moi of Kenya, President René of Seychelles, President Kaunda of Zambia and the then military head of Lesotho, may have been some of these early callers.

They basically consulted the Secretary-General and said, "This multi-party democracy, it might well be what we have to aim for, but what exactly do we do? How do we go about it?" So, that was the vanguard of a stream of work which developed within the Secretariat involving pretty well every part of the organisation in one way or another. My own Division of the Secretariat was by then called Political Affairs – it had previously been known as International Affairs, but the new challenges were not just about political matters. There thus evolved a *modus operandi* centred on preparations for elections and election-monitoring, but of course there was much more to it than that. For example, Kenya, Seychelles and others involved missions by constitutional experts, by people who

knew about electoral laws and legislative processes. Some of that expertise came from within the Secretariat and some of it was brought in from outside from across the Commonwealth. From '91 until '96 when I left, there must have been more than a dozen election observation missions which were in effect the culmination of such preparatory work. I don't remember any outright failures, but Kenya was a severe test of the credibility of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms represented by the electoral observation missions. Patsy, you were there in Kenya, and will recall what we all went through. It was a very rough and violent election with many fatalities amongst the electorate, at least partly because the ruling dictatorship didn't really want to let go, and indeed were returned to power. It did not help that the opposition parties lost their cohesion in the final lead-up. So, there was plenty that was wrong with the preparation and conduct of the election, and the Commonwealth observers from all parts of the democratic Commonwealth identified much of it. There was thus a huge debate among them as to whether the election could receive the accolade of "free and fair", and it was unanimously decided that it could not be so described.

The observers eventually concluded in this particular case that the result of the election broadly represented the will of the people, pointed to the deficiencies, and offered recommendations for the future preparation and conduct of elections which might be termed free and fair. This process was replicated throughout the Commonwealth, and not just in Africa but also in Asia and the Caribbean. Guyana was at the time very high on the agenda and that reminds me of the discussions about the Secretaries-General and their role as mentors and agents-of-change in talking to heads of state and others. One of the key persons in the preparations and conduct of the first multi-party election in Guyana for a very long time was Rudy Collins as senior official in effective charge of the Electoral Commission. At one point with the election looming and being harassed from all sides both locally and internationally including the political parties, the neighbours to the north and the influential Carter Center Rudy became totally fed up. I was in Guyana on behalf of SG Chief Anyaoku when Rudy said to me, "Max, I've enough. That's it, I'm resigning." So I responded, "Well, you better talk to the Chief first." So, a telephone conversation was lined up for the following morning. I was told by Rudy what the content of the conversation was but I'm not going to tell you. You could ask Chief Anyaoku if you like or maybe Stuart at some stage. The end result of the telephone call was that Rudy agreed to stay. He actually couldn't stop laughing for about 10 minutes after the discussion with the Chief but then announced from here on he would stay. I can assure you that Rudy's decision to do so was critical to that election going forward in the successful way it did.

Part three, very quickly as I have already addressed many aspects of the agenda between '91 and '96 and time is running short. I would simply like to mention that there were of course many sides to the democratisation process, and a variety of spill-over concerns to be addressed. One of the critical issues identified by SG Anyaoku and Secretariat officials concerned the security and welfare of former Heads of State and/or Heads of Government who lost power through multi-party elections. The key question was: what needed to be done to ensure the protection of a Head of State/Government who lost an election, because if anything happened to him, (they were all 'hims'), then others would be very discouraged about moving forward with multiparty democracy. So, the 'guinea pig' or test case, was that of President Kaunda of Zambia. He was one of the few serving Heads to actually lose in one of these early multi-party elections and a package was developed by the SG for the consideration and approval of the newly-elected government headed by President Chiluba: pension; accommodation; security; travel; etc. This was a form of reassurance as the SG

saw it, not just to those directly involved but also to the validity of the multi-party democratic process. He was of course right.

A couple of years after the Zambian election which was in late 1991, I was in South Africa with a colleague Moses Anafu, mentioned by Stuart. We were in Johannesburg and we came to learn that ex-President Kaunda was going to give a lecture on democracy at the University of Witwatersrand on multi-party democracy. So, we went along, said hello and sat in the audience and President Kaunda said, "You know, this multi-party democracy, it's like your shadow." He said, "If your shadow is in front of you and you chase it, you can never catch it." He added, "If your shadow is behind you and you try to get away from it, you can't." So, that was his take on multi-party democracy.

Very briefly – and with the benefit of hindsight - on two or three possible turning points, well let me put them on the table. I think by 1995, not too long before I was to leave, we were turning our minds collectively to the states that had come through to some form of multi-party democracy with continuing fragilities, and what we might do as a Secretariat on behalf of the Commonwealth, to try to consolidate and reinforce the gains that had been made. There was I recall a lively debate, both among the member states and within the Secretariat itself, about how to use the CFTC in a very targeted way. So, the idea that began to emerge involved the selection of say the weakest half dozen or so fragile states struggling to consolidate forms of multi-party democracy, and focus resources towards them. That didn't happen. Whether it would have made any positive difference later, who can say? But in fact the Commonwealth was generally weak in any form of sustained follow-up after first or second time multi-party elections and trying to make sure that consolidation took place. The Commonwealth Observer reports of such elections, if you look at them, they do have recommendations on how things could be tightened and improvements effected, but unfortunately any sort of sustained, targeted follow-up generally did not happen.

A second possible turning point relates to the Secretariat itself, I think we all have a picture of a very proactive Secretariat at that time under the leadership of two quite active and visionary Secretaries-General. It wasn't that the SG's were not using ministers and ex-prime ministers. They were being used on scale, particularly with Commonwealth Missions both electoral and otherwise; but in addition, senior and even middle-ranking officers of the Secretariat were also being sent out in responsible roles in support of the Missions, and sometimes in effect as direct personal envoys of the SG and the like. The Secretariat was widely used. Now, when I think back, I don't think all member states were quite happy with that. Also, I'm not sure that all senior officers within the Secretariat were all that happy with it either. In my last year I saw senior people come into the Secretariat with views akin to those of Prime Minister Muldoon of New Zealand, who famously told a Secretary-General that he (the SG) was there to take the minutes! On reflection I think a feeling started to grow within the Secretariat, without going into further detail, that we were there to run the CHOGMs and meetings of Law Ministers, and leave the serious business of diplomacy and development to the member governments and their leaders, and maybe at times the SG.

Now, for my three minutes on human rights. The whole concept of human rights and the global debates around it, were reflected in the Secretariat. Some member states wanted to see the more political aspects of rights take precedence, while others were arguing that economic and social rights were just as if not more

important. Still others – probably the majority - wanted to deal with the whole package. In this broad context there was one particular achievement for the SG and Secretariat, led by the then-fledgling Human Rights Unit. Just to briefly trace the history of the Unit, it was I think mandated in 1985 at the CHOGM summit in Nassau, and eventually began to take shape around 1986. By the time I arrived in 1988 there was one person in the Unit, and by the early nineties maybe one or two more. Building on the back of the 1991 Harare CHOGM, the Unit with support from around the Secretariat played a key role in the Human Rights Global Summit which took place in Vienna in June 1993.

Some might say that these summits are not important but in fact they are, not least because they add to the global lexicon on human rights and they put down markers. In the months leading up to Vienna, and I have some of the experts here so they can help me out if necessary, as was customary the communiqué to issue from the summit was being put together in the background. At one point with only a few months if not weeks to go, the drafters and negotiators working on behalf of their leaders had become bogged down essentially around the relative importance of political, social and economic rights, and had reached an impasse. The breaking of the logjam came from the Commonwealth Secretariat under the leadership of the SG, and a small band of proactive Secretariat officials under his direction. They were able to do because most of the parties on either side of the debate were representing Commonwealth countries. So, in about March 1993 – you would need to check - Secretary-General Anyaoku gathered the Commonwealth representatives together in Geneva with the blessing of the organisers of the Summit and they sorted out the problems in a Commonwealth context. Part of the solution involved the emergence of the concept of democracy, human rights and development as a package, which found articulation both in the (successful) Vienna Summit and in the CHOGM Summit which followed in Cyprus later that year of 1993. Let me end on that note.

**PS: Very nice. That's a very nice note to end on. Thank you very much, Max. I'll just hand straight over to Amitav Banerji, Director of Political Affairs.**

AB: Thank you so much, Chair. It's wonderful to have so many old friends here I'm seeing after a long time but I have to single out Max himself. He was my very first boss when I walked in here, my director. I remember also learning about the vagaries of the English language when I produced what I thought was a brilliant note about institutional development where I talked about institutions being deeply rooted and he said that in Australia that is not a very complimentary term. I'm in the unusual position of having served in the Secretariat now for 22 years and I think that probably makes me either a geriatric or a dinosaur that should be extinct. Some, however, flatter me by calling me a repository of institutional knowledge, but I do have some interesting memories and reflections to share, having now worked with three Secretaries-General and going into my 12<sup>th</sup> CHOGM. I've lived through some momentous times in Commonwealth history. So, if I may I will just start with some random reflections and then try to draw them together into some propositions to put on the table. I realise I have to be selective given time constraints.

Literally weeks after I joined the Secretariat in August 1990, Malaysia was having an election. The Commonwealth was invited to observe that general election by Dr. Mahathir and we put together a Commonwealth observer group. In those days, we didn't have too many rules. The observer group was largely paid for by the Malaysians, the hotel, accommodation, the per diem. They were well looked after, but they ended up giving a rather adverse report. The Malaysians were

furious. UMNO put out its own rejoinder to the Commonwealth report. We have not been invited back to observe Malaysian elections since.

Another of my immediate duties was to help Max, among others, prepare for the Harare CHOGM of 1991 which he has mentioned. It was an honour and a privilege to accompany DSG Anthony Siaguru to meet, among others, Mr Mugabe and I can claim to have been involved to some extent with the drafting of the Harare Declaration. Sadly, that government in Harare was years later itself perceived as repudiating the very values that were set out in that declaration, adopted under Mr Mugabe's stewardship. I do hope history turns full-circle and Zimbabwe will find it possible to return to the family soon.

The impact of that new value system that the Harare Declaration symbolised was as Max said, although I'm making the link, seen almost immediately in next-door Zambia. In fact, the elections, Max, were within two weeks of the Harare CHOGM ending. UNIP was devastated at the polls by the Movement for Multiparty Democracy and Kenneth Kaunda, that giant of the Commonwealth, walked gracefully out of State House. I remember helping with the exercise of putting together terms and conditions of service to look after former heads of government. Zambia had never had one.

The most awesome experience of my early years was seeing the sun set on Apartheid in South Africa and seeing, Nelson Mandela, having been freed from prison a few years earlier, become president of a democratic South Africa. I was mortified when he came to Marlborough House and I was away on a mission. I got to see him and shake his hand at the Auckland CHOGM in 1995, a CHOGM that he strode like a gentle colossus. At that very CHOGM Nigeria had been suspended, our largest member in Africa and the country from which the then Secretary-General came. As was the case with the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, I was also privileged to have played a role in the preparation of the 1995 Millbrook Action Programme, which the leaders adopted at their retreat in Queenstown. In doing so, they created this body called CMAG.

Until today, no other organisation has managed to replicate this unique Commonwealth institution, which received an enhanced mandate from leaders at the last CHOGM in Perth. CMAG showed its teeth pretty quickly. Sierra Leone was suspended from the Councils of the Commonwealth in July '97. Some two years later Pakistan was suspended from the Councils following the overthrow of Nawaz Sharif's government by General Musharraf. The very next year George Speight's act of surrounding Parliament and taking the prime minister and MPs hostage led to Fiji's suspension from the Councils. Fiji was of course suspended again in 2006, initially from the Councils of the Commonwealth and then, three years later, suspended fully from Commonwealth membership. Sadly, that remains the status today.

I've also seen the concept of Commonwealth membership evolve for new aspirants from the fairly ad hoc approaches used in the cases of Cameroon and Mozambique in 1995 to the attempts to properly codify criteria and procedures leading up to the Kampala decisions of 2007 and the admission of Rwanda under the new dispensation.

During my long innings I have seen from the inside track three major reviews of the Commonwealth. In 1990-91 we had the High Level Appraisal Group chaired by Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia. In 2000-2001 we had the High Level Review Group chaired by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa. In 2010-2011

we had the Eminent Persons Group chaired by another Malaysian, former Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi but not as Prime Minister. Each went through very similar hoops, conditioned of course by the topical issues of the time. Each made very useful contributions. What was different about the EPG was that it was a review done by independent individuals, at least in theory, who had total licence, unlike the earlier more, shall we say, controlled reviews done by a group of governments who knew much better what the traffic would bear collectively in the Commonwealth.

It is inconceivable to me that any intergovernmental review could have come up with the idea of a Commissioner for Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights. The EPG was bold enough to do so but found out soon thereafter that governments collectively would not support it.

So, where do these random and disjointed reflections lead us? Firstly, I think they do show that the Commonwealth, and by extension the Secretariat, which is at the heart of our scrutiny today, has remained a pretty active player on the political side right the way through. Indeed, if there was been a renaissance of the Commonwealth, after those defining milestones Max mentioned, the end of the Cold War, the demise of Apartheid, I think it's because the Commonwealth has nailed its colours to the mast of its fundamental political values. CMAG is recognised globally as a unique Commonwealth mechanism. There may be opinions about how effectively it has worked but it is a mechanism that others envy and when I talk to La Francophonie, when I talk to the African Union, sub-regional groupings, they just marvel. They cannot imagine that in their own political setups you could have a body that, by common agreement, can censure member countries when they cross the line. None has been able to replicate CMAG.

Secondly, I think there have been some successes to crow about. Both Stuart and Max mentioned statistics about countries, about one-party states or those under military rule. You can look at it in a different way actually. Since 1991, since Harare, 12 countries have moved away from those two descriptions to multiparty democracy. Some have slipped back and forth, but it is a fact that no elected leader any more likes to sit in the Commonwealth at the same table as someone who has come to office through the gun rather than the ballot box. According to the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Countries, the Index of Good Governance, 8 of the top 10 in Africa are in the Commonwealth. Commonwealth Africa is definitely in better shape than Francophone Africa or Arab-North Africa.

The Latimer House Principles, I think have become a recognised brand name globally. They are often referred to as the principles codifying and defining separation of powers.

Commonwealth election observation is much in demand. We thought demand would die away as more and more countries bedded down their democracies. Sadly, it's not so and we simply can't do them all. We've done over 100 since heads of government agreed the new guidelines in 1991, which was after the Malaysia experience.

The Commonwealth Electoral Network, which not too many people know about, launched three years ago, bringing together all the national election management bodies in the Commonwealth, has quietly been doing good work, making advances. They've had Working Group Meetings, five of them now on such issues as incumbency in elections, the independence of election management



bodies, voter registration, campaign financing and political party funding. The fact that the Commonwealth election managers can discreetly meet and compare notes with one another, with a view to slowly raising the standards of election organisation and management and hopefully preventing train wrecks of the kind that happened in Kenya in December 2007. Compare Kenya 2013 to that, or compare Nigeria 2011 to Nigeria 2007.

I think incrementally it is becoming more and more difficult, I would say, for a Commonwealth election to go completely awry and hopefully this peer pressure through the network called the CEN is going to help.

Thirdly, the success of Good Offices work has been an unsung story. Much of that work is below the radar stuff so it doesn't get known. The fact that countries actually want to reach out to the Commonwealth is a testament to its trusted partner status.

On Commonwealth membership there is now a more finely-tuned process of appraisal in place, learning from previous experience but the fact that countries still want to join the Commonwealth must be a good thing. The rigour by which bids are assessed, I think, has gone up.

Lastly, I can't speak with authority for my colleagues in Legal Affairs or in Constitutional Affairs as well as in the Human Rights Unit. I am very glad Max has spoken about the initial evolutionary stages of human rights in the Secretariat. I can say that while the emphasis has remained on awareness-building and capacity-building, it has not gone and probably will not easily ever go into monitoring or investigation, except to the extent CMAG needs to do so under its new triggers. The role played by the Secretariat in helping member states comply with UPR reporting requirements as well as with implementing UPR recommendations has been very significant.

The overall report card from my perspective is a good one but not an outstanding one and there is much, much more that remains to be done. Firstly, Max, sorry to say even today, follow up to Election Observer Group recommendations remains abysmal and I think that's not because there isn't a will but it's really for want of resources. We are so running to stand still, so running to observe so many elections that systematic implementation of what these wise people can come out from the country and say has been a lacuna and a new mission often goes into the same country and finds dust has gathered on the earlier recommendations and end up saying similar things.

Not all existing member states can be said to adhere to Commonwealth standards. Sadly, in the same way that aspiring members are expected to do. Political space is still an issue in many countries. Separation of powers, I think, notwithstanding Latimer House, is under threat. In too many of them for comfort, the rule of law and independence of the judiciary remain serious concerns. The area of human rights is still one where much remains to be done and certainly on divisive issues like LGBTI and the death penalty, the Commonwealth is very, very much still a divided house. Freedom of expression is another area where there are huge gaps to plug. Needless to say, we have a challenging CHOGM to get through later this year in Sri Lanka from the point of view of keeping the Commonwealth together and true to its values. Thank you.

**PS: Thank you very much. Amitav, I'm sure there is a lot there that others want to respond to. I'd like to, too, but I'll hang fire and hand over to Kayode**

**Samuel, who is a visiting fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies and a specialist in elections. Thank you.**

KS: Thank you very much. Let me just start by saying that it's a very wonderful opportunity to speak, especially after the last two speakers, wonderful in a lot of ways, not least of which is that they have done much of the work that I probably would have had to do as veterans in the field. I would want to focus my comments on going forward since we've done a lot of the retrospective reflections. Let's look at the prospective things that will be good for advancing the work of the Commonwealth going forward. The first thing is to say that in times of democracy, just like the last speaker said, there are still a lot of differences in perspectives, expectedly of an organisation of the kind of complexity and divergent makeup of the Commonwealth, but what is remarkable with the Commonwealth is the way it has always managed these complexities. I come from Nigeria, also able to speak intimately about one of the signal moments in the history of the Commonwealth which was the encounter with the Sani Abacha regime which defined a lot of things but fortunately for our country, also helped in kick-starting much of the progress towards the democracy that we have in Nigeria today.

For the Commonwealth, it is important to continue to recognise those complexities and those complexities always come into play, even in times of what kind of approach to adopt in navigating the whole issue of rights, LGBTI and all of the other things. It's important to know that the complexities will always be there and that there is no one-answer-fits-all. So, as much as possible, the Commonwealth as an organisation will also need to avoid some of the stances that some countries might have taken which will appear to have closed off a debate on the issue. I'm taking things at random, just like someone said earlier, it's rather a packed topic. I recall that somewhere earlier in the day there was some talk about the Secretary-General's position being uncodified and undefined and I would want to say that that is not actually a bad thing, especially when you look at the experience with the British Constitution which itself is also uncodified.

More importantly for me, coming from Nigeria, let me give an anecdote here. Sometime in the 90s just as General Abacha came into office via a coup, there was this anecdote in the newspapers about the constitution of the interim government. The interim government was the contraption that the former dictator hurriedly left in power and that government had a constitution that had 847 pages. The government lasted 82 days. Someone wrote in the papers that the interim government had the most voluminous constitution that anybody had ever seen that lasted for just 82 days and they tried to compare that with the United States constitution which it said was just 22 pages but had lasted 125 years. So, really, there is not much to be said about whether things are extremely codified or not. The important thing is the spirit with which people approach the role that they have.

