

# COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

**DEREK INGRAM**

*As 2003 dawned, a new President and a new party took over in Kenya following a well-run election. Crowds rejoiced as Daniel arap Moi handed over the power he had held for 24 years. In Zimbabwe a political solution seemed no nearer. The economy worsened, famine grew and President Mugabe continued to snub the Commonwealth. The cricketing world was divided over the impending World Cup series in Zimbabwe. Brighter news came from Sri Lanka as the peace talks made remarkable progress. Pakistan's new parliament elected a civilian prime minister in a knife-edge vote. A state election in ethnic-torn Gujarat proved encouraging for the right wing of the BJP and a setback for Congress. Cyprus was accepted for membership of the EU, while Turkish Cypriot demonstrators tried to force Rauf Denktash to do a deal at last with President Clerides. With a new government in Turkey pressing for EU membership it seemed reunification of the island might be in sight.*

## **Kenya**

Forty years of control by the Kenya African National Union (Kanu) ended with the general election of 28 December 2002. It also marked the end of 24 years of rule by President Daniel arap Moi. The new president was 71-year-old Mwai Kibaki, who won a commanding majority in parliament for his National Rainbow Coalition (Narc)—125 seats against 64 for Kanu. The Forum for Restoration of Democracy (Ford-P) took 14 seats and other parties seven. Kibaki scored 62.2 per cent of the presidential vote against 31.3 per cent for the Kanu candidate, Uhuru Kenyatta. Turnout was 57 per cent—down from 69 per cent in 1997. The outgoing vice-president and all but three of Moi's ministers lost their seats. Kenyatta quickly conceded defeat.

For weeks opinion polls had predicted a runaway win for Kibaki. When Moi spoke at a final rally many people turned on their heels and walked silently away.

Derek Ingram was Founding Editor of Gemini News Service until 1993, is the author of a number of books about the Commonwealth and is active in the CJA, CPU, CHRI and the RCS, as well as a member of the Moot.

ISSN 0035-8533 print/1474-029X online/2003/020191-22 © 2003 The Round Table Ltd  
DOI: 10.1080/0035853032000077412

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

The Commonwealth Observer Group led by Professor Adebayo Adedeji of Nigeria, former UN Under Secretary-General, found that 'the electoral process was credible, the conditions existed for a free expression of will by the electors and the results reflected the wishes of the people'.

The team was small but in place for more than a month. The first observers began work on 26 November and the team left on 2 January 2003. For many months before the election the Commonwealth had been advising and providing technical help to the Electoral Commission and afterwards the observers praised its performance. Even so, they found a number of defects and recommended improvements on many matters, such as constituency demarcation, voters' register, campaign finance, voter identification, counting and dealing with illiterate voters.

Compared with earlier elections this one was much more peaceful. A grim-faced Moi, now 78, handed over power, as he had promised he would, at an inauguration ceremony (30 December) in Nairobi's Uhuru Park, where independence was declared in 1963. Up to half a million people were there. Kibaki was frank: 'I am inheriting a country that has been badly ravaged by years of misrule and ineptitude'. He promised no 'witchhunts' and a fresh start, adding: 'Corruption will no longer be a way of life in Kenya'. Kibaki, one-time finance minister and vice-president, had been a Kanu loyalist until 1991 when Kenya ceased to be a one-party state and he formed the Democratic Party.

Both presidential candidates were from the majority Kikuyu tribe. In the campaign Uhuru Kenyatta, 42-year-old son of Kenya's first president, said he represented a new generation of Kanu leaders untainted by graft. On the eve of the election Transparency International's Kenyan director said £31 million had been paid out in the previous month to contractors closely linked to Kanu, a fact denied by the finance ministry in full-page newspaper advertisements.

On election Kibaki quickly named a 21-member cabinet. Lawyer Michael Wamalwa became Vice-President and David Mwiraria Finance Minister. Two Kanu defectors got top jobs: Kalonzo Musyoka was reappointed Foreign Minister and George Saitoti, former Vice-President, became Education Minister. Raila Odinga, leader of the Luo ethnic group, became Minister of Roads and Public Works.

European Union aid to Kenya had been almost frozen since 1997 but within hours of Kibaki's victory Brussels signalled that it was ready to resume help.

Three suicide bombers attacked the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel north of Mombasa, killing 16 people and injuring 80 (28 November). Almost at the same moment two surface-to-air missiles were fired at an Israeli jet full of Israeli holidaymakers taking off from Mombasa airport. Experts said the attacks bore the hallmark of al-Qaida. About 20 people, including Pakistanis and Somalis, were held. Within hours of the attacks it emerged that Australia had warned its citizens in a travel advisory on 12 November to avoid Mombasa. Britain said it had the same intelligence, but simply warned travellers to Kenya of the danger of indiscriminate attacks. The British High Commission in Nairobi was closed (4 December) indefinitely after a threat. The USA shut some offices, too.

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

### **Mozambique**

Manuel Fernandes, on trial in Maputo for the killing of investigative journalist Carlos Cardoso in November 2000, told the court (19 November 2002) he had agreed to take part because one of the five other defendants had told him President Chissano's eldest son had ordered the killing. Chissano said he wanted justice done and the hearing must continue normally.

### **Diego Garcia**

Islanders forcibly transferred by Britain from the Chagos Islands to Mauritius 30 years ago to make way for the US Diego Garcia military base launched a multi-million pound claim for compensation against the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the High Court in London (31 October 2002). In 2000 the islanders won the right to return home in a court case, but the Foreign Office questioned whether repopulation was possible. It commissioned a report that said it would be too expensive to rebuild the infrastructure. An alternative report done for the lawyers said the idea that resettlement could not take place was 'fatuous'. Washington claimed the islanders could be a security risk.

### **Congo war**

The Congolese government and the two main rebel movements signed a peace deal brokered by South Africa in Pretoria (17 December 2002). A transitional government would take the country to elections in three years. President Joseph Kabila would remain president but share power. Democratic elections would be the first held since independence in 1960. A new national police force drawn from the warring factions would patrol the capital and the UN would boost its 8700 military force. South Africa offered 1500 peacekeepers. Foreign troops had begun to withdraw after a peace deal in July, but their proxies continued to fight. By October 22 000 Rwandan troops had left the country. The new deal got a cautious welcome because it had been achieved only under intense pressure from South Africa and the West.

