

Annex I

Munyonyo Statement on Respect and Understanding

- 1) The Commonwealth is a global organization and embraces many of the world's great civilizations and cultures. It is a body well-placed to affirm the fundamental truth that diversity is one of humanity's greatest strengths. Heads of Government recognized their special responsibility, as leaders, to seek the most effective means to address intolerance, fanaticism, violence and terrorism.
- 2) They commended the work of the Commission on Respect and Understanding and welcomed and endorsed its Report 'Civil Paths to Peace', which provides a thoughtful and considered analysis of issues relevant to building tolerance and understanding of diversity amongst and within distinct societies, cultures and communities.
- 3) Accepting diversity, respecting the dignity of all human beings, and understanding the richness of our multiple identities have always been fundamental to the Commonwealth's principles and approach, and will also contribute to resisting the cultivation of a culture of violence.
- 4) Heads of Government endorsed the Report's seven recommendations, and the Secretary-General's call to develop concrete steps to give practical effect to the Report, taking into account the particular needs and situations of Commonwealth countries. In addition, they called for the exchange of best practices and experiences of Commonwealth members.
- 5) They directed that future Commonwealth action to promote respect and understanding should build on and extend existing Commonwealth programmes, at both national and international levels. In this context, they identified activities in relation to young people, women, education, and the media, as the priority fields of action. These programmes should also engage partners from civil society and other sectors.
- 6) They recognized the potential for this Commonwealth work to be complementary to activities undertaken under the UN's Alliance of Civilisations programme.
- 7) Heads of Government decided that progress on this work should be reviewed by Commonwealth Foreign Ministers at their next meeting in September 2008.