I would also like to put our minds to the question of our international issues that are topical. Are they more or less amenable to Commonwealth intervention? By this I mean things like human rights infringements, resource-control issues, issues of the environment and all of that. It's important that the Commonwealth also gives some attention to this because more often than not you find that international organisations, just because they are called international, also believe that they have all the means to cover the entire world. It is important that the Commonwealth also focuses on the things that are truly important to it and achieve maximum impact. It would be nice if the Commonwealth identified what

would be called niche areas so that it can focus its energies on these and not be torn in too many different directions.

I would want to conclude by calling attention to something which I don't know if it had attracted attention before. For a lot of Commonwealth African states, governance and independence started in the parliamentary mode. Virtually all the Commonwealth countries adopted the British system and all of them had prime ministers and parliamentary control but increasingly, the transition has been towards executive control. I don't know if this has any meaning in terms of the attitude of governments to opposition and all of that but it would be interesting to try to find out why this has been so. Virtually all the African countries that started out as parliamentary democracies at independence are now presidential systems. Some have argued that this is probably a throwback to the African culture of chiefs and monarchs and all of that. I don't know where to stand on that but it's important to call attention to that.

It's also important to say that, especially when you're talking about election observer missions which is the core of my work at the institute. The role of the Commonwealth in deepening democracy, which I'm happy to have called attention to, needs to be looked at more importantly and deepening democracy clearly goes beyond the two-week safari mission in the countries to observe elections. The most we gain from the part of the world where I come from, really takes place months before the actual voting and so there is a need to have in place some, you know, in terms of use of the word 'observer', more of a consistent observation of what is actually going on. It's cunning of the political environment to look at something that would enable organisations seriously interested in election observer missions to look at party primaries, for example, to look at how candidates emerge because these are the things that lead to those issues that election observer missions then find it necessary to call attention to when it manifests on election day.

What I'm saying is, good pre- and post-election requires a more engaged involvement on the part of the Commonwealth. Let me end on this point and hope that I can address a few other things at the level of questions. Thank you.

**PS: Thank you very much, Kayode. As we've said, there is so much to cover in these four topics that we need to do. We have 25 minutes before lunch and while everybody is going to put their flags up please and if I miss you please wave at me or something. Can I just pick up on something that Amitav just snuck in at the end of his talk which was mention of the upcoming CHOGM? I think we're a little remiss if we don't place that more centrally in our conversation today because that is the context in which the meetings that I talked about at the opening of this session. The conversations about the relevance of the Commonwealth, its future, what the values mean and the Commonwealth that it claims the new charter is about. Philip and I were at a session not so long ago where a member of the EPG, I can't remember if it's Chatham House Rule or not so I won't mention, was it? It wasn't. Okay, so Ron Sanders himself was saying that though he had massive misgivings about the new Charter of Values although he was involved in the group that brought it into being, not least of all drawing attention to the opening phrase which was, 'We, the people of the Commonwealth' and then goes on to state the values and his misgivings were primarily attached to the fact that the people had had no say in this charter.**

**So, drawing on questions about what values mean in the Commonwealth and what democracy means in the Commonwealth. I think tying that to the year when we have CHOGM, that's such a controversial one that has caused so much angst within the association and outside it, I think to have this conversation as an oral history project must also take into account the question we have been asked, which is a fundamental question for policy makers, whether the Commonwealth's record of achievement justifies a continued engagement with it. That's, I hope, how we might tie together the three excellent presentations in our conversation that follows. Patsy and then Stephen. Patsy?**

PR: I'd just like to comment on the whole business of election monitoring and I want to support what the last speaker said because I've had my little campaign which has not been noticed by anybody for the Secretary of the Commonwealth to stop monitoring. What they should do is use their resources and their power or whatever to ensure that governments run fair elections. Now, everyone knows the electoral role is fiddled a year in advance. So, as he said, coming in to do a safari thing two weeks later is really a waste of time. You can't cover all the constituencies. With mobile phones they tell people, "Oh, the observers are on their way," and they tidy up the polling station. I've done 12-13 elections. I became disenchanted with election monitoring when we did Zambia, when Kenneth Kaunda lost.

Carter was very big in coming to elections and I heard him tell the media in Lusaka that he had had a word that morning with George Bush and what was the name of Bush's Secretary of State? "I had a word this morning with George and James and they've assured me that if there is a change, a regime change, they will resume aid to Zambia", and I thought that was absolutely disgusting and I thought we shouldn't be there in the company of that kind of business. Kaunda lost. Of course, anybody who was at the election would know that the chap running would have turned out to be the disaster that he turned out to be.

I also want to say that this idea, if you who are a hero who fights for independence - sorry, I'm going off - your people do love you. The people vote for you. All right, power corrupts and all that happens, but a lot of these countries that started out as democracies, there were coups. The army came into a lot of them and then we talk about not one-party states but military people. These coups were not really home-grown. So, we have at some stage we have to look at the effect of coups on the de-democratization of many of many of our member states.

I'd also like to put my hand up about Malaysia. I did that election and unfortunately we had a chap who was chair called Dudley Thompson, he was a fellow Jamaican and he knew lots of Malaysians. We assessed that the election was free but the treatment of the media was so disgraceful that we insisted we rang the Chief in London saying, "We can't say it is fair." I think we said it's the only time a Commonwealth election was free but not fair. It created all kinds of problems for the Chief. Now, you know, Kenya was another big problem, remember, Max? The then Electoral Commissioner was a judge appointed by arap-Moi. He had twice been removed from the bench for malfeasance or whatever they remove judges for. He was made head of the Electoral Commission in Kenya. When we went there earlier, we were in the early group; he had not spoken to anybody. So, election monitoring as this gentlemen said, there has to be more to promote democracy. Sorry to take up time.

**PS: [Microphone off – 2.40.39]**

SC: Just briefly and in support of what Kayode was saying and to an extent, of course, what Patsy was saying. I came out of retirement from election observations sabbatical in 2010 before the South Sudan elections and was horrified that nothing had actually advanced in terms of observation since the days when we used to do this for the Commonwealth and I think as Kayode correctly said, this is a very deeply flawed and absolutely inaccurate process. "Safaris", I think, might be a little bit of a harsh word but obviously a lot of the benefit of the crews, could basically be accrued from a safari party in terms of the acuity of observation and judgement that sometimes comes out of these things, but there has been no significant advance in methodology and not just in terms of the preparatory work as you rightly pointed out, but in terms of the aftermath and how things are counted which is a deep interest of my own. How did they rig the count afterwards? There is no scientific work, as it were, being put forward by the Commonwealth or indeed Carter or indeed anybody else on that particular issue.

I just wanted to make a very brief comment on what both Max and Amitav were saying. By the time of the late 1980s and the 1990s I was of course no longer part of the Secretariat but I've still been following these things, shadowing it as it were, from the outside. So, with Derek, for instance, I was at the 1991 Harare CHOGM and my memory of it is of course not deeply informed by how difficult or how fruitful it was in terms of discussions within the Secretariat in terms of drafting the Declaration of Human Rights but our concern – or certainly my concern as an outsider – was the malign influence that Sir Robert Armstrong had in trying to corrupt the draft that the Secretariat first set out, involving these two gentlemen and Moni Malhoutra, a very fine draft they had put forward. So, the point I'm trying to put forward is when we talk about Commonwealth history and we're all witnesses from largely the inside of the Commonwealth, we have to be aware that there are other forces externally and a full witness account has got to encounter these external forces which are implicit in the title of this particular meeting.

Similarly just two very other brief examples – I went to the Zambian elections shortly afterwards. I have a slightly different view of it to Patsy although Jimmy Carter did try to run me down in his motorcade, so I'm not very empathetic towards former President Carter on that account. Two things and that is to do with the Kenya elections in '92 which I attended in a private capacity. I think you were too kind, even in your qualified harsh judgement. I think that was a rig. That was a stolen election. I don't think there are two ways that you can describe this, notwithstanding diplomatic pressures to do so, but that was, simply, I think, unpalatable and untenable as an example of choice for the people of Kenya.

The final comment, I celebrate like everybody else the creation and the proper use of CMAG. It is an advance in international relations. It is an advance in the way that international organisations work. It is envied by others such as the Francophonie for instance, but it was not an entirely internal Commonwealth creation. I spent two sets of two hours advising the Foreign Office here about their submission which helped to form the CMAG and they had their own reasons for wanting to have it in the way that it eventuated. In other words, the merging of agendas, I think is one of the things that any Witness Seminar has got to be able to take on board, not just how we remember it but how outside actors also interacted with the internal actors and I'm very, very anxious that we don't come to obsessed with 'How We Changed History'. We helped, perhaps, to change history.

RB: Well, that's very generous of you, Stuart, because I realise time is pressing us. The Commonwealth has had three sorts of ECGs as far as the heartbeat is concerned. The first was the Mahathir High Level Review and then there was the Thabo Mbeki and as Amitav was saying, the Eminent Persons Group. It really builds, both Max and Amitav were at Harare, were involved as Stephen referred to, in the drafting of that declaration and my query is how far was the High Level Review Report of Mahathir involved leading up to the Harare Declaration? How far was it the Commonwealth Secretariat able drafts people like yourselves and how far was it that governments at that time shortly after the end of the Cold War and after Mandela had been released and turned up in Harare? What was the sort of mix and really was the famous High Level Report very significant in that process?

MG: I think I agree with everything that has been said. Nobody is suggesting this, but the Commonwealth should not forget about elections and helping countries to prepare for them and then run them properly. Just harking back to the more than a dozen in my time - and now as we heard from Amitav more than a hundred overall in which the Secretariat has been involved - the aspect that struck us time and again from the smallest to the biggest was the turnout. You heard then these dismissive counterarguments of, "Oh, what do these people know about democracy? Why would they turn out for an election? They won't know how to vote!" Well, they turned out in astonishing numbers, much better say than the UK or the United States. I might add not better than my own country Australia, but only because we are compelled by law to vote! The second aspect of elections that consistently caught our attention was the very small number of spoiled votes. People not only wanted to vote but they knew how to vote on the day.

**PS: Nothing on the Harare?**

MG: I was going to leave that Amitav.

AB: That's a bad pass! I think on election observation, we have continually learned from experience and, I would like to think, honed the way we work. I was the first to admit that we still don't follow up assiduously and the ideal, as Kayode said, is to treat the pre-election cycle, the immediate election itself and the post-election period as one continuum, because unless you are constantly engaged with a country and feeling the pulse and checking for change, you're not really able to do very much more than take a snapshot. That said, I think the Secretariat certainly, much more than before, now keeps scanning the horizon and doing that early warning now even more post-CMAG's new mandate and we're waiting with baited breath, me more than anyone, to see if we will get more resources in the new budget that flows from the new strategic plan. I've made it very clear to my Secretary-General, and I don't mind saying that in this room, that we are running to stand still and to do the extra work that those triggers of CMAG enjoin upon us, to constantly be able to say to the Secretary-General that in countries X,Y,Z – some red flags are going up, we need more human resources and we need more financial resources. Every observer group, even if it does still go in two weeks before an election and sometimes we have advance observers that go even earlier where the need is perceived, certainly is informed by a continuous Secretariat monitoring of the situation.

So if the voters' roll has indeed been rigged a year before, it is not likely to remain a secret. I can certainly assure you of that. Of course there are instances like Stephen pointed out. In Ghana in 1992. I was virtually assaulted along with the others who were in Kumasi in the Ashanti province, largely because President

Jimmy Carter and his Carter Centre had declared the results of the Ghanaian elections before their own Election Commission had done so, through their exit polling system but of course also said that it was a reasonably good election and people associated the Commonwealth also with that conclusion as well. So, Ashanti being NPP territory, we ran for our lives from there to try and escape being physically assaulted.

There have been instances where you can take issue with the report. I think Uganda is a very famous one of course, in Commonwealth history. If you see recent reports there is much less reticence to call it like it is and we have been able to certainly also very successfully sell the line that these are independent groups led by very experienced former leaders who can't be taught to suck eggs and who do not represent the Secretary-General. As for the Secretariat trying to take credit for everything, I think I will be very quick to say that this is not the intention here at all. At the end of the day, nothing works in the Commonwealth if your member governments don't subscribe to it. They will pull it apart and find one way or another of doing so. You've got to carry them along and things do change.

As for how Harare itself was drafted, Max that's a pass I don't accept because you were more privy to what was going on but my recollection is that the High Level Appraisal that Dr. Mahathir chaired spawned a small group that then met periodically to implement that but I don't think the Harare Commonwealth Declaration was deliberated upon by that group. I think Chief Anyaoku took personal leadership of that and very informally consulted a few key governments but Stuart is probably better placed than anyone else to comment on that? Thank you.

KS: Just to say that I'm a bit relieved by what I've heard from Amitav in terms of the continuous monitoring and to say that I also join him in his prayers for a better budget response from the Secretariat so that more work in that area will be done because it is quite critical. It would save us a lot of hue and cry if a lot of the early-warning systems have been put in place. Thank you.

**PS: Please use the microphone. Stuart first, please.**

SMO: Yes, just on the Harare Declaration. It was certainly a draft that the Secretariat had ownership of and then there was Lord Armstrong who had another draft and it was a question of negotiation and marrying of the one with the other. Just as the British had their own ideas about a ministerial action group, the SG had a very clear idea of what he wanted and only with the final negotiations at Elephant Hills - involving all Heads - was the matter resolved and CMAG created.

I want also to very strongly support what Amitav said about election observer missions, and I've crossed swords with Patsy on this before. Of course, we look at Zimbabwe now and we think of what has been done in pushing people off the register. I accept that a lot of rigging can happen before elections but it is surprising how stupid people who rig elections can be. Certainly, that was true in 2003 when some of us called the Nigerian elections down in the Niger Delta a massive fraud and we witnessed just about every electoral malpractice under the sun. People were so stupid about the rigging. If they had been far more sophisticated and subtle we probably wouldn't have noticed but when people want to be elected with 99.9% vote on a 99% turnout then it's obvious – especially when there is nobody visible on the street - that there has been no real election.

I stand up for what I think is one of the flagship areas of Secretariat action and I can certainly give examples, I remember Antigua and Barbuda where the election observer mission report went through both Houses of Parliament thereafter and was embodied in electoral law. So, a follow-up also happens. I would say, one of the most decisive electoral observer reports was Zimbabwe in 2002. Patsy Robinson was a member and the European Union packed its bags and went home and did not stay for the end of the elections. The Commonwealth stayed for that election, saw the violence, saw that it was an imperfect election and the unity of all members of that group, from all parts of the Commonwealth, was decisive in helping the Commonwealth maintain consensus on Zimbabwe.

Two other quick things that I wanted to say. First off, I think the idea the Good Offices external to the Commonwealth is a very interesting issue and I just mention some of the things that happened under Max's watch in South Africa between 1991-1994 through the UN in getting observers to the negotiating process (at CODESA) and deploying observers on the ground to tackle the violence that was threatening to derail the process. The SG, Chief Anyaoku, obtained a United Nations' Security Council Resolution for that purpose. So, that's a very interesting area of work.

My final point is that we haven't mentioned Secretariat staff in a kind of all-purpose sense and I do want to mention colleagues because I remember through the work that was happening between 1991 and 1994, on the ground in South Africa, with Max Gaylard's team there. Some of the members of the Secretariat were transformed by the work that they did there. They may have come out of Marlborough House from a rather dead-end role. They were put in charge of an office or something in Natal and it was amazing to see the transformation that resulted: how people really entrusted with that responsibility rose to tremendous heights and I had nothing but admiration for those involved in that; but I know there have been many, many examples across the field where Secretariat staff were showing the same degree of high dedication.

MB: My question relates to the leadership role of the Secretary-General and senior management. I think many of my colleagues around the table will agree that the Human Rights Unit has always been the Cinderella of the Secretariat. Clearly, the prince must have come along at some point because the Human Rights Unit now stands on its own, I understand. My question is what are the resources that it's given because during my time, especially from the mid-1990s, we were not given resources both in terms of personnel and money to do what we were doing. So, I'm sorry to admit that I haven't kept up with the history of the unit and what it has been doing, so I would like to know more about that.

**PS: Okay, thank you, Madhuri. Kayode, would you like to go first? Do you have any responses to those comments?**

KS: Just a quick response to Stuart. What you observed in the Niger Delta wasn't nearly as dumb as it seemed. There is a uniquely Nigerian explanation for that. I'm ashamed to admit it but the percentage of votes that you're able to declare also has implications for how well you can negotiate for the board appointments that will come from the president that emerges. So, it's a purely logical thing although it might look very dumb. Thank you.

AB: I'm not sure there is very much I want to say other than that the Good Offices part of our work has not really been discussed very much today. Stuart mentioned it. I



remember when Chief Anyaoku propounded his theory of “inter-mestic” issues; i.e. domestic issues with international repercussions. This was the introduction to what is today ‘Good Offices’. There was huge protest and every country cited sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs etc. Today, more and more actually ask for Commonwealth help with sensitive domestic matters, where other organisations are seen to have an agenda. There are examples, I think, that can be cited of success. There are other examples probably of lack of success but the effort is still worth it. On the Human Rights Unit, perhaps Madhuri can put her hat on as the previous head of the unit and tell you more from the inside track but my own understanding, Madhuri, is that the Cinderella has not really become more of a princess. It’s still a very small unit. It’s got two professionals. They are helped by a couple of interns. It has a reporting relationship that is perhaps seen as more elevated in that it reports directly to the Deputy Secretary General responsible for Political Affairs. In terms of the resources available to it, I’m not sure it is a far cry from what when you left. Certainly, a far cry from what it needs, especially given the UPR reporting requirements that have now become a pretty big thing, although there are now a couple of posts based in Geneva. A number of people are waiting to see what happens to the way human rights are dealt with post-EPG, post-New Strategic Plan given that egregious violation of human rights is one of the triggers now set out in the new CMAG mandate, that could enable proactive engagement by CMAG. Thanks.

**PS: I’ll just add quickly to Amitav’s comments on the HRU in January 2008 when the unit had £225,227 as its entire budget. I know that number very well because I spent a lot of time repeating it to senior management, saying how disgraceful it was. That was to do human rights work across 53 member states. While I was here we increased the budget considerably but mostly by raising resources from outside the building, not least from the Foreign Office which allowed us to kick off the UPR work that Amitav has mentioned and in cooperation with the UN we got that massive project under way. We also raised money from other governments. I think some of that has come to an end. I think when I left, the full budget was about £360,000. It’s pretty minimal when you see other parts of the Secretariat having budgets in the millions.**

**There is only a temporary acting head at the moment who has been there for almost two years since I left. I could give you chapter and verse about the place of human rights and the work of the Secretariat. It’s nowhere near where it should be and that’s why I think the whole question about what do the values mean that the Commonwealth states acclaim to, is something we haven’t talked about very much and where it’s going is a question that is still unanswered. Max, you get the last word.**

MG: If I could add a further comment on human rights, against my recent background of the last 15 years in the UN system. If you look back briefly at the history of the UN and the creation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), what tended to happen is that when it came to confronting human rights issues, other parts of the UN system including the agencies would tend to refer these to OHCHR, effectively saying to human rights complainants “No, no! There is a special office for that. So, you’ve got to go and talk to them.” Those tendencies are still there, and in my view are complete nonsense. As I used to say to my UN colleagues, to the horror of some, “You know, the United Nations as an intergovernmental organisation is fundamentally a human rights organisation,” implying that it is good to have an office to bring focus, but all of the

staff of the UN are effectively working for the people, and are thus involved in the promotion of human rights.

