



## Commonwealth Special Envoy to Maldives: Departure Statement

*23 March 2012*

### **'Act in the best interests of the nation' – Sir Donald McKinnon**

The Commonwealth Special Envoy to Maldives, Rt Hon Sir Donald McKinnon, visited Maldives from 16-23 March 2012. During his visit, Sir Donald met with key stakeholders to discuss the current political situation and to determine how the Commonwealth can best assist Maldives.

The Special Envoy emphasised the importance of a calm and peaceful environment that is conducive to dialogue between the political parties. "I call on all parties to act in the best interests of the nation."

The Special Envoy attended the Opening Session of the People's Majlis (parliament) on 19 March, and noted positively the role of the Speaker of the Majlis in presiding over the session in difficult circumstances. The Special Envoy commented, "it is essential that the Majlis now functions effectively so that parliamentarians can return to debating issues of national interest."

Sir Donald was pleased to note the commitment, in the Presidential address to the Majlis, to bring together political leaders to hold discussions on the matter of early elections. Sir Donald said he would remain engaged in supporting efforts to find a mutually agreeable path going forward.

The Special Envoy stressed the importance of the work of the Commission of National Inquiry for national healing. In this regard, Sir Donald offered Commonwealth expertise to support the Commission in its work.

Sir Donald also discussed additional technical assistance that the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and other international organisations could provide, to help strengthen the judiciary and other key democratic institutions. The Commonwealth Secretariat will seek to develop these programmes with Maldivian

stakeholders, and international partners, as soon as possible.

*Note to Editors:*

*The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Kamalesh Sharma, appointed the Rt Hon Sir Donald McKinnon as his Special Envoy to Maldives on 1 March 2012.*

*During his visit, Sir Donald met with H.E. President Dr Mohamed Waheed Hassan Manik; former President Mohamed Nasheed; former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom; the Speaker of the People's Majlis, Hon Abdulla Shahid; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H E Dr Abdul Samad Abdullah; and the Attorney-General, Hon Azima Shakoor. The Special Envoy also met representatives of the Adhaalath Party, the Dhivehi Quamee Party, the Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party, the Jumhooree Party, the Maldivian Democratic Party, the People's Alliance and the Progressive Party of Maldives, as well as the Commission of National Inquiry, the Coordinator of the All Party Talks, Commonwealth High Commissioners, the United Nations Resident Coordinator, and Maldivian civil society representatives.*