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INSTITUTE OF COMMONWEALTH STUDIES

VOICE FILE NAME: COHP Hugh Segal (Part Two)

Key:

SO: Dr Sue Onslow (Interviewer)

HS: Senator Hugh Segal (Respondent)

Part Two:

SO: This is Dr Sue Onslow interviewing Mr Hugh Segal, former Senator, member of the 2010-11 Eminent Persons Group and currently Master of Massey College, University of Toronto, by Skype on Friday, 22nd May 2015. Sir, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for a second time as part of the Commonwealth Oral Histories project.

As a member of the Eminent Persons Group reporting to the Perth Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2011, I would be grateful if you could comment on the post-Perth period. Secondly, I'd like to ask you about your role as Special Envoy to the Commonwealth and your fact-finding tour of Sri Lanka in 2013. I'm aware that you gave a detailed report to your Parliament's Sub-Committee on International Human Rights after your return to Canada. What were your recollections of the politics around that particular visit, and also Prime Minister Stephen Harper's decision not to attend the Sri Lanka CHOGM? I know that you endorsed Mr Harper's stance. Was there also any fallout associated with Gambia's decision to withdraw in the October of 2013? Overall, I'd be grateful for your views on whether it is possible to speak of 'Commonwealth values'.

HS: Well, let me start by focussing on what happened after the meeting in Perth – after that meeting and [after] a very significant confrontation which took place between the Canadian Prime Minister and the Secretary General. When the EPG was invited in to make its presentation, which we did in front of all the heads of government, the Secretary General was silent on our core recommendations. So, the Canadian Prime Minister said to the Secretary General, "You have not given us your views on the recommendation around a Special Commissioner for Human Rights, the rule of law, etc." The Secretary General responded [that] he did not think it would be helpful or constructive. This was a position he had never once expressed in all the previous months

of meetings with the EPG, as this recommendation had been raised, tossed about, discussed and shaped. Now, our Prime Minister's desire was to make sure that everything was up on the table for everybody to see, including the fact that the Secretary General and his staff had been lobbying against this most central of recommendations, which was a unanimous recommendation of the EPG.

SO: For a Commissioner of Human Rights – drafted by Michael Kirby, yes.

HS: Correct. So, that became, if you wish, the basis of our understanding that for the rest of the recommendations which had been accepted by the heads of government – [there were] various categories, some that needed further clarification, some that needed some financial clarity – we were going to have to campaign quite extensively to make sure that we got them through the various processes that would then ensue, one being the subsequent Foreign Ministers meeting in September, adjacent to the UN General Assembly, and the other being a process by which, by virtue of silence in response to a specific question, the recommendations are deemed to have been approved. So, that saw the government appoint me as Special Envoy to the Commonwealth, and there my mission was to go about the countryside making the case for broad acceptance of those recommendations, because they were consistent with what we thought to be at the time Canadian foreign policy, Australian foreign policy, British foreign policy, and the foreign policy of a majority of the Commonwealth nations.

SO: Sir, there were 106 recommendations in the report the EPG put to heads. Was there a particular emphasis within Canada's foreign policy and national interest within those recommendations, or was there a general embrace of the totality of those recommendations?

HS: Well, there was a general embrace, Sue, but to be fair, the one about rule of law, human rights and a Commissioner for that purpose was seen to be central. The feeling, frankly, was that the Commonwealth had stepped out of that jurisdiction. They had stopped engaging on that front, which is a very different Commonwealth from the Commonwealth that had engaged on apartheid, for example. The feeling was [that], in several areas – the Maldives, Sri Lanka, the issue of gay rights in Africa – the Commonwealth was stepping back at the precise point where it should be stepping up. That situation was made more intense by the refusal of the Secretariat to consider moving the meeting scheduled [to follow] Perth in Colombo to another venue, even though one or two other countries had offered to host. The Secretary General wouldn't hear of it. That put the Secretary General – something I spoke about publically – in the position of, essentially, shilling for what was very much a shell game that the Sri Lankans under the previous administration were pursuing: i.e., pretending to respond to recommendations from various bodies but actually doing nothing whatsoever, and in fact, increasing some of the reprehensible activities with respect to 'white vaning', with respect to the disappearance of journalists, with respect to using rape as a measure against various people who are being kidnapped, and the continued military occupation of the north in a fashion which left no room for economic development for the Tamil population in that state.

SO: And that was in addition to the treatment of the Chief Justice.

