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# Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

Malta, 27-29 November 2015

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Communique  
(Annex 1)

## COMMONWEALTH MINISTERIAL MEETING STATEMENTS

### Education

#### 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers

22 - 26 June 2015

**Education in the Commonwealth: Quality Education for Equitable Development: Performance, Paths and Productivity (3Ps)**

#### The Nassau Declaration

The following document is a Ministerial Declaration outlining the major topics and issues discussed at the 19th CCEM as well as the major remedial initiatives proposed.

1. The 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (19th CCEM) was held in Nassau, the Bahamas, from 22 - 26 June 2015. The Conference was opened by the Rt. Hon. Perry Christie, Prime Minister of The Bahamas. H. E. Kamallesh Sharma, Commonwealth Secretary-General, addressed the conference at the opening ceremony. The host Minister, Hon. Jerome K Fitzgerald, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, chaired the conference.
2. In discussions, Ministers highlight that the 19th CCEM is taking place at an historic turning point, following the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the crossroads in the global education agenda as part of the wider transition from MDGs to SDGs. Education for Sustainable Development is recognized as a priority for future planning by Ministers, as well as the role of education at the heart of the process for driving the SDGs.
3. Ministers note that the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group had significant and valued input to the education component of the SDGs, considered within the national context of each country. Ministers endorse the Incheon Declaration, noting that further input may be made to the

process of finalizing the SDGs in New York in September 2015. Ministers highlight the Commonwealth values of equity, access, and development, stressing the key role of Education for Sustainable Development.

4. Ministers recognize the positive role that key partners bring to the CCEM, and welcome the growing voice and engagement of youth, teachers, civil society, and other stakeholders.
5. The 19th CCEM also saw the official inclusion of a specific forum for small states; Ministers celebrate this as a significant and positive step in ensuring that the voice of small states continues to be heard on the world stage, given that 31 of the 53 Commonwealth nations are small states. Likewise, the role of education for building resilience is championed by Ministers as a key factor in combating issues of vulnerability, particularly those faced by small states, such as climate change, migration, mobility, and financing.
6. The Ministers celebrate successes that have been achieved to date in the drive for universal primary education, but note that achievements in relation to access leave much work to be done in the areas of equitable provision and quality. Ministers also acknowledge the wider responsibility of member-states to 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers Education in the Commonwealth: Quality Education for Equitable Development: Performance, Paths and Productivity (3Ps) 2 ensure the continued relevance of education, ensuring that it prepares the next generation of Commonwealth citizens to contribute positively to the social and economic development of their communities.
7. Commonwealth nations recognize the need for evidence based interventions and policy, building on meaningful data is emphasized by ministers in the drive for establishing sustainable models of education, which enable accountability and effective systems of governance. Addressing the Post-2015 Development Goals, Ministers note the importance of continuing to meet the needs of all learners, regardless of gender, race, or religion, or other aspects of marginalization - recognizing continued challenges in relation to provision for boys and girls (both of whom continue to face issues of equitable access in various Commonwealth contexts), as well as pupils with special educational needs.
8. Ministers commit to focus on the core purpose of education, to serve the needs of their diverse populations, furthering international drives for sustainable development, and equitable, high quality provision, while recognizing the continued role of education in supporting efforts for economic growth and poverty eradication, as well as acting as a tool for socialization. Early Years
9. Ministers recognize the key role that early childhood education plays as the foundation for all lifelong learning, and wider social and economic outcomes, and the need for continued and appropriate investment in this stage. Ministers are also mindful of the need, by committing to the

strengthening of public institutions, to retain effective, positive, and accountable partnerships with the private sector, and civil society, as part of wider efforts to improve quality and access. Ministers commit to strengthening engagement with these parties to support the development of education systems that serve the needs of their communities. Gender

