



COMMONWEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMONWEALTH MINISTERIAL ACTION GROUP ON THE HARARE DECLARATION (CMAG)

REPUBLIC OF FIJI ISLANDS

Marlborough House, London, 8 December 2006

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

1. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG) met at Marlborough House, London, on 8 December 2006 in an extraordinary session to consider the situation in the Republic of Fiji Islands. The meeting was chaired by Hon Dr Michael Frendo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta and was attended by Hon Paul Tiensten, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Papua New Guinea; Hon Mr Seif Ali Iddi, Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, United Republic of Tanzania; and Lord David Triesman, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, United Kingdom. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Canada, Lesotho, Malaysia, St Lucia and Sri Lanka were represented by their High Commissioners to the United Kingdom.

2. CMAG unanimously and unequivocally condemned the military takeover of Fiji's democratically elected government, in total disregard of the authority of the Prime Minister and Parliament. The Group agreed that the unconstitutional takeover constitutes a serious violation of the Commonwealth's fundamental principles, as enshrined in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration.

3. The Group noted and commended the collective and individual efforts of Pacific regional governments to promote dialogue and the resolution of political differences prior to the coup.

4. The Group decided that, according to the steps set out in the Millbrook Commonwealth Action Programme on the Harare Declaration, Fiji's military regime should forthwith be suspended from the Councils of the Commonwealth, pending the restoration of democracy and the rule of law in that country. ¹¹

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5. The Group also expressed support for and solidarity with the people of Fiji who have an inalienable right to a government of their choice through democratic means.
6. CMAG called for Commonwealth principles of good governance, democracy and the rule of law to be upheld in Fiji. The Group also called for the restoration of constitutional rule and democratic government with immediate effect.
7. CMAG requested the Secretary-General to remain engaged and to deploy his good offices as appropriate and in consultation with the Chairperson of CMAG including the possibility of a mission to Fiji Islands to press for the immediate restoration of democracy.
8. The Group appreciates the interest and support given by regional and international organisations and requested the Secretary-General to remain engaged with them on supporting the restoration of democracy in Fiji.
9. The Group also urged Commonwealth member countries to take appropriate bilateral and multilateral actions to encourage Fiji's speedy return to democratic governance. Such measures should be directed at the military regime to the fullest extent possible.
10. The Group expressed its concern for the economic welfare and well-being of the people of Fiji and its intention that any actions taken would bear this in mind.
11. The Group agreed that it would monitor closely the situation in Fiji Islands in light of the Secretary-General's consultations and decided to meet as appropriate.

[1] The implications of such suspension would be: the exclusion of representatives of the military regime or nominees thereof, from participation at all inter-governmental Commonwealth meetings and in other inter-governmental Commonwealth activities including CHOGM. Existing technical assistance would continue but there would be no new technical assistance to the military regime with the exception of assistance aimed at the restoration of civilian democratic rule.