



From the Office of the
Commonwealth Secretary-General

2 September 2009

Dear Commonwealth Colleague

As you may by now be aware, the Republic of the Fiji Islands was suspended from membership of the Commonwealth with effect from 1 September 2009, in accordance with the decision of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG).

You may recall that CMAG suspended Fiji from the Councils of the Commonwealth in December 2006 following the military overthrow of the elected civilian government in that country. Notwithstanding more than two years of efforts to engage the Interim Government of Fiji and to support a process of national dialogue, constitutional democracy has not been restored. Indeed, the Interim Government has made it clear that it has no intention to hold elections before 2014.

At its meeting in London on 31 July 2009, CMAG noted that Fiji's situation with regard to fundamental Commonwealth values had deteriorated strikingly since CMAG's previous meeting in March, including through the President's purported abrogation of the Constitution on 10 April. CMAG decided that, should certain specific conditions not be met by the Interim Government by 1 September 2009, Fiji would be fully suspended from the Commonwealth on that date. As the commitments requested by CMAG were not made, the full suspension of Fiji Islands has now taken effect.

Attached for your information is the press release issued yesterday by the Secretary-General announcing the full suspension of Fiji and setting out the implications of that decision.

Your attention is drawn, in particular, to the provision that contact at professional and non-governmental levels with counterparts from Fiji is left to the discretion of individual pan-Commonwealth organisations. This is in accordance with Commonwealth precedent.

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The Secretary-General has asked me to emphasise to Commonwealth organisations the significance of the suspension of Fiji, and requests your understanding both of the letter of that decision and of the spirit in which it has been taken by CMAG. The Secretary-General trusts that in assessing your own organisation's engagement with counterparts in Fiji while that country is fully suspended, you will take into account the importance of all members of the Commonwealth family showing solidarity with each other and demonstrating their own support for the fundamental values of the association.

The Secretariat is more than happy to discuss with Commonwealth accredited organisations any queries you may have in regard to your organisation's interactions with Fiji during its full suspension from the Commonwealth. It is suggested that you contact the Civil Society Liaison Manager in the first instance (Mr David Kalete, ph +44 (0)207 747 6125, email d.kalete@commonwealth.int).

I also draw your attention to the Secretary-General's advice that the Commonwealth remains committed to engaging with the Fiji Interim Government, and with other key stakeholders in Fiji, in support of an inclusive and credible national dialogue, and to facilitate the return of constitutional democracy. We welcome the support of Commonwealth organisations in this regard.



Simon Gimson
Director & Head