HS: In fact, the issues connect very directly, Sue, in this way. When the Justice and her Court ruled that a decision around the removal of taxation powers from the provinces was *ultra vires* – was not constitutional – and of course, that decision was made by the Rajapaksa Parliament, because they did not want what was going to be a newly elected Provincial Council in the Northern state, which was the Tamil state, to have real taxation powers. They brought in a law that did away with the taxation powers for all the provinces, which was not constitutional, and when the Chief Justice ruled with her fellow Justices that it was unconstitutional, that's when they impeached her. So, the issues connected very directly, and in fact, when I was in Sri Lanka – I was invited by the Foreign Minister to visit Sri Lanka and “see for myself”, which I was glad to do – I was under instructions to meet with the impeached Chief Justice who was too afraid for her life and her family to accept me as a visitor at her home. We then arranged for a telephone call to convey the best wishes of my Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to her, [to] extend any offers of assistance through an odd code we had to construct because of her fear, and because phones were being audited. Even though I was there at the invitation of the government, when we travelled across the country to see whomever we wished, we were being minded by government minders all the time. It was sort of like visiting China.

SO: Or North Korea.

HS: Or North Korea. It had very much that feel to it. So, to get back to it, Canada was very keen on that particular proposition; [it] remained disappointed that it has yet to be embraced, and remains very disappointed that the administration then in place in Sri Lanka was basically endorsed by the rest of the Commonwealth continuing with CHOGM in that location. At least one country – Mauritius, and [also] Malta – had offered to host, if that was necessary. Then, of course, we got into the notion of, “How low would our delegation be?” So, we sent a Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister who represented Canada at the meeting, and he did a few things about human rights. He went to the North [and] various other things – as did Prime Minister Cameron, to his credit, who I think didn't sit at the meeting for more than about ten minutes. He had a photograph taken then went to the North to make a statement, which was very well done by the British. He had a bilateral with Rajapaksa and he left. And the fact that Her Majesty chose not to attend, for whatever reason – she will be attending Malta this coming November, with her entire family – was an important signal. Now, it may have been because she doesn't travel quite as far for quite as long anymore, but we're not aware of any prior circumstance – except when Mr Heath was selling arms to the South Africans – that Her Majesty chose not to attend a Commonwealth meeting. So, as she is our Queen, we were encouraged by that symbolic gesture on her part.

SO: Sir, the Indian government also chose to absent itself, to a degree.

HS: Yes.

SO: Was there, as far as you were aware, a degree of coordination between the government of Canada and the government of India?

HS: There was quite a bit of engagement through the various High Commissioners in both countries, and we were aware of their decision before it was announced, as we were aware of the decision of Mauritius before it was announced. In fact, what was interesting [was that] Mauritius was to be the next host of CHOGM, and when they indicated they wouldn't be going, the Secretary General said, "Well, of course, then you can't host if you're not attending," and they said, "That's fine with us. The principle is more important than the hosting proposition." If you look at the actual numbers in Colombo, they were the worst ever.

SO: Sir Ronald Sanders has made exactly this point, saying that it was the most extraordinary 'stay-away' heads of government meeting.

HS: Yeah, and while some people indicated why they were staying away, others just didn't go. So, that had the net effect, I think, of – perhaps not in Colombo, but at least for the broader Commonwealth – indicating the discomfort with that particular proposition in that location.

SO: Sir, you said that you had had this discussion with the Commonwealth Secretary General, who had lodged his opposition to the possibility of a Commonwealth Human Rights Commissioner...?

HS: Now, Sue, let me be clear. He did that in a room full of heads of government in Perth. There were several meetings in Perth. One was just the Foreign Ministers, which was a shirtsleeves operation about various recommendations, and, for example, the recommendation to strengthen the role of CMAG came from the Foreign Ministers, from the Foreign Ministers' Taskforce. They embraced it; we embraced it. It was all the right direction and the right decision. But the full EPG report was discussed at a full meeting of CHOGM, and it was at that full meeting when our committee was invited in to make its presentation. Tun Abdul Badawi, our Chair, made the presentation and Emmanuel Akwetey, who was the EPG member from Ghana, head of the Institute for Democratic Governance in that country, made the particular presentation on the Commissioner for Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democracy. That's when the Prime Minister of Canada asked the Secretary General if he had a view on this matter. So, it was in a room full of other CHOGM heads, and it was in that room that the Secretary General said he didn't think it would be helpful.

