



Commonwealth Secretary-General's statement on conclusion of Zambia peace talks

Having had the benefit of extensive discussions and consultations with several stakeholders, and in deep appreciation of the significant efforts made by Church leaders to promote and sustain peace and harmony in the Republic of Zambia, and the continued pivotal role to be played by them in any future implementation of an inclusive road map for peaceful and harmonious co-operation, Commonwealth Secretary-General The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC held separate discussions with HE the President and the Honourable leader of the Opposition to explore whether, supported by Church leaders and other stakeholders, there was scope for an agreement which could take the parties forward. Discussions took place on diverse occasions during the Secretary-General's visit from 7-9 August, with the following outcome:

HE Mr Edgar Lungu, the President of the Republic of Zambia, and the Honourable Leader of the main Opposition party, the United Party for National Development (UPND), Mr Hakainde Hichilema, both being committed to the values and aspirations set out in the Commonwealth Charter, peace and harmony, particularly in this peace-building year of the Commonwealth, have agreed to a process of dialogue, facilitated by and through the use of the Good Offices of the Secretary-General, whereby a roadmap of reforms pursuant to Commonwealth principles of good practice, governance and the rule of law, can be undertaken in preparation for the 2021 elections. This roadmap will be created through an inclusive, consultative process which will involve other political parties, civil society, Church leaders and other stakeholders.

HE The President and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition have further agreed that progress of the implementation of the said reforms should be reviewed at the end of 2019 in order to ensure that the preparation and implementation of any such agreed reforms are completed expeditiously, and in good time for the said 2021 elections and for the benefit of future elections.

As an expression of good will and in consideration of the agreement by both His Excellency the President and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to dialogue and peace, and their joint commitment to the proposed roadmap, both being men of faith and devoted to the people of Zambia, have agreed not to look backward, but in order to promote peace, stability and the public good, to look forward to the next election, to give dialogue, peace and harmony a chance.

Both parties have further agreed to take such steps as are within their gift to create an environment that is conducive to peaceful resolution by generating greater and deeper public confidence in their commitment to a constructive, progressive and responsible engagement.