

# Leaders' Statement

## Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2024

1. We, the Commonwealth Heads of Government, met in Apia, Samoa, on 26 October 2024.
2. The Leaders endorsed the Samoa Communiqué, attached hereto, in its entirety.
3. We expressed our deep appreciation to the Independent State of Samoa for its exceptionally warm hospitality at this Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and congratulated the Chair, the Honourable Prime Minister Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa for her wise and eloquent steering of this historic meeting.
4. We also conveyed our gratitude to the Republic of Rwanda for its dedicated and successful tenure as Chair-in-Office since June 2022. We welcomed and accepted the offer of Antigua and Barbuda to host the next CHOGM in 2026.
5. We reflected on this being the first CHOGM since the loss of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who served as Head of the Commonwealth with extraordinary duty for over seventy years. We also reflected on the passing of other Commonwealth leaders, including Sir Shridath ('Sonny') Surendranath Ramphal of Guyana, the longest-serving Commonwealth Secretary-General.
6. We welcomed His Majesty King Charles III to his first CHOGM as Head of the Commonwealth. We commended his unwavering commitment to a more sustainable and resilient future for the fifty-six members of our Commonwealth, and to strengthening education, health and climate resilience, particularly in small island developing states (SIDS), a commitment that has inspired the King's Commonwealth Fellowship Programme.
7. We welcomed the Outcomes of the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS 4), the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity.
8. We commended the Commonwealth member states which are supporting Haiti's return to stability and called on others to contribute to and rally wider international support for the Multinational Security Support Mission authorised by the Resolution 2751 (2024) of the United Nations Security Council.
9. We called for sustainable peace and for the peaceful resolution of all disputes in accordance with international law. We reaffirmed our commitment to the Commonwealth Charter, the Charter of the United Nations, and relevant United Nations resolutions, and to protecting,

promoting and advancing sustainable development, human rights and international humanitarian law.

10. We reaffirmed our commitment to collective action that weaves resilience into all our efforts for our Commonwealth, including our 1.5 billion young people, as articulated in the Samoa Communiqué, where societies stand strong, human rights are respected, peace prevails, environments flourish, and economies thrive.
11. We adopted the 2024 Apia Commonwealth Ocean Declaration for One Resilient Common Future and highlighted the strong affirmation of action to address sea-level rise. We underlined that the existential nature of the climate crisis remains a critical priority for our Commonwealth family and recommitted to the goal of limiting global warming in accordance with the Paris Agreement and its target of 1.5C. We noted the importance of our oceans, forests and biodiversity. We affirmed our commitment to achieving food and energy security for our people.
12. We reiterated the potential to further increase intra-Commonwealth trade and investment, building on the recognised Commonwealth Advantage, and highlighted the urgent need of reforming the global financial architecture and encouraged further consideration of the principles of the Bridgetown Initiative 3.0.
13. We recognised the transformative nature of digitalisation and the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for sustainable development and committed to fostering ethical and inclusive growth in AI and digital technologies across the Commonwealth, including through digital education.
14. We reflected with pride on the 75th Anniversary of the Commonwealth of Nations and its achievements. We reiterated our abiding belief in the value of the Commonwealth as a trusted forum where diverse voices of our member states, the large and the small, the young and the old, come together as one family.
15. We commended the exceptional work of the Commonwealth Secretariat. We called on the new Secretary-General in consultation with the Chair-in-Office, to pursue the ongoing reform process, and to forge a way forward, with reporting to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their regular meetings.
16. We expressed our profound gratitude to the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC, for her historic and pathbreaking stewardship of the Commonwealth, in service to all our members.
17. We congratulated Ghana's Foreign Minister, the Honourable Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, on her appointment as the next Commonwealth Secretary-General and look forward to her tenure beginning 1st April 2025.

Independent State of Samoa  
26 October 2024

# SAMOA COMMUNIQUÉ

## OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING (CHOGM)

*One Resilient Common Future: Transforming Our Common Wealth*

HGM(24)(7)

### INTRODUCTION

1. Commonwealth Heads of Government met in the heart of the Blue Pacific Continent in Apia, Samoa on 25 - 26 October 2024 to deliberate on the vital role of The Commonwealth in supporting long-term resilience for all, guided by the theme “One Resilient Common Future: Transforming our Common Wealth”. Marking the 75th Anniversary milestone of the Commonwealth Family or Aiga, Heads celebrated the diversity of our 56 nations, representing 2.7 billion people, 60% of whom are under the age of 30, from all backgrounds and united in friendship with a purpose. Heads reaffirmed the Commonwealth’s proud stance as a values-based organisation, rooted in its Charter, and committed to collective action that weaves resilience into all its actions, for a Commonwealth where societies stand strong, institutions uphold justice, peace reigns, environments flourish, economies thrive, and human rights are enjoyed by all.

