

Concluding Statement of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG)

26 September 2014

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) held its forty-fourth meeting in New York, on 26 September 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. Sushma Swaraj, Minister of Foreign Affairs of India; Hon Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand (Vice Chair); 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 Professor G.L. Peiris, Minister of External Affairs of Sri Lanka; and Ambassador Collin Beck, Permanent Representative of Solomon Islands to the United Nations.

CMAG noted the outcome of the 17 September 2014 national elections in Fiji and the Preliminary Statement issued on 18 September by the Multinational Observer Group (MOG), deeming the elections to be credible and the outcome to be on track to reflect the wishes of the people. It noted the participation of observers from several Commonwealth countries in the MOG.

The Group commended the support provided by some Commonwealth countries to Fiji's preparations for these landmark elections, which marked a critical step in the country's return to constitutional and civilian rule.

The Group also noted the Statement issued by the Commonwealth Secretary-General on 19 September 2014, congratulating the people of Fiji for participating peacefully, in large numbers, in the democratic process to express their views on their choice of leaders and representatives.

CMAG congratulated the newly elected Government of Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama and called on all in Fiji to continue working together to strengthen the country's democratic culture and values, encouraging them to explore opportunities for dialogue and national reconciliation.

CMAG also congratulated Fiji's eight elected female Members of Parliament and commended the appointment of a first female Speaker of Parliament.

In recognition of the credible elections and assumption of office by a democratically elected Government, the Group decided to rescind Fiji's suspension from the Councils of the Commonwealth with immediate effect, and to reinstate Fiji to full membership within the Commonwealth family.

The Group noted that whilst the elections were a critical step in the country's return to constitutional civilian democracy, it was important to strengthen further Fiji's democratic culture through enhanced citizens' confidence in the rule of law, independence of the judiciary and fundamental freedoms, including of the media, expression, association and assembly.

CMAG called on the Secretary-General to remain engaged with the Government of Fiji and provide such Commonwealth support as may be required to strengthen Fiji's democratic institutions and the pursuit of its national development priorities.