10. Ministers will continue to build on good practice in promoting sensitive gender mainstreaming for gender equity, including reducing barriers to girls education, and addressing specific concerns over the underachievement of either boys or girls in Commonwealth contexts in which either faces specific challenges. Technology
11. Ministers commit to making effective use of technology and innovation in ICT to ensure that education systems continue to meet the needs of quality, equity, and access. The significance of online learning as a universal tool for lifelong learning is recognized by Ministers, and the key role of the Commonwealth of Learning in driving innovation in this field is recognized. To support the Commonwealth of Learning initiative achieving their Strategic Plan. Malaysia has committed a contribution of USD 200,000, and has also committed to support the sustainability of Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility (CTEF) by sponsoring RM 200,000 towards the establishment, and RM 500,000 annually (2014 - 2018) towards its administration. India has offered to provide its e-learning platform, SWAYAM, to host e-courseware developed by the Commonwealth of Learning, and has also volunteered to post digitized learning material of Commonwealth Countries on its anticipated National E-Library, with links to the Commonwealth Education Hub. Ministers note the continuing need for effective ICT infrastructure to facilitate learning in several member states, and commit to support development in order to address this requirement. Ministers welcome the role 3 of the Commonwealth of Learning, and the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth in supporting affordable access to all learners. The role of Parents and Civil Society
12. Ministers acknowledge the key role of parents, and wider civil society, in education, without compromise to equity and quality. Ministers commit to strengthening engagement with these parties to support the development of education systems that serve the needs of their communities, while recognizing the key role of families in shaping culture. Role of Teachers
13. Acknowledging the central role of teachers in quality education, Ministers commit to raising the status of teaching as a profession. This will be achieved by enhancing pre-service and continuing professional development, and conditions of service, ensuring that teachers are motivated and supported in the classroom. Ministers reaffirm the importance of effective governance of teaching to promote accountability and transparency. India has offered to set up a Malaviya Commonwealth Chair, for teacher education which will singularly focus on issues pertaining

to curriculum development, pedagogy, students' assessment, pre-service and continuing professional training, and capacity development. Youth

14. Ministers recognize the potential of learners and youth to act as agents of social change and peace building, and will continue to support policies and programmes in schools that actively engage pupils in building conflict resolution skills, tolerance, respect, and social inclusion, as a way of preventing school based violence and extremism. They support Commonwealth action, including in partnership with UNESCO, in keeping with the report on Civil Paths to Peace by the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding. Ministers reaffirm the key role that entrepreneurship education plays in promoting unique and valuable life skills, as well as career pathways. Ministers are committed to the enhancement of curricula at all levels of education to strengthen entrepreneurship programmes and skills development. Ministers acknowledge the important role that can be played by appropriate cooperation and collaborative national student associations, and commit to supporting and partnering with such bodies to ensure a student voice in education policy, and fit-for-purpose education. Ministers also endorse a name change for the CCEM Youth Forum to the Commonwealth Students Forum, and commit to supporting young student delegates to attend. Spirit of Sharing / Spirit of Giving
15. Ministers celebrate the positive atmosphere of mutual lesson-learning within the Commonwealth, as exemplified by the CCEM, as well as the importance of retaining the positive momentum of the event. To this end, the development of a shared platform for the effective dissemination of ideas, pooling of resources, mutual support, and sharing good practices, is recognized as a clear need by Ministers. It is the belief of Ministers that the Commonwealth Education Hub can serve this purpose. 4 Ministers reaffirm, in accordance with local context, their commitment to appropriate domestic financing of education, to the level of 4-6% of GDP / 15-20% of total public expenditure, as well as the wider targets established for official development assistance (ODA), including targets of 0.7% of gross national product (GNP) for ODA to developing countries. Ministers will, through the strengthening of their public institutions, continue to recognize the need for appropriate and effective partnerships with the private sector and civil society to address wider financing issues, ensuring accountability and equity, quality, and access are not compromised, and while recognising the importance of education as a public interest, and a public good Ministers also recognize the responsibility of Commonwealth members to support each other when in need, by sharing resources, funding, and expertise, while ensuring efficiency in the use of existing resources. Cross-Commonwealth Education Developments
16. The role of the Commonwealth in continuing to support development of effective education initiatives is recognized by Ministers, as is the need for

greater coordination of quality assurance in education by Commonwealth institutions, where requested by member states, as well as the potential for shared curricula and quality frameworks where this is something member states wish to explore. The positive role of mobility is celebrated by Ministers, who recognize the role that a globalized economy can play in supporting the economies and education systems of member states. Ministers also recognize the emergence of additional Commonwealth states as education destinations for Commonwealth members. Lifelong Learning