### RESILIENT SOCIETIES AND PEOPLES

2. Heads stressed that resilient societies require an intersectional, human rights-based approach built on peace, security, sustainable development, and social and economic inclusion. Recognising the importance of our diverse cultures and heritage, faiths, and Indigenous knowledge systems, sciences, skills and practices, Heads recommitted to leaving no one in our Aiga behind, to prioritising small and vulnerable states, all women and girls, youth and children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and marginalised groups, especially considering the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic, exogenous shocks, and climate change have increased inequalities. Heads reaffirmed their commitment to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to uphold its principles as an overarching

roadmap for achieving sustainable development and overcoming the multiple crises faced by Commonwealth countries.

3. Heads remained committed to supporting small states, and particularly Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and to championing their priorities and needs, recognising their economic and climate vulnerability, the need for debt sustainability and their limited access to affordable finance. Heads commended the development of the Commonwealth-United Nations Small States Advocacy Strategy. Heads emphasised the urgent need for sufficient volumes of affordable financing to make the necessary adaptation investments, and the headroom to borrow under current debt sustainability metrics for SIDS, including simplified and expedited processes, given the complexities of current funding mechanisms. Heads encouraged the proposal of solutions by small states for the benefit of the Commonwealth and the global community. Heads welcomed the outcomes and commitments of the 2024 Commonwealth Ministers Meeting on Small States. Heads renewed their support for the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS): A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity. Heads encouraged the Commonwealth flagship programmes to continue to support small states and urged the Commonwealth Secretariat to seek sustainable financing for this work.
4. Heads renewed their commitment to gender equality and to the empowerment of women in keeping with the Commonwealth Charter, in all areas of activity within their countries and to strengthen their contribution to global efforts, in particular to SDG 5 on Gender Equality. Heads recognised that conflict, climate change, the digital environment, and negative social norms and behaviours may hinder progress on achieving gender equality and eliminating gender-based violence, and committed to promote the empowerment and rights of women and girls, including by working in partnership with and supporting civil society and women's rights organisations. Heads welcomed the Outcome Statement of the 13<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting and the roadmap in support of the Commonwealth Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2022-2030 adopted at the 13<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting held in The Bahamas in August 2023. Heads committed to employ evidence-based approaches to eliminating gender-based violence, and to oppose all forms of discrimination, be they gender-based or otherwise. Heads strongly support the Commonwealth Says NO MORE Campaign and Road Map in support of the Commonwealth Declaration for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2022 - 2030.
5. Heads reaffirmed their commitment to include, respect, understand, support and strengthen the voice and agency of the youth- an integral part of the Commonwealth - and to restore hope and optimism in our common future. Heads recognised the importance of support for at-risk male youth. Heads also recognised the crucial role of youth in driving climate action and sustainable social and economic development, particularly in SIDS, and committed to enhancing youth participation in decision-making processes related to sustainable social and economic development, climate policy and implementation. Heads applauded the work done for our Commonwealth youth in the Year of Youth that began in 2022 and was extended to 2024. Heads welcomed the Outcome Statement of the 10<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, the Marlborough House Commitments and the Revised Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Heads reaffirmed their commitment to the 2022 Kigali Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform to expand

social protection coverage, strengthen child protection systems, tackle the underlying causes of family separation, and to progressively replace institutionalisation with quality alternative care.

6. Heads reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring, protecting and promoting the full realisation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons with disabilities, to fully implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recalling the 2023 Report of the Commonwealth Roundtable on Advancing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Heads urged the Commonwealth Secretariat to prioritise and expedite the establishment of a High-Level Advisory Group of Persons with Disabilities together with representatives of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities from across the Commonwealth, to effectively support member states, in advancing the rights of people with disabilities. Heads commended the ongoing work towards the finalisation of a Disability Inclusion Action Plan, and the important role of National Human Rights Organisations in monitoring CRPD implementation.
7. Heads reaffirmed the 2022 Declaration on Sustainable Urbanisation adopted in Kigali on promoting safe, resilient, and prosperous cities for all and welcomed the collaboration with Member States and with the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Initiative.
8. Heads called for cooperation to address the drivers of displacement including conflict, insecurity, humanitarian need and the impacts of climate change. Heads agreed that regular migration should be safe, orderly, gender responsive and child sensitive and in accordance with their applicable international and human rights obligations. Heads recognised the importance of promoting faster, safer and cheaper remittances by further developing existing policies and regulatory environments conducive to competition, regulation and innovation on the remittance market.
9. Heads underscored the pivotal role of education in shaping cultural, societal and family values, beliefs and norms; in promoting human rights, peace, economic, political and social development and environmental sustainability, and in fostering responsible global citizenship. Heads expressed concern about the increased attacks on schools and education facilities and reaffirmed their commitment to resilient, inclusive and safe environments in education systems; to prioritising the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, and stressed the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education, and to achieving the education-related SDGs. Heads encouraged initiatives that provide social and emotional learning, scholarships, opportunities for lifelong learning, quality education and training that bridge digital divides, including the gender digital divide. Heads commended the Commonwealth of Learning for the work on expanding access to quality education and training, including technical and vocational training, also through open, distance and technology-enabled learning. Heads welcomed the outcomes of the 2024 Commonwealth Education Ministers Meeting and endorsed the Declaration on the Common Agenda for Education and Climate Change made at the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of Parties to the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP28).

