

*Byron - I don't understand these woolly letters and*



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1. Content with this draft reply to Mr. Ramphal?

2. Would you agree to see Mr. Ramphal for a preliminary talk fairly soon? *But says*

23 May 1979

*I suspect they don't mean nearly but 2 days I'd like to see for me can a diary note*

*Dear Byron,*

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting: Agenda

The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Ramphal, wrote to Heads of Government on 22 March setting out suggestions for the Agenda at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHGM) to be held in Lusaka from 1 - 8 August. He asked for replies by the end of April. Mr Callaghan sent an interim reply on 16 April.

--- I now attach a draft reply from the Prime Minister, on which we have consulted other Departments.

Discussion at Heads of Government Meetings has traditionally been under broad "global" political and economic headings. According to his letter, Mr Ramphal seems to intend that the usual pattern should be followed. He is moreover aware that non-African Commonwealth Heads of Government will not wish to spend a disproportionate amount of time discussing Southern Africa, although they no doubt recognise that, not least because of the venue, Southern Africa is bound, as Mr Ramphal puts it, to "occupy a high place" in the Agenda. Mr Ramphal has also outlined areas for discussion in the economic field as well as in areas of Commonwealth cooperative action, to follow up, for example, the Ministerial meeting on industrial cooperation held in Bangalore in March, and the discussion of how the Commonwealth might help its smallest members, which has taken place so far at official level.

The draft reply is largely self-explanatory. It emphasises the hope that Heads of Government will be able to discuss economic problems in a global setting rather than risk repeating sterile and possibly acrimonious discussion of detailed questions, such as the Common Fund. To this end the Treasury have in mind the possibility of advising the Prime Minister to circulate an economic paper before the meeting. But this could not be finalised until much nearer August (to take account of whatever emerges from the Tokyo Summit and also perhaps UNCTAD); and it is difficult at this stage to offer firm advice as to whether or not it would be useful to put in a paper.

We have suggested including a reference to the report of the Advisory Committee on relationships between the official and unofficial Commonwealth, if only to encourage discussion of the Commonwealth Foundation and its need for continuing support from member countries.

/The Prime Minister

B G Cartledge Esq  
10 Downing Street



The Prime Minister may wish to welcome Mr Ramphal's reference to the possibility of more restricted sessions (attended only by Heads of Government and himself) which make for franker and more informal discussions. It might also be useful to express the hope that the meeting can avoid lengthy prepared speeches. It is obviously desirable to encourage as intimate and informal a meeting as possible (while recognising the limitations when there may be as many as 38 or 39 Heads of Government around the table).

The Prime Minister may wish - perhaps a little later - to invite Mr Ramphal to call for an informal discussion of the Meeting and the Agenda. Mr Ramphal is keen to call on the Prime Minister.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to the Private Secretaries to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary and the Secretaries of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Industry and Trade; and also to Martin Vile in the Cabinet Office.

(J S Wall)

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Top Secret, Secret, Confidential, Restricted, Unclassified.

To:- His Excellency Mr Shridath S Ramphal Kt CMG QC Commonwealth Secretary-General

From Prime Minister

Telephone No. Ext.

Department

PRIVACY MARKING

In Confidence

I am writing in reply to your letter of 22 March about the agenda for the 1979 Heads of Government Meeting.

I am glad that you suggest keeping the customary pattern for the meeting, thus enabling us to discuss both global political and economic issues and also specific topics, including Commonwealth functional cooperation. In adopting this approach, however, I believe it will be important for us to discipline ourselves in the amount of time we spend on any one particular subject. (remembering that with almost forty countries present no one area of the world will be of overriding interest to everybody.) Moreover, I hope we can take the "global" political and economic subjects under single broad headings, as was the case in London and Kingston. I accept that (not least because of the venue) Southern Africa will be a major area for discussion.

Economic matters will be of great concern to us all, and I should welcome a general discussion on the basis, as is customary, and of a review of the global economic situation and prospects. We shall want to take stock of the state of the North-South Dialogue, ~~between the developed and the developing worlds.~~ But I believe that the most useful approach would be for Heads of Government to aim to transcend artificial divisions such as "North/South", and to address ourselves to common economic problems in a global setting, rather than to repeat the detailed discussion of specific

I wish we could get away from this, upon it is necessary to us every person

questions, such as the Common Fund or IMF conditionality, which will recently have taken place at UNCTAD and elsewhere.

~~4~~ Under the economic heading we may wish to exchange views briefly about the new Lome Convention; ~~and I agree with you that the recent Ministerial conference at Bangalore was successful and that the Heads of Government will wish to consider the proposals put forward~~ at the Bangalore conference with a view to deciding whether and how to put them into effect.

~~4~~ With regard to relationships between the official and unofficial Commonwealth, I hope that Heads of Government will have time to focus again on the very valuable work of the Commonwealth Foundation, and that member states will be encouraged to fulfill, or even increase, their contributions.

~~4~~ I am glad that you intend to make greater use of restricted sessions at the Conference. I also hope that we shall all be able to do without lengthy prepared statements which detract from the "informality and purposefulness" which, as you mention, Heads of Government are concerned to retain.

~~4~~ I ~~greatly~~ look forward to the ~~Meeting and to meeting you personally before long.~~

*Discussing these matters further with you when we meet on 18 June.*

*Ben  
9/6*

23 MAY 1979



*I can't say this - I don't know.*