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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

9 September 1981

CHOGM : Melbourne Declaration

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 7 September and the draft enclosed with it. She is, as you know, unenthusiastic about the declaration. She believes that the structure of the document is wrong and that it contains too many assertions e.g. about human rights - on which the participants are not in a position to deliver. However the Prime Minister has agreed that we should let the Australians have sight of a text along the lines of that enclosed with your letter. She would wish it to be made clear that the changes suggested are the least that we could go along with.

I enclose the text as approved by the Prime Minister.

I am sending a copy of this letter and its enclosure to John Kerr (HM Treasury).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

CS

Roderic Lyne, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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## MELBOURNE DECLARATION

We, the Heads of Government here assembled, drawn from five continents representing a quarter of the world's entire population:

- 1) Affirm our strong and unanimous conviction that all men and women have the right to live in ways that sustain the nourish human dignity.
- 2) Believe that this right imposes obligations on all governments, great and small, not only in respect to their own people but in their dealings with all other nations.
- 3) Believe that the gross inequality of wealth and opportunity currently existing in the world, and the unbroken circle of poverty in which the lives of millions are confined, generate tension and instability which gravely endanger social cohesion both nationally and internationally.
- 4) As a consequence, assert our unanimous conviction that there must be determined and dedicated action, at a national and international level, to reduce that inequality and to break that circle.
- 5) Believe that for all these reasons it is imperative to maintain the dialogue between developed and developing countries so as to enable the international community to make a more effective contribution to the efforts of developing countries to overcome poverty.
- 6) Declare that this will require political commitment, clear vision and intellectual realism to which the Commonwealth can greatly contribute.
- 7) Believe that the dialogue must be conducted with a genuine willingness to accept real and significant changes commensurate with the urgency of the problems we now face.
- 7a) Affirm in particular the need to concentrate the flow of concessional resources on the poorest developing countries.



8) Firmly believe that the choice is not between change and no change but that timely adequate change is required on the part of all countries if disruptive and damaging conflict is to be avoided.

9) Maintain that success will only be achieved as states recognise and give due weight to the essential interdependence of peoples and of states.

10) Declare that, while the most urgent humanitarian considerations demand action, self-interest alone warrants a constructive and positive approach to these great human problems by all governments.

11) Recognise that in the process of negotiations, nations must cast aside dogmas and habits which have thwarted progress in the past and find new ways of talking to each other and reaching agreement.

12) Note that, as well as technical economic considerations, it is imperative that states keep in the forefront of their attention the larger moral, political and strategic dimensions of what is at stake.

13) Maintain that while the problems are formidable, they are not of such a weight that they will defeat our purpose, given political will and an understanding of the needs of different countries and groups.

14) Assert that what is at stake - in terms of how hundreds of millions will live and die; of the prospects for co-operation or conflict; and of the prospects for economic advance or stagnation - is of vital importance in human terms.

15) Firmly believe that the issues are so important that they require the personal commitment and involvement of political leaders who alone have the power to advance the common cause of mankind.



16) Attaching the highest importance to the principles and objectives of this document, recognising the mutual interests and inter-dependence of all nations, declare our common resolve: to improve the channels of communication so as to maintain the dialogue between developed and developing countries and so to infuse an increased sense of urgency and direction into the resolution of these common problems of mankind; and solemnly call on all leaders of all countries to join us in a commitment to taking prompt practical and effective action to that end.