

MALDIVES *REJOINS* THE COMMONWEALTH

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY IBRAHIM MOHAMED SOLIH, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

This morning, I received a telephone call from the Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, informing me that the Maldives has formally become the 54th member-state of the Commonwealth family from 1 February 2020 onwards. I thanked the Secretary-General for her guidance, and for her tireless efforts in ensuring the Maldives' re-accession to the Commonwealth, and assured her of the Government's full commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the Commonwealth.

Today, I am pleased to share the news of our membership with the Maldivian people, who fought hard for the country to regain its rightful place in the international community, as a country that values the rule of law, democracy, and the promotion and protection of human rights. The Commonwealth for the Maldives embodies these values that we cherish.

As one of the Government's priority pledges, the Commonwealth is an important international organisation for the Maldives and the Maldivian people. The benefits we achieved when we were part of a larger Commonwealth family were lost when we abruptly withdrew from the organisation in October 2016. I am pleased to announce, that upon regaining our membership, we have once again opened new opportunities and avenues in the fields of education, youth empowerment, sports, gender equality, environment and climate change as well as the promotion and protection of human rights. Mostly it is a great avenue for people-to-people contact, capacity building and the exchange of experiences.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Maldivian people who embarked on this journey with us and believed in the Maldives' rightful place as a responsible and active member of the Commonwealth and the international community. I would also like to express my gratitude to His Excellency Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs and his team for their diligent efforts and leadership in spearheading our efforts to become a member of the Commonwealth once again.

From the 1st of February to the 6th of February, the Maldives and its missions abroad will commemorate our re-entry into the Commonwealth. A flag-raising ceremony will also be held in London at the Commonwealth Secretariat in Marlborough House, London on 6 February 2020.

I'm confident that, as a proud member of the Commonwealth, the people of the Maldives will once again benefit from the many opportunities for national development that our membership will provide. I thank the members of the Commonwealth for their unwavering support in our journey to regain membership.



The Commonwealth