### **Nigeria**

Four days of riots in Kaduna killed 200 people, injured 11 450 and displaced 13 000. Churches were burned and in turn Christian youths burned mosques and houses owned by Muslims. The spark was an article in the newspaper *This Day* about the Miss World beauty contest which had been scheduled to take place in Abuja on 7 December. The article by a Christian journalist suggested the prophet Mohammed, far from being offended by the pageant, would have chosen a wife from among the contestants. A mob burned down the newspaper's regional office in Kaduna (20 November 2002) and began the outbreak which took place against the background of rising tension over the sentence of death by stoning passed on a mother by a Muslim court in Katsina state in August.

When the 73 Miss World contestants flew in from London to Abuja on 12

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

November for the pageant on 7 December they were welcomed effusively by the government. But a week later they flew out and the contest was held in London. President Olusegun Obasanjo called the article blasphemous and the newspaper apologized for it, but it was too late. The episode had not helped Obasanjo politically. The Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs had condemned him for agreeing to host the contest during Ramadan. The writer of the article, Isioma Deniel, resigned from *This Day* and left Nigeria for the USA. Zamfara State issued a *fatwa* urging Muslims to kill her. The Deputy Governor said: 'Like Salman Rushdie the blood of Isioma Deniel can be shed'.

In an attempt to make its debt more manageable Nigeria offered (26 November) to buy back £1.29 billion worth of its commercial debt known as Brady bonds—loans restructured under a plan devised by former US Treasurer Nicholas Brady. In a second step (17 December), the government said it would make a first interest repayment to foreign government creditors in an effort to win relief on its £17.6 billion debt burden. It would make a token payment to the Paris Club before meeting with the IMF, which had broken off its formal relationship with Nigeria earlier in the year. The Nigeria Debt Management Office said more than 80 per cent of its total debt liabilities stemmed from borrowing made between 1980 and 1984 by the corrupt administration of President Shehu Shagari. Nigeria argues that it is excluded from debt relief available to other African countries in part because of its oil wealth.

The USA warned Nigeria in November that it would support international sanctions threatened by the Financial Action Task Force, an anti-money laundering body set up by the industrialized nations, if it did not fall in line with a global campaign against money laundering. The West was urging Nigeria to pass laws proposed by Obasanjo to avert the action.

The timetable was announced (12 November 2002) for the 2003 elections—parliamentary 12 April, presidential and gubernatorial 19 April, regional assembly 3 May 2003. A run-off for the 12 April poll would, if needed, be a week later. A joint report from the US Carter Center and National Democratic Institute (25 November) said the government needed to make big improvements to election security to prevent the polls being undermined by political tensions.

### **Sierra Leone**

British human rights lawyer Geoffrey Robertson was elected president by the eight-judge special court set up by the UN to decide on crimes committed during the civil war (3 December 2002). The court has a budget of £37 million and three years to bring to justice military and political leaders responsible for atrocities. Its job is to find, arrest, try and convict those guilty of war crimes since November 1996. The prosecutor is former US army judge advocate David Crane.

### **Zimbabwe**

The economic situation grew steadily worse in the last months of 2002. More than half the population was said to be seriously affected by the famine and shortages created by the dismantling of the agricultural sector without its

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

replacement by productive farming. Thousands queued for hours for maize and other staples, and cars, buses and trucks lined up for fuel for long periods. Figures at the end of the year estimated total maize production at 1660 tonnes. In 2000 it had been 2133 tonnes. Tobacco exports were expected to be down by 75 per cent in 2003. Fuel shortages worsened in December when Zimbabwe and Libya failed to agree on a new barter formula to finance fuel imports. Zimbabwe could not supply the goods required and turned to Kuwait and South Africa for help on fuel supplies.

Finance Minister Herbert Murerwa said (14 November) that all foreign exchange bureaux would be closed at the end of November to curb the black market. He painted a gloomy picture of the economy, forecasting GDP would drop by 11.9 per cent in 2002 and 7.2 percent in 2003. Military spending was to go up, despite the end of the Congo war. More would be spent on land resettlement. He added that the government had 'always respected internationally recognized rules which govern property rights'. In November inflation reached 175.5 per cent.

UN officials said (16 October) that Oxfam and Save the Children had been stopped for political reasons from distributing food supplied by the World Food Programme. A spokesman quoted credible reports that the government was using state-owned food as a political weapon to punish communities suspected of supporting the opposition. The government had outlawed the private importation of food, leaving the state grain marketing board with a monopoly on the importation and wholesale deliveries of maize meal. Zanu-PF administrative secretary Didymus Mutasa was reported to have said he would not mind if Zimbabwe lost half its 12 million people because of the collapse of farm production. 'We would be better off with only six million people, with our own people who support the liberation struggle.'

A census held in the country in August suggested 11.6 million people were now living in the country against estimates of 14.5 million. Two million people were said to have migrated illegally. Also, an estimated 300 people a day were dying of AIDS. The figures cast doubts over the official results of the presidential elections in March. To achieve a turnout of 5.2 million voters, as claimed by ZANU-PF, the country would have needed a 17 million population.

When President Robert Mugabe opened the annual congress of the ruling ZANU-PF at Chinhoyi he fiercely attacked Britain, the white minority and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, but did not mention the famine. He called Britain an enemy of Zimbabwe and said: 'Leave us alone to run our own lives'.

Foreign affairs senior secretary Willard Chiwewe said (19 December) that Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon had been trying to put pressure on Zimbabwe to receive him on a mission, but he would not be welcome if he tried to come. McKinnon's intentions were not legitimate because they were based on a 'flawed' observer group report on the March elections. The Secretariat said member governments were dismayed by Chiwewe's remarks. The Commonwealth would continue to try to engage the government of Zimbabwe in dialogue.

After local elections (28 September), the state radio announced that ZANU-PF had won 'a majority' of the 1397 seats. The MDC said only 699 of its

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

candidates had been allowed to register, so ZANU-PF was assured of victory.

A fierce controversy arose in the cricket world at the end of 2002 over whether the England team should visit Zimbabwe in February 2003 to take part in the World Cup, six matches of which were scheduled to be held in Harare. England was to play one one-day match on 13 February. Strong opposition built in the UK. In Zimbabwe the MDC called for the matches to be moved to South Africa. The International Cricket Council and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) firmly opposed any change. British Prime Minister Tony Blair, several of his ministers and the two main opposition parties wanted the visit called off, but the government said it had no legal power to stop the tour; it was a matter for the cricket authorities. Australian Prime Minister John Howard called for all six countries taking part in the World Cup to boycott Zimbabwe. Several past England cricket celebrities opposed the tour, but England captain Nasser Hussain said his team would do as directed by the ECB. As well as England and Australia, the teams scheduled to play one-day matches were Namibia, India, Holland and Pakistan. Mugabe is a keen cricket fan and President of the Zimbabwe Cricket Union. Opponents of the tour feared going ahead would bolster his regime.

