



**Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana
Virtual Meeting, 3 September 2024
Concluding Statement**

1. The Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana was convened virtually on 3 September 2024 by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC, at the request of the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, and in accordance with the mandate given by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1999 to monitor, “*further developments in respect of the existing controversy between Guyana and Venezuela.*”
2. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Md. Touhid Hossain, Honourable Foreign Affairs Adviser of the interim Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, and attended by Foreign Ministers, and representatives from Antigua and Barbuda, Canada, Guyana, Jamaica, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.
3. The Ministers expressed condolences to the Government and people of Guyana, to the family of Sir Shridath Surendranath Ramphal and to all the Commonwealth on the passing of the longest serving and second Commonwealth Secretary-General. The Group recognised his exemplary global leadership, his pivotal role in the coordination of international opposition to apartheid in South Africa, his visionary advocacy for the rights of small states, and his tireless work to bring nations together.
4. The Ministerial Group received an update from the Honourable Hugh Hilton Todd, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana on the status of the Guyana-Venezuela controversy in respect of the Essequibo region since the last CMGG meeting of 11 December 2023.
5. The Group recognised and commended Guyana’s exemplary conduct throughout the process, in particular, its restraint and adherence to international law.
6. The Group noted that Guyana approached the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in March 2018 petitioning the Court to adjudge and declare, inter alia, the validity and binding nature of the Arbitral Award of 1899.
7. The group encouraged parties to respect the 1 December 2023 Order of Provisional Measures of the International Court of Justice to, ‘*refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute before the Court or make it more difficult to resolve*’.
8. The Group welcomed the Joint Argyle Declaration of 14 December 2023, wherein both Parties committed to maintaining Latin America and the

Caribbean as a Zone of Peace. Therein Parties agreed that controversies, “*be resolved in accordance with international law*” and that both, “*will refrain, whether by words or deeds, from escalating any conflict or disagreement arising from any controversy between them*”.

9. The Group welcomed the meeting of Foreign Ministers and technical teams in January 2024 pursuant to the Argyle dialogue and noted that subsequent scheduled meetings are yet to be held.
10. The Group also welcomed Venezuela’s participation in the process, and its submission on 8 April 2024 of a counter-memorial on the merits of the case.
11. The Group noted with concern developments in Venezuela since the last CMGG meeting. They include Venezuela’s promulgation of the ‘Organic Law for the Defence of the Guyana Esequiba’ on 3 April 2024 that creates a new state, establishes a High Commission for its defence, proposes the implementation of social programs for the local population, and administrative units for oil, mining and industrial activities.
12. Ministers cautioned that these actions constitute a threat to Guyana’s sovereignty, a disregard for the ICJ’s Order of 1 December 2023, and a departure from the Argyle Declaration. The Group also noted the 9 April 2024 Statement of the United Nations Security Council expressing concern over the escalation of tensions.
13. The Group welcomed the 1 August 2024 decisions of the CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in Grenada, which reaffirmed continued support for the maintenance and preservation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Guyana and for the ICJ process.
14. The Group reiterated its firm and steadfast support for the ICJ process as the appropriate and lawful means to address the matter under international law. Similarly, the group confirmed its support for the preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Guyana, for Guyana’s right to self-defence, and for the unobstructed exercise of its right to develop the entirety of its territory for the benefit of its people.
15. The Group commended the Good Offices of the Secretary-General to engage partners to support peace and stability in the Caribbean region and encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to use her Good Offices to support Guyana in upholding its territorial sovereignty and integrity.
16. The Group agreed to draw the conclusions of this meeting to the attention of all Commonwealth member governments and to present this statement to the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers’ Meeting later this month.

3 September 2024

Members of the Group, as constituted following the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Durban in 1999, are Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Canada, Guyana, Jamaica, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.