



Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana Concluding Statement

The Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana met in New York on Thursday 22 September 2016 to discuss recent developments in the controversy arising from the contention of Venezuela that the 1899 Arbitral Award concerning Guyana and Venezuela is null and void.

2. The meeting was convened by the Commonwealth Secretary-General at the request of the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, and was chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh.
3. The Group received with appreciation a briefing from the Vice President and Foreign Minister of Guyana, Hon Carl Greenidge.
4. The Group reiterated the unequivocal and collective support of Commonwealth member governments for the maintenance and preservation of Guyana's sovereignty and territorial borders, in accordance with the 1899 Arbitral Award, which definitively settled the land boundary between the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and Venezuela.
5. The Group acknowledged with appreciation the efforts by the United Nations Secretary-General to facilitate a resolution between the two countries and commended Guyana's commitment to cooperate with the UN Secretary-General's Good Offices engagement.
6. The Group recalled that at the most recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, in Malta in November 2015, leaders had, "*noted that the Geneva Agreement of 1966 between the Parties provides a range of mechanisms for an expeditious solution to the controversy arising from Venezuela's contention of invalidity of the 1899 Arbitral Award...Heads expressed their full support for the United Nations Secretary-General to choose a means of settlement in keeping with the provisions of the Geneva Agreement 1966, to bring the controversy to a definitive end.*"

7. The Group noted Guyana's concerns that this longstanding controversy has significantly hindered the country's economic development, and represents a threat to national peace and security. The Group also noted Guyana's preference for the United Nations Secretary-General to choose judicial settlement through the International Court of Justice, to bring finality to the contention of the invalidity of the Arbitral Award, and to bring a lasting and amicable resolution to this controversy.
8. The Group also agreed to draw the conclusions of their meeting to the attention of all Commonwealth member governments.

New York, 22 September 2016

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.