Baroness Amos, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for the Commonwealth and African affairs, was among a minority of EU foreign ministers to travel to Maputo in November for a biennial meeting with SADC. The meeting had been moved from Copenhagen when SADC threatened not to attend because sanctions made it impossible for Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Stan Mudenge to travel there. British Conservatives accused the EU of being spineless in accepting the move. Amos said Zimbabwe could not be allowed to wreck the dialogue between Africa and the EU on such vital matters as AIDS and armed conflict.

A meeting of the 77-nation African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group collapsed (25 November) when the European Parliament voted to bar two Zimbabwean ministers from entering the building. The group boycotted the meeting in protest.

Britain said (8 November) all Zimbabweans would need a visa to enter the UK because up to 300 a week were now arriving. In retaliation Zimbabwe banned visits by 121 mostly British officials and politicians, including Tony Blair, and imposed its own visa requirements.

A British inquiry was launched into allegations in a UN report in October that Zimbabwean businessman John Bredenkamp, one of the richest men living in Britain, had supplied aircraft parts to the Zimbabwean air force. Bredenkamp said the report was 'hopelessly inaccurate'.

A new Zimbabwean law said that any driver forced to stop as the president's motorcade passed 'shall not make any gesture or statement within the view or hearing of the motorcade with the intention of insulting' its VIP passenger.

Three eminent Zimbabwean figures died: the widely respected former finance minister Bernard Chidzero, 74, who held several UN posts and narrowly lost to Boutros Boutros-Ghali as UN Secretary-General (8 August); New Zealand-born Sir Garfield Todd, 94, premier of what was then Southern Rhodesia 1953–58, restricted and imprisoned during Ian Smith's rule and a senator after independence (13 October); and Mark Chavunduka, 36, outspoken founder editor of

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

the independent Sunday paper, *The Standard*, who was held in prison with another journalist in 1999 and tortured (11 November).

### **Zambia**

In a drive to encourage the return of children who left school under the Chiluba regime the government began distributing textbooks, exercise books, pens rulers and pencils for grades 1–7 throughout Zambia. Education Minister Andrew Mulenga said (11 November) that under Mwanawasa's free schooling policy children were returning to classrooms in droves.

President Levy Mwanawasa restored national honours abolished by his predecessor Frederick Chiluba. In an independence day ceremony (24 October 2002) he honoured the country's first president Kenneth Kaunda—Grand Commander of the Order of the Eagle—several freedom fighters and Commonwealth Games gold medallist Kennedy Kanyanta. In Lusaka cathedral bishops of the Anglican church presented the first Woman of Honour award to Kaunda's wife, Betty.

Actor Roger Moore, goodwill ambassador for UNICEF, urged Zambia (12 November) to reconsider its decision to block the import of genetically modified grain. Care International said an estimated 2.9 million people—30 per cent of the population—were 'very, very hungry'. Agriculture Minister Mundia Sikitana said Zambia stood firm on its rejection of GM maize; Zambia had no way to detect or manage GM products and accepting them might harm budding European demands for its produce, in particular organic vegetables. In December the World Food Programme began to take food supplies out of Zambia—the first time the UN had taken emergency relief out of a country threatened by starvation.

Despite the pullout of Anglo-American from Konkola copper mines at the start of 2002, the mines produced more copper than in 2001 and more than any other mining company in the country.

Police Commissioner Wynter Kabwika told a press conference (25 November) that the anti-corruption task force had frozen many kwacha and dollar accounts belonging to leaders of the ruling MMD, as well as identifying 37 properties in Zambia and abroad connected to fraudulent funding. Interpol had been engaged to find former foreign minister Katele Kalumba, who vanished to Congo as members of the Chiluba regime were picked off one by one by the task force.

Chiluba was stopped from flying to London before Christmas for a medical check-up. Mwanawasa feared he might not return.

### **South Africa**

The 51st conference of the African National Congress was held on the campus of Stellenbosch University, regarded as the intellectual cradle of the apartheid policy. The site was the D. F. Malan Memorial Centre—named after the architect of apartheid. In his opening address (16 December) President Thabo Mbeki promised to continue privatization of state assets and said an overarching empowerment charter was needed to give black people a bigger stake.

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

There would be no wavering from liberal economic policies and no concessions to the 'ultra-left'. He spoke of racial reconciliation and paid tribute to 'the role played by the Afrikaans-speaking section of our population in the reconstruction and development of our country'. But he reminded his audience that most corrupt practices in South Africa were 'a legacy of the past, encompassing 300 years of white minority rule'.

The conference came at a time of more signs of a revival of Afrikaner extremism. Bombings in Soweto and elsewhere had led police to discover several more arms caches and 27 people were to go on trial for plotting to overthrow the government. One explosion was in a hangar full of police aircraft. Police raided 94 homes of white militants in a pre-dawn security sweep across the country (29 November). Several people were arrested.

An Afrikaner language station run by whites called Radio Pretoria was preaching resistance to the new South Africa. The Institute for Security Studies said the plotters were mainly intellectuals and numbered fewer than 1500. The driving force seemed to be erosion of the Afrikaner culture as English took over in the courts, Parliament, schools, universities and on street signs.

The constitutional court ruled (4 October) that local councillors were entitled to defect from one party to another without losing their seats. When 27 defectors left the Democratic Alliance control of Cape Town passed into the hands of the ANC and its ally the New National Party.

A case was filed in a New York court (11 November) accusing 21 American and European banks, including Barclays and Deutsche Bank, of allegedly bankrolling and supporting apartheid in the days of white rule. Lawyers said up to 100 more corporations might be added later. The legal move was the second to be taken in New York. The first named such giants as General Motors, IBM and Rio Tinto. South African ministers said the government would not back the claims because they would harm attempts to attract foreign investment. Finance Minister Trevor Manuel said the country did not need the lawsuits.

Nelson Mandela returned to the Victor Verster prison, later the Drakenstein prison, for its opening as a museum (9 December). The jail was his final place of captivity after Robben Island, already a national heritage site, and Pollsmoor.

President Mbeki presented former president Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia with a gold medal making him 'a companion of Oliver Tambo' for his relentless fight against apartheid (10 December). For the ceremony in Pretoria Kaunda dressed in the toga he had worn at Zambian independence in 1964.