SO: Do you recall, sir, if there was a degree of endorsement from other elements of the Commonwealth in opposition to the idea of creating a Commonwealth Human Rights Commissioner? After all, it could be said that it replicated the UN Commissioner's role.

HS: Right. The view was, frankly, [that] the British, the Australians, the New Zealanders and the Canadians were very much in favour of that new Human Rights position. There was also support that emerged in places like Malaysia, in Asia. There was support for it – there was no opposition to it – from India. There was support in Tanzania; there was support in Ghana. There was

actually quite a broad base of support. There would have been some normative issues: what are the terms of reference and how does it relate to the role of the Secretary General? All of that legitimate discussion, but what would've happened after the Secretary General expressed his view is that that would have pretty well coalesced the developing states in their opposition to it, because what the banter back from places like Sri Lanka, of all places, had been was that Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democracy are kind of Western values, and this is going to be another instrument for the Commonwealth to dictate to developing countries what appropriate western values they have to [adopt]. So, it's a new form of colonialism. That was part of the narrative that was being addressed at those of us who were proponents thereof. Our view was that, well, if it's a new form of colonialism, it was at the very base of what the Commonwealth has been about since the early 1950s.

It wasn't new at the time of apartheid, when a whole bunch of African Front Line states, India and Canada stood united against some of the old Commonwealth members in opposition to apartheid and in favour of strong sanctions against apartheid. So, the notion of this as some new imposition – a new kind of neo-colonial value set – is both odd and without substance. That was part of what the Secretary General was encouraging, and we knew – because there are no secrets – that the Secretary General was meeting with the developing countries separately, without the other members of the Board of Governors present, on an ongoing basis to organise against this particular proposition. So, we were aware of all that going on, and the good thing is that the Prime Minister, by asking the question for Canada, forced the Secretary General to actually make his views known publically, as opposed to continuing to advance the negative campaign *sotto voce*. That was helpful both in terms of understanding the dynamic and helping us understand some of the frame of reference issues that have to be addressed at the end of his term.

SO: Obviously this was of prime importance if the Commonwealth was, indeed, to claim Commonwealth values as the basis for the Charter, as a values-based association. Were there other critical aspects of the recommendations that generated a lesser degree of animosity and antipathy elsewhere within the Commonwealth?

HS: We're looking at, essentially, 85 of the recommendations that were accepted. The sorts of other recommendations that didn't pass the test are recommendations around a much more robust Commonwealth youth initiative, the notion of moving Commonwealth offices – to have the Secretariat not being quite so concentrated in London, to have Commonwealth operations in places like Africa and Asia, in the same way as we have the Commonwealth of Learning now based in Vancouver. The more presence throughout the Commonwealth – throughout the 52, now, countries of the Commonwealth – of Commonwealth bodies and organisations, the stronger the presence would be. So, those sorts of things were the sorts of things about which Foreign Ministers quibble, but none of them were substantive in the sense of running right to the core of the recommendations which the EPG had unanimously provided. The one that went right to the core was the one about Human Rights and Rule of Law. I remember that it was Tun Abdul Badawi who recommended the Charter to begin with. His

response, by the way, in the meeting when the Secretary General indicated that he was not supportive of the Commissioner's proposition, was to express – unlike him, because he's a very moderately tempered guy – intense anger and frustration, and a sense of betrayal that this would be raised now when it could've been raised on many prior occasions.

SO: Indeed. The opportunity had certainly been there.

HS: And Tun Abdul Badawi did that as a former Prime Minister of Malaysia in front of a room full of people, including all the other heads of government who were present in Perth, which was quite a substantial number.

SO: Sir, did you pick up an undertow or a sense that to have a Commonwealth Human Rights Commissioner would also be a particular financial burden on the Commonwealth at a time when individual countries were facing straightened circumstances, and the Secretariat itself was under pressure? Well, it's consistently under pressure, given that the demands on its time and energies always outrun its financial resources...

