

The Commonwealth

Home > About us > Our governance

Commonwealth Secretariat, n.d.[b]



Our governance

Head of the Commonwealth

HM Queen Elizabeth II is Head of the Commonwealth. The Head of The Commonwealth's role includes a number of symbolic functions. There is no maximum fixed term for the Head of The Commonwealth. The choice of successive Heads will be made collectively by Commonwealth leaders.

Commonwealth Secretary-General

Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC is the **Commonwealth Secretary-General** (<http://thecommonwealth.org/secretary-general-rt-hon-patricia-scotland-qc>)

The Secretary-General is responsible for representing the Commonwealth publicly, and is the Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth Secretariat which supports dialogue and collaboration between member governments at the intergovernmental level.

The Secretary-General is selected by Commonwealth leaders and can serve a maximum of two four-year terms.

Patricia Scotland (<http://thecommonwealth.org/about-us/commonwealth-secretary-general>) is from Dominica, and is the sixth Secretary-General since the post and the Commonwealth Secretariat were established in 1965.

Commonwealth Deputy Secretaries-General

Gary Dunn, Josephine Ojiambo and Deodat Maharaj are the **Commonwealth Deputy Secretaries-General**. Deputy Secretaries-General support the Secretary-General in the management and executive direction of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Mr Dunn was formerly the Deputy Secretary responsible for development programme design and policy at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Dr Ojiambo was formerly Chief of the Executive Board and External Relations Branch at the United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA).

Mr Maharaj was formerly Chief, Division for Afghanistan, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in New York.

Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group

The **Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG)** deals with serious or persistent violations of Commonwealth political values and can recommend measures for collective action.

CMAG can also consider situations of concern in member countries in a proactive, engaged and positive manner.

Its authority to suspend or even recommend to Commonwealth leaders that a member country be expelled is unparalleled by other international organisations.

The Group is convened by the Commonwealth Secretary-General and is made up of a representative of the Commonwealth's Chair-in-Office and foreign ministers from eight countries - who serve a two-year term.

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors approves the Commonwealth Secretariat's work plans and budgets. All member governments are represented on the Board of Governors, which meets annually.

Commonwealth Chair-in-Office

Malta's Prime Minister Dr. Joseph Muscat is the current Commonwealth Chair-in-Office.

The Chair-in-Office is the leader of the Commonwealth country that hosts a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The two-year role comes into effect at the start of the CHOGM.

The Chair-in-Office voices Commonwealth positions at high-level international forums and reinforces the Good Offices role of the Commonwealth Secretary-General. The term 'Good Offices' refers to conflict prevention and resolution work carried out in Commonwealth countries.

Documents

Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan 2013/14 - 2016/17

<http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/page/documents/ComSec%20Strategic%20Plan%202013%202017.pdf>

Report of the Commonwealth Secretary-General 2011-2013

<http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/page/documents/Report%20of%20the%20Commonwealth%20Secretary-General%202011-2013%20Low%20Res.pdf>