It sounds very simple but the reality is not so easy. These days thankfully, virtually all of the UN agencies – UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and many others - are talking the language of rights.

**PS: Yes.**

MG: Even UNDP is talking rights, and that is my point. There is a small Human Rights Unit in the Secretariat which brings focus to rights issues; but in fact everyone working in the Secretariat in my view should be thinking of rights as part of their normal workload.

On a final, lighter note, we were talking before about communiqués and in particular about the Harare CHOGM Communiqué and the Vienna Human Rights communiqué. This reminds me of the process of preparation of communiqués in the Secretariat, not just for the two-yearly CHOGM summits but also for entities such as the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Committee on Southern Africa which met every six months, and for which each meeting issued a communiqué. The way it worked, for better or for worse, was like this. The SG would consult in advance with Heads of Government, Ministers or their representatives. The SG would then pass his directions and guidance to a small Commonwealth Secretariat team such as Stuart Mole, Amitav, Madhuri and myself.

The second part of the instruction was to go away and find a quiet place where no member state minister or official could find you and start drafting the communique, I remember one Foreign Minister in particular, whose name I shall not mention, who wanted to be involved in the drafting process from the beginning and by doing so could, theoretically any way, influence the outcome and shape of the draft of the communiqué. So we would be hiding in one part of the hotel/conference centre, putting together the beginnings of the communique and he would be looking for us because he wanted to get involved right at that stage. The SG would seek to reassure him by saying “just wait a little longer, we will have a draft for you shortly.”

**PS: Can I just thank Kayode Samuel, Amitav Banerji and Max Gaylard for some really interesting presentations, and some great questions and conversation that followed. Thank you very much. It’s straight to lunch now, isn’t it Philip?**

SO: Thank you very much indeed to the last panel. We will be convening promptly at 14:15 so that the rest of the day doesn’t slide on, but thank you very much to everyone who has participated this morning.

*Session 3 – Sustainable Development*

**SO:** Thank you very much. It gives me great pleasure to chair this third session on sustainable development and technical assistance of the Secretariat's work between 1965-2013. I'm delighted that Sir Peter Marshall and Edwin Laurent will be our principal witnesses and that Matthew Battey, who is a PhD student at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, will be acting as the respondent. I welcome this valuable opportunity to highlight the lesser known, but equally important work of the Secretariat. This morning's discussion was of course focused on the highly-visible aspect of the Secretariat: the image of the Secretary-General and the work in International Affairs and Political Affairs Division. Yet, as Sir Peter has pointed out, in another venue, the Commonwealth's works on development which is arguably more important in some people's view.

Without further ado, I'd like to ask Sir Peter to begin. Sir Peter has also asked me to flag up that you have each been given a printout entitled 'Outcome of the World Summit – Headings of the Text Adopted by the General Assembly – September 16 2005' to which he will indeed be referring while he speaks. I would also draw your attention to a summary prepared by Dr. Vishnu Prasad which is in your briefing pack which gives, I believe, an excellent overview of the Economic Affairs Division during his time here at Marlborough House. So, thank you very much indeed.

**PMA:** Thank you very much, Sue. Having listened with fascination to the discussion this morning, naturally what's going through my mind is how we can best relate what we have discussed this afternoon to the insights and the questions which arose this morning. I think I can begin rather controversially. When I want to wind up my fellow diplomats, I say that economics is political studies seriously. There is more than a grain of truth in that, not least in the Commonwealth experience because the essence of economics really, academically, started from moral sciences and history. Not only that, it had a purpose in it. It was to see what could be done to better the lot of Mankind. Now that, in other words, is a positive-sum gain, which is in contrast with the zero-sum game which was a feature of classical diplomacy which landed us in the catastrophe of two world wars within a generation, which of course we should be remembering with particular poignancy the centenary, the outbreak of the Great War next year.

The Charter of the United Nations represents the first time that the positive-sum approach to international affairs was expressed in an authoritative document. The Charter of the UN itself is a very complicated and legal text but it is prefaced by a preamble of almost unexampled clarity and direction. It was produced very largely by Field Marshall Smuts thanks to a meeting of Commonwealth Ministers in London just on the eve of the San Francisco Conference. Now, that means that we, as a Commonwealth, have got a fundamental stake in the way in which international affairs are being conducted, of a sort which no other organisation has. I think it's something that history has tended to repeat itself in some ways in that regard.

How did this positive-sum game start to express itself? Well, it began when the most elaborate machinery was set up, but what people did not foresee was the emergence of a very large number of new countries, mainly gaining independence or asserting independence for the first time, would lead to a sort of situation where there was, if you like, growth of political parties in the UN and the

emergence of the group of developing countries which had a great deal in common with one another and not very much necessarily in common with the developed world. This potential clash, this confrontation, came to express itself first in UNCTAD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development under the influence of an Argentinian economist, Raúl Prebisch. Then, in the New International Economic Order, which was an attempt to rebalance the trading arrangements internationally between developed and developing countries on the basis of oil power and the power of the Non-Aligned Movement, specifically in the shape of the somewhat messianic figure of President Boumedienne of Algeria. In sum, the 1960s and 1970s were characterised by confrontational intergovernmental economic negotiation. Now, this meant that from about the 60s and the 70s, there was, I suppose, the nature of international cooperation on the issues of the, say, fourth of the Charter, tended to be confrontational intergovernmental economic negotiation.

That, understandable as it was, proved in some ways to lead to stalemate and to disillusion. The first attempt to break this stalemate was in the work of the Brandt Commission of which both Sonny Ramphal and Edward Heath, a former British Prime Minister, were members. It was those two who came to Geneva in early 1980 to present the report of the Brandt Commission, called North-South: A Programme for Survival. This was the first time that I met Sonny. He and Edward Heath were very a very effective duo in putting across the prospects of looking at these things less confrontationally and perhaps more realistically. Then, the Melbourne CHOGM of 1981 asked the Secretary-General to set up a group on obstacles to the North-South dialogue and how they might be overcome. To me, sitting in Geneva at the time, that was exactly what the doctor ordered and I wrote to Sonny to ask if there was anything I could do in Geneva to help, would he let me know?

The rest of what happened thereafter is my history, but that is in fact how it came about. I've always thought that the law of unintended consequences runs particularly freely in international affairs and it certainly did in my case. Anyway, there were perhaps individual reasons for this. I was the first member of the British Diplomatic Service to occupy a position in the Secretariat. Why that should be the case is best past over, but my own position in the Diplomatic Service was unique because I had been successively the Economic Undersecretary, the Representative for ECOSOC in New York and the Permanent Representative in Geneva. This unique succession of offices has never been repeated and I think it's unlikely to be so. Anyway, the result of this was that I was somewhat out on a limb career-wise. When the Labour government came in in 1974, I was then the Economic Undersecretary. Judith Hart who became in charge of the Ministry for Overseas Development as it was then, said when I was introduced to her, "Yes, I've heard about you. Apparently you're not quite as awful as the rest of them."

Anyway, so the result of this was that I duly appeared in the Commonwealth Secretariat in 1983 in the middle of this phase of UN cooperation, which was so distinctive. Therefore, looking back I can see that it was of particular relevance that the Commonwealth had a role to play under a five-star Secretary-General of a sort which it certainly hasn't had to play since and again I wouldn't expect it to have to do so. I also could see that this, a core idea of approaching, what are the obstacles? Where are the problems? What can the Commonwealth do about them? There were many possibilities and I pursued them in one or two directions and let me mention three.

The first was in New Delhi, the CHOGM in 1983. This was shortly after I had arrived. I thought after having had this Expert Group on obstacles to the North-South dialogue, let's see if we can produce a text for the Commonwealth as a whole to adopt, facing up to the fact that there were these differences and what we were going to do about them in the light of the Brandt Report and so on. As a result of that, with the help of the Indian government as host, the Secretariat offered a draft and other delegations took it and turned it into the Declaration of New Delhi. That is of considerable interest simply because, previous to that, no group of governments had attempted to offer a solution to the problem of this sort. Now, the question arose, do the Secretariat take credit for it or do the governments? My answer to it was that of any lifelong official, you always give credit to the minister. There is no point in trying to take it for yourself.

The second illustration is in the Nassau CHOGM of 1985. That was the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signature of the UN Charter. There, a committee of the General Assembly had been spending a year trying to draft an agreed declaration. They failed. So, we thought within the Secretariat it's perfectly possible for us to produce a draft which we think would reflect the opinions of the vast majority of the UN. We presented this draft to heads of government at Nassau who adopted it within 15 minutes and there exists the Declaration of the New World Order which most of the members of the UN would I'm sure have gone along with but nevertheless they couldn't agree on among themselves.

The third, and in a way the most forward-looking, example I would give of this was in the Vancouver CHOGM of 1987. President Gayoom of the Maldives had just made a speech in the UN about the problem of rising sea levels and climate change. He came and repeated his concerns at the CHOGM in Vancouver. President Ershad of Bangladesh said, "We've got a bit of a problem with flooding, too." After some discussion, they said that the Commonwealth Secretariat ought to set up a group about this. Now, it was rather interesting because of course the issue at that time was far less generally accepted than it is now. It was thought to be moonshine, by and large, by a number of people, especially those interested in the burning of solid fossil fuels. Anyway, we'll have set up an exercise which on the one hand accepts the realities of the situation and on the other side responds, as we always wanted to do, to the wishes of heads of government.

The terms of reference which we drafted and were agreed by the heads of government were fourfold. We began by saying, "What is the state and what is our knowledge of this problem?" Secondly, which countries in the Commonwealth are likely to be affected? Thirdly, what can they do themselves about this problem? Fourthly, what can the international community do to help them? That, I regard as a template for how we can approach a problem on a useful and practical basis. We're now talking, my years were 1983-88, the Cold War came to an end in 1989. The dreadful problems of Southern and then South Africa were resolved in Commonwealth terms in the early 90s. In UN-terms, this meant two of the great constraints on international cooperation were removed and the results of this were reflected in a very practical way – in the declarations of the UN on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1995, the millennium and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2005 which is the text you have here.

Now, you could, one, look at this text you can see just how the situation has changed. The word 'political', by the way, doesn't appear in any of these headings. The word 'economic' is attached to various other things. What we're talking about here are the problems of living, both collective and individual. What can be done about them? Development, peace and collective security, human

rights and the rule of law and of course the machinery. Now, I think that the more I look back at my time in the Secretariat I can see that we were in a very particular situation and that Sonny, as a five-star Secretary-General, was in a very interesting and almost unique position to respond to it. The Commonwealth and the Commonwealth Secretariat had a good deal to do as a consequence. What the significance of our contribution is, we will leave to history to decide but I can't think that they weren't a fair degree of importance to it. I think I've said all I want to say in my introduction except may I just, I wanted to refer to what you were saying, Sue, at the beginning, what a great pity that Vishnu isn't here and that his admirable paper which I know everybody has studied very closely, really sets out the detail of these issues in the time which he and his colleagues were dealing with it in the Economic Affairs Division.

My privilege and pleasure was to observe what they were doing and do what I could to sell them to other United Nations institutions. For example, we, the Commonwealth Secretariat had civil service status at the World Bank, IMF, Joint Development Committee and we used to have meetings of finance committees with the Finance ministers on the eve of these annual finance meetings which Vishnu refers to. The first thing that I would do on getting into the World Bank and IMF meeting was go straight to the Secretariat and give them the communiqué which we had just issued among the Commonwealth to the Finance ministers. We were listened to. There's no doubt about that. By way of comment on ministers, finance meetings, it was the first one I went to, it was in Port of Spain and Sonny was making a speech crafted, very carefully, by Vishnu and others; and when he was reading it he came to the bottom of one page and moving onto the next he saw there was some discontinuity. So he stopped and said, "I need help." What happened was, of course, page 13 was missing in his copy of the thing and the missing page 13 enabling him to proceed from 12-14 logically, was supplied to him. The next morning the Trinidad Guardian had the most misleading headline of the year – "Ramphal at a loss for words".

**SO: Sir Peter, thank you very much indeed. If I could now ask Edwin Laurent to reflect on his time as head of International Trade and Regional Cooperation. I'm curious to know what your relations were with the wider world? With Whitehall perhaps, and also how far did you use Sir Peter's template for approaching problems, in the methodological way that he did?**

EL: Thank you very much, Sue. I must say, my time was six years in that position and it ended last year. During that time, the world had certainly moved on and changed considerably, not just politically but also its economic structures. The Secretariat itself had also, I think, probably, retreated to a certain extent from certain areas of economic intervention and support. Before joining the Secretariat, I did have a very favourable impression which was formed from the recollections of the Brandt Commission and anti-Apartheid leadership role and also the reputation of the Secretariat in many developing countries as a very effective provider of technical assistance. It was not big, but it was considered to be able to provide good quality and timely assistance. So, I had a very favourable impression from the start. During my time, I think my understanding certainly evolved considerably and unlike several of the other speakers, one of the things that probably also helped to influence the way I look at things is that I did spend some time in the Staff Association as President. Being involved in this way with the people who actually deliver those big plans etc., gives you a certain insight that is impossible to get if you have never engaged with them and understood things from their perspective. In management one looks at the big picture and the

goal; but for the staff, the issues and the priorities can be different so this has influenced my perspective.

First, I want to say, though, that development should not be considered as an orphan. It is an essential pillar of the Commonwealth and I think most people probably agree with this. What is clear is that the Commonwealth would lack purpose and not, make sense to probably the majority of its members if the development component was not prioritised.

What does the Secretariat really seek to achieve in the development sphere? I think it is two things. One is to help those member states that are not sufficiently able, for whatever reason; because they are very small; because they are LDCs or otherwise; to be able to come up with the appropriate public policies and to implement and manage those policies in a way that will contribute to their development. That is one aspect.

The other thing which the Secretariat seeks to do is to influence the external environment within which these countries currently operate in order to make that environment more supportive of development. The extent to which it satisfies those two objectives should be the basis on which the Secretariat's performance and the types of policies it develops should be measured. It uses of course a number of mechanisms to pursue its development goals and some of those have been alluded to both by Sir Peter and by Vishnu in his excellent paper.

I want to address some of the challenges that the Secretariat faces in pursuing development goals. I know that maybe some of what I say might be controversial but, well I'll say it anyway. The first challenge is an absence of what I would call a political guidance structure for reaching Commonwealth wide consensus on the detailed aims of development policy and its implementation. In the political area, it is clear; that such structures exist. You've got CHOGM, you've got CMAG etc. On the economic side, the finance ministers do meet but they only address a fairly specific area which is finance and very much linked to collaboration or involvement with the Bretton Woods Institutions. Further they sometimes meet for less than half a day so they are not able to address the full range of economic policy and development issues.

What of the High Commissioners? One could ask, "Yes, the High Commissioners do meet regularly," but they tend not to be the diplomatic representatives given responsibility by their governments for external economic and related issues like development cooperation and the WTO. The Secretariat is therefore forced to operate very much on its own. The result being that it is very diffident about what it can do, or what it can say, because it does not have clear guidance and is not sure that it will have political backing for innovative approaches to the delivery of development support.

The other challenge is the financial. Of course, we know money is short in the Secretariat. The budget is very small and this limits what it can do. That is obvious. As a result of that, it relies on donors. This reliance on external donors though has implications because, most importantly, I think the objectives of the donor and the Secretariat will not necessarily coincide. There can be conflicts and I can think of some that are very pertinent. For instance, the Commonwealth at the political level is very committed to small states, but focusing on the small states is not the priority of most donors. Many of them want to focus on the poorest of the poor.

The other problem is that donors are under political pressure to be accountable and that accountability often has to be met within the political and budgetary cycle; but development is a process, a long-term process and the activities that are undertaken will not necessarily yield results within the short-term. Results are often realisable only in the medium to longer-term.

The consequence of the need for accountability has been that development agencies, including the Secretariat have adopted a project-approach. Now, whilst the project-approach can be very practical for managing activities; in terms of development, discrete projects are not necessarily the best approaches for contributing to long-term development. One needs a programme of coherent activities that will support and eventually lead to development. A project on its own will not do so. This approach has clear disadvantages for the Secretariat itself in that as a result of needing to ensure effective management, particularly financial, individual officers have to be held responsible for the management, preparation, oversight etc. of individual projects. As a result of that, there is not the pooling of intellectual resources and effort across divisions and within divisions. One might say that there can almost be a silo-mentality, which is a side-effect of this.

Measurement of the true value and genuine impact of technical assistance on development is another area which I think the Secretariat and probably no other development agency has yet been able to really make significant advance. The reason why I say that it is a challenge is because it is so important. How can you manage something unless you are in a position to objectively review and measure the results and its impact? Assistance and development activities will hopefully have an impact on economic growth and development, but this takes time and not necessarily in a way that is readily quantifiable. Let me just use an example to be concrete. If one supports, for instance, the participation of exporters in a trade fair, you could work out that so much has been sold, orders generated or business contacts established, so you arrive at a rapid result. However, if you provide support to trade negotiators, how do you measure that the specific activity has actually been of benefit? Its benefit will only be realised when the trade officials negotiate more successfully and that impacts on trade performance and economic growth. This is very difficult to compute objectively and is way, way down the line; most probably outside of the budgetary and political cycle.

So, these are the areas. Having said this, I want to emphasise that they are certainly not insurmountable obstacles or challenges. The Secretariat, though, has continued along the lines already alluded to by Sir Peter where it has sought to engage in outreach. This is done by helping countries in negotiations and trying to help build international consensus around certain issues and I want to refer to just two examples where this was done quite successfully. One was during the EPA negotiations; the negotiations between the African, Caribbean and Pacific and the European Union. The Secretariat along with Francophonie arranged for various ministers particularly from Africa, to have informal encounters with their counterparts in countries of Europe, with people like Mrs Lagarde when she was Minister of Trade in France; and more recently it arranged a gathering of African ministers with Catherine Ashton. The idea was to help the negotiations by promoting understanding. You bring these people together in Marlborough House, away from the rough and tumble of the negotiating table, to really exchange information.



To conclude on the issue of the diplomatic, what you call in your note, the external dynamics. I would say that whilst the Commonwealth and the Secretariat are very beneficial in the economic-diplomatic area, the Commonwealth is punching way below its weight. If you consider the number of countries, their diversity and the economic and political power of the members, the potential influence that the Commonwealth countries as a group can exert internationally should have been much more than it actually is. This is a real pity because in my view there is no institution with that sort of mandate and authority for advancing Commonwealth principles in the economic area. And most importantly for the majority of Commonwealth members, there is no other major international institution in which the small, the LDCs and marginalised countries have a real voice.

I think it is a pity that the Commonwealth Secretariat does not realise its potential in the development sphere. It's not though just a matter of saying the Secretariat should do better, because in order to do so, it would need a political guidance framework from which to operate. Thank you very much.

**SO: Thank you very much indeed. I'd now like to ask Matthew Battey if he'd like to respond, before introducing a degree of discussion to this session.**

MB: Thank you very much. My name is Matthew Battey and I'm a PhD student at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, currently researching the CFTC and its history. I'd just like to raise a few points very briefly about technical assistance and the Commonwealth's development history and hopefully respond to some of the points made by the witnesses. First of all, to speak directly to one of the points raised directly by Mr Laurent, I think you spoke of the reliance on donors within the Commonwealth and I think it's interesting to think about the history of the technical assistance programmes in this context because the CPTC was formed in 1967, which was a precursor to the CFTC. I think what's interesting is one of the things that is a real sticking point in terms of the transition to a centralised fund is the scepticism over multilateral aid expressed, especially within the British government, I think. I was wondering if there was perhaps an on-going tension between multilateral and bilateral aid and whether that has affected the Commonwealth's abilities in development, particularly in terms of finance.

