



# INDIA भारत

**73rd Session of UNGA**

**18th Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFAMM)**

**Statement by**

**Mrs. Ruchi Ghanashyam, Secretary (West)**

**27 September 2018**

*Mr Chairperson,*

I am delighted to represent the Minister of External Affairs of India at the 18<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFAMM) which is being held on the sidelines of the annual general debate of 73<sup>rd</sup> UNGA Session today.

I would like to begin by offering my congratulations to the Secretary General Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, and the Secretariat on the successful conduct of CHOGM-2018 earlier this year. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the role of CHOGM Chair-in-Office, the UK, for having been instrumental in ensuring a very successful visit as hosts to the meeting. I would also like to thank the High Level Group for its efforts in preparing the report to review governance arrangements of Commonwealth Secretariat.

*Mr Chairperson,*

Our Prime Minister's decision to participate in CHOGM this year is reflective of the importance India places on the Commonwealth as an instrument of delivering the developmental needs of its member states, especially Small States and Small Island Developing States. India will continue to support the Commonwealth's emphasis on strengthening democracy, rule of law, and human rights amongst its member countries.

*Mr Chairperson,*

I am pleased to provide a short update to other members states

on the steps that India has taken to meet the commitments made during CHOGM-2018:

- India has doubled its contribution to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) from GBP 1 Million to 2 million, to enhance the Commonwealth's ability to deliver 'demand driven' assistance.
- India has disbursed its enhanced contribution to the Small States Office in Geneva of US\$ 150,000 and US\$ 250,000 to the Joint Office in New York with effect from 2018-19.
- The 'Commonwealth Sub Window' amounting to US\$ 50 Million over 5 years, is now open under the India-UN Development Partnership Fund at the UN Secretariat New York, to provide grant-in-aid assistance to Commonwealth members for projects related to SDG implementation and Climate Action.
- We are drawing up suitable capacity building programs for Small States and SIDS to better manage their Ocean based national wealth and resources with the help of the National Institute of Oceanography, Goa.
- India has commenced action to provide cricket training at

prestigious training centres in India for 30 boys and 30 girls under 16 years, in cooperation with Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). This is an activity under the Commonwealth's cross-cutting youth and gender agendas which recognizes the importance of sports as a medium to build bonds among the Commonwealth youth. The Commonwealth Secretariat has already circulated this information among the member states, and we look forward to welcoming the first batch in India later this year.

Apart from these, let me inform you about other initiatives that India has undertaken as part of the Commonwealth platform. Under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, 30 scholarships have been offered this year through Commonwealth Secretariat, in addition to over 3000 scholarships being disbursed through bilateral means, which can be availed by Commonwealth countries as well.

India has already signed up to be part of the new Commonwealth Marine Plastics Research and Innovation Framework to collaborate on the latest research and innovations to tackle marine plastics. I am happy to inform you that recognizing the strong focus on use of oceans, seas and maritime resources to achieve SDGs, on the occasion of the World Environment Day - 2018 in New Delhi, Prime Minister Modi announced that India will eliminate all single-use plastic in the country by 2022. This is an ambitious yet solemn pledge that India has made to beat plastic pollution.

*Mr Chairperson,*

I welcome the Commonwealth's initiative towards reforming the governance structure and processes of the organization to make it more effective, efficient and geared 'towards our common future'. I can assure you of India's continuous engagement and support in this important initiative.

We have noted the report submitted in this regard by the High Level Group (HLG) constituted for the purpose. I have been informed that there are issues that are still not agreeable to all member countries and hence would need more deliberations to reach a consensus.

CFAMM provides the opportunity for Foreign Ministers of Commonwealth member countries to meet informally and discuss important issues of concern every year. I hope that the Commonwealth will continue this tradition in the forthcoming UNGA Sessions as well.

*Thank you, Mr Chairperson.*

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