

Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana

New York 2018

Concluding Statement

The Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana was convened on Thursday 27 September 2018 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 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh.

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.*”

The Group received a briefing from Vice President and Foreign Minister of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Carl Greenidge, who advised that the Government of Guyana had filed its application to the International Court of Justice on 29 March 2018. Minister Greenidge also expressed gratitude to the Commonwealth Secretariat for the technical support it has provided to Guyana since 2012 to develop the legal and regulatory framework for the sustainable harvesting of oil and gas.

Having considered the update provided by Minister Greenidge, the Group welcomed the step by the Government of Guyana to pursue a judicial course of action as the means through which the border controversy can be permanently resolved.

In this regard, the Group noted and strongly reaffirmed the statement issued by CARICOM Heads of Government on 7 July 2018 where the Leaders “*noted that Guyana had filed its Application with the*

International Court of Justice on March 29, 2018, in accordance with the decision of the United Nations Secretary General, which was issued on January 30, 2018 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” and further “noted that Venezuela had indicated its decision not to participate in the case and that in such a case, the rules of the Court provide for a full hearing of the case and a final judgement that is legally binding on both the participating and nonparticipating countries. They expressed support for the judicial process underway which was intended to bring a peaceful and definitive end to the long standing controversy and which was in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.”

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.

The Group also agreed to draw the conclusions of their meeting to the attention of all Commonwealth member governments.

New York, 27 September 2018

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.