Secondly, I thought we could consider the Commonwealth's relationships within the global context of development and development institutes. Sir Peter Marshall mentioned the economic strategy of the Commonwealth in the context of global economics and perhaps we could talk about the ways in which the Secretariat has interacted with an organisation like the FAO and other development-oriented institutions.

The final point I thought we could consider was whether the CFTC is part of an overall economic strategy of the Secretariat, or whether there is a kind of narrowness of mandate that has affected the Commonwealth's ability to push an economic agenda.

**SO: Thank you very much, Matthew. Sir Peter, would you like to begin by responding to those points?**

PMA: I'll take them in the reverse order. Should one be thinking of the CFTC, when it existed separately, as being part of a strategy? The answer to that is yes. I mean, we usually have an annual CFTC meeting alongside the Commonwealth Finance

Ministers' Meeting. There was a picture there, but that didn't mean that technical assistance wasn't financed differently and a very great contribution by the Canadians in particular. As ever, there was a certain defensiveness about how far the CFTC should be able to decide what it did, rather than having the decision made for it by the rest of the Secretariat. As to where the Secretariat as a whole, including the CFTC, which I suppose is what you're talking about Matthew, is how does that relate to the UN system as a whole? Well, we used to have meetings with Ministers of Agriculture at FAO headquarters, a Commonwealth meeting alongside the main conference, the same for Ministers of Labour. I don't think we periodically had any others. I don't think there were any others but the answer is, to the system as a whole, I think the argument would be that the Commonwealth Secretariat was so involved in a very large number of issues that it was part of our consciousness, certainly in my case given I had spent so much time in the UN.

On your first point, going back to the multilateral and bilateral. Well, there is a tension there. There is a suggestion that multilateral aid on the whole is less efficient than bilateral aid and certainly multilateral aid is dispensed through the EEC. It's arduous to get hold of and also rather expensive. One of the great fortes of the Commonwealth Secretariat in my day is what used to be called ECDC – Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries, where you are talking about the techniques available and acquired and practised in one developing country or group of developing countries, was applicable in another. Perhaps between the African and Asian or African and Caribbean or whatever it may be. Now, that's rather a different question, whether the flow of know-how comes from the developed world to the developing world, but I think it's very important. We regard the ECDC as being a very important aspect of the work, also not least because it was so much more economic.

**SO: Thank you, Sir Peter. Edwin?**

EL: On the issue of multilateral versus bilateral aid, I would say that beneficiary countries would consider systems like the CFTC to be multilateral. My recollection from before coming to the Secretariat was that that its aid was held in the highest regard, with a much better reputation than equivalent bilateral technical aid schemes such as those of the USA and others. Not in terms of volume, but in part because it was not similarly tied. Of course, the CFTC itself is also a recipient of funding from some of those bilateral donors so there are also other dynamics at play here.

On the other question which you raised regarding the UN agencies, etc: I think, that the Secretariat has collaborated very well with a range of institutions. It has to do this out of necessity because it does not have the resources, particularly financial and manpower, so it leverages its relationships in order to be of much greater value. The challenge that it always has to face when it is doing this is to ensure that its interests are not subsumed by those of very powerful players, such as the WTO, World Bank, etc. Thanks.

**SO: Mr Bailur, you would like to pose a question?**

GB: My name is Gurudas Bailur and I worked in the Secretariat for 10 years, from 1985-1995 in the Division of Food Production and Rural Development to begin with and subsequently when it was discontinued, in the Agricultural Development Unit as a part of Export and Industrial Development Division of CFTC. My experience of these ten years has been that the Secretariat is in a position to

provide crucially important technical assistance to developing member countries because of the expertise that it has within its own member countries. The subsequent downgrading of the CTFC and abolition of Divisions like FPRD, I think has been a mistake because that deprived the Secretariat of playing a crucial role in assisting member countries. The reason advanced for the abolition of this area of work was that we were duplicating the work of other international agencies. For example, it was said that FPRD and other technical Divisions of CFTC were duplicating the work of FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) and other counterpart UN organisations. The IDU, Industrial Development Unit was said to be duplicating the work of UNIDO. This was the argument advanced for the abolition of these divisions.

This is a fallacious argument because the Secretariat has a different role to play vis-à-vis the multinational organisations because their resources are large, their investment thresholds are very high as they do not entertain smaller projects. They do not provide the kind of technical assistance the Secretariat can provide. I would say that in a sense, these multinational organisations like FAO, UNIDO, and other bigger UN organisations provide hardware in terms of plenty of funds for huge projects but not much of assistance is given to upgrading the capability of the national for implementing these projects, whereas the Secretariat was in a position to provide the software in terms of developing the capacity of personnel and formulating small projects and things of this nature, which these agencies are not able to cater for.

I can think of a number of examples of this kind. For example, the Maldives wanted a project for fisheries development and an international development organisation wanted to fund this project. They however wanted Maldives to submit a well-formulated project. The Maldives was not in a position to formulate it because the staff involved was so busy in day-to-day management that they didn't have the time nor the capacity to sit back and formulate a project. So, we were called in. We formulated a project within 3-4 weeks because we were full-time on the job. So, we formulated a project and it was submitted to a donor agency for funding. If this kind of catalytic assistance was not provided by the Secretariat, the member countries who need assistance for smaller projects, smaller investments, would not have been able to take advantage of the assistance available from bigger multilateral donor agencies. So, there is a crucial role that the Secretariat can play in terms of human resource development, formulation of projects, small viable projects and upgrading the technical capabilities of member countries.

I can give you another example of post-harvest technology. Now, if you go to Africa you notice that in most countries the food grain is scattered on the ground and vehicles pass on the grains and that's how they thresh their wheat, rice or whatever they are producing, whereas if you ask donor agencies, they will provide them with huge combine harvesters which are of no relevance to them. So, I took them to India and showed them small post-harvest technology machines, small hand operated threshers which don't cost more than, say £500-600. They were then imported by African member countries and subsequently fabricated locally. This technology saves a lot of food grain which was otherwise wasted in threshing on the road.

So, I'm giving these examples to show that there is a crucial role that the Secretariat could have played in this area, which nobody else is playing. It was a mistake to abolish or downgrade these economic development divisions like Agriculture and Rural Development, Industrial Development Unit, Export-Market

Development Division etc. The economic development divisions had a crucial role to play which in a sense, I think the Secretariat should have been proud of as it was a very important, crucial and catalytic role that it could play in manpower development and upgrading the capabilities of the member states in taking advantage of the assistance available from bigger donor agencies. Thank you.

**SO: Thank you very much indeed. Would either of the witnesses like to respond? Was this catalytic small-scale project approach was already established when you came to the Secretariat, or whether this was an innovation on your watch?**

PMA: During my time at the Secretariat that this dilemma existed between programme and project aid to which Edwin was referring and I think that is a permanent dilemma. What I was doing while I was listening, when everyone was speaking, was looking at the exact wording of the Commonwealth Charter under the rubric 'Sustainable Development' which is Section 9. Now, when you look and see at the way this is drafted, it is so complicated and interrelated that if you haven't got a fairly large amount of money on which to base what you're trying to do, you are going to be faced with some with very difficult and arbitrary decisions. In other words, this a great programme covering the economic and social fields, not only as they affect individuals but international cooperation, national policies and national priorities.

I think the fundamental problem facing the Secretariat is have we simply got enough basic resources to be able to contemplate dealing or tackling these problems in the scale of which they are set out here in the Charter? Edwin, I think as I understood what you were saying. This is the dilemma, isn't it?

EL: I wasn't actually planning to add anything except to say that I think it is probably quite legitimate for the Secretariat to look at its own resources and figure out where it could spend best. Also, look at other donors or other institutions, and what they're doing in the field. Unfortunately, I really don't have any information on this because by the time I got to the Secretariat, those agricultural projects had already been sunsetted.

**SO: If I could just return to one question which Matthew put about the Commonwealth Secretariat's relationships with global economic institutions, or with FAO: to what extent was there a concentrated and on-going comparative process at the Secretariat, comparing intellectual ideas and where limited funds could be best spent?**

PMA: I think the answer to that is not to any great extent. I mean, our remit comes very largely from heads of government. We were a responsive organisation, therefore we were asked to do what it was that governments wanted us to do. So, the idea that, on a sufficient scale, would be able to compare notes with something of the size of the FAO or the other major agencies, I suppose, it wouldn't really arise.

EL: Fortunately in some areas, things are changing and there has been more institutionalised interchange with some agencies. For instance, in the case of UNCTAD there is a formal agreement for a long time and the Commonwealth Secretariat has worked very closely with the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of countries, the majority of which actually belong to the Commonwealth. For other institutions as well, the Secretariat collaborates on an ad hoc or sometimes a project/programme-basis. I think that is a move in the right direction because it makes best use of the limited resources. Thanks.

**SO: Dame Veronica, you had a question you'd like to pose?**

VS: I'm Veronica Sutherland. I was Peter Marshall's successor but three, as DSG (Economic), but I came to the job without his very extensive background in economic diplomacy. I've been fascinated by the two very thoughtful presentations we've had and I'd just like to offer some personal insights or perspectives on them. I would also like to identify three particular areas where I think the Secretariat has a great deal to be proud of and, as Amitav Banerji did, I would like to give a comment or a mark as to how the Secretariat has done in particular areas. I would give 'Very Good' to the three areas that I am about to mention. The first is debt-forgiveness in relation to the highly indebted poor countries and, as we all know, there is a long history of Commonwealth activity on the HIPC area starting, I think, with the Brandt Commission and going through the Trinidad Initiatives and the Naples Terms and so on. In all of this one of the critical areas has been the way that the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' meetings have fed into the annual meetings of the IMF World Bank and there is no doubt in my mind that the Commonwealth communiqués and influence have been very considerable in the way that the HIPC Initiative has been launched and has been followed up.

Therefore I was very interested when Edwin Laurent, if I've understood correctly, thought that the Commonwealth had insufficient influence in comparison to its size and the diversity of its membership. I'd put it slightly differently. I think it has had very considerable influence and that that influence has been very, very considerably underplayed. Why that should be, I don't quite know. If you look, for example, you may think this is a slightly trivial example but it nevertheless is interesting. If you look at the Wikipedia entry on HIPC, if you Google that, you get the fact that it was launched by the IMF World Bank in 1996 following pressure from a number of non-governmental organisations. If the Commonwealth is dismissed as just one of many NGOs - with no disrespect to the other NGOs - I think that's rather sad, actually. I think the Commonwealth has a very good story to tell and I think I'm waiting for a PhD candidate to tell it.

The second area I would highlight has already been mentioned by Edwin Laurent, namely small states. I think the Commonwealth has certainly been out in the forefront of promoting the interest of small states, giving a voice to those whose voice in international affairs is very small. There are a number of ways that this has been done. Most recently, I see that the Secretary-General went to Geneva and opened an office there that can be used by small states' representatives. That kind of activity is enormously important, enabling states which perhaps have very, very few highly-qualified people. Sadly they will never operate on an equal footing with the large countries but this will at least give them a better chance of having their voice heard. So, I think those are two areas where the Secretariat, the Commonwealth as a whole, can be really proud of the contribution they have made.

The last one I would mention is perhaps rather a particular one. It is a project in fact. It is the Iwokrama Rainforest Project. I mention it because it is an international project involving the Commonwealth Secretariat and, originally, the government of Guyana. It involves international scientists and it has trustees from around the world. When I was in the Secretariat and I visited it a number of times, at one stage this project looked as though it could never succeed, so difficult were the issues it confronted. My understanding now is that it is on a very much more sound footing and is something, again, that the Secretariat can take great credit

for, for seeing this through and for ensuring the existence of a project designed to investigate how best to preserve rainforests, how to protect the livelihoods of those who live there to the greater benefit of everybody who cares about the environment. I think that is another very fine story. So, I do think the Secretariat in these areas has much to be proud of and I'm glad to have been involved in them in the time I was here.

EL: Just very briefly, I certainly don't object to anything what Dame Veronica has said except I want to clarify a bit on the Commonwealth punching below its weight. There has been a lot that it has done and it can do, which is of tremendous value. But consider the importance of the group and I don't recall all of the statistics, with about 54 members that is about one third of the countries of the world and about a quarter of its population and then there is the economic weight. Then look at what impact it is actually having as a group as opposed to the individual members of the Commonwealth exerting influence in the WTO, in the World Bank etc. As a group, it really is not having that much influence in international economic governance. Thanks.

**SO: Antony Ellman, would you like to add to this?**

AE: Thank you very much. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to be here this morning so I should introduce myself. I'm an agronomist. I worked in the Secretariat in the Food Production and Rural Development Division from 1976-84, just before Mr Bailur came in. I came to this job after six years of working in Tanzania on the UK bilateral assistance programme and then five years in Sri Lanka on an FAO programme. So, I've seen the bilateral, the multilateral and the Commonwealth environment and I come out very strongly in favour of the Commonwealth - otherwise I wouldn't be here today! In Sri Lanka I was part of a team with a Japanese economist, an Egyptian water engineer, a Turkish construction engineer, a Bangladeshi sociologist and a Dutch geographer and it was a Tower of Babel. There was very poor communication within the team and as a result, pretty poor communication with our Sri Lankan colleagues.

By contrast coming to the Commonwealth Secretariat was a delight, to work in a multicultural environment where people understood each other, spoke the same language, not just English but having had similar colonial experiences and retaining similar administrative systems. Agricultural extension and integrated pest management, for example, mean the same thing to you whether you're from Fiji, Nigeria or Jamaica. The terms are incomprehensible if you're from Brazil or Indonesia.

We worked with people at different levels. I was involved mainly with grassroots programmes, regional programmes for technology exchange, regional training programmes. We ran a very effective training programme for agricultural managers in the Caribbean, another one for irrigation managers in South Asia which resulted in significant advances in curriculum development, teaching material preparation and these were regional programmes which catalysed many requests to CFTC for single-country follow up projects. I agree fully with Mr Bailur that one needs to have programmes which feed into single-country or even multi-country projects.

Comparing my time here with the time I spent in Sri Lanka with FAO and in Tanzania with DFID; we had much less money to spend and we therefore planned the use of it extremely carefully. I think that we were far more cost-effective than the other programmes that I had worked on.

I also had some experience of working at a higher diplomatic level in a Commonwealth context. The pre-FAO conference meetings of Commonwealth Ministers of Agriculture, which Sir Peter mentioned, were quite useful but I felt here we were trying to punch above our weight and I'm not sure that much was achieved (however, it's better to punch above one's weight than below it!) I also represented the Secretariat at a CILSS meeting in Ouagadougou. CILSS is the French acronym for Interstate Committee for the Battle against Drought in the Sahel, an organisation which involves Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Cameroon as well as the francophone West African countries. The Commonwealth ministers clearly felt much more comfortable talking with each other in these meetings. I remember the Nigerian minister saying these French get-togethers are completely hopeless – all form and no content.

The biggest downside of working in the Commonwealth Secretariat in my time, which may have been overcome since, flowed I think from the Secretariat's recruitment policy for diplomatic staff, namely that a director of a division should not stay in the post for more than 5 years. That applied to assistant directors, too. Mr Bailur seems to have managed to survive for 10 years. Compared to him, I was not so successful. I found that in many cases, a new director would feel he had to come in with a new broom, sweeping out the existing programmes that he found and bringing in his own initiatives to make his mark. This resulted in a lack of continuity which was counterproductive, particularly in agriculture and rural development which are by their nature long term. The problem was overcome to some extent by the project staff, many of whom were there for the long term, but I thought that changing the recruitment policy for diplomatic staff was one of the ways in which the Secretariat could have got a bigger return on the investment that it made. Thank you.

**SO: Thank you very much indeed. So, it was not simply a question of challenges from outside and bureaucratic silos inside the Secretariat, such as limits on the pooling of resources across divisions, but also appointment practices, helping to undermine institutional knowledge then. Simon, you wanted to make a point?**

SG Thank you. It was actually a point that I was discussing with Dame Veronica in the lunch break, in fact the rotation policy in the Secretariat continues to be a challenge, especially in an institution of this size. You'll be pleased to know that the lifespan of a director can now be extended as long as 6 years. Nonetheless, it remains an enormous challenge for the organisation because after about 4 years, you naturally start to look for alternative pastures and that does have an effect to the extent to which the Secretariat can be, if you like, the heartbeat of a modern Commonwealth because it's constantly losing its institutional memory at a senior level. Equally, on the other hand, it does not mean that there is a constant refreshment and new blood coming in. So, it's a two-way street in that regard.

I was just recalling the title – the Heartbeat of a Modern Commonwealth – and your description of the Secretariat up to 2013 and we've been looking at this in slightly historical terms and I think it's probably germane, particularly from what Matthew was asking before about multilateral aid, to ask whether or not the Commonwealth in 2013, is the modern heartbeat, whether it is relevant in terms of its contribution to sustainable development and technical assistance. I think that it's probably worth saying that from the sustainable development point of view the answer is probably yes. It's right there on the button and in fact it's leading the charge in many respects. That fact that it was the Commonwealth Secretariat that

encouraged the G20 to form the Working Group on Development and that became an outcome of the Canadian G20 Summit. No bells, no whistles, no sort of ownership, simply encouraging the political level and the result was born. The Highly-Indebted and Poor Country Initiative was mentioned before, a number of trade statements over the years which have moved along the Doha round and other rounds, the Uruguay round. I think these are all examples of statements more recently and the G20 work, more recently, have highlighted the on-going relevance and the modernity of what's being done by the Secretariat.

The technical assistance continues to be seen, I would suggest, through rose-tinted spectacles by us, the Commonwealth brethren and family and we'd like to be viewed positively. Some of those who contribute to it are less enamoured and that's partly because of that concern about multilateral aid and whether it's impactful, but it also speaks to whether or not we are being relevant and what we do and how we do it. The Secretariat has been the subject of a number of criticisms in recent years. Its training programme, for instance, has been lambasted for being pretty poor quality and that's a criticism the organisation is trying to respond to. On the other hand, it is difficult for an organisation of which CFTC is a mutual fund and it's very difficult when you're being measured by one country according to its criteria. The recent Multilateral Aid Review by the largest contributor to CFTC concluded that the Secretariat's development work, its technical assistance was not particularly good but we then looked deeper into that and discovered that it was being measured against the 10 components of that particular country's development objectives as much as Edwin was saying before, the fact that small states do not feature in those 10 components of that donor's development programme, well, it's no surprise that we don't score highly and we're never going to score highly. We'll always be criticised, irrespective of how good the work is we do with small states. I thought I'd take the opportunity to throw that in.

**SO: Thank you very much indeed. Michael Sinclair, you wish to make a contribution?**

MS: I was Assistant Director of the Education Programme here from March 1982 – September 1985 and for eight months prior to June 1984 I was Acting Director until Peter Williams came on board full-time. Before I joined the Secretariat, I learned about a programme which hasn't been mentioned specifically here. It was usually called TAG, T-A-G, by its acronym – Technical Assistance Group. My understanding was that it was to be a very specialised form of technical assistance by a limited number of CFTC advisors, including people like John Syson, whose name will be recognised by some of you, as well as other people who would provide advice on call, on very highly specialised and technical subjects. For example, to help governments deal with big multinational mining companies in terms of negotiations and so on. I'm not sure what happened to TAG over subsequent years including, I will confess, while I was working here. We were very compartmentalised in those days and people working in one section didn't know an awful lot about another section unless there was some interaction.

