



Commonwealth Lawyers Association

Statement on the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Kigali, Rwanda.

The Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA) is pleased to be participating in the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in Kigali, Rwanda on 20th -26th June 2022.

CHOGM in Kigali, Rwanda represents an important opportunity for Heads of Government and other senior officials to gather in person.

The CLA encourages those attending CHOGM to recollect the important principles contained in the Commonwealth Charter and in previous Commonwealth Statements dealing with issues concerned with the rule of law and access to justice.

The CLA urges the Leaders of the Commonwealth to ensure that there is a commitment to the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles on the Three Branches of Government.

- Principle 4 states that “an independent, impartial, honest, and competent judiciary is integral to upholding the rule of law, engendering public confidence and dispensing justice”.
- In addition, this Principle states that “an independent, effective and competent legal profession is fundamental to the upholding of the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary”.

At the Sri Lanka meeting of Commonwealth Law Ministers in November 2019 which the CLA attended, the Law Ministers agreed to look at opportunities for enhancing access to Justice and supporting the rule of law and referenced the opportunities provided by technology.

The CLA is pleased to partner with the Commonwealth Secretariat to facilitate a high-level side event discussion on the use of technology to improve access to justice. The use of technology has greatly accelerated during the pandemic. It is hoped that this discussion will resonate throughout CHOGM and that the access which citizens require to fair and impartial justice will be noted and developed.

In many Commonwealth jurisdictions emergency powers were taken during the pandemic. The CLA calls upon the Heads of Government to prescribe sunset clauses for emergency powers which are no longer required.

The CLA encourages all Heads of Government to express support for the rule of law and to take steps to respect all international Treaties, Commonwealth Declarations, and the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles.

The CLA looks forward to participating and contributing to the discussions both formal and informal during the Heads of Government meeting.

Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA)

15th June 2022

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The **Commonwealth Lawyers Association** is an international non-profit organisation which exists to promote and maintain the rule of law throughout the Commonwealth by ensuring that an independent and efficient legal profession, with the highest standards of ethics and integrity, serves the people of the Commonwealth. commonwealthlawyers.com