



COMMONWEALTH

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TWENTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE COMMONWEALTH MINISTERIAL ACTION GROUP ON THE HARARE DECLARATION (CMAG)

Marlborough House, London, 21-22 May 2004

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

1. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG) met in London on 21-22 May 2004. This was the Group's first meeting following its reconstitution by Commonwealth Heads of Government in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2003 and the twenty-third meeting since CMAG's establishment at the Auckland Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in November 1995. The meeting was attended by the Hon Tuila'epa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Samoa; the Hon Mohlabi Kenneth Tsekoa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lesotho, the Hon John Dalli, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Investment Promotion of Malta, the Hon Olu Adeniji, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, the Hon Jakaya M. Kikwete, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of the United Republic of Tanzania, HE Mr Basil G. O'Brien, High Commissioner of The Bahamas to the UK, HE Mr. Faisz Mustapha, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to the UK, Mr Robert J. Rochon, Acting High Commissioner of Canada in London and Mr Satyabrata Pal, Acting High Commissioner of India in London.

2. CMAG adopted its Agenda and unanimously elected the Hon Olu Adeniji, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria as its Chairman.

3. CMAG reviewed developments in the countries on its Agenda, namely Fiji Islands and Pakistan.

Fiji Islands

4. CMAG received an oral presentation from the Hon Kaliopate Tavola, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Fiji Islands, on developments in that country.

5. CMAG commended the considerable progress Fiji Islands has made in addressing the issues of democratic governance and national reconciliation in line with CMAG's earlier

1/2

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statements. The Group welcomed the ongoing dialogue between the Government and the opposition through the Talanoa process on a number of key issues. It encouraged the parties to come to agreement on outstanding issues and appreciated the commitment to abide by the rulings of the Fiji Supreme Court.

6. In recognition of this progress, the Group concluded that Fiji Islands should not remain on its agenda. However, CMAG noted the unresolved issues continuing before the courts and agreed it would continue to consider reports on developments in Fiji Islands by the Secretary-General under "Other Matters of Interest to Ministers".

7. CMAG requested the Secretary-General to continue to monitor the situation in Fiji Islands in pursuance of his good offices role and to provide appropriate technical assistance, as required by the Government of Fiji Islands, to strengthen democratic processes and institutions.

Pakistan

8. CMAG noted the adoption by Parliament of the Legal Framework Orders, thus bringing them into Pakistan's Constitution. The Group welcomed the progress made in restoring democracy and rebuilding democratic institutions in Pakistan as well as the restoration of the 1973 Constitution, as amended by the 17th Amendment, and decided therefore that Pakistan should no longer remain suspended from the Councils of the Commonwealth.

9. However, CMAG noted continuing concerns in regard to the strengthening of the democratic process in Pakistan. It was the Group's expectation that there would be no deviation from the agreement reached between the Government and the opposition parties in December 2003 and that the 17th Amendment to the Constitution be implemented fully in letter and spirit, including the issue of the separation of the offices of President and Chief of Army Staff. The Group further hoped that the process of democratization would be consolidated in such a way as to encourage a broader embrace of the Harare principles.

10. CMAG agreed to remain seized of the situation by retaining Pakistan on its agenda. It requested the Secretary-General to utilize his good offices and technical assistance, as appropriate, to support the strengthening of democracy, institution building and good governance, and to provide an update on developments to CMAG at its next meeting. CMAG also urged other Commonwealth organizations to provide similar assistance.

Future Options for CMAG

11. CMAG agreed to consider proposals from the Secretary-General on options for future CMAG activity, consistent with its mandate, at its next meeting.

Next Meeting

12. CMAG decided that it would meet next in New York on 25 September 2004 in the wings of the UN General Assembly.