



The Commonwealth

**ARRIVAL STATEMENT BY HON BRUCE GOLDING  
CHAIR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP  
MALDIVES' PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION 2019**

I am honoured to have been requested by the Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland to lead the Commonwealth Observer Group for Maldives' Parliamentary Election scheduled for 6 April 2019.

The Group consists of distinguished Commonwealth citizens from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the Pacific who have a range of expertise from the political, electoral, legal, human rights and civil society fields.

This election is an opportunity for the people of Maldives to continue to shape and strengthen their democracy by voting for leaders who are committed to realising their aspirations.

Our Group is particularly mindful that while the Commonwealth does not usually observe elections in non-member countries, an exception is made for countries that have applied to join or re-join the Commonwealth, as in the case of Maldives.

Our report will inform the Secretary-General's ongoing assessment of Maldives' commitment to adhere to the Commonwealth's fundamental political values, as part of the re-application process. This, therefore, is not a task we take lightly.

The Group's mandate is to observe and evaluate the pre-election period, polling day as well as the post-election period. We will consider the various factors impinging on the credibility of the electoral process as a whole and report on whether it has been conducted in accordance with the national, regional, Commonwealth and international standards to which Maldives has committed itself.

In conducting our duties and undertaking our assessment, we will be objective, impartial and independent. The Group's assessment will be its own, and not that of any member country of the Commonwealth.

We arrived in Male on 30 March and have received briefings from relevant stakeholders including the elections commission, political parties, the police, independent institutions, civil society and diplomatic community.

On 4 April, observers will be deployed to various atolls to observe the campaign environment in those areas ahead of polling day, engage with relevant local stakeholders, and observe the voting and counting processes on election day.

We will issue an *Interim Statement* of our preliminary findings after the election. The final report will be submitted to the Secretary-General and will be made available to the public afterwards.



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Commonwealth Observer Groups were present for the first multi-party elections in 2008 and 2009, the Presidential Elections in 2013 and the Parliamentary Elections in 2014.

On behalf of the Group, I wish the people of Maldives well as they prepare once again to exercise their democratic right to vote.

**Male, Maldives**

**3 April 2019**

The Commonwealth Observer Group is composed of:

- **Chair: Hon Bruce Golding**, former Prime Minister of Jamaica
- **Mr Bruce Hatch**, Electoral Expert, Canada
- **Mr Nitin Pai**, Co-Founder and Director, Takshashila Institution. India
- **Mr George Morara Monyoncho**, Vice Chairperson, National Commission for Human Rights, Kenya
- **Hon Maryan Street**, former Minister of Housing, New Zealand
- **Ms Miatta French**, Commissioner, National Electoral Commission, Sierra Leone
- **Mr Peter Pursglove**, Senior Counsel, Trinidad and Tobago
- **Ms Linda Duffield**, former High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to Sri Lanka and Maldives, and former CEO of Westminster Foundation for Democracy

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For more information or to organise a media interview with the Chair, please contact Snober Abbasi

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## Note to Editors

- The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign countries. It is home to 2.4 billion citizens, of whom 60 per cent are under the age of 30. The Commonwealth includes some of the world's largest, smallest, richest and poorest countries, spanning five regions. 31 of its members are small states, many of them are island nations.
- A Commonwealth Observer Group has no executive role and it is independent of the 53 member countries.
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