So, first, my hope would be that there is some institutional memory about the effectiveness or otherwise of that process and secondly if there is anyone here who can articulate, generally, what was the assessment of that particular approach? I would welcome hearing that, briefly.

**SO: Sir Peter, would you care to reflect on that?**



PMA: I do remember this business of having a facility to respond very quickly to specific questions because one Saturday afternoon I was rung up by a minister of finance from a Caribbean Commonwealth country saying they were going to be at the Paris Club on Monday and he wanted some expert advice. We dug somebody out of deep retirement in Oxfordshire and got him there on time, but whether this programme was ever assessed in the way you were asking, I don't know that happened. It might have been something rather special to John Syson. On the other hand, I do think that the general question of being able to respond to specific questions from member countries is very important and I think it ought to be a priority in addition to the sort of general perceptions of what we should be doing, which we ought to be having given that we've got a budget from heads of government.

**SO: Edwin?**

EL: Thanks. I fully agree with this and TAG was certainly before my time but what is important in this is what I think Sir Peter is alluding to; the need for that type of rapid response and high-level sort of support. The case for it is that there is no other institution for Commonwealth LDCs and small states can turn to.

Now, going to the intervention by Simon and again I don't have too much of a difficulty with most of what he said, but I think that we should not judge the Secretariat, too harshly; and neither should the Secretariat itself. I agree that a lot of the capacity building projects and the activities can be a waste of time. But it's not just Commonwealth Secretariat projects; in fact, probably the Commonwealth Secretariat is more effective than many of the other donor institutions, such as the EU etc. I've looked at some of those programmes managed by other institutions and they can sometimes look as if they have been devised just to spend money, not to have any real developmental impact.

So, the Commonwealth, as deficient as it has sometimes been portrayed to be, is probably no worse than others, but could actually be much better than them. I think the Secretariat is strong in technical assistance and if one speaks with a lot of the beneficiaries, where some of them need specialised expertise very quickly, they just cannot get this via any other institution. I think this is maybe the area we should be paying more attention to. Thank you.

**SO: Thank you very much indeed to both witnesses and the respondent and from the contributions from around the table. I think this has been an excellent discussion on sustainable development, emphasising yes the limitations and impediments to the Secretariat's work on sustainable development but also emphasising the qualified but still success story that is the Commonwealth and development. It's now time for tea. We're breaking only briefly for 15 minutes before the discussion on human resource development. Thank you.**

*Session 4 – Education and Health*

**VS:** I hope you had a nice cup of tea and are ready for the next session. Now, as I said earlier, I came as the DSG Economic and Social in 1999 and I supervised a very wide range of subjects to the extent that I couldn't really take a close, in detail, interest in absolutely every corner of this empire I had been presented with. Fortunately, I had excellent professionals in areas where I particularly needed them and I would say that specifically of both education and health. So, I'm very pleased that we have got, this afternoon, two experts in the field. On my left is Dr Peter Williams, whom I'll ask to begin. He preceded Professor Stephen Matlin, whom I supervised when he was Director of the Health and Education Division in the late-90s, when I was here. Taking things chronologically, we'll start with Dr Williams. He'll talk about education. Stephen will also add health to his presentation because the person who had been planning to speak about health, Ken Stuart, unfortunately can't be with us. So, Peter, can I ask you to begin please?

**PW:** Thank you very much. Although I am a doctor, it's only an honorary doctorate and it was the source of huge disappointment to the Secretariat when I arrived from a chair in London University that I had to tell them that if you resign a chair, you give up your professorship. They were dying to call me Professor Peter Williams the whole time I was here and I had to tell them that I wasn't entitled to the title. On Madhuri's point - I hope by the way, she can take part in this session after I and Stephen have contributed, because although we are from the education and health fields, I think human resource development is wider than that and I imagine we shall get back into the discussion of technical assistance and professional cooperation generally. I think neither Stephen nor I would want that just to be limited to education and health if people have something to say about the wider scene. I don't know if Madhuri is still here but she referred to her work as the Cinderella of the Secretariat and I think that those of us who worked in the Human Resource Development programmes and maybe particularly those of us that were Secretariat and not CFTC-based, always felt ourselves to be somewhat marginalised and Cinderellas in the Secretariat.

One accepts that the political and economic work of an organisation like the Commonwealth will always be paramount, but one result of the fact that the senior management is traditionally recruited from diplomatic ranks, with perhaps some economists, is that the areas of professional, scientific and technological development are not always as well-led by professionals as they might be. On the fact of marginalisation: before I came here I looked back at my notes, my resignation note to the Secretary-General, and was complaining that when a document like the Harare Declaration was drafted, nobody from any of the professional divisions played a part in the drafting of it. I went to four successive CHOGMs but was never on the initial list as someone to go there: and then, because things like student mobility, the creation of the Commonwealth of Learning, brain drain and other issues which connected education came onto the agenda at the last minute, I was incorporated in all four of them. It is not insignificant that when you look down the list that the ICS itself has prepared of key events in the development of the Secretariat in the last 48 years, you see that on March 7<sup>th</sup> 1988 three IRA members were shot dead in Gibraltar, but you do not see that on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1988 the Commonwealth of Learning's Memorandum of Understanding was signed and that that was the initiation of one of the three Commonwealth inter-governmental organisations!

Now, okay, I'm trivialising but it does actually, to those of us who work in these areas, that is not insignificant because if you worked in this building in the professional fields, you did have the feeling that you were thought of at the last minute and it is of no surprise to me that it has recently been suggested that Educational and Health should follow FPRD and the industrial development division into obscurity and oblivion and nor is it surprising to me that the developing Commonwealth has united to say, "Not if we can avoid it. Keep them because they are central to what we're about." In a young Commonwealth, where half of the population is aged 25 or under, it's quite understandable. I was in the Secretariat as a director. I don't know how I managed to survive as a director for 10 years. I don't remember it being an issue at the end of 5 years, whether the policy had changed, I don't know. I was director from 1984-1994, almost 10 years. At the time we did have quite a continuity of staff. Towards the end of my time, the great Leilani De Silva-Packer who had been our Secretary of Education for about 15 years was finally forced out and we lost a lot of our institutional memory, but it was a tremendous help having someone who could remember everything that had happened in the past.

One relevant function in our programme - and I suppose this is paralleled elsewhere- was, I think, partly to serve and support member countries in grappling with their own problems in educational development or organising schools or training teachers or education in rural communities, whatever they needed help with. That was done partly through exchange of experience through meetings and seminars, preparing resource books, setting out the policy options and so on. Partly, it was done through direct technical assistance from the Fellowships and Training Programme and the GTA, the General Technical Assistance Programme of CFTC. Quite often they would ask us as education staff, for our opinion about what should be done, whether they should support a request, but quite often they would recruit members of the Education Programme, as we were then, to go and deliver the assistance themselves. I remember being sent on at least three university commissions in Africa to serve on those setting up new universities.

Part of our function was to help countries grapple with the international order and to develop structures for international cooperation because although education is quite largely domestic, increasingly it's becoming more and more a place where you have to interface with other countries on Recognition of Qualifications, Student and Teacher Mobility, Brain Drain, approaching problems of migrants and a whole lot of problems that have come up since that are going to be important about general agreement on trade and services, whether you're going to let the big multinationals into your country to actually own chains of schools, which is very likely to be on the agenda now that privatisation of education is on many countries' horizons.

We played quite a big part in some of the big international campaigns, Education for All, setting up the Association for the Development of Education in Africa to which international agencies give support. Support and development of the Commonwealth infrastructure in education was extremely high on our agenda and in education, as you probably know - and you can pick up a bit of advertising here in the shape of a Directory of Commonwealth Education and a book about Commonwealth education cooperation - more than in any other field you've got this huge infrastructure in education, for example the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. People don't realise that this is a multinational framework with bilateral assistance. People don't realise that almost as much as is spent on

CFTC multilaterally is spent by countries bilaterally on funding Commonwealth Scholarships. I mean, the UK which is much the biggest donor, particularly now that Canada is going to pull out, spent £23m this year on Commonwealth Scholarships. It is prominent and huge. The Commonwealth of Learning was brought into existence in the 1980s, during the time when I was director. The Commonwealth Institute was still there: it has since become the Commonwealth Education Trust but it has substantial resources. And then you have got all the big voluntary agencies, particularly the Association of Commonwealth Universities, a big organisation that has about 40-50 staff, even more now, although because although we were talking about the inefficiency of multilateral cooperation, in the Commonwealth field we should be proud of the fact that the UK Commonwealth Scholarship Commission is so well regarded for its management of Commonwealth scholarships in the UK that it has just been asked to take over the whole of the Chevening Scholarships Programme which is the FCO programme of scholarships, to manage that. That certainly is not a programme where Commonwealth management, not by us here in Marlborough House but by ACU, has been deficient.

Running the Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers was always important. They started in 1959 and we're now up to the 18<sup>th</sup> conference. Of course, it was important to feed in the education dimension to the rest of the Secretariat's work whether it was in health or HIV-Aids or whether it's on the kinds of things that the 'Sen Report' has just been discussing - Civil Paths to Peace. Many areas of endeavour need a population which is educated and attuned to the problems there. How am I doing? I haven't even been looking at the time.

Staffing and resources – well, staffing was okay. We had nine professionals in education. When I came, four of the other eight were British so I was never, during my time, in any position to offer the hope to a British applicant that they would be appointed. We had to diversify in terms of region and country. There were no women professionals when I came. We had got three or four by the time I went and I should have pointed out at the start that two colleagues here, Michael Sinclair, you heard from, who was here. Lucy Steward from Trinidad is here sitting opposite me and came just about the time I was going, I think. We had many professional women in the programme as time went on and I think even a higher proportion today. That nine – actually, at the time, we had no money, this was our problem - but we had more professionals in Education than the Overseas Development Administration did which, during the time I was here, had only six. So, we had a capacity for thinking and producing policy analysis and options which some of the other bigger agencies didn't have and that's why we were really highly regarded and welcome partners to them. Our difficulty was we had no money to operate with because of the structures, and the general poverty of course, of the Secretariat.

Those staff at that time, were very experienced people and internationally well-known. Stephen (Matlin) went on to be head of Education in DFID, but others went on to be deputy head of that unit, to be head of Education at UNICEF, to senior positions in the World Bank and UNESCO and to be the Chief Executive of the Caribbean Examinations Council. So, our staff were highly regarded and much in demand for help and advice, but the financial resources, as I say, were really inadequate. We had a tiny budget from the Secretariat for conferences and Expert Groups which I'll say just a little bit more about in a moment if I have time, a very small travel budget and we were not allowed to go and use it just to go on a liaison visit to get to know ministers who were coming to the next conference. It

always had to be a sort of technical assistance. Now, that's very difficult for an international organisation that doesn't have any offices outside London, to get to know your ministerial constituency was really quite difficult because you couldn't travel unless it was on a sort of technical project basis.

We were very mean with our travel budget and the reason why the Secretariat now - it isn't the reason why but a contributing factor to it - is dealing with budget airfare shops is that I would never allow my staff to go to Hogg Robinson who had the travel bureau in-house and said, "You can't only not take advantage of your business class travel (which came in then), you can't even have an economy class ticket. You've got to go to Global Link and buy a bucket-shop seat unless you can produce a medical certificate saying why you should not". So, I was quite unpopular on that account. A lot of our programme money, that came from the Y Vote of CFTC and we could have some discussion about that. It was really quite difficult to negotiate with CFTC to get sufficient programme money to operate with. So, you had a very good staff who had a tiny budget for publications, for travel, for programme work.

A very short word about the ministerial conferences and a short word about the Expert Groups. After the finance ministers', and possibly along with the law, conferences, the education ministers conferences are probably the best-known, well-established going right back to 1959 in connection with, which one should point out that there was an Education Secretariat here in Marlborough House for 5 years before the Commonwealth Secretariat was formed, The Commonwealth Education Liaison Unit. The conferences had two big problems. I'm talking about a time before Stephen Matlin introduced the notion of parallel forums. Now, whenever the ministers meet you've got four parallel forums alongside them and I really do not envy the Head of Education here having to organise a programme with a ministers' conference and four quite well-attended parallel forums as well. It's an interesting and useful thing but a headache to coordinate. Of the two problems which came up for us, one was the huge amount of preparatory work and to know whether or not it was justified to give up programme work in order to organise a conference. I think it was, but the question will go on being asked.

The second was that the conferences were only three years apart and ministers, being politicians, have very short lives. So, you really valued the few ministers who went on from conference to conference and would sort of champion your causes, but the danger, which is still there now, as I noticed in Mauritius at the last ministers' conference, most of the ministers come having no idea about what the agenda is at all. Unless you've got a very controversial issue to wind them up, like in Mauritius the proposed abolition of the education work of the Secretariat was, it's very difficult to get a buzz going among them. Now, we were fortunate in a sense, in my time, that we had some very controversial subjects and Sonny Ramphal loved a controversial subject and to make use of it because his great gift was to find a way through a consensus between opposing points of view and to reach something people could agree on. So people would then come out of a conference feeling really good. They'd done something about student mobility. They had created the Commonwealth of Learning. They had created a Commonwealth of Education Support Scheme or whatever it is. Even though some had gone in, particularly the ABC countries, hoping to not to reach that conclusion.

Expert Groups is the other thing I wanted to say something about. What helped us particularly was the role of Expert Groups and having senior people highly regarded around the Commonwealth who were Commonwealth champions. They

were either senior public servants, senior academics, businessmen and I think there were about five of these groups in my time, not all at once. They were The Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Cooperation, which led to the development of a lot of infrastructure in education and indirectly led to the Commonwealth of Learning; to the Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service at ACU, which is defunct now but it was extremely effective for 10 years; and quite a few other initiatives, I think. Then there were groups we set up on the Commonwealth of Learning; Review of the Commonwealth Scholarship Plan, and latterly a very important group which produced a big report on human resource development. I didn't really stay to see the follow up which came, in Stephen's time as Director. This one, "Foundation for the Future, was looking at integrated human resource development.

I should have said, and I will stop in 15 seconds, is that of course in this context education was part of the Human Resource Development Group (HRDG) with Health, Youth, Gender, Fellowships and Training Programme of CFTC and the Management Development Programme. We used to have joint programmes. We talked earlier about 'silos'. Some of our HRDG budgets had to go to programmes which linked different functional sections of the Secretariat and I think it is one of the areas where the Secretariat did extremely good work and it was a tragedy that just when this report had been issued, that for some reason and someone here may remember why, the Human Resource Development Group was taken to bits. Moni Malhoutra had been the champion of it and he was retiring at the time. Perhaps that was why the opportunity was taken to disband it but it was a very useful innovation while it lasted. Apologies, Chair.

**VS: Not at all. Thank you very much. An extremely lucid account of the complications of what you were dealing with. On the last point, not guilty! Before my time. Stephen?**

SMA: Good afternoon, everybody. I was director of the Human Resource Development Division (HRDD) from 1995-2001. I've been asked particularly to speak about Health now, because Sir Kenneth Stuart, unfortunately, was taken ill a couple of days ago and couldn't come. Rather than play a respondent's role, I've had to change my thinking on what I was going to say rather quickly. I thought it would be important to preface my remarks about the Health Department with a few general comments about the external environment in which we were all operating in the 1990s, the second half of the 1990s particularly. This was a period when the world of international development was changing very radically indeed, very fundamentally and there are two particularly key aspects that I think are worth mentioning. First of all, it was the era of so-called donor fatigue. I say 'so-called' because a lot of that was actually donor impoverishment due to the financial crises of the end of the 1980s. The impact obviously was on the Secretariat as well as every other aspect of development and one of the consequences was the major reorganisation and downsizing in 1993 at the end of Peter's period and just before I came in. That was still very much indeed in the air when I took over the new division which brought together Health and Education.

Secondly, there had been, and was still going on, a whole series of world conferences on aspects of development beginning in 1978 with the Alma Ata Conference which established primary healthcare and the principles of health for all and then the Jomtien Conference on Education for All in 1990, a whole series of conferences during the 1990s on sustainable development, on women and development, on population development and of course the high point of all of that in 2000 when the main conclusions of all those conferences were

summarised and reflected in the Millennium Development Summit at the UN in September 2000 which led to the Millennium Development Goals with their 2015 objectives. So, there was a very profound change going on and what was happening as a result of all of those reflections on the nature of development was that a consensus was building around a couple of key ideas. One key idea that's been already mentioned earlier this afternoon was to do with projects and it was a growing feeling in many quarters that projects were dead as a means of carrying out international development, a growing consensus around the idea that you had to approach development at the systems-level. You had to go beyond individual training, individual capacity-building and actually engage in an entire system; whole sectors and whole of government and for those governments to be in the driving seats themselves and not merely the passive recipients of aid from outside.

There was a growing recognition of the great deal of fragmentation that existed in the world of development, more and more agencies and specialised functions coming into the field, competing with one another for resources and competing for the attention of the beneficiary government. So much so that, by the time of 2005, there was a global effort to sort that out through a conference in Paris and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness which was all about getting more coherence, collaboration, systems-wide approaches and putting governments in the driving seat. So, that was the process under way and I think it's interesting to look at the extent to which the Secretariat was in tune with what was happening, or was the victim of it, or was actually leading the way. The answer is that that was very patchy indeed. Peter has referred to one important aspect of the time; namely the Education Department was source of the Report 'Foundation for the Future', based on the work of an expert committee led by Dr Sam Pitroda of India, but actually the thinking came very much from Education Department people recognising this need to integrate Human Resource Development within broader and systemic programmes. As Peter has said, we saw the dissolution of the Human Development Group and its replacement by a more fragmented structure so that when I took over the division, there were two separate departments of Health and Education and a third element which was supposed to be an element to implement the results of that Report under my supervision. All three things were being actioned quite independently at the time and my overall function, in part, was to try to bring about that integration and a wider integration with other things happening.

At the same time, you had the so-called Technical Assistance Divisions of the CFTC behaving in a totally independent and projectised mode while the professional divisions, as Peter referred to them, HRDD and Gender and Youth Affairs outside of that loop. So, it was a very fragmented approach. Let me talk mainly now about the Health field and then I'd like to come back to a few broad remarks about Human Resource Development. At the time when I joined, the Education Department had been downsized to about six professional staff and the Health Department was much smaller; it had only three professional staff in post when I joined and it was very focused indeed. One of those staff dealt exclusively with issues of drug control and liaised closely with UN programmes on substance abuse. The other two worked on a very limited range of activities, mainly derived in each triennium from the theme and mandate of the Commonwealth Health Ministers' meetings. Most recently when I arrived they were coming to the end of a programme on Environment and Health and particularly emphasising environmental impact assessments and the need to include health impact assessments within national environment impact assessments.

There were two particularly significant events during 1995 that were to strongly influence the health work of the Secretariat for a number of years to come. The first of those events was that, I found on arrival, a review of the Economic and Social Affairs Programme which was then under DSG Sir Humphrey Maud, had been set in motion and was just about to start. I soon discovered that this review, which was being conducted by a consultant called John Toye from the Institute of Development Studies, was not at all benign for us and was setting about proving that the Health Department was a waste of time and should be eliminated from the Secretariat. We successfully opposed that move in a battle that took several months and during the course of that battle we were forced to re-justify our existence and we did that by very carefully setting and at least ostensibly redefining the modes of working of the Health Department to be advocacy, brokerage and catalytic roles. Over the next several years we worked very intensively to activate and demonstrate that approach and I believe that's remained at the core of the Department's work ever since.