10. Heads emphasised the importance of prioritising knowledge exchange and capacity development across the Commonwealth Aiga, and of supporting members in building interlinkages between science and policy, also with the valued wisdom of Indigenous knowledge, sciences and practices and traditional and local knowledge systems. Heads applauded initiatives to promote science education especially for and by all women and girls.
11. Heads welcomed the outcomes of the 2024 Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting and reiterated their commitment to achieving the health-related SDGs by building post-COVID-19 sustainable, resilient and inclusive health systems supported by sustainable financing, digital solutions, and by developing institutional capacity. Heads recommitted to the implementation of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel and to investing in the health workforce. Heads committed to working to achieve Universal Health Coverage by 2030, with primary health care at its core, and to improving access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights which are critical to achieving gender equality and the highest attainable standard of health for all. Heads resolved to continue to strengthen pandemic prevention preparedness and response for disease outbreaks, including through use of a One Health approach. Heads urged for increased global and national efforts to tackle non-communicable diseases and antimicrobial resistance; recommitted to efforts to eliminate all forms of cancer including cervical cancer; to end the epidemics of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), tuberculosis (TB), malaria and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) by 2030; to eradicate polio, and to promote and protect mental health. Heads encouraged the increased availability of adaptation finance for health; the building of climate resilient health systems in nations most vulnerable to climate change, including SIDS. Heads also recommitted to strengthening the global health architecture, and welcomed the extension of the mandate of the intergovernmental negotiating body to complete its work as soon as possible and to submit its outcome for consideration by the 78<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) in 2025, or earlier if possible in 2024, by a special session of the WHA. They also committed to working collectively, impartially and based on mutual agreement with the global community to support Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria with *inter alia* their upcoming replenishments. Heads welcomed the launch of the cross-regional Health Development Partnership for Africa and the Caribbean (HeDPAC) to strengthen South-South cooperation, to develop the health workforce, and to enable local medical products manufacturing in the Global South.
12. Heads stressed the importance of sports for peace, inclusive and sustainable development, of sports scholarships, and of data-driven sustainable sports policies and programmes that protect and promote integrity, safety, and inclusion for all. Heads welcomed the priorities and commitments identified at the 2024 Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting and welcomed efforts to secure the future and enhance the resiliency and impacts of the Commonwealth Games.
13. Heads stressed that for social and economic development and resilience, it is important to foster collaboration, also through private sector engagement and the provision of educational opportunities, to bridge the global digital divide on access to reliable digital technologies and to ensure, safe, secure, trustworthy, human-centric, responsible, inter-



operable and inclusive development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and transformative technologies. Heads acknowledged the potential of AI and advanced computing in transforming social and economic progress and for sustainable development. They urged a cooperative, responsible, approach to the peaceful development, deployment, and use of these technologies that *inter alia* ensures the promotion and protection of human rights. Heads encouraged the work of the Secretariat and noted the need for capacity building and multistakeholder cooperation in AI, including with existing multilateral commitments and fora, such as the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), New Delhi Declaration and United Nations resolutions on the development of safe, secure and trustworthy AI systems and in that context commended the establishment of the Commonwealth Artificial Intelligence Consortium.

## RESILIENT DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

14. Strengthening democratic institutions is at the core of our Commonwealth Aiga, united as we are by shared values of democracy, human rights, peace, tolerance, respect and understanding, the rule of law, good governance and respect for diversity. Heads committed to continue building and supporting resilient democratic institutions and governance structures, which are pivotal for sustainable and inclusive development and for fostering peace.
15. Heads expressed concern regarding ongoing armed conflicts and related humanitarian crises; the consequent threats to international peace and security; the displacement of people, attacks against all civilians and civilian infrastructure; the increased risk of exploitation of persons and human trafficking, loss of life, food and energy insecurity and the distortion of economies and supply chains around the world. Heads called for sustainable peace and for the peaceful resolution of all disputes in accordance with international law. Heads reaffirmed their commitment to the Commonwealth Charter, the Charter of the United Nations, and relevant United Nations resolutions, and to protecting, promoting and advancing sustainable development, human rights and international humanitarian law. Heads underscored the importance of respect for states' territorial integrity and sovereignty, for the international rule of law and agreed rules, norms and standards, to achieve justice, peace, freedom and democracy based on international law.
16. Heads endorsed the call for United Nations Security Council reform, including to improve on geographical representation to make it more representative of the world today.
17. Heads renewed their commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights for all and to combating all forms of discrimination in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Heads emphasised that human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of religion or belief, and the right to development are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. Heads underscored the importance of the promotion and protection of human rights for resilient, accountable, transparent, and inclusive governance, sustainable development, and democratic institutions. Heads adopted the Commonwealth Principles on Freedom of Expression and the Role of the Media in Good Governance and urged member states to take concrete and meaningful steps to implement them within their domestic frameworks.

