



Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana

NEW YORK, September 2019

Concluding Statement

1. The Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana was convened on Thursday 26 September 2019 by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, at the request of the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, and in accordance with a mandate given by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1999 to monitor *“further developments in respect of the existing controversy between Guyana and Venezuela.”* The meeting was chaired by Bangladesh.
2. The Group recalled that at the most recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, in London in April 2018, leaders had, *“expressed their full support for the decision by the Secretary General of the United Nations issued on 30 January 2018, within the framework of the Geneva Agreement of 1966, to choose the International Court of Justice as the means that is now to be used for the settlement of the controversy between Guyana and Venezuela. Heads noted that the decision of the Secretary General, which was in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, was intended to bring a peaceful and definitive settlement to a long standing controversy. Heads reiterated their unequivocal support for the maintenance and safeguarding of Guyana’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.”*
3. The Group received a briefing from the Foreign Secretary of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Carl Greenidge, who advised that further to the Government of Guyana’s filing of its application to the International Court of Justice on 29 March 2018, Venezuela continues to assert that the ICJ has no jurisdiction in the matter, notwithstanding the Geneva Agreement and the United Nations Secretary General’s choice of it, as a means of conclusive settlement.

4. Foreign Secretary Greenidge also briefed the Group of reported developments of concern to Guyana in the maritime area of controversy; and, that Guyana has requested the Secretary General of the United Nations to place this issue on the Agenda of the General Assembly under the Item “Peace Building and Sustaining Peace” and that it also be brought to the attention of the Security Council.
5. Having considered the update provided by Foreign Secretary Greenidge, the Group reiterated its support for the Government of Guyana to pursue a judicial course of action as the means through which the border controversy can be permanently resolved.
6. In this regard, the Group welcomed the update that the International Court of Justice has notified Guyana that hearings on the jurisdiction of the Court will be held in The Hague, The Netherlands, from 23-27 March 2020.
7. The Group reiterated its unequivocal support for the maintenance of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Guyana and its unimpeded right to the development of the entirety of its territory for the benefit of its people.
8. The Group also agreed to draw the conclusions of their meeting to the attention of all Commonwealth member governments.

New York, 26 September 2019

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.