

The 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) that was scheduled to take place in Kigali from 22 to 27 June 2020 has been postponed to unknown date due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The postponement was announced this Tuesday in a statement by the Commonwealth Secretariat saying that it was in accordance with the 2005 Memorandum of Understanding Establishing the Commonwealth Secretariat and the CHOGM Technical Manual, as well as with precedent.

President Paul Kagame as the host said, “In the coming months, every Commonwealth nation will be fully focused on combatting Covid-19 and its socio-economic impact on our people. Our organisation’s deep reservoirs of solidarity and expertise will be invaluable tools as we work together globally to ensure no country is left behind. We look forward to welcoming the Commonwealth family to Kigali for CHOGM once the pandemic has been defeated.”

Kigali remains the venue for the next CHOGM meeting at a date that will be decided at a later date.

Patricia Scotland, Commonwealth Secretary-General said, “the COVID-19 Pandemic has changed the course of our modern history. Lives have been lost, economies are shrinking, and livelihoods have been shattered. It is difficult to predict what the new normal will look like. We must be mindful of the risks large meetings pose to all. The current circumstances require heroic decisions. We stand together with Rwanda, and thank all our member countries and, in particular the United Kingdom as our Chair in Office, who have suffered so grievously, for the support and commitment they have shown in these trying times. I too warmly look forward to reuniting with the Commonwealth family, face-to-face, in the beautiful country of Rwanda.”

Held every two years, Rwanda will be the second African country to host the CHOGM after neighbouring Uganda in 2007. Rwanda joined the group of nations that are former British colonies in 2009 becoming the second country without any direct colonial ties to Britain after Mozambique.

The Commonwealth is a community of 53 countries – mostly former British colonies – with a combined population of about 2.4 billion.