18. Heads reiterated their commitment to promoting good governance, including electronic governance, with strong, effective, transparent, accountable, inclusive, and resilient democratic institutions. Heads supported public sector reforms that combat corruption and build stronger state productive capacity, electronic government (E-Government) to improve the accessibility to local and national government institutions and to overcome the challenge of dispersed populations. Heads underscored the vital role of a vibrant civil society, including human rights defenders, in delivering good governance and democracy. Heads also reaffirmed the importance of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in decision-making and leadership at all levels of governance. Heads adopted the outcomes of the third Biennial Commonwealth Meeting of Cabinet Secretaries and Heads of Public Service, held in April 2024.
19. Heads commended the Commonwealth's pivotal work on election observation and in the provision of electoral support to members, as well as the crucial role of the Good Offices of the Secretary-General in promoting peace, democratic institution building, human rights and sustainable development. Heads requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to develop a plan for the whole-of-election-cycle approach and to ensure that there is sustainable financing for this work.
20. Heads reaffirmed their commitment to the rule of law and welcomed the Outcome Statements of the 2022 and 2024 Commonwealth Law Ministers Meetings (CLMMs) held in Mauritius and the United Republic of Tanzania, respectively. Heads stressed the importance of the CLMMs in supporting the implementation of effective justice frameworks to advance the rule of law, efficient administration of justice, and people-centred access to justice solutions, alternative dispute resolution, and legal innovation.
21. Heads emphasised that the Commonwealth had never retreated from respectful conversations on difficult issues, but rather has been the vanguard of matters of great importance and significance to its members. Heads noted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Commonwealth Charter; the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 75/123; and the acknowledgement in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action that, "slavery and the slave trade, including the transatlantic slave trade, as appalling tragedies in the history of humanity, not only because of their abhorrent barbarism but also in terms of their magnitude, organised nature and especially their negation of the essence of the victims", and that, "slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity and should always have been so, especially the transatlantic slave trade".
22. Heads, noting calls for discussions on reparatory justice with regard to the trans-Atlantic trade in enslaved Africans and chattel enslavement and recognising the importance of this matter to member states of the Commonwealth, the majority of which share common historical experiences in relation to this abhorrent trade, chattel enslavement, the debilitation and dispossession of Indigenous People, indentureship, colonialism, blackbirding and their enduring effects, agreed that the time has come for a meaningful, truthful and respectful conversation towards forging a common future based on equity. Heads further agreed to continue playing an active role in bringing about such inclusive conversations



addressing these harms, paying special attention to women and girls, who suffered disproportionately from these appalling tragedies in the history of humanity.

#### A RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT

23. Heads acknowledged that the survival of our ecosystems depends on our effective, inclusive, sustainable and comprehensive management of our natural environment and on the urgent tackling of climate change, biodiversity loss, waste, harmful chemicals and all forms of pollution including support for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention of Biological Diversity, in particular Targets 2 and 3 on protecting and restoring thirty per cent of the planet's lands and ocean by 2030. Heads recognised the need for our natural capital to be valued as an asset, as well as the importance and interconnectedness between resilient environments, economies and societies for our collective well-being.
24. Heads remain concerned with the severe consequences of the climate crisis, including rising temperatures and sea levels, which negatively impact marine and coastal ecosystems, desertification and land degradation, and the increasing frequency and severity of related disruptive weather events, which impact our Commonwealth Aiga, in particular developing countries, SIDS and LDCs, Indigenous Peoples and local communities on the frontline of climate change. Heads recommitted to urgent, ambitious and collective climate action and mitigation and recognised that this requires accelerated action in this critical decade on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge and equity, reflecting the agreed principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances. Heads also recommitted to phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that do not address energy poverty or just transitions as soon as possible, taking into account the Paris Agreement and their different national circumstances, pathways and approaches, and to transitioning to global net-zero emissions by 2050.
25. Heads welcomed the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement. They recalled the commitment by Parties to submit their next round of nationally determined contributions at least 9-12 months ahead of UNFCCC COP30 and encouraged member countries to submit ambitious, economy-wide emission reduction targets covering all greenhouse gases, sectors, and categories, aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5°C, as informed by the latest science and the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake, in light of different national circumstances. Heads recommitted to contributing to global efforts agreed under the first Global Stocktake, including tripling global renewable energy capacity and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030. They also emphasised the importance of transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly, and equitable manner, accelerating action during this critical decade to achieve global net-zero emissions by 2050, in keeping with the science. Heads further recognised the need to accelerate industrial decarbonisation including in hard-to-abate sectors in line with national circumstances and acknowledged that there remains a significant gap between current global emissions trajectories and the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement.
26. Heads welcomed the United Arab Emirates Framework (UAE) Framework for Global Climate Resilience to guide the achievement of the Global Goal on Adaptation agreed at UNFCCC