17. Ministers commit to supporting the continued development of the continuum of lifelong learning, and recognize the key role this plays in the economic and social development of Commonwealth countries. Ministers call for continued efforts to ensure that those who have not completed school, or not had access to basic education, or wish to continue their professional development, are given lifelong access to support in numeracy, literacy, and skills for employment. Ministers are also committed to developing lifelong, distance, and technical vocational education and training, linked to local, regional, and international, labour markets. Policy Frameworks
18. Ministers recognize that all countries must not compromise on equity and quality, learning from good practice, and the lessons of countries that have made significant progress in these areas. Therefore, in line with the core values of the Commonwealth Charter, the Commonwealth Secretariat will be developing effective policy frameworks to support efforts in this area, to be adopted by member states that wish to do so. Scholarships
19. Ministers call for continued and expanding support for Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships, a flagship of Commonwealth cooperation, recognizing the positive role of cross-border mobility, partnership building, and leadership development. Ministers are mindful of the continued importance of ensuring that scholarships are awarded to the most able, but meet the needs of the most deserving. Research Collaborations
20. Ministers call for the establishment of effective and meaningful research collaborations. To this end India has offered to establish a Commonwealth Consortium, for need-based-research throughout the 5 Commonwealth. It is anticipated that the newly launched Commonwealth Education Hub will play a role here, in facilitating Research Collaborations, supported by efforts, led by India, and the new consortium. Building on the success of the Commonwealth Science Conference in Bangalore 2014, India also offered to support cross-border efforts to drive research in areas of priority to member states. Looking to the Future
21. Ministers look to a fruitful, rich, and collaborative future for the Commonwealth, and welcome the opportunity offered by the upcoming meeting of the executive heads of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, focusing on University, Society, and Employment, to be held in

Accra, Ghana 2016. Ministers welcome the development of Commonwealth Connects and the Commonwealth Education Hub, and recognize their potential to act as a transformative resource for the entire education community of the Commonwealth and applaud the vision to create ‘one-stop non-stop shops’ to serve the community. Commonwealth Action Group on Education

22. Ministers agree to establish a Commonwealth Accelerated Development Mechanism for Education (CADME) to assist with the implementation of the SDGs in Commonwealth countries. On taking forward recommendations of the 19th CCEM Commonwealth Secretariat assist in establishing a Commonwealth Education Ministers Action Group - CEMAG - to have regional representation, as well as that of Youth, Teachers, Stakeholders, Multilaterals, and other partners, with regular online networking and meetings where appropriate, to ensure momentum and continued action on the points recorded herein. Both CEMAG and CADME will maintain networking between ministerial meetings, supporting and supplementing, and not replacing existing international initiatives, such as the framework agreed at Incheon in 2015.
23. Ministers express their thanks and appreciation to the Government and the People of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas for their hospitality in hosting the 19th CCEM and the Commonwealth Secretariat for the organization of the event.
24. Ministers welcome the offer by the Government of Fiji to host the 20th CCEM in 2018, and the Government of Kenya’s interest in hosting the 21st CCEM in 2021 was acknowledged.
25. The 19th CCEM was declared closed.

## **Finance**

### **Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting 2014**

**13 October 2014**

**Statement by: Hon. Tuilaepa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi Prime Minister and Finance Minister of Samoa**

Commonwealth Finance Ministers met in Washington DC on 8 October 2014 on the theme of 'Financing the Post-2015 Development Agenda.' We discussed the implications of OECD-DAC's current proposals for statistical reform on the measurement of development finance and Official Development Assistance (ODA); the report of the UN Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing; and priorities for engagement with the G20.

#### **OECD-DAC Reforms**

Ministers were apprised of the OECD-DAC proposals for reform on the measurement of development finance and ODA. These include a new measure of total official support for development (TOSD), reconceptualising ODA to better reflect donor effort and recipient benefit, establishing a clear and quantitative definition of concessionality and revising ODA targets to ensure that aid goes to where it is needed most.

We recognised and highlighted the continued crucial role played by ODA and concessional resources in Commonwealth developing countries. We made a strong call for the international community to meet existing ODA commitments. We highlighted that the reforms should not detract from this commitment and that there is a need to maintain support and focus on poverty eradication in the light of the possible introduction of a new measure of TOSD. We also noted that the measurement of South-South cooperation should remain distinct from North-South cooperation, with a recognition of the particular value of South-South cooperation in sharing country experiences and approaches. We supported further work by the Commonwealth to feed Commonwealth perspectives formally into OECD-DAC high level deliberations and provide on-going policy research and technical support to members as the OECD-DAC reforms proceed.