HS: Sue, we are just coming to the third year in which the Commonwealth Secretariat had underspent its allocated budget by four to six million pounds. So, the notion that this was about money would be odd. They themselves – the Secretary General and some folks who work with him – were talking about what the constraints had been to spending the full budget, and that they were looking to be far more robust on a go-forward basis. This EPG had asked, "Why are we not spending our budget in areas like human rights, like development, like other sorts of things?" Of course, what then happens is that governments like Canada say, "Okay, they don't want to be serious anymore about human rights and the rule of law. They're not spending the budget that's being allocated. Why would we allocate the same amount of money on an ongoing basis, just to have it sit in their bank account when we could be spending it in other ways ourselves?" And by the way, one of the things that happened was that Canada stepped up in a very big way to John Major's committee, Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee Foundation. Canada made the largest commitment of any country to those Jubilee Scholarships, which were matched. I think our total number between the private and the public sector here in Canada was close to £20 million. So, that is a very substantial contribution. It wasn't about Canada not wanting to spend in support of Commonwealth goals and purposes, but it was about Canada deciding, after Perth and prior to Colombo, that allocating the same amount to the Secretariat when they either couldn't spend it or wouldn't spend it on the purposes for which the Commonwealth was established made no sense.

SO: Indeed. So, also part of the 'back-story' in your minds – even if it wasn't necessarily articulated, because the prime focus was on Sri Lanka – was the issue of the Maldives, which has been presented in the Commonwealth story as a success story under Don McKinnon. Yet to be honest, the processes of democratisation and supporting the country's transition to normative values of democracy and human rights has started to go backwards.

HS: Yes. Let me say three things about the Maldives. First of all, it's important in terms of what's coming up between now and Malta in November. Baroness Scotland, who is a member of the House of Lords, was retained by the Maldives government to render a legal opinion about why the Commonwealth had no standing whatever with respect to matters of human rights, rule of law and democracy. That's a matter of public record in the British press. She was, I think, brought before some committee – I'm not sure now which one – of the House of Lords as to whether or not that was ethically appropriate or not, because she did accept a fee for so doing. I visited the Maldives with our High Commissioner – who was our same High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Shelley Whiting – and Rosemary Brisson, Lead Research Director in my office, and I think I was the highest-ranking Canadian ever to visit the Maldives for official purposes. I had extensive meetings with the Supreme Court, with the Electoral Commission, with the President at the time, [and] with the candidate who had been pushed out, so to speak, after having won the election.

SO: Mohamed Nasheed, yes.

HS: That's right, Nasheed and his party and the other parties as well. We made some very strong recommendations which were taken to CMAG by our Minister at the subsequent meetings. But the Secretary General was arguing very much in favour of a status quo, of no suspension – none of the things that were done, for example, with Pakistan and others where there was a deviation from democratic procedure. I think part of what we're seeing now was contributed to by the lack of coherence and the lack of a sharp end, if you wish, in the Commonwealth position. I think former Secretary General McKinnon did a superb job. He worked extremely hard and I think achieved a fair measure of consensus and restraint, but in the end, we are where we are, and I think that's because the powers that be paid no price whatsoever in terms of their international standing. They got support from Sri Lanka, of course, under the Rajapaksa regime, and of course the Chinese are always mucking about. Any country that is veering off the path of democracy [and] which also has developmental opportunities for the Chinese is usually in their radar scope: a place for them to invest, support and encourage. The less democracy in place, the happier they happen to be.

Now, the only good thing about the Maldives is that we always felt strong support from our Indian Commonwealth brothers and sisters. They have a very strong stake in the Maldives because of its geography and because of the demography of that country. They remain engaged, and I'm led to believe – I'm no longer in the Senate or in the public service – but I am led to believe that that engagement continues.

SO: Sir, did you have a particular political or informed view of the Gambia's decision to withdraw from the Commonwealth in October of 2013? I appreciate that by then you had stepped down from the Senate.

HS: Well, our assessment was simply that that was an idiosyncratic decision by a leader of the Gambia, looking to blame outside forces for internal difficulties. I guess there's still always an anti-British, anti-imperial narrative available to some leaders in Africa when it suits their purposes, but we didn't see that as particularly germane either to the salience of the Commonwealth in Africa or

what the disposition of the Commonwealth had been on development or other programmes in Africa. There is an undercurrent, as soft as the expressions have been on the issue of homosexual rights – and I think that the Secretary General’s expressions have been very soft and far too mild – but as soft or mild as they have been, it does offend a certain narrative in parts of Africa. You are aware, I guess, of the whole US evangelical presence in places like Uganda and elsewhere: how, having lost the battle at home, they’re more than delighted to fight the battle with gobs of money in sub-Saharan Africa on the same front. So, that is one of the forces with which moderates in government and elsewhere in South Africa and other part of sub-Saharan Africa have to deal with.