COP28. Heads underscored the importance of scaling up and improving access to finance for adaptation and resilience from a wide variety of sources.

27. Heads underscored the importance of the UNFCCC COP 29 for scaling up climate action, ambition and financing, and of the agreement on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance, prior to 2025, from a floor of USD 100 billion per year taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation. Heads welcomed the establishment and the ongoing work to expedite the operationalisation of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage and urged, as a matter of priority, increased financial inputs from a wide variety of sources to swiftly respond to loss and damage. Heads commended the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, which has helped members access over \$363M in climate financing and committed to its sustainable growth and financing.
28. Heads reiterated the need to triple global renewable energy capacity by 2030 and are committed, where possible, to making efforts towards collaborating in the development, and voluntary and mutually agreed transfer of affordable low-emission technologies. Heads recommitted to a just and equitable transition to resilient, clean and renewable energy systems, including the fulfilment of 2030 Agenda commitments, and to renewables deployment that must be accompanied in this decade by a rapid increase of energy efficiency improvements, and recognised the need for deep, rapid and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in line with 1.5°Celsius pathways, making efforts in a nationally determined manner, taking into account the Paris Agreement and their different national circumstances, pathways and approaches. This includes improving access to affordable energy and modern cooking solutions, enhancing cross-border power trade, creating green jobs, and enabling an inclusive, technology-driven transition, to be achieved through collaboration with development finance institutions and private sector investments, and fostering regulatory and policy environments that facilitate financial flows that are inclusive of marginalised groups, women and girls, youth, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Heads reaffirmed their commitment to collaborate on these issues through the Commonwealth Sustainable Energy Transition Agenda. Heads also welcomed the leveraging of geospatial technologies and AI for climate adaptation, mitigation, resilience, and disaster management.
29. Heads welcomed the Ministerial Statement of the First Commonwealth Environment and Climate Ministers Meeting, held in 2023, and further expressed their support for climate, ocean, energy, and natural resources action, responsive to the needs of local communities, the needs of marginalised people and their rights, and all women and girls, youth, and Indigenous Peoples. Heads also welcomed the Commonwealth Collaborative Network on Gender Responsive Climate Action as agreed at the 2023 Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting.
30. Heads emphasised the serious and irreversible threats and adverse impacts of climate change-related sea-level rise, and the fundamental need to secure the rights, entitlements, and interests of all states and people of the Commonwealth. Heads recalled and acknowledged the 2021 Pacific Island Forum (PIF) Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate Change-Related Sea-Level Rise and acknowledged and noted the 2023 PIF Declaration on the Continuity of Statehood and the Protection of Persons in the Face of Climate-Related Sea-level Rise, and the 2023 Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility.

31. Heads stressed the importance for some of the concept of “climate justice” as envisaged in the Paris Agreement, when taking action to address climate change. Heads further stressed the importance of taking climate action in a manner that is equitable, inclusive and respects, promotes and considers their respective obligations on human rights. Heads acknowledged and noted the ongoing process at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) with respect to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/77/276, adopted by consensus requesting the ICJ to render an advisory opinion on the obligations of states in respect of climate change.
32. Heads recognised the achievements of and the transformative support for members of the Commonwealth Natural Resources Programme over the last 57 years. Heads noted that one-third of small states and half of LDCs are resource dependent which contributes to economic vulnerability and potential debt distress. Noting the importance of critical minerals for the clean energy transition, Heads renewed their commitment to support members in the sustainable use and equitable development of natural resources while balancing social and economic benefits, ensuring environmental protections and safeguarding for workers, Indigenous Peoples, all women, and affected communities, ensuring the transition is just, equitable and inclusive, leaving no one behind. Heads noted the development of the Commonwealth Living Lands Charter Implementation Framework.
33. Heads adopted the landmark 2024 Apia Commonwealth Ocean Declaration for One Resilient Common Future, which reaffirms their commitment to the Commonwealth Blue Charter, and the underlying critical role of the ocean to life on our planet as called for in SDG 14. Heads recalled the pivotal role of the Commonwealth in the conservation, management, and sustainable use of our ocean and welcomed the principles, priorities, and actions developed at inaugural Commonwealth Ocean Ministers Meeting, held in Cyprus, in April 2024.
34. Heads welcomed Australia’s proposal to host the UNFCCC COP 31 in partnership with Pacific Island countries.