#### **Report of the UN Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing**

We welcomed a presentation by the co-chair of the UN Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing on the Committee's report, which contains a comprehensive set of high-level considerations and options. The Commonwealth has a profound interest in Financing for Development given its diverse membership which contains both providers and recipients of Financing for Development, and we discussed key issues and next steps towards securing a strong outcome at the forthcoming third international conference on financing for development.

We recognised that substantial further work is required to flesh out the post-2015 financing framework into concrete proposals which can be discussed and advanced by the conference next July. Ministers noted the opportunity for dialogue and peer learning as this issue is taken forward, and supported plans for on-going work by the Secretariat to help advance discussions in areas such as: the development of a new set of development finance principles to underpin the post-2015 financing framework; strengthening system coherence and global economic governance; strengthening an international accountability framework and a monitoring and follow-up process; and fostering a concerted discourse on innovative finance for development.

A key theme of interventions throughout the meeting was innovative financing and we welcomed the Commonwealth Toolkit on Innovative Finance. Our discussions highlighted the need to identify specific proposals that can unlock additional new financing. These might include: recapitalisation of development banks; the use of specific taxes to raise development finance; and efforts to strengthen tax collection. The specific needs of small states was highlighted, both in terms of their need for concessional financing, but also for options tailored to their needs. One approach, for example, is the mobilisation of resources through the diaspora. Another was to focus on approaches that have not yet been fully leveraged, such as revenue streams from carbon services, for example, from forest resources.

Some concerns were expressed surrounding anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing and the impact of the regulation on remittances. Ministers also recognised that countries will rely increasingly on their own resources to finance development, and that efforts are needed on domestic resource mobilisation to unlock resources that can be directed towards development priorities.

### Strengthening the Commonwealth and the G20

We discussed the potential of the Commonwealth to provide a forum which brings together G20 and non-G20 members to allow mutual concerns to be expressed and discussed. We noted the strong foundations that have been built to establish this relationship and that the Commonwealth - G20 relationship had delivered strong outcomes since we last met. We heard substantive priorities for the G20, and the Australian Presidency; and were challenged to consider areas where Commonwealth poor, small and vulnerable countries might engage with the G20 further.

### Future Finance Ministers Meetings

We reviewed options presented by the Secretariat to strengthen CFMM. These recommendations were based on insights provided by an external study and a survey amongst Ministers themselves. We agreed the following, to: hold CFMM in the wings of the World Bank and IMF annual meetings and the location will be the same venue as the annual meetings; seek to hold CFMM on the Thursday immediately before the annual Meetings; adopt a volunteer Troika chairing system to start at the next CFMM; introduce a focal point network; and make more use of: Ministerial Working Groups, High-Level Ministerial Missions and High-Level Panels

to provide the opportunity for more regular ad-hoc dialogue and engagement on issues. We agreed to meet again in Peru in the wings of the World Bank/IMF annual meetings in 2015.

#### Progress on Debt Challenge of Small Vulnerable Economies and the Commonwealth Small States Trade Financing Facility

We heard a report on progress with development of a Small States Trade Finance Facility, as directed by the November 2013 Kotte Statement of the Commonwealth Heads of Government. This is undergoing a feasibility study and we look forward to further updates.

The Secretariat reported on its contribution to the UN Conference on Small Island Development States on resilience and debt concerns of small states: influencing the SAMOA Pathway; and presenting options such as an innovative debt-for-climate change swap at the Conference itself. The Secretariat indicated its current engagement with the World Bank on progressing core recommendations, and plans to engage with member states on these issues during preparations for the third international conference on financing for development.

We endorsed a report on meetings of Senior Officials, who focused their discussion on the OECD-DAC reforms and innovative financing; and Central Bank Governors, who had focused their discussions on the implementation of international financial regulation, and a risk-focussed approach to Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism.

## Health

### Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting 2014: Ministerial Statement

18 May 2014

#### **Theme: 'Commonwealth Post-2015 Health Agenda: Strengthening Health Policies and Systems'**

Commonwealth Health Ministers held their annual Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, on the eve of the 67th World Health Assembly. The theme of the meeting was 'Commonwealth Post-2015 Health Agenda: Strengthening Health Policies and Systems'.

Ministers noted that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had significant impact in positioning health in the development agenda and in galvanising multi-stakeholder partnerships. They acknowledged the significant progress in reducing under-five and maternal mortality, increasing immunization coverage and increased access to HIV and TB treatment, including availability of affordable antiretrovirals.