SO: Sir, that’s a very interesting point. That aspect does not feature prominently in the press when there are discussions on the majority of Commonwealth states for whom homosexuality is on the criminal statute book.

HS: Yes. I mean, it was only the last twenty years under Mr Trudeau that the criminality associated with homosexuality in the past was addressed. But in many, many, many countries, it’s been on the books as the old British anti-sodomy laws, but there was no enforcement. As long as consenting adults were going about their business in a private way, nobody cared terribly much. It’s re-criminalisation and the reinforcement of old anti-sodomy rules which is being encouraged by the US evangelicals on the ground, [and they] have built quite a middle class following in places like Uganda and, to a lesser extent, Nigeria. And that’s problematic. That’s exactly the kind of place where a UN Human Rights Commissioner – who, for example, perhaps was an African, who knows – could be on the ground saying, “There’s another view here.” He could be arguing or could be advocating on behalf of the Commonwealth, not in a way that threatens anybody’s sovereignty, but just makes the contrary case, in the same way as the UN does on various other issues in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. So, the notion that we would have one too many voices on the side of human rights and democracy strikes me as odd.

SO: Indeed. So, in the run-up to the Valletta meeting this November, do you think it is possible to talk again of ‘Commonwealth values’? I know a lot is riding on this forthcoming heads of government meeting.

HS: I do think Commonwealth values will become a core, underlying thematic of the debate around the choice of the next Secretary General. The issue will not be, “Who’s for Commonwealth values and who’s not?” I think that’s simplistic. The issue will be, “What is the instrumentality by which we advance Commonwealth values with due respect to the different cultures and histories of the various diverse countries that form the Commonwealth, and with a high regard to the way we work in diplomatic and other ways to achieve certain outcomes?” I would argue that that makes the case for a seasoned Commonwealth diplomat who has taken a strong stand as part of the EPG, as the best way to go forward. Sir Ronald is guilty of many things, but being less than subtle or being obtuse, or being insensitive to local democratic and other pressures, would not be those things about which he is guilty. He would be superb, because we need someone with that kind of skill set but who had the will to engage. I think the present Secretary General – who I still think is a

pretty decent fellow – just didn't have the will to engage. [He] was at a point in his career, and in the cycle, where he just didn't see it as worth his effort.

SO: May I suggest a different scenario? I think this is germane to the future position of the Commonwealth Secretary General, that there is the necessity of the SG to be an enabler, a facilitator between heads, rather than simply responding to the heads' mandate. So, it requires a degree of proactive diplomacy, not simply to raise the profile of this unique association but which places particular demands on the political skills and energy of that individual.

HS: Right. And it raises the question, if you have a club that is based on certain core values [and] certain principles, is there any sanction when a country chooses specifically and consistently to violate those values and principles? If the answer is "No" – which is what we could have said was the case for Sri Lanka – then the question is, well, why have the values and the principles? And then, in a world of many, competing inter-governmental organisations that seek money, effort and investment of time from our leaders, what would the relevance of the Commonwealth be, if it's not prepared to stand up for those things? It's not a defence organisation; it's not really a trade organisation. It's not a security or development organisation, purely laid out. It has aspects of all of that, but the bottom line is that it is an association of like-minded countries with a common parliamentary heritage, who are trying to defend certain values in a constructive and cooperative way. [If] they're not going to defend those values, if there's not going to be any instrumentality around that, why would we have the organisation? What're the chances of the organisation surviving Her Majesty if it has no other apparent purpose?

SO: I wanted to ask you, sir, about the question of the headship and your view of the contribution of the existing head, and the position of the headship going forward.

HS: Canada's view – and I share it – is that the contribution of the existing head is seminal [and] remains seminal. In a host of different ways, the substantive nature of that is indicated by the Palace in ways that make a great difference. At Perth, the opening ceremony – if you don't have it, you should get a video of it – Her Majesty steps forward and says, "for better or for worse," she has benefitted from the advice contained in the report of the Eminent Persons Group, and she awaits with great interest news of that report being passed and put into effect.

SO: Well, considering the delay on the publication of the EPG's report, that was a particularly pointed opening remark.