I'll mention just two or three different kinds of approaches shortly. The second event in 1995 which had extremely important consequences for the Health Department was the 11<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting which was held in Cape Town in December of that year. This was, I think, the first Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting that South Africa had hosted after its return to the Commonwealth. The host ministry was determined that this should be very productive and should lead to some very tangible and memorable outcomes. The theme of the meeting was Women and Health and the Secretariat's Health Department was given a mandate for a new three-year programme in that field. It became evident to the South African minister and officials during the conference that the Health Department had very limited resources indeed with which to deliver the mandated activities and so to help this, they proposed that interested countries should make a voluntary contribution to establish what became called a Technical Support Group for Women and Health within the Health Department. South Africa itself pledged £50,000 a year to support this.

When we got back home there was a huge discussion about whether the Secretariat in principle wanted to accept these kinds of voluntary additional contributions and to cut a long story short that was eventually agreed and during 1996 we were allowed to set up the Technical Support Group and this was a huge shot in the arm for the Health Department, both psychologically coming so soon after the battle over the Toye Report and practically in providing extra resources, more or less doubling the available resources and the available staff power to conduct the work.

So, let me just give some brief examples which illustrate the kinds of work that we were doing and some of the principles that relate to things other people have talked about today. In the advocacy area, within this three-year programme on Women and Health and with the assistance of the Technical Support Group, one of the things we did was to establish an initiative for the collection, publication, dissemination of models of good practice in Women and Health. As we developed our work on Women and Health it soon became very clear to us that what was really fundamental to the field at that time was a shift in perspective from women to gender. The Women's Affairs Department was undergoing a similar shift of frame at that time and we soon developed a very strong collaboration with WAD, especially in the area of advocating for gender mainstreaming, which was a new idea at the time and the use of gender management systems in the health sector which is something else that WAD was pioneering. We developed a number of



joint activities between the two departments, which for much of this period was under the direction of Nancy Spence. I think it's significant that later, after both I and Nancy had left the two departments, together with Education they were brought together in a subsequent reorganisation to form units in the new Social Transformation Programmes Division.

Nancy and I jointly participated in two UN Expert Group meetings on Gender and Health in 1998 and 2000, bringing the Commonwealth experience and approaches to the global discussions on gender mainstreaming in Health and the gender-dimension of HIV-AIDS, which I'll return to in a moment. Subsequently, I was invited to, as one of a panel of four people, to present on gender and health at a UN Special Assembly in New York.

So, there were a number of ways in which we were engaging with major international organisations in bringing the Commonwealth perspective and experience into that. In the brokerage and catalytic areas, in 1998 the 12<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting was held in Barbados and we were given a new mandate for work on Health Systems Reform. The previous decade of structural adjustment had put health systems in many countries under very severe strain and resulted in massive downsizing and loss of capacities. It's interesting to note how the pendulum has now swung back very strongly the other way on this field with the principle of universal health coverage free at the point of access now becoming the target of countries everywhere and likely to be one of the key principles of the new post-2015 sustainable development goals.

In the 1990s many Commonwealth Health Ministers were struggling to sustain and develop their health systems and one of their very deep concerns was not only the lack of financial resources but also the haemorrhaging of human resources. Skilled health personnel were being lost to migration to richer countries either in their own neighbourhood – for example island-hopping in the Caribbean of nurses and doctors or globally, including movements to countries like the UK, Australia and Canada. At the request of Health Ministers, the Health Department began developing a Commonwealth Code of Practice for international recruitment of health workers and that required a lot of intensive negotiation but the Code of Practice was eventually accepted by Commonwealth Health Ministers at one of their pre-World Health Assembly meetings in May 2003. What's especially interesting about this is that it was achieved at the time when the WHO was not making progress in this very contentious area, but it became a model for the WHO to follow and eventually the WHO Global Code of Practice on the international recruitment of health personnel was adopted seven years later in 2010.

Finally, on the Health Department, I wouldn't want to conclude without referencing the subject of HIV-AIDS. The Health Department had a long-standing mandate from CHOGMs to monitor and report on HIV-AIDS and the situation in the Commonwealth. By the late-1990s it was clear that this was becoming a global catastrophe and one with a very large proportion of the global burden of HIV-AIDS being found in the Commonwealth, especially in Africa.

It was clear that this problem should not be seen only as a Health Sector problem, as the determinants of transmission of the disease and the means for limiting and mitigating its impact involved many other sectors including social and economic sectors. The Health Department therefore developed a multi-pronged strategy which included not only issuing a lot of technical and advisory publications on HIV itself and engaging in regular debates in Geneva with

ministers prior to the World Health Assemblies, but taking the leadership in establishing a cross-sectoral response within the Secretariat itself, establishing a ComSec Working Group on HIV-AIDS with representatives from most divisions. We also brought this perspective back to heads of government at the 1999 CHOGM in Durban with the result that the Durban CHOGM's communiqué included a paragraph (paragraph number 55) referring specifically to HIV-AIDS and encouraging a multi-sectoral all-of-government response. We also subsequently played a role catalytically in forming a wider action group including a large number of Commonwealth professional associations and NGOs, which for some years was named Para 55 before changing its name to the Commonwealth AIDS Action Group.

As I'm running short of time, I'll just skip right to the end now and just return very briefly to the question of HRDD overall, the Human Resource Development Division. One of the things I became very conscious of when I joined the division was the enormous number and range of Commonwealth professional associations and NGOs with whom we had very effective interactions and who were assisting us to carry out our work, many of whom wanted to have closer engagement at the policy level in the Commonwealth and actually be able to interact with ministries and ministers. It was out of that recognition that the idea was born of creation a parallel event at ministers' meetings that would allow for some interfacing between the unofficial and the official Commonwealths. The first opportunity to test that idea was in Botswana in 1997 at the 13<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Education Ministers' Meeting. We recognised the great sensitivity in the Secretariat to this; there was a lot of diffidence about engaging with the unofficial Commonwealth and a strong feeling that they didn't want to be responsible for what might turn out to be a disaster. Therefore, one of the first things we did was to look for an external partner who would manage the parallel forum and take responsibility for that and then we would engage in partnership with them. The very effective partner that we found at that time was the British Council.

So, the parallel event in Gaborone was managed by the British Council but we did have quite significant interactions between the two events including some official sessions where there could be direct dialogue. I'm sorry to hear that that has proliferated to the extent where it has become a burden, but I think the idea which also then followed through in subsequent Health Ministers' Meetings was a very effective way of interfacing civil society and government - part of the mandate that came to us, actually, from the Foundation for the Future. Just one final remark if I can take one more minute, Veronica. Obviously there are lots of references being made to the Commonwealth Secretariat's work on small states, which is what I think is one of its very important areas. Something that struck me during my period in the Secretariat was that there was another opportunity that was being missed and that was as we looked at things like health systems and the way they were organised in different countries and education systems, I began to see that there are two sorts of government systems across the Commonwealth. The majority are single jurisdictions but about a quarter to a third of the Commonwealth countries – and I think it was about 17/51 or something at that time – were multi-jurisdictional in character. These are countries ranging at one end from very big countries like India down to small states like St Kitts and Nevis, which is bicameral. It included very developed countries, effectively the UK, Canada and Australia to some extent having state as well as federal systems, if you like, and of course many of the least developed countries were being set up in that way. There was an opportunity to understand how government works including in technical areas and social areas like health and education and I tried

quite hard to promote that idea in the Secretariat but it was never taken up. I think it's still a missed opportunity.

**VS: Thank you, Stephen, very much. It's a true and extremely thoughtful and detailed account which leaves me, at any rate, with the impression of how much you can do with really very small resources. Who would like to come in and comment? Yes? Richard Bourne.**

RB: [break in sound]... in terms of what has actually been achieved in these two particular sectors. The thing that bothers me is that clearly it's not got across to governments and those who underwrite the work the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Fund for Technological Cooperation. Historically, I think there has been a story of a relative decline. It was pointed out that for five years there was a Commonwealth Education Liaison Unit working here before the Secretariat was even started. It's my understanding that James Maraj was an Assistant Secretary-General in the early 70s, solely concerned with education. In about that period, it's before I joined the old Commonwealth Institute in Kensington but I think the UK government was putting as much money into the Commonwealth Institute in Kensington as it was subscribing to the Commonwealth Secretariat. By the early years of this century, even though some significant things have happened. Peter didn't mention something I was personally involved in but the Commonwealth Teachers' Recruitment Protocol parallel to the International Recruitment of Health Workers that Stephen mentioned. This was a very significant piece of work. The Commonwealth of Learning is a significant instrument but somehow this story has not really got across. So, that it becomes possible, seriously, to consider abolishing all this work within the Commonwealth Secretariat, I personally thought that there was a serious bit of backsliding circa 2000 when the one-off Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meetings, I think the last one took place in New Zealand as a kind of 2-3 day event in 2001 was abolished in favour of these kind of half-day meetings in the wings of the World Health Assembly in Geneva.

There has been a kind of run-down of appearance in the world of this Commonwealth collaboration in fields like Health and Education. I spoke to a member of the Eminent Persons Group who said, "Come on, Richard. Why are we bothering with an Education Department at the Commonwealth Secretariat when the total budget is something like £250,000? Divided by the 54 states of the Commonwealth, what does that really mean? Isn't it better to pull out of this entirely?" Actually, I think that's to misunderstand a lot of the roles of educational cooperation and a lot of the possibility but somehow, in spite of the stories that the two of you have been saying, nobody has managed to get this across to governments and I think it's time for a bit of honesty about the failure, really, to tell the world, that Commonwealth work for education and health and other human resource development issues has been and is significant.

**VS: Well, thank you. I think that links somewhat into what I was saying about HIPC too - that the role of the Commonwealth. I don't quite know why it should be - we'll have our last session on media and communications - but I think there is a huge gap here. Who else? Sorry, I can't see your name.**

MS: Michael Sinclair. Thank you. I can verify for sure what Peter Williams said about Hogg Robinson and being of Scottish heritage I can appreciate his thoughts on that. I can also verify what Anthony said earlier about the relative ease, so to speak, my word not his, of working within a Commonwealth framework for reasons of similarity of institutions, language and so on as compared with working

for UNESCO or ILO, where I had several assignments subsequently. We were very lucky to have these traditions, these commonalities of structure and organisation in the education field and so on. We should use them and if I may dare say so, think of exporting them. For example, not too far from now, Burma, almost certainly, will be a member of the Commonwealth. It's a very poor country. Their per capita spending over recent years on education has been almost near the bottom of the list. I mention this for reasons of its own sake, also because I have some recently current connections there through personal interests.

A few words about the birth of HRDG within the Secretariat because I happened to be there – my recollection is that it was overwhelmingly an idea from the top. As far as I know, and I wish I had thought to discuss this with people like Peter Snelson, for example, it did not arise significantly from discussion between the Divisions later renamed Programmes of Education, Youth, Women etc. Rather, I think it arose, or if it didn't arise with it, it got significant impact because of Moni Malhoutra, who I was very saddened to hear earlier today, is not at all well. Just for your information, he pressed it, very strongly and very forcefully. I also recall that at that time there was very little brainstorming about the essence of the idea as distinct from how it should be implemented and so on.

One point that has not been made in this discussion in relation to Human Resource Development and HRDG is the effect on youth as a key component in respect of what did happen, might have happened, should have happened and so on. It would be important not to lose sight of this because there are lots of interesting things happening among youth groups getting organised, partly through social media and continuing disparities of poverty and austerity increases in my country and in Britain and so on.

Finally, one reference. There is a dynamic looking relatively new organisation in Canada. The key words to Google are 'My Commonwealth'. It's a youth organisation which I think is a spinoff from the Royal Commonwealth Society of Canada. So, Google "mycommonwealth.org". Thank you.

**VS: Thank you. Would either Peter or Stephen like to respond both to Richard Bourne and to our last speaker?**

SMA: First of all, I think your point is very pertinent about the question of small resources for Education and Health and whether that meant they could do anything useful. As you said, this critique is often based on a serious misunderstanding. That was the situation we felt when there was an attempt to close the Health Department in 1995. The accusations levelled against the Health Department at that time was that it was trying to duplicate the work of WHO – a nonsensical idea if you think about three people and £100,000 in operating funds – also, that it was failing to have an impact in its project work. Apart from showing that we did things that were complimentary to, rather than in competition with, WHO, what we really tried to nail on the head was this idea that we operated in a project mode when in fact we had always done something different. But in order to give the Secretariat the sense that something had been achieved, I said we 'ostensibly' redefined our activities as being advocacy, brokerage and catalytic roles. That was my analysis of what we were really about anyway, but we said, "This is what we will do for the future."

We set about labelling everything in that way to make it quite clear that this wasn't what WHO was doing or anybody else at the time. The same is true of Education. Maybe it had in the distant past been involved in education projects in developing

countries but certainly by the time I was there we were really engaging in much broader systems-wide efforts to create tools, whether it was for the training of teachers or policy instruments and so on. These were things that countries found very difficult to get advice on from independent sources. There was a huge distrust in that period of time of major institutions like the World Bank, which had forced structural adjustment programmes down the throats of poor countries. The Secretariat was trusted and respected as a source of independent advice.

So, just briefly on the question on youth; the Youth Programme was really an autonomous activity and I think the person speaking earlier today who worked with the Youth Programme has now gone, which is a pity. During the period I was there, I found trying to work with them was extremely difficult. They had separate mandates from ministers but also separately voted money from countries and they guarded their autonomy very jealously. It was actually therefore very difficult to collaborate with them.

**VS: Even the DSG found that difficult. Thank you, Peter.**

PW: Two things, yes. On Richard's point: I think we may have not been very good at self-promotion. I think I left nearly 20 years ago. I think governments were still pretty well on-side now and I think the Commonwealth of Learning particularly has done a very good job in attracting the enthusiasm and support of governments but one problem in education is and we found ourselves, I mean I've become a civil society operator now. I mean, the Secretariat centrally, hasn't done a particularly good job. I've been secretary of a consortium of Commonwealth organisations and these two publications which there are some copies of on the chair there, were produced by civil society, not by the Secretariat, just showing what a wealth of infrastructure there is in education. The education sector, although there was a lot of Commonwealth infrastructure, 10-15 civil society organisations and Secretariat, Commonwealth of Learning, Commonwealth Education Trust. The notion of working together, not centralising the programmes but sort of consulting and trying to achieve some common objectives is not very well developed and we keep trying to make it happen.

On Youth, it is curious. Youth spend most of their time either in Education or preoccupied with Education. I think things are improving actually. Those of us in civil society have done quite a lot of work recently with the Youth Affairs Division here. They now run a Youth Forum, that's one of the four, at the Commonwealth Ministers' Conference. The New Commonwealth Students' Association, which they have just shepherded into existence, is extremely interested in linking up with people in the education sector. So, I think things may get better.

**VS: Thank you. Who else? Yes please, Lucy Steward.**

LS: Thank you very much. Like a true Trinidadian, I crashed your party. Thanks for inviting me. I was very fortunate to work with both Peter and Stephen during the period 1994-1998. Just a few comments, I know we have mentioned the Commonwealth of Learning as a success story, and it is. The whole business about the viability or the relevance of the Education Department, to me, started when the Commonwealth of Learning was established. Instead of fostering a collaborative working relationship, we ended up, to me, coming from a staff perspective now, coming more in competition with each other. For very personal reasons that sat very uneasily with me as my husband, sitting at the back, was a member of staff at the Commonwealth of Learning at the time and I was a liaison in the division with the Commonwealth of Learning. I think people started to

question then that we had the Commonwealth of Learning getting separate funding and we have the Commonwealth Secretariat Education Department with very little funding and there was a concern even then about the relevance of it. I was really surprised when I was alerted by Peter about the move to disband the department altogether.

While I was there, we never really had much funding but as Peter and Stephen said, we had the opportunity to provide a lot of thinking that went into policy and programmes. One of the successes, I think, was our work in small states. The pioneering work that was done in education in small states starting with Stephan Packer who I replaced and then it went on after I left. That was very pioneering work and it's still quoted around the Commonwealth even though we don't advertise what we do, the whole publication on multifunctional administrator education systems in small states and so on. I remember UNESCO, at the time, had a desk for small states and it was one person. We had no funding but we wanted to do something on the financing of tertiary education systems in small states. UNESCO had the money. We had the expertise and we collaborated with them and I remember the person at that desk in UNESCO saying it was the first time he had participated in something, in an activity, that had such a specific outcome where we were able to make some impact on the kinds of discussions about how tertiary education is to be financed in small states.

I'm stationed in Barbados now. Barbados is one of the countries that have said that education at all levels will be free. So, education at the tertiary level is free and the university is in a serious position right now, trying to find funds to pay staff because it is something that probably cannot be sustained. I think that the work in small states is something that really should continue, if I may suggest. I fear that the work that was done recently by Bray, Packer and Crossley, summarising what was done in small states seems as though it was putting it to bed. That was how it came over to me, that here are all the things we had done in small states. "It's summarised now and it's there. Let's move on," whereas I think it's continuing. Small states will always have unique problems and I think that the Secretariat has that capacity to provide the thinking that could go into informing policies that will affect Education, Health and HRD in general. The lack of funds is something that we experienced a lot. I know about the pocket states. We don't hold it against Peter or Stephen but the thing is by saving it that way, we were able to have money to do some of the work that we were supposed to do. We had to use some very creative ways and I remember in the case of the ADEA Work, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa. We had no money to contribute towards that, but we participated fully in it in the area of non-formal education because CIDA provided the funding but they did not have the expertise available.

So, we used their funding, provided the expertise and that was an example of the kind of cooperation and the creative way we had to obtain funding in order to carry out the work. In fact it went so far that in my last activity in the Secretariat was to establish the Association of Commonwealth Examination and Accreditation Boards. The launch of that took place in New Zealand. We got about 50 participants at that meeting and when I got back to the Secretariat, at the request of Sir Humphrey, I had to write to say how I was able to get this funding because it came from bits and pieces from all over the place. That took effort and it took away from some of the time we could have spent much, much better in terms of conceptualising our programmes and so on. Without doing that, we couldn't really get to the countries.

In terms of youth, just one comment. I think every time we talk about youth at a forum like this, we are talking about the youth who are preparing to take our places, be in government, in parliament or wherever. I think that more has to be done to reach the youth at risk. That is not something that is easily done and it's something that I think could probably be achieved by working with the young people themselves and probably with the NGOs who know how to reach these youths much better than we who sit around a table can.

**VS: Thank you. Would you like to say something?**

**SMA:** Maybe, I'd just like to comment on one thing out of the many important things that Lucy raised – and that's the Commonwealth of Learning. I think it was the case when I arrived that there were very fragmented views in the Secretariat about the relationship and a lot of anxiety on the other side. COL, after a few years of operation, had suddenly hit a very bad patch. All the initial money had run out and it was getting into dire financial straits. James Maraj had recently been replaced by Raj Dhanarajan as the President of COL. I saw as one of my roles – picked up very quickly from Education staff, including Lucy's very effective briefings – that it was our responsibility to try and help COL to survive. We worked very hard at that; and one of the reasons for deciding to choose the theme of 'education and technology' for the next Commonwealth Education Ministers' Meeting in Botswana was to provide a platform for COL to show what it could do. At the same time, this provided the opportunity to resolve another part of the tension, which was to clarify that there was a role for the Secretariat more broadly, beyond anything that COL was able to achieve through distance-learning approaches – and that is to do with policies. That meeting in Botswana in 1997 was the first time Education Ministers sat down and began a regular process of pledges for COL, which I think has been the mechanism that's ensured its continuing survival.

