

# Promoting Peace

Seen as a trusted and impartial partner, the Commonwealth can be called upon to use its influence and to provide practical assistance when member countries are going through troubled times. The Secretary-General may also consider deploying either the COG\* Chair or an independent Special Envoy to facilitate dialogue between key stakeholders in order to find common ground and agreement on sensitive issues.

For our Overview timeline and other themed timelines go to: [thecommonwealth.org/electoral-support](https://thecommonwealth.org/electoral-support)

DATE	CATEGORY	EVENT	DESCRIPTION
<b>1980</b>	Good Offices	<b>Zimbabwe Independence</b>	The Commonwealth played a key role in talks leading to independence and sent its first election observer group to the pre-independence elections.
<b>1986</b>	Good Offices	<b>Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to South Africa</b>	Their mission was to seek a negotiated end to apartheid. It was co-chaired by former President Obasanjo of Nigeria and former Prime Minister Fraser of Australia.
<b>1991–1994</b>	Good Offices	<b>Commonwealth countries transitioning to multiparty democracies</b>	The Commonwealth sent observer groups to the elections in Malawi, Seychelles and Zambia. Additionally, the Secretariat ran a seminar on preparations for multiparty elections in Mozambique.
<b>1994</b>	Special Envoy	<b>Sir Ninian Stephen, Special Envoy to Bangladesh</b>	Former Governor-General of Australia appointed following the political breakdown between parties in Bangladesh which had led to violent clashes and national strikes.
<b>1995</b>	Commonwealth Declarations and Principles	<b>The Millbrook Commonwealth Action Programme on the Harare Declaration</b>	Heads agreed to establish a Commonwealth Ministerial Committee Action Group (CMAG) to review violations of the Harare Principles.

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1999	Special Envoy	<b>Hon Major-General Sitiveni L Rabuka, Special Envoy to Solomon Islands</b>	The Honiara Peace Accord was brokered by Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka, former Prime Minister of Fiji Islands, who was appointed following public unrest between the Guadalcanal and Malaita islanders in Honiara.
2001	Special Envoy	<b>Justice Pius Langa, Special Envoy to Fiji</b>	Justice Langa facilitated a dialogue between the political parties, encouraged the formation of a government in accordance with the constitution and promoted national reconciliation.
2002	Declarations and Principles / Commonwealth Values	<b>Coolum Six Step Process</b>	Clarified the process for intervention of Good Offices. Membership of CMAG expanded from 6 to 9 members.
2002	Special Envoy	<b>Sir Paul Reeve, Special Envoy to Guyana</b>	A former COG Chair to Guyana in 1996, Sir Paul Reeves helped to facilitate the resumption of talks between the two major political parties and to promote national unity in Guyana.
2002	Special Envoy	<b>Sir Douglas Graham, Special Envoy to Tonga</b>	Sir Douglas Graham assisted the Kingdom with its parliamentary processes. He encouraged the strengthening of the authority and capacity of the Legislative Assembly along with consultation on constitutional reform.
2002	Special Envoy	<b>Christine Stewart, Special Envoy to Cameroon</b>	Christine Stewart, and later the Rt Hon. Joe Clark, worked with the government on the implementation of reforms to enable the country to comply more effectively with the Harare Declaration.
2003	Commonwealth Secretariat	<b>Good Offices Section established</b>	Following a call by Heads for more proactive use of the good offices role, a Good Offices Section was established within the Secretariat's Political Affairs Division.
2004	Special Envoy	<b>Joe Clark, Special Envoy to Cameroon</b>	Following on from the work of Christine Stewart, the Rt Hon. Joe Clark worked with the government on the implementation of reforms to enable the country to comply more effectively with the Harare Declaration.
2004	Special Envoy	<b>Adebayo Adedeji, Special Envoy to Kenya</b>	A previous COG Chair to the Kenyan elections in 2002, Professor Adedeji facilitated dialogue between political parties and the constitutional review process in Kenya.
2005	Special Envoy	<b>Tun Musa Hitam, Special Envoy to Maldives</b>	Tun Musa Hitam supported the implementation of the government's ongoing constitutional and electoral reform processes in line with Commonwealth fundamental political values and best practice.
2005	Special Envoy	<b>General Abdulsalami Abubakar of Nigeria, Special Envoy to The Gambia</b>	General Abdulsalami Abubakar worked to build trust between the political parties in the run-up to the national elections in 2006.
2006	Special Envoy	<b>Meeting of Special Envoys, Special Envoy to ComSec</b>	'The Envoys concluded that their work succeeds because -- while they do it in partnership with others -- they also do it under the Commonwealth flag, which carries such international credibility and respect. They spoke of their work as a mission, not as a job.' Don McKinnon, former Secretary-General.

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2011	Commonwealth Declarations and Principles	<b>Perth CHOGM adopts recommendations of EPG on strengthening the role of CMAG</b>	Recommendations included clearer guidelines, timeframes and types of situations that might be regarded as constituting a serious or persistent violation of Commonwealth values.
2012	Special Envoy	<b>Don McKinnon, Special Envoy to Maldives</b>	Don McKinnon was appointed to promote the consolidation of democratic culture and institutions in Maldives.
2014	Special Envoy	<b>Dr Rajen Prasad, Special Envoy to Lesotho</b>	Dr Prasad supported the coalition government's efforts to undertake reforms contained in the coalition agreement. In collaboration with the UNDP, he launched a set of guidelines on effective coalition governance.
2016	Special Envoy	<b>Dr Willy Mutunga, Special Envoy to Maldives</b>	Dr Mutunga encouraged the strengthening of a pluralist, multiparty democracy, including steps towards credible and inclusive presidential elections in 2018 and the advancement of reforms concerning the separation of powers.
2016	Pre-Election Pledge	<b>Commonwealth and partners issue joint call for 'non-violent' Ghana elections</b>	The ECOWAS, the Commonwealth and the United Nations called on all the presidential candidates to commit to contribute towards non-violent, transparent and credible elections.
2017	Special Envoy	<b>Prof Ibrahim Gambari, Special Envoy to Zambia</b>	In partnership with the Electoral Commission, Professor Gambari worked with the political parties to promote national cohesion and tolerance. Eight out of the nine political parties eventually signed the peace pledge.
2017	Pre-Election Pledge	<b>Secretary-General Scotland helps facilitate an agreement to peaceful dialogue between the President of Zambia and opposition leaders</b>	The President and the leader of the opposition agreed to 'a process of dialogue' working towards boosting 'public confidence in their commitment to a constructive, progressive and responsible engagement'.
2017	Pre-Election Pledge	<b>Lesotho politicians commit to pre-election peace pact</b>	Political parties in Lesotho agreed to sign a pre-election peace pledge during a four-day mission by the Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland.
2019	Pre-Election Pledge	<b>Political leaders sign Peace Accord prior to Nigeria's Presidential elections</b>	Secretary-General Scotland attend the signing of the Peace Accord. The Accord was the initiative of Nigeria's National Peace Committee, headed by former Commonwealth Special Envoy Abdulsalami Abubakar.