## RESILIENT ECONOMIES

35. Heads noted with concern the challenges, especially for Commonwealth small and vulnerable states, posed by geopolitical conflicts, climate change, the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic-related consequences, disruptions to global supply chains, rising protectionism and public debt, and the increased costs of debt servicing. Heads committed to take measures to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the fostering of robust economic cooperation in our Commonwealth Aiga.
36. Heads highlighted the importance of developing inclusive, sustainable, and resilient post-COVID-19 economies, particularly for all women. Heads reinforced the importance of capacity building, increased investment in developing countries, the strengthening of national structures to promote trade and investment and the creation of conditions for long-term debt sustainability. Heads also highlighted the transformative potential of digital technologies, especially AI, in promoting development and noted the potential for the sharing of best practices. Heads welcomed the offers by India and Singapore to share their experiences in the areas of AI and digital technology.

37. Heads recognised the need to support financing for development and disaster risk reduction, to unlock the potential for the private sector to provide capital for mitigation and adaptation measures. Heads also recognised the need to ensure that natural resources are leveraged in a manner consistent with sustainable development principles, to expand efficient carbon markets, to promote responsible business and decent work in supply chains, to provide expertise, and financial resources, and to foster innovation and an enabling business environment for private sector investment and entrepreneurship, especially for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives.
38. Heads reflected on the opportunities and challenges in the multilateral trading system and reaffirmed their strong commitment to a fair, transparent, equitable, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and open rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core. Heads noted the outcomes of the 13<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference and looked forward to the 14<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Cameroon in early 2026. Heads recognised the importance of strengthening the WTO and expressed a shared commitment to support all members, especially developing countries, including least developed countries, small states, and small island developing states, in effectively participating in and benefiting from the multilateral trading system. Heads acknowledged the Commonwealth's valuable role in facilitating sustainable development through trade, investment, business connectivity, and tourism, and as a platform for exchanging knowledge on inclusive and sustainable development. Heads called for technology-driven and low-carbon business models. Heads reaffirmed their support for the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda, including the goal of increasing intra-Commonwealth trade to USD 2 trillion by 2030, and emphasised the cost advantage of intra-Commonwealth trade. Heads also recognised the importance of a gender-responsive approach, and of prioritising gender equality in trade and economic policies. Heads further welcomed the outcomes of the 2023 Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting, including the creation of a Commonwealth Investment Action Plan by a sub-action group of the Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI). Heads also noted the establishment of the Commonwealth Working Group on Legal Reform and Digitalisation. Heads endorsed the Work Plan of the Working Group on Trade and Investment and mandated Trade Ministers to consider its operationalisation at their next meeting. Heads also recognised the need to ratify and implement the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, to conclude negotiations for its second phase, and to continue reforming multilateral trade rules for agriculture, aiming to enhance food security, while ensuring the smooth functioning of global supply chains particularly for the most vulnerable.
39. Heads noted with concern the early start of the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season with the Category 5 hurricane that wrought catastrophic damage on the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean and the drought experienced in Southern Africa in 2024, and the impact of these events on their peoples' nutrition and economic production. Recovery will take years, more people will become vulnerable. This brings into sharp focus the plight of vulnerable countries in tackling the climate crisis and sustainable development. Heads reaffirmed their support for the work of the High-Level Finance Ministers Working Group and for a Commonwealth call for reform of the global financial architecture. Heads noted that calls for the reform of the international financial institutions including, inter alia, the

Bridgetown Initiative 3.0, are gaining traction and noted proposals for a significant increase in funding and building of resilience, to be taken to UNFCCC COP 29 as a powerful statement on the existential crises faced by the majority of the members of the Commonwealth Aiga. Heads also called for additional disaster risk finance and insurance to build members' resilience to climate shocks, for all public and private debtors to institute natural disaster clauses and for a significant increase in availability of affordable financing for disaster prevention.