Ministers, however, noted that many countries may not achieve the health-related MDGs by 2015, especially MDGs 4, 5 and 6. Hence the need for continued commitment to accelerating progress in achieving these goals, while learning lessons from the MDG era.

Ministers highlighted the significant economic returns of investing to improve health and noted the high cost of inadequate health investment.

Ministers discussed the concept of universal health coverage and, whilst noting the challenges, acknowledged the need to ensure that all citizens have equitable access to quality and affordable essential health services they need, without enduring financial hardship, in a manner that is sustainable for the long-term.

Ministers agreed that the post-2015 development agenda could include universal health coverage, address the unfinished business of the MDGs, cognizant of the need to accelerate progress on reducing maternal, new-born and child mortality, and incorporate a life-course approach to health, with a focus on morbidity, non-communicable diseases, strengthening health systems, equitable access to medicines, and links health to other development goals.

Ministers undertook to articulate, individually, collectively, and through the Secretary-General, the need for action on the centrality of health in the post-2015 development agenda, leading up to its inclusion in the UN process scheduled to start in September 2015.

Ministers appreciated the opportunity to share and exchange experiences in tackling health systems strengthening, immunisation coverage and costs, nutrition, and anti-microbial resistance, as well as the health related challenges presented by climate change and the imperative of addressing these issues in the post-2015

development agenda. They noted the need for continued collaboration and sharing of knowledge and expertise to support one another, and the work of the World Health Organization in this area.

Ministers noted the progress of The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust in rolling out programmes across the Commonwealth supporting many governments' efforts to reduce avoidable blindness. They looked forward to further updates on this pan-Commonwealth initiative.

Ministers welcomed the update on the cloud-based online hub on the Commonwealth Connects platform for Commonwealth health professionals, the 'Common Health', particularly noting its potential for knowledge and information sharing across a wide spectrum of stakeholders.

Ministers expressed their appreciation for the role played by the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Health (CACH) in providing advice to the Secretariat. Ministers noted the suggestions presented by CACH for strengthening its role, maximising the opportunities offered by Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting and for enhancing ministerial interactions and exchanges.

Ministers agreed that 'Universal Health Coverage' would be an appropriate theme for the 2015 Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting and that the theme should include an emphasis on ageing and good health.

Ministers thanked the Secretary-General for his leadership of the Secretariat's strategic review process and noted the plans to start implementing the new staff structure by July 2014 and to continue effecting the Strategic Plan 2013/14-2016/17.

### Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting 2015: Ministerial Statement

**17 May 2015**

#### **Universal Health Coverage, with an emphasis on ageing and good health**

Commonwealth Health Ministers held their 27th Meeting, in Geneva, Switzerland, on the eve of the 68th World Health Assembly. The theme of the meeting was 'Universal Health Coverage with an emphasis on ageing and good health'.

Ministers noted the need for all countries, irrespective of income levels, to move towards universal health coverage (UHC) in order to meet these challenges, but also to consolidate past gains. Ministers supported the inclusion of UHC as a central component of the health goal in the proposed Sustainable Development Goals and the importance of a life course approach to health care, ensuring that all citizens have equitable access to the quality and affordable essential health services they need, without enduring financial hardship. Ministers recognised the critical need for sustainability including financing mechanisms for UHC.

Ministers noted the increasing rate at which populations are ageing worldwide leading to predictions that in the next 5 years people aged over 65 years will outnumber children under five years old. Ministers acknowledged that while this

trend was a reflection of success in MDGs and in health interventions, it also posed challenges for economic growth, social security and health systems, particularly in view of the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases, including mental health, as the population ages.

Ministers recalled the role of the Commonwealth in bringing the issues of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) to global attention, culminating in the 2011 United Nations High-level meeting on non-communicable diseases prevention and control. Ministers looked forward to the Commonwealth's continued leadership in the recognition that the burden of NCDs cannot be adequately addressed without UHC, strong health systems and public health policies that support the delivery of UHC, including the promotion of healthy behaviours.

Ministers especially recognised the particular harmful effects of tobacco and the importance of tobacco control measures and this year marks the tenth anniversary of the coming into force of the WHO framework Convention on Tobacco control. Additionally, Ministers acknowledged the importance of alcohol control measures.

