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Dear Lindsay,

During the Commonwealth debate on Thursday 28 March, you asked about the UK Government's view on Angola joining the Commonwealth. I am sorry that I was unable to respond to you at the time and I promised to write to you. I am also sorry for the delay in replying.

As you may be aware, there is a clear process for aspirant members of the Commonwealth including criteria, particularly in relation to human rights, good governance, the rule of law, as well as having a historical constitutional association with existing Commonwealth members. At their Edinburgh meeting in 1997 the Commonwealth Heads of Government received and endorsed a report from the Intergovernmental Group on Criteria for Commonwealth Membership. They agreed that to become a member of the Commonwealth, an applicant country should, as a rule, have had a constitutional association with an existing Commonwealth member; that it should comply with Commonwealth values, principles and priorities as set out in the Harare Declaration; and that it should accept Commonwealth norms and conventions.

Whilst, as you rightly pointed out, any such decision would rest equally with all 53 members of the Commonwealth, **the UK would be pleased to see Angola join**, provided the conditions were met. We understand that the Government of Angola have had some contact with the Commonwealth Secretariat and we will of course follow developments with interest.

I hope you find this letter helpful. I will also place a copy in the House library.

Yours sincerely,
Annabel

BARONESS GOLDIE

Baroness Northover
House of Lords