### **Swaziland**

King Mswati III insisted he would take delivery of a £28 million, 19-seat jet-liner, although parliament voted to cancel the order. At a time when the country was hit by the AIDS pandemic and severe drought his intransigence angered MPs and donors. The cabinet approved the purchase, saying that it would help the King seek foreign aid and investment and scout for food. The cost was twice the amount the UN was trying to raise to prevent starvation in Swaziland. Britain and the USA threatened to withdraw aid. In turn Prime Minister Sibusiso Dlamini threatened to deport the British High Commissioner and US Ambassador.

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

The King was also still in conflict with the country's judges over the court case brought by the mother of a teenager selected to become his tenth wife. The attorney-general told three judges to stop her case against royal aides. When the director of public prosecutions instituted sedition charges against the attorney-general he was told to drop them or resign. He refused unless he was paid in full until the end of his contract in 2005.

Six South African judges on the court of appeal ruled that the King had acted unconstitutionally in ruling by decree and overturning court decisions. Dlamini said the government would ignore judgements that curbed the King's power. The six resigned (30 November) and High Court judges refused to preside over trials indefinitely. Chief Justice Stanley Sapire said: 'If the government does not honour court rulings why are we here?' The trade unions called a nationwide strike in protest at government interference in the judicial system.

### **Transfrontier Park**

After two years of talks South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique signed a treaty near Maputo (9 December) under which the countries would open their borders to merge three game reserves into one. The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, with a mammal population of 100 000 will allow wildlife to roam an area half the size of Scotland.

### **Namibia**

Foreign Minister Hidipo Hamutenya said (3 October 2002) that the government was considering expropriating white-owned land for redistribution to landless blacks if farmers continued to resist reform. The farms listed included 91 owned by South Africans and 99 by Germans. President Sam Nujoma, who had appointed himself Information Minister, ordered the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation to stop foreign TV broadcasting programmes because they were 'corrupting the nation's youth'.

### **Pakistan**

After weeks of post-election party wrangling Parliament convened for the first time (16 November 2002) since General Pervez Musharraf seized power in 1999. Six days later Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, of the Pakistan Muslim League–Quaid-e-Azam (PML–QA), became Prime Minister. His party joined with regional parties and he was elected leader by one vote in a 342-seat house. The turning point was the defection of ten members of Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party, which had won the largest number of seats in the October elections. The vote ended Bhutto's hopes of forming a government and returning from exile.

The leader of a coalition of six Islamic groups won the second largest number of votes in the parliamentary vote, putting the opposition into the hands of the religious right for the first time since independence. Jamali, 58, from Baluchistan and little known, had close links with the military. He promised Pakistan's support for the US war on terror and praised Musharraf for returning the

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

country to civilian rule. The MPL–QA candidate was elected Speaker of the House. Musharraf, who said he would continue to play a role as the ‘protection and progress of the country’, retained power to dismiss parliament. The new House had 74 women MPs who were separately seated. Few were dressed in all-enveloping burkas and one wore jeans and a red shirt.

Musharraf was sworn in for a five-year term as president on the day parliament convened.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon wrote to the new prime minister offering continued Commonwealth support ‘to help complete the transition to civilian and democratic rule, in accordance with the Commonwealth’s fundamental political principles’.

A senior MP and member of the Islamic alliance called the USA the ‘biggest terrorist state’ in prayers said in parliament (19 November) for a man executed in Virginia for the murders of two members of the CIA. A crowd of 20 000 gathered in Quetta, the man’s home town, some carrying banners calling Musharraf an ‘American stooge’.

Lt-General Dan McNeill, commander of US-led troops in Afghanistan, said (28 December) catching al-Qaida militants would be easier if Pakistan put more forces on the border. Pakistan said it had committed 60 000–70 000 troops to the hunt.

When Washington accused Pakistan of swapping nuclear know-how with North Korea the new Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mahmood Kasturi, said (26 November) that Pakistan had faithfully followed the Missile Technology Control Regime agreed between a group of governments to restrict technology exports.

Police claimed (15 December) to have foiled a suicide bombing plot by Islamic militants in Karachi to kill US diplomats. They seized a car full of explosives and arrested three members of a banned guerrilla group. Nine people, including two Americans and one Canadian of Pakistani origin, were arrested by Pakistani police and FBI agents in Lahore (19 December) in a search for members of al-Qaida.

Two masked men threw a grenade into a church in Chianwala, near Lahore on Christmas Day. Three girls were killed and 13 other worshippers injured. Four people were arrested and tougher security was ordered for the country’s main churches.

### **India**

The ruling BJP, led by Chief Minister Narendra Modi, took 127 of 182 seats in Gujarat state assembly elections (12 December 2002). Congress, which had expected a good showing, took only 51. The election had been fought on bitter communal lines. It was the BJP’s first significant state election victory for four years and followed communal riots earlier in the year that had killed nearly 2000 Muslims. Modi had been accused of complicity in the riots and the result was seen as a blow to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, who was trying to bring the BJP to the centre ground.

President Vladimir Putin of Russia and Vajpayee pledged after talks in New Delhi to cooperate in the fight against terrorism. Putin called on Pakistan to take

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

tougher action against militants—a remark swiftly rejected by Pakistan’s new Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, who said Pakistan’s nuclear assets were in safe hands.

Promotion of Arun Shourie to the post of Minister of Commerce in November was seen as a clear sign that India’s hesitant economic reform programme was back on track. Shourie, as disinvestment minister, had sold 30 state enterprises in 18 months, but in September Vajpayee froze privatization for three months because of cabinet dissension. Now it was announced (9 December) that Hindustan Petroleum Corporation was to be sold to a private company and the shares of Bharat Petroleum would be offered publicly. The oil deals had been a cause of the dissension.

Figures up to December showed that in three years India’s stockpile of rice and wheat had tripled to 60 million tonnes—roughly a quarter of the world’s food stocks. In November India gave one million tonnes of wheat flour to Afghanistan. Aid officials said the system of food distribution in India had collapsed and failed to find its targets among those living below the poverty line. Much of the stockpile was being eaten by rats, rotting in warehouses, or sold on the black market

The first 8.3 km stretch of the new £1.3 billion underground rail system in New Delhi which opened on 25 December was such a success officials had to plead with customers to stay away. Its South Korean-made carriages were built to carry 200 000 passengers a day, but 1.2 million travelled in the first 24 hours. The entire 250 km network was to be completed by 2010.

India lifted its ban on the separatist National Socialist Council of Nagaland. The move opened the way for the party leaders to travel to Delhi for the first time in 37 years and talk to Vajpayee. Nagaland has three guerrilla groups with 10 000 men under arms. The 50-year conflict had led to 20 000 deaths.