**VS: Stuart?**

**SMO:** Thank you, Veronica. One of the things that we've done today, I think, is in looking at the past, we've also tried to look at the present and draw conclusions from what we've learnt from the past. I want to do that in terms of the current difficulties that the Education and Health functions face and what might be the future. We did hear this morning of the pressure from officials – there was a greater pressure from officials that had developed over time to, as it were, to micro-manage the Secretariat and obviously to attempt to push the Secretariat into the image of all the other international organisations they might have to deal with, with the same kind of checklist that they might have to administer in terms of other organisations. We've heard time and time again that the Commonwealth may not be susceptible of this kind of definition but nonetheless it is an unrelenting pressure from officials. Then I think that Heads of Government, every now and then, move in the opposite direction because there will be at a Heads of Government Meeting where an issue will come up, whether it's HIV-Aids or something' where a Head will say that "The Commonwealth has to speak. The Commonwealth has to act." And all of a sudden the specific area of concern will be pushed into the limelight and the remorseless advance of officials will be checked for a while.

I think it's a systemic issue in a way, a real problem. In a way, if the Commonwealth follows the path of being told that it has to keep chasing this sometimes illusory goal of comparative advantage, it will end up doing nothing and losing its global reach in that respect. We've heard from two directors, both of whom were strong directors and who were able to fight their corner to engage at the highest level with governments, and with international organisations, to raise

funds independently and so on. Peter very politely was talking about the present situation. I've heard him be slightly more robust in his comments about what obtains at the present. I think we have to face the reality that, for example, there have been some pretty big pots of money in various funds, i.e. for education or for other things, which should have come the Secretariat's way but haven't – they've gone elsewhere. There have been people who have said, "Over my dead body will this go to the Secretariat."

I've certainly talked to civil society people in both the health and the education sectors and they're not, today, entirely complimentary about what they see as the core functions the Secretariat is providing to these ministerial meetings. So, my question, really, to Peter and Stephen is to be a bit more upfront with us about this issue because I know that if Peter finds himself in the Education Ministers' Meeting and having to chip in with communique drafting or whatever it might be. That's not really illustrating that the technical expertise is there as it should be. I wonder if both could comment on what the source of the problem is and where we have gone wrong – if we have gone wrong – and how it needs to be put right?

**VS: Thank you. That's a challenge. Shall we do it chronologically again? Peter, then Stephen.**

PW: Well, that is indeed a huge challenge. I mean, I think many agencies would be prepared to use the Secretariat if they had confidence in it and in fact, I think one of the posts at the moment in the Education Department is provided, but this is historical really, by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa where we pioneered 25 years ago the idea that teachers were crucial to education development and that because of the work we had been doing on teacher management and records in developing countries and on training of head teachers, were asked to convene the Working Group for this AEDA body on the teaching profession. One staff member here now is still supported for through that agency outside. There must be opportunities, as you say, to get bilateral and multilateral money fed through the Secretariat if one is working on the right agenda. The problem is that some of the agenda that the Secretariat should, in my opinion, be working on are not necessarily the ones that are terribly fundable at the moment.

To me, it's rather a tragedy that higher education and support for universities, which have got into a very bad state in many countries, has been abandoned. The Secretariat has followed the Education for All agenda, which is an important one of basic education for everybody. It's difficult in a sense because if you take 35-40 members of the Commonwealth countries, they have actually achieved basic education, nearly all of the small states have. It's just a few countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia that haven't, but they're very populous countries so we do, in the Commonwealth, account for a lot of the education deficit. That is one issue. I think the Commonwealth has a huge comparative advantage in this linkage. This year is of course the centenary of the Association of Commonwealth Universities and there are all kinds of new initiatives underway. About 15 years ago, the Higher Education Unit in Education was disbanded and we've never got back into it and we almost did. I think most people feel that you have to take a holistic approach to education development, linking together the levels.

There's another thing that I think is going to be really important. I mentioned it earlier. It's this business of privatisation and marketisation of education and I think just like we were talking about, the Technical Assistance Group in the past, in



John Syson and Mike Faber's time in helping countries to negotiate. They would do the negotiation but you would give them technical support in doing it with big players, whether it's the World Bank, IMF or whether it's De Beers, Shell or BP. I think developing countries would really appreciate knowing how to deal with Intel and Pearson's and other people who have open designs on controlling access to information, to education and technology. This is controversial. We'll find that the UK government and maybe the Canadian/Australian governments won't be very keen on the Commonwealth getting into this area but it's the same kind of issue that Sonny Ramphal warmed to on student mobility. We didn't really get anywhere but the spin-offs of the engagement were really rather fruitful.

I won't speak again after this because we're running out of time but I would just like to, we haven't discussed today the internal organisations of the Secretariat and probably we weren't supposed to but we probably should have another seminar on it. I've just read my handing-over note to the Secretary-General when I left and there is a sentence saying, "The Secretariat has the weakest administration of any organisation that I've ever worked for. It's inefficient, poorly-informed, cavalier in its treatment of staff and is generally non-consultative."

**VS: Stephen, I think the last word falls to you.**

SMA: Thank you. Let me say, to begin with, in answering your challenge, that I'm not necessarily optimistic of the future of Health or indeed Education but let me just speak about Health now, as Peter said something about Education in the Secretariat. I think what's fundamental to the Health area is this growing recognition that happened during the 1990s, that health is not simply a product of development that you can wait for, that actually health is driver of and a determinant of development. That idea has become very thoroughly accepted in most development quarters. So, for example, the UNDP's Human Development Reports beginning in 1990 with the creation of the Human Development Index puts health at the centre of any measure of development for that reason.

Perhaps even more influentially, the World Bank's World Development Report in 1993, which was entitled, "Investing in Health," was built on that notion that you should get health right first as one of the determinants of development. I think the side of the Secretariat that controls resources and controls priorities has been extremely slow to recognise that in spite of us shouting about that quite loudly, certainly during the period when I was here. One of the more interesting trends in the last few years has been the emergence of Health Diplomacy and it's now become recognised that international diplomats dealing in political matters need to be educated in health and in health diplomacy because of issues such as SARS and the movement of infectious diseases and pathogenic organisms and contaminated food from around the world, amongst other things. So, it's becoming more accepted that the training of the modern political diplomat needs to include an understanding of health and maybe that will be one of the factors that changes.

Certainly, the traditional source of staff in those aspects of the Secretariat that deal with the major decisions has tended to be in classical political and diplomatic areas and classical economic areas and they've not been very well educated in those [health] things and are very resistant to change. That's been compounded by the fact that, as I think was referred to earlier, there is a disconnection between the countries that are the major funders of the CFTC and therefore in one way or another, tend to have a controlling influence over how that money is spent, and the voices that come from things like ministers meetings where

ministers of health are generally very clear that they would like the Secretariat to go on doing work in these areas and have a very clear agenda that they are able to give to us. It is very unfortunate that the triennial Health Ministers' Meetings have been discontinued. The one-day meetings in Geneva on the eve of the World Health Assembly have never been a real substitute for that. Now they're being cut back to half a day and that would be a tragedy because what they can deal with is extremely limited.

If I could just end with one story, then I'll give up the ghost on this. When we used to have the one-day ministers' meetings, one of the traditions for many years has been that the Directory General of the WHO comes to the afternoon session of that pre-WHA, the meeting of Commonwealth Health Ministers on the Sunday, and engages with Commonwealth Health Ministers in this private discussion. I think it was in 1998 when Gro Harlem Brundtland had just become the new Directory General of WHO. She came and what she did was just to give a preview of her opening speech for the World Health Assembly which she intended to deliver the next day. One of the main messages in that speech was that she had just come back from negotiations with a whole group of multinational pharmaceutical companies on lowering the price on HIV drugs. She was very proud of this and was almost boasting of it in the way it was presented to health ministers, obviously expecting a pat on the back from the Commonwealth. It was a matter of deep concern to the Commonwealth, but what she got, actually, was savaged by a large number of Commonwealth Health Ministers, especially those from Africa who said, "How dare you engage in such discussions without involving us and without discussing with us beforehand what you're doing." This was a complete disaster for her but she got the lesson because she changed her opening speech for the next day quite radically.

We thought at the time that it would be the last time we ever saw the Director-General at one of our meetings, but on the contrary, she found that so useful and so important that she made a point of coming, and subsequent Director-Generals did always come every year and have a kind of preview of their speech and use it as a lightning rod to pick up any serious discontent with what was virtually a third of the WHO's membership. It's a great pity that that will be lost in the reorganisation that's now going on.

**VS: Well, a great thanks to both of our speakers for two very wide-ranging accounts of their work. May I just say - I meant to say earlier - I'm very glad that Stephen mentioned the work done by Nancy Spence and the Gender Division because that was important and we haven't touched on that today, but I'm glad that it has had a mention. Thanks to everybody who has come to listen and intervene. I think we draw to a close in a timely fashion. Thank you.**

**PMU: We'll go on until 18:00. We'll keep the concluding remarks to a minimum to maximise the time we have for this session. We were talking in the previous session about the Commonwealth getting its message across and appropriately, to end, we've got two masters of communication here who are both very well-known to you. Patsy Robertson, who joined the Secretariat at its birth in 1965, was Deputy Director of the Information Division between 1977-1989 and Director from 1989-1993; and Cheryl Dorall, who's Deputy Director of Information here at the Secretariat from 1989-2001. So, I'm going to ask Patsy to lead off with some general remarks.**

PR: Thank you, Phillip. Let me begin by giving you the picture of the world when the Secretariat began in 1965. Countries were just coming into independence. The Commonwealth was changing. Countries which had become independent, India, right up to 1962 when Caribbean countries came, Tanzania. There was a shift in the Commonwealth. Now you had countries which were determined to do something about racism in the Commonwealth. They were determined that racism which had characterised the empire should not continue and so they came ready for a fight. That is why these countries, and I mentioned earlier on, mainly Ghana and Trinidad and Tobago said, "We simply must have our own Secretariat. We simply cannot have Foreign and Commonwealth Office managing the Commonwealth anymore." So, at the Heads of Government Meeting in 1962-4, when they worried about how to set up this Secretariat and finally in 1965 they set it up. Arnold Smith was appointed with the full support of Canada, which had thrown in its lot with the developing countries. In their Memorandum of Understanding there was no mention of an Information Programme for the Secretariat and in their discussions they said that the Secretary-General should rely on High Commissions to help him with information activities. Well, what happened was, there was a lot of interest in whole new Commonwealth and this new Secretariat and Arnold Smith was quite a jolly, charismatic Canadian of, I must mention, Caribbean extraction and he spent July and August answering questions, "How do you see your job?" etc. and then of course disaster struck. India and Pakistan went to war and Malaysia divorced Singapore.

So, there was this man, and his first two months. He sat at his desk speaking to the international media and he was really becoming quite upset about it. Well, I had been the Director of Information in the Jamaican High Commission. We had made good contacts with the British and other media. It was on the advice that he asked me if I'd come and work with him, so I joined in November 1965. There was the perception that the Secretariat would not become very active right at the beginning but of course, Rhodesia [blew up]. We went to Lagos for the January 1966 Heads of Government Meeting. There were only about 10-15 of us. There was not much staff in the Secretariat. Somebody mentioned, I think it was Peter Marshall, that his office was the British office. When I joined the Secretariat, my office was the Australian government, one of the grand offices. So, you could see we were very sparse. Anyhow, the Secretariat was given a lot of work to do. We set up a special group on Rhodesia, as it was then. Our main concern was Rhodesia. South Africa, by then, had left the Commonwealth. Because there was strong feeling that under no circumstances would the Commonwealth not take a very proactive role in getting the message across, I was then the Press Officer. There was no post in the Secretariat for a Press Officer but I was given the go-ahead, to speak freely to the media about what we are trying to do. That's how it began and that's how we continued.

Arnold Smith said to me, "Let us work to develop an Information Division." We appointed an Australian to go around the Commonwealth talking to leaders and then he made a report. They looked at it in the 1969 meeting and then 1971 in Singapore. They appointed Tony Eggleton, who was the Press Officer to – Menzies was still around. We began the big struggle, which I won't go into about facing up to Southern Africa but because there was such a strong feeling among governments that the Secretariat should get the message across, there was no question that in my role that I shouldn't speak freely to the media. At that time the media was interested in the Commonwealth. At Heads of Government Meetings, we had 1,000 journalists from all over the world in those days. It was huge. So, we let them know exactly what we were doing. You could always deny it if it was published in the paper the following day. They would say you were misquoted. That's very easy to do.

I suppose there was a certain amount of listening to telephone conversations, then, but we took the view that even if that happened, nobody would come out and say that, "We heard that you had given some secret information or talked about what had been discussed in the Heads of Government Meeting," which were still confidential then. So, everybody leaked, in those days, shall I put it that way? Gradually, we built up an Information Division and our role was to continue to be quite aggressive in spreading the message of the Commonwealth wish to end racism in Southern Africa. There were other things like the whole development of the Secretariat, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation. All that work was very interesting. Now, I just want to say, pay tribute to Derek Ingram, because Derek began a thing called Gemini News Service. Derek was then the Deputy-Editor of the Daily Mail – we will not hold that against him. He left that role and he set up a wonderful news service which wrote articles which could be printed in newspapers all over the world, particularly in developing countries. He sent out graphic materials so that discussions at ministerial meetings, Derek managed to make them interesting.

We got a lot of publicity on that level as well. I remember Sonny Ramphal coming back from the Middle East where he saw in the local paper, I think he went to Kuwait or some such place. The little paper there, now of course much richer, was full of Gemini News Service articles and my role in the Secretariat at that time was to sponsor Derek and his few journalists and we took journalists to meetings because we had to keep journalists on our side and it wasn't just journalists based in London. So, we brought journalists from the Caribbean, journalists from Africa, journalists from Asia to go to wherever Heads of Government Meetings were. Out of that came the Commonwealth Media Development Fund, which Malcolm Fraser, when he became Prime Minister of Australia thought it was a good idea and gave us £20,000, which was a lot of money in those days. So, we began training journalists etc. The entire picture, the entire atmosphere was quite different from how it is now. We had very close relationships with the media. It was not difficult to get a Fleet Street editor to come into Marlborough House to talk to the Secretary-General.

Before every Heads of Government Meeting, the Secretary-General went to their editorial board and discussed the whole agenda of the meeting. That was supposed to be secret, but that's the only way you can deal with the media. Of course, in those days the Heads of Government Meetings was 6-7 days and journalists had a chance to write long, good stories, they always got the front pages. We had a thing called the Curtain Raiser the evening before when we told them exactly what was on the agenda of the meeting and gave them leads which they could follow up. They had access to leaders. I mean, there are lots of

journalists who called heads, in those days, by their first name. It was a completely different atmosphere. That was what I think enabled the Commonwealth to maintain the controlling power in that big struggle in terms of the media and getting the message across, because we were up against some very skilful operators. We were based in London, so there was a steady stream of briefings which we had to counteract – which we did. The media then, they knew leaders; they were interested in what was happening, they were grateful because they were on the front pages. When the EPG went to South Africa that was a huge story. When Penguin published their report, written by Moni Malhoutra and Jeremy Pope, it was an international bestseller. So, that was the way in which we had built up this support and working very closely with the media in all countries of the Commonwealth, wherever we had a big meeting.

I used to go to Finance Ministers' Meetings, I used to go Health- all the ministerial meetings, which were seen as crucial elements in this kind of matrix of Commonwealth relationships which made the Commonwealth different from any other international grouping. I remember telling people, "Health ministers consult, and they talk to each other," which is true. They were doing what I think, now, NGOs are doing. The role of NGOs have now taken over to express what is perceived to be what is in the best interest of developing countries. At that time, it was the ministers at all levels, of all the disciplines, who were talking about what we need to develop hence CFTC, hence all the work which was done, the thinking. I'm afraid that died a death slowly. It's going to be very difficult to replicate it because the Commonwealth is not seen to be doing anything in the headlines. Journalists, whom we have to rely on, they love to write stories, they love to be in their papers and I suppose in a way we were very lucky. We were in the right place at the right time. We had a great issue and I think we played the game very well indeed.

**PMU: Thank you very much indeed. Cheryl, would you like to come in?**

CD: Thank you, Philip. Cheryl Dorall. I was a newspaper editor in Malaysia and a senior editor in a regional magazine in Hong Kong before I joined the Commonwealth Secretariat in the middle of 1989. I was in complete awe of the Secretariat, or of the Commonwealth should I say, before I joined, its work and stance on Apartheid in particular but also of the illegal government in Rhodesia, which was very well known and were covered by local and regional newspaper in Asia. It's absolutely true that the day I set foot in the office, my first day in July, I was in complete trepidation. Patsy did try and make me feel at home but there were stern faces all around and I was left in no doubt as to the work that was ahead. I remember at one point that I was talking, maybe 2-3 years later, I was talking to diplomats in a sort of induction course that they had for young diplomats in the UK and they asked me to describe the Commonwealth. It was beyond, at that point, describing it as a liberator, freedom-fighter, standing up for independence, so I said it's like an amoeba. It depends on which side you look at it. It's a different shape to different people. It's pro-independence. It had its time preparing and then helping countries through independence. It had hands-on technical assistance. It's a lead in economic thinking. Its innovative thinking in gender and youth programmes, you name it.

Yet, I think it was two years ago that Sonny Ramphal said in a Witness Seminar, I think it was at ICS, but was it two years ago when he agreed to a question that the identity of the Commonwealth was forced in its shape because of the fight against Apartheid. Of course, there was almost the sideshow of Zimbabwe and that particular fight because it was a liberation struggle. It's no exaggeration that

reporters were practically falling through the doors at the Commonwealth at that time. I wasn't in the Commonwealth yet, but as a journalist looking at it from afar in Malaysia and in Hong Kong. If I had been in London, I would have been banging on Patsy's door wanting to know what the story was. South Africa was a classic Good versus Evil story. It's the sort of thing that the media loves. It was bad racist oppressors versus people struggling to be free or if you wanted to look at it from the other side, it was terrorists, communists, insurgents versus law and order, corrupt, terrorist insurgents being propped up by nasty Commonwealth. Whichever way you looked at it, it was headline-making stuff and I think I'm not wrong in saying that we attracted not only very professional journalists, we attracted people who were obviously sympathetic to the whole cause as such. We also attracted a brand of journalist who was completely unsympathetic to our cause. It's all grist to the mill.

When Apartheid ended, Nelson Mandela was freed, Apartheid ended, down came the Berlin Wall, communism was rolled back and the media lost another Good vs. Evil story. That's when I think the Commonwealth fairly, swiftly came on a slippery slope and became a non-story. It just kept moving downwards and downwards. Now, it dropped right down and it's not like we lost our friends in the media. It wasn't as if in the 90s people didn't think that the Commonwealth somewhere along the way was doing good things. Yes, education, yes, health, but what they wanted was that story. The media loves that story. I'm only talking about media here. You could say in a way that the Commonwealth was a victim of its own success, almost. The Secretariat was also a little shy, I thought, about claiming that success. I remember once that I was ticked off rather loudly by a very senior officer in the Secretariat, I won't mention names, for writing an article in one of our magazines, this is the Commonwealth Current. I don't know if anyone remembers it. It was a bi-monthly magazine in which we were talking about what we had done in the Secretariat. This was after the 1994 election and the senior officer ticked me off, a British academic who was actually a very pro-Commonwealth person, had described the article as being vain-glorious. I was stunned because I thought I had underplayed it, to tell you the truth.

