

Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG) - concluding statement

Released: 25 Sep 2004

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG) met in New York on 24 and 25 September 2004.

This was the Group's second meeting following its reconstitution by Commonwealth Heads of Government at Abuja in December 2003 and the twenty-fourth meeting since CMAG's establishment in November 1995. The meeting was chaired by the Hon Olu Adeniji, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria and attended by the Hon Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Samoa; the Hon Frederick Mitchell, Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Public Service, The Bahamas; the Hon Pierre Pettigrew, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada; the Hon Mohlabi Tsekoa, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lesotho; the Hon Dr Michael Frendo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malta; the Hon Lakshman Kadirgamar, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka; the Hon Jakaya Kikwete, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, Tanzania; and Mr Shyam Saran, Foreign Secretary, India.

2. The Group elected the Foreign Minister of The Bahamas as its Vice-Chairman.

Pakistan

3. CMAG received various reports on developments in Pakistan. The Group welcomed the Government's resolve to remain engaged with the Commonwealth to strengthen democratic institutions. It acknowledged Pakistan's participation in the Commonwealth since its reinstatement.

4. CMAG recalled and reaffirmed its statement of 22 May 2004 which urged Pakistan to continue to make progress in the democratic transition, ensuring the supremacy of the Constitution and Parliament as well as the full implementation of the 17th Amendment to the Constitution in letter and spirit, including the issue of the separation of the offices of President and Chief of Army Staff.

5. CMAG welcomed the Secretary-General's forthcoming visit to Pakistan in October 2004 at the invitation of the Government of Pakistan and the opportunity it provides for further engagement with the Government of Pakistan. The Group also requested the Secretary-General to continue to utilize his good offices and technical assistance, as appropriate, to support the strengthening of democracy, institution-building and good governance. Other Commonwealth countries were also encouraged to work with Pakistan.

CMAG: The Way Ahead

6. The Group received a paper from the Secretary-General on CMAG's future work. CMAG noted that its current work was consistent with its mandate from the High Level Review Group which was endorsed by the Coolum CHOGM in 2002 and needed no further elaboration. CMAG decided in principle to meet annually, ideally in New York in the wings of the United Nations General Assembly, and also meet if and when circumstances so required, in accordance with its mandate. The Group noted that CMAG also meets on the eve of CHOGM to update its Report to Heads of Government.

Helmsley Hotel

New York

25 September 2004