The manhunt for Koose Muniswamy Veerappan, India’s most wanted bandit, was stepped up in December when the body of former Karnataka state minister Harran Nagappa, kidnapped from his home in Mysore in August, was found in the Changdi forest bordering on Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Riots broke out in Nagappa’s home town, Kamagere. Veerappan is wanted for 120 murders and had cast himself as a Tamil supporter to cover his criminal activities. He has lived for 25 years in the jungle, where police say he is king, imitating the calls of animals and birds.

A New Delhi court ruled (15 November) that the trial should go ahead of the three Hinduja brothers accused of involvement in the Bofors arms scandal 16 years ago. The defence lawyers said they would contest the ruling.

### **India and Pakistan**

Indian Foreign Minister Yashwant Singh said (31 October 2002) that the international community had lost its right to advise India. It had shown double standards by chasing bombers in Pakistan but letting them freely operate in Kashmir. They should force Pakistan to act.

India accused Pakistan of being involved in a series of terrorist attacks in Kashmir at the end of November 2002 that ended many weeks of relative calm in the region. Forty people died in a Hindu temple, a bus and an Indian camp.

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

Indian Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani dared Pakistan to launch a war on India (1 December). He said: 'Let us fight it out face to face. We have fought thrice, let there be a fourth.' They were the toughest words since the crisis that nearly brought war earlier in the year.

Hopes of any peace talks were further dashed when Pakistan cancelled (9 December) a summit of regional leaders planned for January. Western diplomats had been working to get the two countries together, but now, they said, it was back to square one. Pakistan's new Commerce Minister said (2 December) his country would not give trade access to Indian exports unless political ties improved.

### **Bangladesh**

Bomb attacks in four cinemas in Mymensingh, 95 km north of Dhaka, killed 17 people and injured 300 on the last day of Ramadan (8 December 2002). The government strongly denied Indian claims that the attacks were the work of militants linked to al-Qaida.

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed said (22 October) a campaign against violent crime was being used to harass the political opposition. Nearly 3500 people had been detained, including two opposition Awami League ex-ministers. Fifteen people were said to have died from 'heart failure' in army custody.

Thirty women and children died in a stampede caused by thousands of people scrambling for clothes being handed out by a charity in Gaibandha, northern Bangladesh (1 December). The crowd surged into the compound of an old jute mill as guards opened its gates.

### **Sri Lanka**

After a four-day third round of peace talks, this time held in Oslo, the government and the Tamil Tiger rebels (5 December 2002) said they were pursuing a peace deal giving regional autonomy to rebel-held areas in the north. They had decided 'to explore a political solution founded on internal self-government based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka'. Rebel leader Anton Balasingham said there was 'no question of a reversal to war'.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga remained opposed to giving what she saw as too much ground to the rebels. Fundamental constitutional change would require a two-thirds majority in parliament, which the government of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe did not command. The Supreme Court ruled (22 October) that a bill before parliament to restrict the powers of the president needed approval by a public referendum as well as a two-thirds majority.

The UN estimated that 213 000 displaced people, mostly Tamils, had returned home since the ceasefire began.

On the eve of the Oslo talks Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon pointed to a meeting of Sri Lanka's donors also taking place there and said 'their commitment to peace will be measured by how deeply they dig into their pockets'.

## Malaysia

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad was angry when the USA included Malaysia in a list of 15 terrorist-risk countries, despite Malaysia's strong support for the 'war on terror'. Since mid-2001 it had detained 60 suspects without trial and when Ahmed Ibrahim Bilal, an al-Qaida suspect believed to be a member of a US-based terrorist cell, was arrested by Malaysian police he was quickly deported to the USA (10 October 2002), although Malaysia has no extradition treaty with Washington.

Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was security-searched at Los Angeles on his way to address the UN assembly. Mahathir accused the USA of 'anti-Muslim hysteria' (1 October). He warned later that a US attack on Iraq would create a chasm between the West and the Muslim world. Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said (27 October) Malaysia planned to set up a regional centre to help Southeast Asian countries fight terrorism.

The police arrested (16 October) three men said to be members of the Islamist group believed responsible for the Bali bombing.

## Hong Kong

The biggest political protest march for years took place (15 December 2002) in the central area. About 20 000 people demonstrated against an anti-subversion law known as Article 23. The Article was inserted into the Basic Law, the territory's legal framework agreed with Britain, in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre because the Chinese feared Hong Kong would become a base for subversion after the 1997 handover. Under Article 23 moribund colonial laws would be replaced to deal with a wider range of offences. China did not set a timetable for implementation, but in 2002 it stepped up pressure for an end to delay. Continuing failure of the Hong Kong government to spell out the new laws in enough detail led to the demonstration.

A 'consultative document' circulated early in 2002 was considered vague and merely raised fears of restrictions on freedom of expression and association. Britain said (18 November) that it had a responsibility to ensure that the rights and freedoms enshrined in the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration were maintained. Three days later the USA expressed concerns. Both governments called for early publication of the actual language of the legislation and for a full and genuine public consultation.

British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Jack Straw discussed the matter with Chinese Vice-Premier Quan Qichen in July and the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, raised it on a visit to Hong Kong in October.

Hong Kong's economy recovered in July–September with GDP up 3.3 per cent on the previous year. Visitor arrivals in October rose 37.2 per cent to 1.58 million—a record for a single month.

Six thousand maids marched in Central Hong Kong (1 December) against government plans to tax by £30–£60 a month those who employ domestic help. Employers were expected to deduct the tax from the maids' meagre salaries. Most are Filipino. Few have had a rise since 1997. In 1999 their minimum wage was cut 5 per cent because of the Asian economic crisis.

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

### **Papua New Guinea**

Foreign Minister Sir Rabbie Namaliu said (12 October 2002) the agreement with Australia to operate a camp on Manus Island to process asylum seekers was to be extended for another year. It had been upgraded and could take up to 1000 people. Currently it housed only 98.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan asked the Security Council (21 November) to extend the mandate of the UN Political office in Bougainville by another year because of setbacks in the peace process involving the handing in of weapons. A deadline of 30 September had been missed.

### **Solomon Islands**

A cyclone generating winds up to 223 mph hit the remote islands of Tikopia and Anuta, on which live about 3000 people. The islands are about 600 miles from Honiara, have no airstrip and can be reached only by boat. At first it was feared most of the inhabitants had been lost, but they had built traditional cyclone shelters and after a week it was established that everyone had survived. Much of the islands' vegetation was flattened.

