



**COMMONWEALTH
SECRETARY-GENERAL**

30 May 2013

Dear Gordon,

Thank you for today's letter concerning two legal opinions commissioned as part of my Good Offices engagement with Sri Lanka.

A number of opinions were proactively sought and sources of advice were consulted, as is to be expected and as is routine, in addition to the legal and other opinions that were offered voluntarily on this particular matter. It is a normal part of our institutional procedures that the Secretary-General, in determining the nature of sensitive Good Offices engagements, should be comprehensively briefed. In advancing my Good Offices in Sri Lanka, I have duly taken into account a range of opinions, including the two to which your letter refers.

It is also a longstanding practice of successive Secretaries-General that communications in support of Good Offices engagements are privileged. Indeed, it would be injurious to the discretion, trust and ultimately the effectiveness of the Secretary-General's Good Offices if the sources and nature of privileged communications were to be compromised.

It is these longstanding parameters of Good Offices – a breadth of informed sources and their privileged nature – that have served Secretaries-General and the Commonwealth extremely well. And within these important parameters, you will know that I have introduced the practice of providing regular and more detailed briefings than hitherto to CMAG about the full scope of my Good Offices engagements with member states.

Your office has indicated that your letter was to be copied to those High Commissioners whose Ministers sit on the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group. I am therefore taking the liberty of copying my response similarly to the High Commissioners concerned.

*Rajad,
Kamlesh*

Kamlesh Sharma

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cc: H E the High Commissioner for the People's Republic of Bangladesh
H E the High Commissioner of Australia
H E the High Commissioner of Jamaica
Acting High Commissioner of the Republic of Maldives
H E the High Commissioner of Sierra Leone
H E the High Commissioner of the Republic of Tanzania
H E the High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago
H E the High Commissioner of Vanuatu