HS: And remember, the Secretary General had conspired with the Australian Prime Minister – who I don't think understood why – and Madame Kamla Persad, the outgoing Chair from Trinidad and Tobago, not to publish the report sufficiently for it to gain any kind of public granularity prior to the meeting. And despite that, Her Majesty said what she said. The fact that Charles was dispatched to Sri Lanka as opposed to Her Majesty going, all of these are very important, seminal pieces, and the attraction of leaders from around the world to come and meet with Her Majesty as part of this is a very

important part of the glue that holds it together. Canada's position is that – and I think it is Sir Ronald's position – the headship will, on the sad day of her passing, transmit to her heir and to the next King of the United Kingdom, monarch, period, full stop. There are a few other views, but I don't think the other views have any real traction.

SO: Sir, thank you very much indeed. Do you have a view, given the political tensions around the Scottish referendum last September, on a possible breakup of the United Kingdom and whether that would in any way affect the Commonwealth?

HS: Well, aside from expressing my joy as a Red Tory [in] the outcome of your general election, I think I should probably not have a view on the internal dimensions, except to say this: there are lessons to be learned from Canada. The 1992 general election saw the election of the official opposition as a separatist party from Quebec, which had 53 seats in the House of Commons – the second largest number. Yet Canada, under both Conservative and Liberal Prime Ministers, found a way to manage that process and treat those elected people with all the fairness that they deserved for having been elected under the operating system of Canadian democracy, but to have a risk to the country's survival no more intense today – as you and I speak – than it was back in 1992. So, if we could find a way to do that with our very modest history, the notion that the United Kingdom would find a way to do that does not strike me as farfetched.

SO: Sir, thank you. Just as a concluding question, what do you believe has been the utility of the Commonwealth? Do you see it surviving and thriving going forward?

HS: The core utility of the Commonwealth is to say that across many different cultures, many different languages, many different faiths, there is in fact a kinship based on core values – a belief in democracy and development and the mobility of ideas – that makes our continued association worthwhile, and that there are other reasons for countries to associate with one another, other than simply trade and defence. That is an important idea, because it talks about civility as a kind of global concept, and the notion that that would be associated with the evolution of the British Empire into something more democratic and diverse is probably quite appropriate in terms of who has contributed what in this particular anniversary of the Magna Carta. So, I'm of the view that that is very important. It's very important to Canada: it was when we were an emerging country in the post-1931 period, when we just got our own rights around foreign policy. [The] global connections for Canada really were Commonwealth connections. Our engagement in World War I was because of the British connection, and the notion that other emerging countries develop this international network of which they are instantly a part, when they are part of the Commonwealth, I think, is a huge value. It's a huge benefit.

And the fact that there are also scholars going back and forth, and that there are other relationships that exist on a cultural basis, and that nurses and doctors and teachers and people in all other aspects of life are connected through Commonwealth associations, we think [this] is of huge value.

SO: Sir, thinking of the difficulties, though, for the Commonwealth going forward, I don't have to remind you of the intensity of the debates about migration which are taking place in this country, and the issue around the tightening of visa regulations which are affecting those very Commonwealth professionals that you have mentioned.

HS: Yes.

SO: It seems to me that there are a number of disparate forces that are posing possibly insupportable strains upon the Commonwealth, and perhaps its day is done, because the big issues of the day are not addressed in the Commonwealth. It is a quintessential 'soft power' organisation, and that very civility that you point to is coming under increasing pressure from different quarters.

HS: Well, Sue, let me say this: inertia does not generate engagement and support. The present leadership of the Commonwealth [at the] Secretary General's level has been dynamically inert, in a way that is very problematic. I wouldn't want to forestall what the implications might be of a Commonwealth summit on migration. If nobody tries it, if no one attempts to achieve another forum for fresh ideas and new thinking, then it won't happen. That's exactly what the Commonwealth should be doing. It's on those very issues – which divide up, in a way, that are North/South, for example – that the Commonwealth, because of its bridges and legitimacy, should be attempting to build a new path, to suggest a new way through that might not have occurred otherwise in organisations which are either stultified by the veto, as in the case of the UN, or tied up on a kind of left/right ideological premise, as might be the case with respect to the AU or NATO. The Commonwealth doesn't have those burdens, and the issue is, what does it do with its opportunity? If the answer is what it has been in the last eight years – which is, essentially, very little – then I think your prophecy will become reality. But if it engages fully? The only way that will happen is if we choose a Secretary General who's prepared to engage.

SO: Indeed, sir. I think that's an excellent note on which to conclude. Sir, thank you very much indeed. That was an extremely energetic and eloquent interview.

HS: Keep up the great work, Sue. We all appreciate the important contribution this will make to a greater understanding of the institution.

[END OF AUDIOFILE PART TWO]