Australian High Commissioner Robert Davis said (15 October 2002) that, even though hundreds of weapons had been surrendered under the Townville Peace Agreement to end ethnic conflict, there were now more guns in the country than when it was signed two years earlier. Continuing imports were to blame. A National Peace Council was set up (15 October) to replace the Peace Monitoring Council, which had expired under the agreement. An eight-member interim body would be replaced by a permanent one after 16 January 2003. A four-man UN team visited Solomons (17–24 October) to assess ethnic tension.

### **Vanuatu**

President Father John Bernard Bani pardoned former prime minister Barak Sope (13 November 2002), who had been sentenced to three years jail for fraud. He did so on grounds of ill-health.

Public discontent over the pardon led the government to set up a commission of inquiry. Sope had accused Australia and New Zealand of manipulating the judicial system to have him jailed. He claimed the two countries did not like his 'Look North' foreign policy that aimed to improve ties with China.

On Australian television Deputy Prime Minister Serge Vohor accused Australian police stationed in Vanuatu of spying on politicians and meddling in Vanuatu's domestic affairs. Australia denied the charges, which referred to a dispute that had led to a trial of police officers on mutiny charges.

### **Kiribati**

Elections for the House of Assembly went into two rounds (29 November and 6 December) because President Teburoro Tito's government lost 14 supporters including seven ministers. He was among MPs lacking 50 per cent support in the first round. There were no parties but the uncertain outcome of the voting

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

for the Assembly was followed by the scheduling of a presidential election in 2003.

Earlier, delay in bringing into service an aircraft leased for Air Kiribati led to a vote of confidence in the House which the government survived, but a report recommending enlarging the number of legislators, currently 42, was rejected.

After four years' wait former president Ieremia Tabai was given a licence to operate the country's first independent radio station (14 December 2002). Tabai, owner of the independent Kiribati *Newstar*, often critical of the government, said the Information Ministry had been holding up the application without good reason. The licence was granted three days before the matter was to go before the High Court.

### **Tonga**

All nine elected members of the 30-seat legislative assembly walked out (21 October 2002) because a series of private members' bills had been dismissed on first reading by the 21 legislators appointed by the King or elected by the nobility. Opposition leader Akilisi Pohiva proposed a constitutional change by which all bills would have to be debated before being voted on.

### **Fiji Islands**

The Great Council of Chiefs ruled in November 2002 that Queen Elizabeth was still Queen of Fiji, although she had ceased to be head of government when the country became a republic in 1987. The chairman said Fijian royal titles had been bestowed on the English throne by traditional procedures in 1902 and confirmed in 1937.

### **Australia**

The governments of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines condemned remarks made by Prime Minister John Howard (1 December 2002) that he was prepared to act against terrorists in neighbouring Asian countries. He argued that international law should let nations strike pre-emptively against those who planned to attack them. The four countries said such strikes would flout international law. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia said his country would consider such a move 'an act of war'. Malaysia threatened to pull out of the counter-terrorism pact put in place with Australia after the 11 September attacks

To ease tension Foreign Minister Alexander Downer met heads of mission of the ten ASEAN countries. Labor leader Simon Crean accused Howard of reckless statements, but Howard refused to apologize and said he had made the remarks 'very carefully'.

A Senate inquiry report (23 October) found that then defence minister Peter Reith deliberately misled the public by claiming during the 2001 general election campaign that asylum seekers on a ship intercepted by the Australian navy had thrown their children into the sea. During the campaign other ministers had repeated the story.

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

One of the worst droughts in Australian history led to water restrictions in Melbourne and in December to another outbreak of fires around Sydney and in Queensland. About 40 000 jobs were estimated lost because of the dry conditions across the country. The economy was expected to suffer by £2 billion and inflation to rise. In some places farmers resorted to stealing river water to keep their crops alive and to sell it on the black market. The weather conditions were blamed on the El Niño pattern over the Pacific.

A judgement delivered by the Sydney High Court (12 December) was seen as the death knell of the native title system. The court ruled that the Yorta Yorta people had no claim to 2000 sq km of tribal land along the Murray River, on the New South Wales–Victoria border, from which they were expelled in the 19th century. Monica Morgan, speaking for the Yorta Yorta, said the verdict was ‘not about native title, it’s about racism’.

A medical report published in Darwin showed that malnutrition among Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory was reaching epidemic proportions. The Australian bureau of statistics said one in 20 Aborigines in the country had diabetes—three times the rate for other Australians.

The High Court of Australia ruled (10 December) that a mining entrepreneur could sue US news group Dow Jones locally for defamation over an article on a website. It was believed to be the first time the highest court in any country had ruled on the jurisdiction issue in a defamation case involving internet-based publication. Legal experts said the ruling could have a significant impact not just in Australia but world-wide.

Media watchdog Reporters Sans Frontières said the ruling could have implications for freedom of expression on the internet all over the world. It said:

It sets a dangerous legal precedent that exposes online media to prosecution anywhere in the world where the Internet is present and a lawsuit can be filed for libel. As the legislation governing libel varies from one country to another, there is a crucial difference between the place where a text appears and the place where its website is hosted ... lawsuits against online media must be handled by the court in the country where the website is hosted.

The Australian Institute of Marine Science said (17 December) that the Great Barrier Reef had recovered from severe bleaching and was now one of the world’s healthiest coral reefs. The bleaching occurs when the water becomes too warm and the algae populating the reefs die. At one time 60 per cent of the reef was dying, but now only 6 per cent was affected. In 1997–98 El Niño raised the Pacific water temperature to a record level.

### **New Zealand**

When the Kyoto protocol on climate change was ratified (10 December 2002) the government said it would begin a transition to a sustainable energy economy. About half the country’s greenhouse gases come from the methane and carbon dioxide emissions of more than 50 million sheep and cattle.

Finance Minister Michael Cullen signalled a government U-turn (19

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

December) when he said taxes for low to medium wage earners would be cut within two years if forecasts for higher economic growth and bigger budget surpluses proved accurate. When Labour was re-elected earlier in the year it ruled out tax cuts. Cullen said New Zealand had been one of the strongest performers in the OECD in recent years, with current growth now expected to rise from 3.1 per cent to 4 per cent.

A minister was seen knitting during a debate in Parliament. Opposition MPs sought a ruling from the Speaker on knitting in the chamber. The Speaker ruled (22 November) that backbench MPs were allowed to knit, but ministers could not.

