



## Concluding Statement of the Sixty-Fifth Meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group

*September 2024*

1. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) held its Sixty-Fifth meeting at the Joint Commonwealth Office in New York on Sunday 22 September 2024. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Tourism of Samoa. Ministers and representatives from Barbados, Belize, Canada, Ghana, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, and Rwanda were in attendance.
2. The Group expressed condolences to the families of Hon Dr Saulos Chilima, Vice President of Malawi, Hon Dr Shanil Dzimhiri, Former First Lady of Malawi, His Highness Tuheitia Paki, Maori King and leader of the Kingitanga, Sir Shridath Surendranath Ramphal and to the Government and people of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, and all in 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.
3. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the fundamental values, and principles of the Commonwealth as enshrined in the Charter.
4. Ministers reiterated their support for the Secretary-General's Good Offices, a mechanism to protect and promote Commonwealth values and principles and welcomed the report from the Secretary-General on her Good Offices engagements with member states.
5. The Group received reports from Gabon and heard from the Foreign Minister Honourable Régis Onanga Ndiaye, on behalf of the Republic of Gabon, and welcomed the progress made on the transition roadmap and the timetable for Gabon's return to democracy, the full restoration of the rule of law and constitutional order. Ministers encouraged the Transitional Government to continue to strengthen policies that build peace and stability and to abide by its schedule to hold credible elections by August 2025.
6. The Group encouraged the Secretary-General to continue her Good Offices engagement with Gabon and encouraged the Transitional Government to use

all the available technical support of the Commonwealth to facilitate its steady progress and prompt transition to democracy.

7. The Group endorsed the outcomes of the September 2024 meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana. Ministers noted with concern developments in Venezuela since the last CMAG 64. These include Venezuela's promulgation of the 'Organic Law for the Defence of the Guyana Esequiba' which purports to create a new state for Venezuela in Guyana's territory and 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 reiterated its steadfast, strong, and unconditional support for the preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Guyana and for Guyana's right to develop the entirety of its territory for the benefit of its people.
8. Ministers welcomed the work of the Secretariat on strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law in member states through election observer missions and the whole of electoral cycle approach in member states. Ministers also welcomed the Secretariat's support for member states on human rights capacity building, the rule of law, preventing and countering violent extremism, legislative drafting, civil and criminal justice, and public sector governance reform, among others.
9. Ministers applauded the Secretariat's work to strengthen partnerships with regions, international organisations, and with the international development community to promote sustainable development, democracy, good governance, stability, and peace.
10. The Group agreed that its next meeting will be convened in Samoa in October 2024 on the margins of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

*22 September 2024*