While noting the health challenges across the Commonwealth and the challenges facing member states as they endeavour to achieve UHC, ministers noted with interest successes and best practices in progressing towards UHC, particularly in preventive health, targeting vulnerable populations and innovative financing mechanisms.

Learning lessons from the Ebola crisis, Ministers encouraged all members of the Commonwealth to collaborate to build strong and resilient Health care system and urged the Secretariat to facilitate the co-ordination between countries.

Ministers welcomed the update on the Commonwealth Hub and the collaborative work with Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation and Public Health England on the Global Burdens of Disease, particularly noting its potential for connecting health professionals across the Commonwealth and for knowledge and information sharing across a wide spectrum of stakeholders.

Ministers noted with appreciation the progress of The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust and its pan-Commonwealth initiative to roll out programmes across the Commonwealth to reduce avoidable blindness.

Ministers appreciated the civil society contribution to the meeting discussions, and encouraged their ongoing participation in the area of Health within the Commonwealth.

Ministers expressed their appreciation for the role played by the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Health (CACH). Ministers agreed to the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Health report and chairs recommendations. Ministers agreed that statements from future meetings would be presented to World Health Assembly by the chair of Commonwealth Health Ministers.

Ministers agreed that Health Security and access to Universal Health Coverage access would be an appropriate theme for the 2016 Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting.

Ministers noted a suggestion for Polio eradication as a topic for future consideration at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

Ministers therefore recommend that the Heads of Government collectively:

- a. Support the call for universal health coverage as one of the health goals in post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.
- b. Give priority to a systems strengthening, whole-of-government, whole of society approach.
- c. Recognise the primary role of governments in encouraging a society wide response to the global challenge of ageing and non-communicable diseases, including mental health.
- d. Recognise the importance of cooperation across the Commonwealth to strengthen health systems.

## **Law**

### Meeting of Commonwealth Law Ministers and Senior Officials

#### **Gaborone, Botswana: 5 - 8 May 2014**

1. Commonwealth Law Ministers met in Gaborone, Botswana from 5 to 8 May 2014. The meeting was attended by Law Ministers and Attorneys General from 28 countries. An opening ceremony was addressed by His Honour the Vice-President of the Republic of Botswana, Dr Ponatshego Kedikilwe, and by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, H E Kamallesh Sharma. In opening the business meetings, the Secretary-General acknowledged the great contribution made by Botswana not only to this Meeting but to advancing the values of the Commonwealth. The Meeting elected the Hon. Dikgakgamatso Ndelu Seretse, Minister of Defence, Justice and Security of Botswana as the Chairperson.

#### **Agenda**

2. As a paper by the Latimer House Working Group was not presented by Senior Officials to Ministers, due to the fact that Senior Officials could not reach a consensus on the paper, it was agreed that, rather than as a separate agenda item, Ministers could raise the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles in their discussions throughout the agenda wherever relevant. Ministers later, during the presentation of the report by the Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association (CMJA), agreed to mandate the Secretariat to prepare a paper on the implementation of the Latimer House Principles in the Commonwealth for consideration at the next Law Ministers' Meeting. In preparing the paper, the Secretariat should consult widely with member countries and with the Latimer House Working Group

#### **Legal work of the Secretariat**

3. The Meeting received a report on the work undertaken by the Secretariat on the rule of law since the last Meeting of Law Ministers in 2011. The Meeting welcomed Ms Katalaina Sapolu, who joined the Secretariat as Director of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division in December 2013. The report mentioned the adoption of the new Strategic Plan for 2013/14 - 2016/17, which aims at focusing the Secretariat's activities in order to reflect its comparative advantages and resources and to ensure more sustainable impacts. The structural changes taking place across the Secretariat, as well as their impact on the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division, were explained to Ministers. From 1 July 2014, when the new structure becomes effective, the Division will be called the Rule of Law Division. The Division continued to deliver programmes of a high standard in a wide range of areas. The report was adopted.