### **Barbados**

A 6.4 per cent drop in government revenue since the start of 2002 led to a new budget to supplement one presented in March. Prime Minister Owen Arthur produced reductions in corporation tax (by 1.25 per cent) and personal income tax (from 25 to 22.5 per cent). Retirement age was raised from 65 to 67 and national insurance contributions increased.

### **British Virgin Islands**

Thomas Townley Macan was sworn in as Governor in succession to Frank Savage (14 October).

### **Trinidad and Tobago**

Following the convening of parliament for the first time since the disputed election of 2001, Prime Minister Patrick Manning presented a budget (21 October 2002) that provided for an 8 per cent cut for taxpayers in the lowest income band and a 5 per cent cut in corporation tax in the non-energy sector. Public expenditure on health and education was to rise steeply by 10 per cent.

### **St Vincent and the Grenadines**

Under the terms of the Commonwealth Debt Initiative Britain cancelled US\$3.7 million in aid debt repayments. The Initiative, launched by UK Chancellor Gordon Brown in 1997, applies to Commonwealth countries with an annual per capita GNP below \$3115 and to middle income small islands committed to internationally agreed development targets.

### **Turks and Caicos Islands**

Jim Poston was sworn in as Governor in succession to Mervyn T. Jones (30 November).

### **Jamaica**

Newly re-elected Prime Minister Percival Patterson used a TV address to announce (3 December 2002) that his government would seek re-introduction

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

of the death penalty. He said it was time to 'heed the voice of the people'. The Labour opposition supports the government, but strong opposition comes from religious and human rights groups. Jamaica has one of the highest murder rates in the world; by December, for the second year running, 1000 people had been killed in 2002, including 16 policemen. Sixty convicts were on death row. Most violence is drug-related. The death penalty had not been imposed since 1988. Under the constitution the Privy Council remains the final appellate court. Patterson moved to amend the constitution so that appeals no longer go to the Privy Council.

Since the death penalty was abolished in the UK it had consistently upheld appeals to commute the death sentences to life jail. It had also opposed hanging. A gallows still stands at an adult correctional centre in Kingston.

Patterson also pledged 'new and forceful' use of the army to counter violence. As he spoke, police and military squads moved into Kingston's gun-ridden ghettos and seized scores of young men for questioning, imposed 24-hour curfews and demolished derelict buildings used by cocaine gangs.

Police seized 1710 lb of marijuana at Montego Bay airport and arrested 19 British citizens (21 November). A week later 11 of them were sentenced to a year's hard labour. Dogs alerted police to 37 suitcases about to be put aboard a flight to Gatwick.

### **Guyana**

Desmond Hoyte, president from 1985 for seven years following the death of Forbes Burnham, and leader of the opposition People's National Congress/Reform party, died aged 73 (22 December 2002). He lost the 1992 election, handing over power to Cheddi Jagan, and had led the opposition since then.

### **Canada**

The government told citizens born in some Arab and Muslim countries to think before travelling to the USA. Some people holding Canadian passports had been fingerprinted, photographed and registered. Foreign Minister Bill Graham had taken the matter up with Secretary of State Colin Powell and been dissatisfied with the response.

Francoise Ducros, communications manager in Prime Minister Jean Chretien's office, resigned after she had been heard to call President Bush a 'moron' during the December NATO summit in Prague.

A government-appointed commission on the future of healthcare said £6 billion federal cash should be injected into the service by 2006, raising the government share from 19 to 25 per cent. Creation of a Health Council of Canada was recommended to monitor the system's performance.

Quebec Prime Minister Bernard Landry called (21 October 2002) for UNESCO to prepare a convention allowing cultural products such as films to be exempted from world trade rules. Leaders of 50 Francophonie countries had endorsed the proposal at their summit in Beirut.

Opposition to Canadian ratification of the Kyoto accord on climate change announced by Chretien (16 December) grew as industrial leaders campaigned

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

against implementation. Under the agreement Canada must cut annual gas emissions by 6 per cent of 1990 levels over the years 2008–12. Opponents argued that because of Canada's strong growth a cut of 20–30 per cent from current levels would be required. Chretien sees Kyoto as part of his political legacy when he steps down in 2004.

The USA said it would dismantle Canada's 65-year-old system for selling wheat on world markets by launching a dispute settlement case in the World Trade Organization (WTO). It sought to end the monopoly powers of the Canadian Wheat Board, a farmers' body that negotiates all world sales of Canadian wheat. The move was seen as exacerbating relations already damaged by the US decision to put a 27 per cent import tariff on Canadian lumber. The USA is the world's biggest exporter of wheat and Canada is second.

The WTO found (1 November) that the USA had wrongly determined that local government payments to the Canadian softwood lumber industry constituted a subsidy.

In Yukon the ruling Liberal Party led by Prime Minister Pat Duncan was heavily beaten in an early election (4 November). It won one seat in the enlarged 18-seat Legislative Assembly. The Yukon Party, led by Dennis Fentie, won 12 and the other five went to the New Democratic Party. Duncan had been forced to call the poll because the defection of three Liberals lost the government its majority.

Mario Dumont, 32-year-old leader of Action Démocratique du Québec, pushed his party to the top of the opinion polls in advance of elections due in 2003. His radical programme for flat-rate income tax, school vouchers and expanded healthcare was driving the separatist issue out of the headlines, much to the dismay of the ruling Parti Québécois.

### **United Kingdom**

Cabinet papers released by the Public Record Office (1 January 2003) showed that when prime minister Edward Heath was faced in 1972 with the arrival of 57 000 Ugandan Asians expelled by Idi Amin he tried to divert them to other Commonwealth countries and to dependencies like Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands. But almost no one wanted them except prime minister Pierre Trudeau of Canada, who offered to take 3000 and President Banda of Malawi who said he would take 1000 'provided they behave themselves'. The USA refused to take any. Bermuda, Virgin and Cayman Islands, Solomons and Seychelles were all unhelpful. In the event only 28 000 Ugandan Asians came to Britain, many highly motivated.

Other papers showed that the Duke of Edinburgh urged prime minister Harold Wilson to stop independence for Barbados and instead propose a relationship to the UK similar to that of the Scilly or Channel Islands. On a visit to Barbados 'it seemed quite obvious to me [that the islanders] were far more attached to Britain than they were to each other'.

