Statement of the Common Thread Network for CHOGM – March 2018

The Members of the Common Thread Network,

- Acknowledging the theme of the CHOGM 2018 to engage the Commonwealth in delivering a common response to global challenges based on a shared vision of democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law;

- Recognising that in an increasingly globalised and digitised world, cross border data flows, including of personal data, bring great economic and social benefits to countries and economies;

- Recognising that modern data protection laws with robust safeguards are central to securing the public’s trust and confidence in the use of personal information within the digital economy, the delivery of public services and the fight against crime;

- Recognising the potential for the Commonwealth to add global value in ensuring that the fundamental rights to a private life and to the protection of personal data are upheld;

- Concerned however about cybersecurity and privacy risks, and the potential threat they pose to trust in digital trade and development in the Commonwealth, as well as to individuals’ rights ;

Call on all Governments to acknowledge the importance for the Commonwealth to:

- respect and promote individuals’ right to privacy in the digital age, including in the context of data proliferation and digital communications;

- Develop and maintain robust privacy and data protection legal frameworks which can support both the individuals’ rights and the digital economy, based on observance of minimum standards, individual rights and accountability by those collecting, storing, using, disclosing, modifying and deleting personal data;

- ensure that legal frameworks for privacy and data protection include independent oversight mechanisms that are adequately resourced

- promote participation in existing frameworks of the Commonwealth to facilitate the sharing of information and expertise on privacy and personal data protection.

The Common Thread Network is a forum that joins together Commonwealth countries’ data protection and privacy enforcement authorities to facilitate cross-border cooperation on privacy issues and raising the standards of privacy and data protection across the Commonwealth. The Common Thread Network is also open to relevant Ministries from Commonwealth Member States that are in the process of setting up their own data protection or privacy regulatory framework.

For further information about the Common Thread Network, visit www.commonthreadnetwork.org or follow us on Twitter @commonthreadnet