

Concluding Statement of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG)

14 March 2014

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) held its forty-third meeting at Marlborough House, London, on 14 March 2014.

The meeting was chaired by Hon. Bernard K. Membe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania. It was also attended by Hon. Ioannis Kasoulides, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus; Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guyana; Hon. Salman Khurshid, Minister of External Affairs of India; Hon. Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand (Vice Chair of CMAG); Hon. Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on National Security and Foreign Affairs; Hon. Dr. Samura Kamara, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone; Hon. Clay Forau Soalaoi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Solomon Islands; and Hon. Prof. G.L. Peiris, Minister of External Affairs of Sri Lanka.

CMAG welcomed the significant progress made in Fiji towards holding national elections by September 2014. These include the promulgation of a new constitution; the enrolment of more than 540,000 voters; the establishment of an independent Electoral Commission; and the commencement of a dialogue between the Commission and political stakeholders. The Group welcomed the decision by the Fiji Elections Office to open Voter Registration Offices around the country to ensure more voters will register in anticipation of the planned elections.

The Group urged that the Electoral Commission be provided with the necessary independent authority and resources to oversee the conduct of credible and inclusive elections, on a level playing field. It noted the logistical challenges still facing the Fiji Elections Office. It commended the financial and technical support provided to the Elections Office, including by some Commonwealth countries and welcomed the offer by the [Commonwealth Secretariat](#) to provide technical advice and support to the electoral preparations. CMAG looked forward to the early appointment of a Supervisor of Elections and the issuance of an Elections Decree and the legal framework for elections. It stressed the importance of the fullest possible voter education.

CMAG stressed the importance of continuing improvements to human rights, the rule of law and fundamental freedoms, including of the media, expression, association and assembly. It also encouraged Fiji to invite international observation of the election.

The Group welcomed the relinquishment by the Interim Prime Minister of his role as Commander of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, and noted the subsequent announcement of his intention to register his political party to contest the forthcoming elections. CMAG reaffirmed the Commonwealth's unwavering solidarity with Fiji. In recognition of progress, CMAG decided that Fiji's current full suspension from the Commonwealth should be changed to suspension from the councils of the Commonwealth, thus permitting Fiji once again to participate in a range of Commonwealth activities, including the Commonwealth Games, recognising the role of sport in bringing people together.



The Group further reaffirmed its commitment to Fiji's full reinstatement as a member of the Commonwealth family, through the restoration of constitutional civilian democracy following credible elections later this year. CMAG requested the [Secretary-General](#) to remain engaged with Fiji, with a view to supporting the full restoration of adherence to the Commonwealth's fundamental political values.