40. Heads stressed the importance, especially for smaller economies reliant on sectors such as tourism and extractive industries, of initiatives for economic diversification and resilience, for reducing financial vulnerability and for leveraging opportunities of diaspora investment, including the issuance of diaspora bonds by Governments. Heads called for all public and private debtors and other financiers to introduce natural disaster clauses and Climate Resilient Debt Clauses, as well as other Disaster Risk Finance initiatives, to support vulnerable countries' resilience and called on a wider range of financiers to provide them. Heads also noted the outcomes of the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting held in October 2023.
41. Heads expressed concern that many members struggle to access concessional development finance, face local capital market liquidity challenges and high costs of borrowing, which undermine their ability to fund climate and sustainable development policies. Heads urged governments to foster stronger partnerships with the private sector and to create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and for private sector investment, especially for micro, small and medium enterprises and cooperatives. Heads also expressed support for the mobilisation of domestic and international public and private finance at concessional rates. Heads noted the need to collaborate with International Financial Institutions to encourage risk-sharing mechanisms, business models and innovative approaches to scale up private sector investment. Heads reaffirmed their support for reducing the sovereign debt burden and associated risks, and for the establishment of a Commonwealth Sovereign Debt Management Network. Heads supported the continued development of the Commonwealth Universal Vulnerability Index (UVI) and ongoing collaboration with the United Nations on the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) adopted by the United Nations on 13 August 2024. Heads encouraged International Financial Institutions, United Nations agencies, and all development partners to consider using the MVI or other tools, as appropriate, and to apply the MVI as a complement to their existing practices and policies, in line with their respective mandates. Heads called for support for the ongoing UN process to create a framework convention on tax to promote inclusivity and equity in the global tax regime. Heads noted the need for Commonwealth members to strengthen efforts to eliminate illicit financial flows and facilitate the recovery and return of assets to the country of origin.
42. Heads called for improved international debt mechanisms to support debt review, debt payment deferral and debt restructuring. Heads acknowledged the invaluable impact of the Commonwealth Secretariat's debt management systems for debt sustainability and resilience over the past 40 years. Heads applauded the Commonwealth Meridian system now deployed in 43 states. Heads declared 2025 the Commonwealth Year of Resilient, Sustainable, and Innovative Debt Management.

## COUNTRY SITUATIONS

43. Heads reaffirmed their support for the interim Government and the people of Bangladesh deeply affected by the prolonged influx and stay of over 1.2 million forcibly displaced Rohingya from Rakhine State in Myanmar. Heads expressed grave concern at the gross human rights violations and atrocities perpetrated by parties to the armed conflict in Rakhine, particularly since the eruption of intense conflict between the Myanmar Army and the insurgent Arakan Army in the Rakhine state, leading to extensive clashes near the Bangladesh-Myanmar border since 13 November 2023. Many Rohingyas and other ethnic groups from Rakhine are fleeing worsening violence to neighbouring countries. Since February 2024, more than 750 Myanmar Tatmadaw troops, Myanmar Border Guard Police, and their accompanying persons took refuge in Bangladesh due to the expansion of the conflict between the Myanmar Army and Arakan Army in Rakhine State, later repatriated to Myanmar. Fighting between the Arakan Army and Myanmar Army near the Myanmar and Bangladesh border has impacted the bordering inhabitants of Bangladesh. Noting the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/76/180 that authorised investigation of alleged crimes related to the situation in Myanmar, Heads welcomed the role of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), as applicable, in adjudicating violations of international law. Heads commended the humanitarian commitment and efforts of the Bangladesh interim Government, in cooperation with United Nations agencies and the international community, in providing sustained assistance and temporary shelter to the persecuted Rohingya and called for continued international support. Heads acknowledged the extensive investments made by Bangladesh in the response, including the development of facilities and infrastructure. Heads recalled the importance of the implementation of the general agreement and arrangements reached between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Heads also called for action to address the root causes of the current crisis, including through the immediate implementation of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State recommendations. Welcoming the work and reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General on Myanmar, and the ASEAN Chair's Special Envoy on Myanmar, urging the Myanmar military authorities to grant them full access to Myanmar, Heads called for the creation of the necessary conducive conditions for the voluntary, safe, secure and sustainable return of all such displaced Rohingya sheltered in Bangladesh to their rightful homes in Myanmar.
44. Heads expressed their support for the ongoing ICJ process on Guatemala's territorial, insular, and maritime claims against the territory of Belize. Heads condemned the continuing illegal encroachments and settlements in Belize's territory and urged Guatemala to respect and implement the confidence-building measures, which are valid and in force. They also reiterated their call for both countries and the Organization of American States (OAS) to fulfil their commitment to design a mechanism of co-operation for the Sarstoon River. They commended the OAS for its work in maintaining peace and security along the border and for supporting efforts towards a final and peaceful settlement of the dispute. Heads took note of the case between Belize and Honduras before the ICJ, in respect of the Sapodilla Cayes. Heads strongly reaffirmed the Commonwealth's firm and longstanding support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Belize.
45. On this year's sombre 50th anniversary of July and August 1974, Heads expressed their full and enduring support for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus. They reiterated their support for the resumption of negotiations, under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary General's Good Offices Mission, for a



comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem based on the United Nations Charter and United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Cyprus in accordance with the wishes of the Cypriot people and based on a bicommunal, bizonal federation with political equality as set out in relevant Security Council Resolutions. Heads called for the implementation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs), especially UNSCRs 365(1974), 541(1983), 550(1984), and 1251(1999). Recalling also United Nations Security Council resolutions and its Presidential Statements on Varosha condemning the announcement by Turkish and Turkish Cypriot leaders on the further reopening of a part of the fenced-off area. Heads expressed their deep regret regarding unilateral actions that run contrary to those resolutions and statements and reiterated the calls made for their immediate reversal and for full respect and implementation of relevant UNSC resolutions. Heads reiterated their support for full respect of the human rights of all Cypriots including their right to property, and for the accounting for all missing persons. Heads underlined the importance of confidence building measures and urged the sides to work together for their timely implementation, as well as to reinvigorate the efforts to provide the necessary support to the work of the technical committees. Heads extended their solidarity in the exercise of the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus in its Exclusive Economic Zone under international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and called for the avoidance of actions and statements that undermine these rights and threaten stability in the Eastern Mediterranean. Heads also noted the many important benefits, including economic benefits for all Cypriots that would flow from a comprehensive and durable solution, which would constitute a strong incentive for all parties.

46. Heads received an update from Guyana on recent developments. On 1 December 2023, the ICJ issued an Order of Provisional Measures, and on 14 December 2023 the Joint Declaration of Argyle for Dialogue and Peace was agreed to by Guyana and Venezuela, with support from the Caribbean Community and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Guyana informed that Venezuela continued its aggressive posture and expressed concern that the continued military build-up by Venezuela on the border between the two countries poses a threat to regional peace and security. Guyana also informed that on 3 April 2024, the Government of Venezuela promulgated the organic law to annex more than two-thirds of Guyana's territory. This was brought to the attention of the United Nations Security Council which reminded both parties that they were obligated to comply with the Order of the ICJ. Heads noted the submission by Venezuela on 8 April 2024, of its Counter-Memorial to the ICJ and the Order dated 14 June 2024 of the ICJ authorising the submission of a Reply by Guyana on 9 December 2024 and a Rejoinder by Venezuela on 11 August 2025. Heads reiterated their continued support for the ICJ which has accepted jurisdiction over the controversy, to resolve the matter fully and finally by means of its binding legal judgment. Heads reaffirmed the Commonwealth's unswerving support for the preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Guyana.

## OUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY

47. In celebrating 75 years of the Modern Commonwealth, Heads reaffirmed the Commonwealth's core values as enshrined in its Charter, their voluntary association as, "free and equal members of the Commonwealth of Nations, freely co-operating in the pursuit of peace, liberty and progress" (London Declaration 1949), which started with only eight countries and now brings together a family comprising 56 countries from all continents, north and south, developed and developing economies. Each member is diverse in history,

culture, and experiences but united in our common interests, shared values, and commitment to facing challenges together.

48. Heads welcomed the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat and of the People, Youth, Women, and Business Forums to empower civil society, women, the aged, youth, marginalised groups, the vulnerable and those in vulnerable situations and to engage our business sector to build resilient and inclusive societies.
49. Heads also applauded and recognised the valuable contribution of the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth of Learning, as well as the Commonwealth Accredited Organisations, civil society, human rights defenders, women, youth, and other groups in our Commonwealth Aiga. Heads noted the importance of collaboration, emphasising the need for improved and increased synergies between the three Commonwealth Intergovernmental Organisations and the Commonwealth Accredited and Associated Organisations. Heads celebrated countless contributions of the Commonwealth to the global community and its members. Heads welcomed greater citizen engagement in Commonwealth institutions and programmes and noted, with appreciation, the strengthened collaboration between the Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation.
50. Heads directed the Secretary-General to report annually to the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting on the Programme of Work to give effect to the vision of this Communique.
51. Heads welcomed and encouraged the ongoing work over the past two years on Commonwealth institutional reform by the Informal Working Groups of the Board of Governors. They reaffirmed their commitment to the ongoing process for Commonwealth reform and renewal, emphasising a focus on results-oriented value creation and a responsive Commonwealth, driven by mandates as agreed by Heads, particularly in areas where the Commonwealth has a comparative advantage.
52. Heads expressed their profound gratitude to the Government and people of the Independent State of Samoa for the warm hospitality extended to all and congratulated Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade the Honourable Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa for her leadership in chairing the meeting. Heads also expressed their warm appreciation to His Majesty King Charles III, Head of the Commonwealth, for his attendance at this CHOGM. Heads congratulated the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC, outgoing Secretary-General for her unwavering commitment to the Commonwealth and her leadership in advancing Commonwealth values, and unanimously selected Ghana's Foreign Minister, the Honourable Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, as the seventh Secretary-General of the Commonwealth. Heads agreed that Antigua and Barbuda, Botswana, Canada, Grenada, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Zambia will serve with Samoa, as ex-officio member, on the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group for the 2024-2026 term and welcomed and accepted the offer of Antigua and Barbuda to host the next CHOGM in 2026.

Independent State of Samoa  
26 October 2024