### **Cyprus**

As part of its ten-nation enlargement process, the European Union summit in

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

Brussels (12–13 December 2002) decided to admit the Greek Cypriot south of the island as a member in May 2004, leaving the door open to the Turkish community in the north if they could approve the UN peace plan for Cyprus by 28 February. This followed the failure of Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash to sign the 137-page document before the Brussels meeting. The UN plan proposed a sovereign ‘common state’ with a bi-national government consisting of Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot ‘component states’ with responsibilities in all spheres not reserved to the federal government. The area of Turkish Cypriot administration would be reduced from 37 per cent to 28.5 per cent.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan had hoped for a settlement by 12 December but it was not to be, although Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis had promised to work for an agreement that would avoid a divided island entering the EU.

The year-long UN-brokered talks between Denktash and President Glafkos Clerides of Cyprus continued up to the Brussels summit, although they were impeded when Denktash entered hospital in New York (7 October) for the first of two heart operations. Another impediment was the pending Turkish general election, which on 3 November resulted in a change of government. After the election the new Turkish government said an accord was impossible because of Denktash’s ill-health.

In the Turkish sector of Nicosia thousands turned out (27 November) to urge their leaders to grasp an historic opportunity for a deal. People in the Greek Cypriot sector were divided over the settlement, which would allow only half the 165 000 driven out by Turkish troops in 1974 to return to their homes.

In a last-minute attempt to secure unity Annan called on Denktash and Clerides to attend the EU summit. Clerides went, but Denktash flew off to Turkey for a medical check-up.

British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Jack Straw flew to Turkey (2 December) in a final attempt to resolve the dispute before the EU summit, but he had to admit (12 December) that was not possible. Under the UN deal Britain would remain a guarantor power and keep its bases in Cyprus.

It became clear that Turkey, seeking accession to the EU, was using its bargaining power over Cyprus to advance the start date for talks leading to its membership by 2010. Former supporters of Denktash staged a series of further demonstrations in the Turkish sector of Nicosia in December with up to 30 000 people urging him to sign a peace deal and resign. Denktash returned to Cyprus after a two-month absence on 29 December.

### **Gibraltar**

The government of Chief Minister Peter Caruana refused to close its tax-haven status for offshore financial companies. It argued that the matter was for Britain and directed it back to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The European Commission had ruled that exempt company status was a form of illegal state aid and ordered the UK to scrap it. Gibraltar has 76 000 registered companies and Spain said tax exemption attracted money launderers, which Gibraltar denies.

Sir Francis Richards, 57, head of the GCHQ listening post, was appointed

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

governor (18 December 2002) in succession to Sir David Durie. He was to take up the post in May.

### **Commonwealth Secretary-General**

News that the USA was the only country in the WTO blocking a deal to supply poor countries with vital drugs at affordable prices brought a strong response from Secretary-General Don McKinnon (31 December 2002). He said: 'Denying people in impoverished countries access to life-saving medicines is unacceptable. 143 out of 144 WTO countries can't be wrong. If the USA would only join this powerful humanitarian consensus millions of lives could be saved.'

### **British Empire and Commonwealth Museum**

After several years of preparation the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol opened its doors to the public (22 September 2002). It is housed in Temple Meads Station, Britain's first railway terminus, built by Isambard Kingdom Brunel. The opening gallery presents the Commonwealth as it is today, leading into the history of the Empire. The exhibition is the first in the world to be dedicated to a study of the 500 years of colonial history. As well as a mass of historic material the museum has built an oral archive of more than 1000 recordings and hopes to develop as a centre of research into the Empire. The director is Dr Gareth Griffiths. The Princess Royal is royal patron and Dame Margaret Weston chairs the trustees.

### **Law Ministers**

Commonwealth Law Ministers met in Kingstown, St Vincent and the Grenadines (18–21 November 2002). In a statement on terrorism they resolved to ensure that no Commonwealth country can be used as a safe haven for terrorists. They amended the Commonwealth scheme for extradition to eliminate legal barriers that might otherwise preclude the extradition of persons alleged to have committed terrorist acts. The 40-year-old London Scheme for the Rendition of Fugitive Offenders recognizes that extradition may be refused if the offence involved is considered a political one. Now the ministers resolved to ensure that no terrorist can evade extradition by invoking the political offence exception.

The ministers also issued a declaration on land and development, in which, *inter alia*, they recognized there may be tension between developed country concepts of land tenure that are expected by major corporations based in those countries and the needs of developing countries to address their special and development objectives. They agreed to work on this issue at future meetings. St Vincent Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves said at the opening of the meeting that 'a reform of the law on property rights is vital'.

### **Around the Commonwealth**

The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan is stepping up the

## COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

number of scholarships on offer. Commonwealth countries are increasing their commitment and awards are now available in 13 states. Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria and Malaysia and individual universities in South Africa and Australia are offering support for the first time. The UK provided 450 awards in 2002, against 300 in 2001 and 241 in 2000. A new chairperson of the council of the Association of Commonwealth Universities took over—Professor Sir George Bain, Vice-Chancellor of Queen’s University, Belfast.

Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Florence Mugasha launched (19 December 2002) a new Commonwealth website to help developing countries bridge the digital divide—the gap between those with and those without access to information and communication technologies. The website is a product of the High Level Review Group Report adopted at the Coolum summit in March.

The Secretariat’s Human Rights Unit relaunched its newsletter, *Human Rights Update*, in January 2003. It will appear three times a year. Information about it can be obtained at: [j.matiya@commonwealth.int](mailto:j.matiya@commonwealth.int).

The Commonwealth Secretariat sponsored a Caribbean Herbs Business Forum held in Montego Bay, Jamaica (2–5 December). More than 150 professionals involved in research, production, processing and marketing of Caribbean herbal products attended. It was the third such event organized by the Secretariat to promote the herbals industry in the Africa–Caribbean–Pacific (ACP) countries. The first was in Capetown and the second in Port Vila.

A workshop held in Chandigarh, India (2–13 December) produced a strategic and operational plan for the Commonwealth Youth Programme for 2003–06.

The Commonwealth Press Union and the UK Press Complaints Commission launched (26 November) the results of a study into self-regulation of the press across the Commonwealth. It ended an 18-month exercise in which regional seminars sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were held in Kenya, Ghana, the Caribbean, Malta, Sri Lanka and South Africa.

The winner of the 2002 Commonwealth Vision Awards promoted by the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association was a short film called *The Winning Team* produced by a UK company.

New Secretariat publications at the end of 2002 included *Gender Mainstreaming in the Health Sector: Experiences in Commonwealth Countries*, which argues that there is a disparity between men and women in their ability to gain access to appropriate health care; *Popularisation of Science and Technology Education: Some Case Studies from Africa*; and *Educational Planning and Management in Small States: Concepts and Experiences*.