## **Consolidating the Rule of Law and Human Rights in the Commonwealth**

4. Ministers received papers addressing the theme chosen for their Meeting, 'Consolidating the Rule of Law and Human Rights within the Commonwealth'. Historical Overview of Human Rights in the Commonwealth
5. This paper covered selected aspects of the history, successes and challenges in regard to human rights in the Commonwealth. It underscored the increased focus given to human rights by the Commonwealth Charter, CHOGM Communiqués and the new Strategic Plan of the Secretariat. The paper presented successes, challenges and gaps in the ratification of the nine core international human rights treaties, engagement with the United Nations Universal Periodical Review (UPR) mechanism and the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles. Ministers were encouraged to utilise the services of the human rights experts and office space available at the Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva, especially small states who would otherwise not have a presence in Geneva. They were also encouraged to engage with the Secretariat in regard to their technical assistance requirements to prepare for the UPR and to implement accepted UPR recommendations and the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles. They expressed support for the Secretariat's work in the field of human rights and endorsed the paper.

## **Judicial Independence and Economic Development**

6. Ministers received a paper by the former Chief Justice of Botswana, the Hon. Julian Mukwesu Nganunu, which explored the relationship between the independence of the judiciary as being essential to upholding the rule of law, and economic development. It identified the components of judicial independence and the impact that independent and effective courts can have in ensuring an enabling environment for economic development. In that context, it emphasised the use of the judicial review mechanism and the role of the courts in ensuring equality and combating corruption. Ministers shared information about recent developments in their countries, including improved appointment procedures and the establishment of specialised commercial courts. Ministers acknowledged the importance of an independent judiciary. They also stressed the need for increased judicial accountability in order to ensure judicial integrity, competence and efficiency. Ministers requested the Secretariat to carry out further work on the link between the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and sustainable economic development. They also supported the Secretariat's role in strengthening judicial systems and the independence, competence and integrity of the judiciary.

## **The Rule of Law and the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

7. The Meeting recalled that, at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in November 2013 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Commonwealth

Heads of Government endorsed the intergovernmental process to be launched at the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly to develop and agree on a Post-2015 Development Agenda. Commonwealth Heads of Government also decided to constitute an open-ended High-Level Working Group to identify shared Commonwealth perspectives and recommendations through a Commonwealth Statement on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The paper presented to Ministers reviewed the global discussions around the Post-2015 Development Agenda and outlined the various facets of the rule of law under the Commonwealth Charter and how they relate to development. Ministers agreed that there is a link between the rule of law and sustainable development, which ought to be strengthened, and that the rule of law should be integrated into the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Ministers mandated the Secretariat to prepare on their behalf a paper setting out a draft contribution to the Commonwealth Statement on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and to circulate it within two weeks of this meeting for their consideration and comments.

### **Enhancing International Civil Legal Co-operation in the Commonwealth**

8. Ministers recalled their 2011 meeting at which they requested the Secretariat to develop a proposed scheme on international civil cooperation. Further to that mandate, a paper analysing the possibility of establishing such a scheme was presented to Senior Officials at their meeting in September 2013. Ministers received a revised paper and decided that work should not be undertaken to develop a Commonwealth scheme, as most of the matters that might be covered under the scheme were already the subject of the existing Hague Conventions on Service Abroad, on Taking Evidence Abroad and on the Abolition of Legalisation. Ministers agreed to the following recommendations: (a) that Commonwealth member states which were not already parties to the Hague Conventions on Service Abroad, on Taking Evidence Abroad and on the Abolition of Legalisation, be invited to consider taking steps to have possible accession to those Conventions; (b) that their governments consider ensuring that their national law makes adequate provision for taking evidence in response to requests from other states (whether under the Hague Convention on Taking Evidence Abroad or in response to requests out with that Convention) including, as appropriate, the use of audio-visual technology; (c) that their governments consider ensuring that their courts have the power in appropriate cases to make interim orders in support of proceedings elsewhere; (d) that their governments consider including in their national law provisions on obtaining copies of entries and decisions, security for costs and safe conduct, similar to those in the Hague Convention on International Access to Justice but applied with respect to other Commonwealth states.

### **Draft Model Law on Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgements in the Commonwealth**

9. Ministers considered a draft Model Law on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments. At their meeting in 2005, Ministers had asked the Secretariat to review the intra-Commonwealth arrangements for the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments. Since then, the Secretariat has undertaken work in pursuance of that mandate, including the drafting of a model law as requested by Senior Officials at their 2010 meeting. The draft model law draws on the work of the Hague Conference on Private International Law and of law reform agencies in a number of Commonwealth countries. It proposes changes to the current intra-Commonwealth arrangements and could be used by governments as a basis for reform of their legislation in this area. Ministers noted that further discussion was necessary on some provisions of the draft model law. They mandated the Secretariat to take appropriate steps to produce a final draft of the Model Law for consideration at the next meeting of Senior Officials and to consider other ways in which member states might improve the means of recognition and enforcement of judgments of other Commonwealth Member States, including the suitability of the Hague Convention on Choice of Court Agreements.

