



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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ELECTORATE TALK

During their deliberation over the Retreat, the Heads of Government have decided to issue a declaration of their belief that it is imperative to reinvigorate the dialogue between developing and developed countries as a matter of urgency, and of their determination to contribute to that process.

They have agreed on a declaration. It has one over-riding purpose: to express as clearly and forcefully as possible, the concern and commitment of the leaders on these issues. Everything which might detract from the clarity of this message has been deliberately omitted.

The declaration does not deal with specifics or with practical measures. That is not its purpose. These, the issues of trade, food, energy or finance, will be dealt with at length in the communique at the end of the meeting. But because of the intrinsic importance and urgency of the issues, and because of the timing of the Melbourne conference in relation to the North-South Summit in Mexico, the Heads of Government think it essential to express now, and in unequivocal terms, the importance they attach to the mobilisation of the will to make progress.

It is possible to over-emphasise the importance of will and commitment. But it is also possible - indeed very easy - to underestimate them. They are essential ingredients for success. It is just as much a moral and intellectual failure to surrender to current realities in these economic and social spheres, as it is to try to appease aggressors and tyrants in the political sphere.

We have no right to accept gross poverty and inequality as inevitable, until we have exhausted every possibility to eliminate them, and done so with vision and the utmost determination, and without inhibition. That is the message of the declaration. It comes from the Heads of Government of 41 countries, representing a quarter of the world's population. It is a message to all the other governments of the world, including especially the non-Commonwealth governments who will be attending the Mexico Summit.

We shall be doing all we can - individually and collectively - to ensure that the message registers, and we hope it will serve as an example and encouragement to other countries. It is also a message to the peoples of the world, rich and poor: to the rich, that their own self-interest requires action; to the poor, that the Commonwealth cares for their plight and is determined to muster its weight to improve their lot.

The language of this declaration is not the language of compromise or official caution. It is a powerful coherent statement in language intended to appeal to the imagination will and humanity of leaders and peoples. I commend it to your attention.

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