That's why I thought we were very diffident sometimes. The time that we were at the greatest height of our achievement, I thought in many people's terms, we were being very diffident. I know that they say we Asians are very diffident but I thought this was a bit ridiculous. The Commonwealth had put in so much in so many years. Overlooked by many people was the training that we put in, the conflict resolution between the ANC, the PAC, the Secretariat and Commonwealth experts had put a lot of time and effort into it. It wasn't as if it wasn't appreciated, but in media-terms, it wasn't remembered for a long time. Suddenly, after 1994, everyone was talking about, well, not everyone, many people were talking about, especially the newspapers, how the Commonwealth didn't have an international role. "Was it relevant? Why is it there? I mean, Apartheid is finished so what is it doing?" I suspect that some of this was fanned by government officials who were bitter after the long fights in their various corridors with the Secretariat and certain other governments over the Commonwealth's views and actions on Apartheid, especially about sanctions. In fact, nearly 20 years after the end of Apartheid, I suspect that some of the bitterness still lingers on. I may be wrong. I may be paranoid.

In the mid-90s thereabout, the Secretariat very consciously started to arm itself with tools to counter this. We had two big information strategies. In 1991, the Harare CHOGM had passed and accepted an information strategy for sharpening the Commonwealth image. This was endorsed by governments. "It was aimed at

opinion-makers, parliamentarians, NGOs, media students, young people. Harare wanted to focus on things other than Apartheid etc. geared to media relations etc.” The other big review was in 1996 when our good friend Derek Ingram was let loose on the Secretariat and in his review of publicity and information, quite astutely, he said, “It’s the joint responsibility of the Secretariat, NGOs and governments to publicise the Commonwealth.” He went on to say that the Commonwealth was owned by all, not just the Secretariat, not just governments but of the people. Of course the whole idea of having a pan-Commonwealth information thing like that, good as it was, it didn’t really fly. However, the Secretary decided to reach out and Stuart’s already spoken about how Chief Anyaoku reached out a lot more to the Commonwealth family, who were always welcome in Marlborough House. It was a great pulling together of people. There was the Commonwealth Day, materials for pushing out messages to schools, posters and it was surprisingly enough, very, very popular. There were teachers who used to call up and say, “Oh, you’ve got Commonwealth Day coming up, where’s my poster? Do you have any materials?” Etc. Now, this was largely in the UK but we did see it sometimes in the Caribbean, in Singapore, in Malaysia, probably in parts of India and in many, many other countries. There was a lot of interest in it. That’s gone, by the way, now, especially with the demise of Commonwealth Institute and there is less interest in it now from the RCS and I’m hoping the Commonwealth Secretariat will keep up its thing on the poster and the use of it in schools, which is very important.

Let me just jump very quickly to what Stephen Matlin said earlier about, and Richard Bourne said about non-publicity for Education and Health. These are highly important areas. I mean, the Commonwealth had a long, long, long history of working in these areas. The thing is, in media terms, this is not a sexy story. We did, not just us, but the divisions themselves, they got specialist magazines and there were a lot of articles etc. put in there. The mainstream media, particularly in the UK, is not really interested in that. They were still hooked on the whole Good vs. Evil sort of stuff. Developing countries’ news and media and also developed to the point where they were not really interested in education, health, gender, that sort of thing. They were really interested in political things largely because many of them were also battling in their own governments for space, for freedom of expression, freedom of the media etc. So, there was that problem there. So, try to counter this, Patsy, you started it when you were there but it accelerated under Mike Faber who took over from Patsy, the setting up of a publications section would be put in professional publications management of things like education publications, health publications, economic publications so that they wouldn’t be the sort of tatty little non-proof read house-printed on our little in-house printing press and then sent out to places like the World Health Organisation, World Bank etc. We used to come back and say, “This is a very nice publication but why does it look like this? It’s not even read properly and why are the statistics in the wrong place?”

So, that came on board somewhere in 1998 and I think I’m probably not wrong in saying that a lot of education, health and other publications went out through that, but there was hardly any possibility of getting it into the mainstream media, almost anywhere and this includes the student mobility which was very admirable as a project etc. There were a whole lot of other things, feature services, we had broadcasting services and at that time we had leaflets, books, information. We had press releases which at one time in the early 90s were very difficult to get out if you remember, Patsy? We weren’t allowed in our division to have a fax. So, we couldn’t fax things out. We had to send it to a central position somewhere here in Marlborough House where it was put under a pile, education faxes to ministers,

health faxes to doctors etc. etc. So, press releases sometimes went out 48 hours later. This was swiftly, I think Patsy shouted at somebody and I think you shouted at the Secretary-General actually. I think yes, you got the fax, the next day we got the fax. The thing is, inside the Secretariat there was also a bit of diffidence about the press. I think there was a suspicion about the press. Maybe that's too strong a word but there was certainly an element of 'let's keep the information within us', not let it out.

Sometimes even we in the Press Office didn't know what was going out so we didn't even have the opportunity to evaluate what to leak, what to push, what to press to favoured and sympathetic journalists. This happens in almost any international organisation, I might say, but it just made our job more difficult. By mid-1997 or thereabouts, we jumped into the internet era. I think that was good. The Commonwealth was slightly rescued, if you want to use that word, by the next big Good and Evil story, which was Nigeria, as you all know, in 1995. Military government in power, writer Ken Saro-Wiwa was hanged. Heads of government were personally annoyed that the execution went ahead. We've already talked about the Millbrook Plan of Action, CMAG etc. The press loved this. We were back on track as not being irrelevant, back on track being relevant and they were very pleased with us. The problem was that this led, by installing this kind of mechanism; it led to greater expectations of what we were doing. CMAG, for instance, I'm talking from the media point of view, is there to examine countries failing the Commonwealth's own code, the Harare Principles. Well, they were going to hold us to it. The problem was the failure of keeping up to the Principles was not a question of crossing a clearly defined line. Military coups were definite no-nos except in one or two cases. Only a few were mounted anyway, by that time, for reasons other people have said. There were other question marks over human rights, interference with the judiciary, disregard of the constitutions etc.

The media took this up all the time. The Secretariat was responding with governments trying to put training in here, putting Good Offices there. Most of the time it didn't want to talk about this because this would have undermined the role of the Secretary-General as a discrete interventionist as such. The Commonwealth really had raised the bar high and the media and some governments wanted to hold them to it, to its own proclaimed values and principles and that then became the story. To a certain extent perhaps it is still even the story today - the Commonwealth's failure or not-failure to live up to its own values and principles. A very senior Secretariat official told me, I can't remember when it was, it must have been the late 90s and again I won't mention his name, he told me that the Harare Principles and the Millbrook Plan of Action were a mistake and he actually used the word mistake because, he said, "Once you set rules for yourself, you're expected to follow them to the letter." Now, that is a very cynical point of view, but I'm afraid that is what happened. We, in the Commonwealth are being held to that high principle or what people think is that high principle.

A struggle to reshape the image of the Commonwealth has thus moved on vastly from the Apartheid struggle. In fact, there are many people in South Africa, Stuart, I think you once said that you went to South Africa and there were people there who didn't even know the Commonwealth had anything to do with the struggle and they were younger, not very young people but young-ish people. Yeah, anyone younger than us is young! It's too late for the development agenda. It's too late for the Commonwealth to hang on to the development agenda and use that as a media hook because the development agenda in media terms was something in the 70s, 80s – not 60s – 70s and 80s I will say, maybe even a bit of



the 90s. So, they're really not interested. I personally think that the Commonwealth has many audiences and maybe what we all have failed, us included, is to be able to react and to put our messages out to various different audiences. There is the audience of the media, which is very powerful. There is the audience of governments, which the SG and directors usually craft. There's the audience of ministers with directors in each divisions usually do. There is the Commonwealth family which is sometimes not reached but on the whole, I think in the 90s which is my witness decade, I think was coming along very, very well. I think Chief Anyaoku did fantastic work in that.

Obviously, the next vision was the Democracy and Development bit and then governments got into a fight over that. I remember and I'm not a sort of witness to that because it was just slightly out of my decade but I remember that Secretary-General McKinnon was very bruised over that at one CHOGM. I can't remember what it was. It might have been Malta, because he was pushing this Development and Democracy as two sides of the same coin and it got rapped on his knuckles by his own prime minister over it in a very public way as well. So, it has been difficult. It's not a single thing that we in the Commonwealth or the Chairperson of the Commonwealth actually can push. It's a very fractured imagine, at least in the 1990s, towards the end of it and by the time I left it was a very fractured image. I'm sure that every Secretary-General and every press officer in the Secretariat had tried to bring that together.

Perhaps it is a lack of a public relations role in the Commonwealth. We have media, we have communications, we now have Twitter, we have a very good website. Maybe we need a proper public relations role because that is missing. Public relations officials always tell me, "God, you people in the Commonwealth don't know how to push yourselves," so maybe an external affairs role is needed at some point for the Secretariat. I think I'll stop there.

**PMU: Thank you. We've had two really excellent presentations and I should mention that we're delighted to have, around the table, Richard Uku, the current Director of Communications here. So, if Richard would like to chip in at any point it would be great to hear from him. The floor is open. We'll take questions until just before 18:00. So, please. Yes, Peter?**

PW: Peter Williams. I just wondered what your feeling is about linking up the kind of public relations side of information work with the kind of thing the Commonwealth Connects is supposed to be doing, you know, a Secretariat information-based. I'm not sure whether they are and I wonder whether or not you think they should be under the same coordinator, direction or whether they are two quite different things.

**PMU: I'll take one or two different comments. Derek, would you like to?**

DI: Well, I just want to say that Patsy and Cheryl between them have told the story superbly in about 10-15 minutes, of the whole scene from the time of the formation of the Secretariat. I thought it was terrific. Of course, we're in a different period altogether now, but there have been very weak periods when the Commonwealth has lost a lot of ground in public relations, which it needn't have done. I think when I made my report, as an example, it was all endorsed by heads of government afterwards but very little of it was implemented. There has been a falling back on the performance. It is very difficult to believe that when the Secretariat was first set up that there wasn't even a press officer. It's absolutely amazing, really. Then of course, Patsy was brought in by Arnold very quickly,

brilliantly and rescued the situation single-handedly for a time, didn't you? There is a tremendous job to be done and I don't believe that the Commonwealth can't be promoted today as it was before. There are different issues and it's a different ball game but it can all be done, actually.

**PMU: Thank you very much. Rupert, would you like to come up?**

RJ: As Cheryl has said, and it was driven by Cheryl, it was decided that a publication section should be set up sometime, I think in 1996 and I was the first incumbent of that as the head of that section. There had been some limited publishing before, but this was the first time that there had been a dedicated publication section. There were many valid reasons why the Commonwealth Secretariat should have publications section, but I think there are two key or main results for the setting up of this section. For instance, within a couple of years, we were producing 20-25 titles in a range of subjects. Also, we were producing a range of what I call advertorial publications produced by external publisher partners on behalf of the Commonwealth Secretariat, such as the Commonwealth Yearbook, the Commonwealth Education Partnerships and Commonwealth Health. These both gave more publicity to what the Secretariat did and what were some of the key issues that were facing Commonwealth countries. We were selling the list into bookshops throughout the Commonwealth. Through the publication of the advertorial titles, this provided additional monies to the divisions and by the time I left, this was about £150,000 p.a. which was being distributed to the divisions. Thank you.

**PMU: Thank you very much. Patsy, Cheryl, would you like to respond to any of the points that have been raised?**

PR: Peter, you asked about Commonwealth Connects. I have to tell you, my dear, I don't even know what Commonwealth Connects does, which I think is a metaphor for a lot of things. You see, an organisation like the Secretariat which is small, which now has an agenda which, shall I say, is not sexy in any way, but which has to compete with every government, every organisation, NGO, everybody is telling a story. It has to be seen to be doing something that is of value, that has resonance with people, not only in the big metropolitan areas, big, big countries but also in its smaller members so that people have some kind of identity with this organisation, their government belongs to. Now, I get profoundly irritated, I'm very irritated at the number of things that the Commonwealth says it is doing whereas the Latimer House Principles, there is this, there is that, it confuses people. It absolutely confuses people and it does mean the Commonwealth can be held to ransom on practically every issue because it's said something on every issue and it has pledged to do things which it knows it cannot do and it shouldn't do it. I go back to the Singapore thing where we were against racism; we want people to develop an easy document which nobody ever said that you must be held to. Okay? But that's another story.

So, we have confused our image terribly in the last, say, 2-3 decades. How do you do it? What are you doing that's of interest to anybody? We hear of the erosion of Health, Education, ministers of finance barely meet. There is no story. There was – "we are this family with this latticework of meetings". We were the only organisation in the world doing it. Now, we are an organisation which is pledging to fight racism, not racism anymore, sorry, democracy, governance. What are you doing, Vijay? You have a new thing now. What is it? No, it's got a funny word before it. "Participatory Governance." Now, if that's not enough to turn – sorry, Vijay – people just can't cope with that, you know? That is the big

problem. We are doing a lot of publications but who has time to read huge, thick publications? If you're going to compete in this world in terms of maintaining some kind of image, do one thing well, make it simple and spread the message. I think the worst thing that ever happened and I hate to, when the Secretariat was when they stopped giving Derek £50,000 to send out marvellous little articles with lots of lovely drawings and pictures and it went in every paper. Everybody all over the world knew that the Commonwealth was doing simple things which were of benefit. They made stories about education ministers interesting – and that's tough!

Is that okay? We lost that and it hasn't been replaced by big publications. The one other thing I want to say is that we encourage academics so if you had been there 20 years ago, you would have had a lot of access because you would be writing about, people spoke of, we had 4-5 who came to every CHOGM and they had a lot of access. I want to make a plea that the Heads of Government Meetings could still be sold. People like meetings of leaders. If it's just to convince yourself they are totally useless and they meet and spend money and don't do anything but at least people pay attention. The meeting now is what, a day and a half? Two days?

**PMU: Two and a half.**

PR: Two and a half days? It has a grandiose opening ceremony which doesn't even get it publicity, which to me is such a waste of time. It takes up half a day. They meet and then they go into retreat. The retreat was where I got publicity because I took in the media. We had already met for three days and they had gone, economic and so forth and you saw leaders playing a little bit of golf, sitting by the swimming pool chatting. We called it 'refreshing the image' which meant every television, thing in the world would show a picture of Malcolm Fraser talking to Kenneth Kaunda, sitting by a swimming pool. You know what I mean? That kept the Commonwealth. Now, we have lost all of that. Now, how do you replace it because it's not a book? You don't want a book. You just want somebody to get a simple story of an organisation of a family, that's died a death as well, of a family getting together and doing small but useful things. So, Commonwealth Connects, Peter, what does it do, darling?

**PMU: I think it's too late. I'm going to give Richard the final word because I'm afraid we've got to - sorry to the people I didn't get round to - but we've got to wind up.**

RU: Thank you, Peter. I'll try and be brief. Good evening and I apologise for not being here earlier. First of all, let me arrive at a number of things and I'll try and zip through them very quickly. First of all, it's always a pleasure to listen to Patsy and Cheryl. When you look at past, present and future, there's a proverb. There are probably lots of proverbs that say you can't really take hold of your future unless you look behind you and see where you have come from. So, it's always a pleasure to sit down with Patsy and Cheryl and Derek and so many others to look at what came before. Today, we're still trying to fill the fine shoes of Cheryl and Patsy. I'm not sure how successfully, but we're trying. We're doing the best we can. First, on Commonwealth Connects, it's a very simple thing. Commonwealth Connects is a platform, it's a window or a doorway, if you will, on our web that serves as a sharing platform for professional communities of practice. Right now, we have about, at last count, well over 115 different communities of practice and they can go from anything, from the Commonwealth Electoral Network to the

Commonwealth Beekeepers Association. There is a platform for interactivity for these different communities of practice.

Now, just a word on the environment in which we work today. It has changed considerably. There are lots of wins that we had in the past. We work in a different environment today, one which comes with its challenges. The web, I must talk about the web because the website and the web, the internet world has changed the dynamic of the way we work today. Our website is one of our most powerful tools today. We are very active on the web. As you noted earlier, Patsy, the website has changed a lot. It is continuing to change. We are using it as a tool to project our brand and on the brand, I would say that the brand is the most powerful thing we have. We are in the process of refreshing the Commonwealth brand. In fact, we've almost finished and between July 1-8, somewhere in that week, we're going to be rolling out the refreshed Commonwealth brand.

One of the things I said to the Secretariat when I came here is, I said, "SG, if we are to achieve any success in portraying the Secretariat as a dynamic, modern organisation, we need to think differently about how we do so." I said to him, "As Secretariat, when you think of a Secretariat, the Secretariat will always be here, but we are the Commonwealth. We are the primary intergovernmental agency for the Commonwealth, but a Secretariat already, when you think of branding and I've been doing branding for many years but when you think of a Secretariat, you first think of a very static organisation." We've been projecting ourselves as the Commonwealth. Of course, the Secretariat is still there and it's on all our paraphernalia and all our material. The new brand will show us as the modern, dynamic organisation that we are today, 54 nations, one third of the world's population, and also showing us as an organisation that is very relevant to its members in so many different areas. I think you said, Cheryl, something about the Commonwealth being a non-story right now. I don't think it's a non-story. I think we're far from that. There was a time when it was a non-story but I think there are enough issues that we are dealing with and providing assistance to our member countries that make us far more than a non-story. With regard to CHOGM, I don't think there is any fear, Patsy, that we will risk not being in the spotlight, being in the media, come November.

**PMU: I'm sure future historians will read that with a wry smile in 30 years' time. We've really got to wind up.**

RU: There's one point that I'd like to make. And I don't know if my colleagues had to deal with this but we talk about how we communicate the Secretariat, how we communicate our work in the Commonwealth. One thing we don't do very well is enjoin third parties to speak on our behalf. We are just 300+ people in this Secretariat. Our leaders and our governments, stakeholders, civil society, we should be enjoining them more to talk about the work of the Secretariat. I sat in the UN General Assembly in September last year and I listened to speech after speech of Commonwealth leader after Commonwealth leader and not one said anything about the Secretariat, from the Chair-in-Office to –various- about half a dozen. So, I think if we have more of that, more third-party voices working alongside us to project the Commonwealth story and the Commonwealth brand, we can hope to get a lot further.

DI: Can I make one point? Gemini News Service may well come back. They're working...

**PMU: Excellent!**

DI: They're working in Canada in Carlton University. The Director of Carlton University School of Journalism was with Gemini for years and he is now working on a plan to re-launch, possibly.

**PMU: That's great.**

DI: Also, all the stories are still out there just as they were 30 years ago. It's just that they're not being found. Right.

**PMU: Thank you very much. Thank you all for staying the course. I know it's been a long day. I know we've only scratched the surface but in the process I think we've captured some absolutely fascinating material. Thank you all. Congratulations on your lucid comments, your searching questions. Thank you on our behalf and as I suggested before, thank you on behalf of all the future generations of historians who are going to read this transcript and think, "That's interesting. I must find out more about that," and go that little bit deeper. Thank you. Thank you very much. We are actually going to move onto the final stage of our day, today, over drinks in the next room. So, please join us. Thank you very much.**

[end of recording]