#### **Addressing violence against women in the Commonwealth**

10. Ministers received a paper on addressing violence against women in the Commonwealth, which contained a series of detailed recommendations for their consideration, on, inter alia, the content of national legislation, the need for a national strategy for the prevention, prosecution and punishment of violence against women, and relevant training for police, prosecutors and judges. Ministers shared information on the progress made in their jurisdictions in developing national legislation and establishing institutions to address the problem of violence against women. They also highlighted the challenges experienced in enforcing some provisions of their national laws. They recognised that law reform was not sufficient in itself to address violence against women and that a holistic, multi-sectoral and comprehensive national strategy was essential. In that regard, attention must be given to the importance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds and taking into account the fundamental values expressed in the Commonwealth Charter.
11. Ministers expressed their support for gender mainstreaming of the law and the need for closer co-operation between Law Ministries, the judiciary, national women's machineries and other agencies. They welcomed the integrated approach adopted within the Secretariat to address issues of violence against women. Ministers accepted the recommendations in the paper and mandated the Secretariat to continue to support member countries in implementing the recommendations within the context of its ongoing technical assistance and capacity-building programmes.

#### **International Judicial Development Assistance**

12. At their 2011 Meeting, Ministers mandated the Secretariat to establish a clearing house to facilitate international judicial development assistance. They received a paper which contained proposals for the establishment of the clearing house and the framework within which it might operate. The paper emphasised that the clearing house would contain details of judicial education programmes designed to benefit judicial officers at all levels. There would be an emphasis on the needs of small jurisdictions. The aim of the clearing house would be to coordinate information on existing judicial development assistance programmes and requests for assistance from Commonwealth countries. The success of the clearing house would depend upon governments publicising the existence of the clearing house amongst their judiciaries and their making good use of it. Ministers reiterated that such a project would be of great assistance to member countries. They agreed to approve the establishment by the Secretariat of the clearing house on the terms proposed in the paper for a trial period of three years, after which an evaluation would be conducted.

#### **Legislative drafting: A Commonwealth Legislative Drafting Handbook**

13. At their Edinburgh Meeting in 2008, Ministers had recommended the development of legislative drafting and style manuals and guidelines on the legislation process. A draft Commonwealth Legislative Drafting Handbook, building on regional documents produced for the African and Pacific regions, was presented to Ministers. Ministers welcomed the production of a Handbook as a valuable resource in legislative drafting across the Commonwealth and as a guide in encouraging member countries to devise their own local legislative drafting manuals, guidelines or handbooks. Ministers acknowledged that the Handbook was still in a draft form and that consultations with relevant stakeholders, including the Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel, would be carried out. The problem of retention of legislative drafters was also highlighted. Ministers -
  - (a) endorsed the idea of having a Commonwealth Legislative Drafting Handbook and mandated the Secretariat to continue with its finalisation;
  - (b) approved that consultations with relevant stakeholders be carried out on the Handbook, that the Handbook be reviewed in the light of comments received and that the revised Handbook be considered by Senior Officials at their next meeting;
  - (c) resolved that local legislative drafting manuals, guidelines or handbooks reflecting their own particular local processes and in-house styles will be devised as soon as possible for use in drafting offices in their respective countries, where these do not already exist.

#### **Modalities for Civil Society engagement with Commonwealth Law Ministers**

14. At the 2011 Meeting in Sydney, Australia, Ministers received a paper which outlined proposals for Civil Society engagement with Law Ministers. No

consensus was reached at the 2011 Meeting. In 2012, Senior Officials reached agreement on the principles to be recommended to Ministers and a paper setting out those principles was considered by Senior Officials at their Meeting in 2013. A revised paper, incorporating the amendments suggested by Senior Officials at their meeting on 5 May 2014, was presented to Ministers and adopted.

15. Ministers acknowledged that civil society could have a valuable role in an open and transparent democratic process and, as recognised in the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles, a role in the implementation of the Commonwealth's fundamental values. They welcomed the fact that steps were being taken to strengthen the current Commonwealth process for accrediting CSOs. Ministers noted that it was critical that CSOs were transparent as to their sources of funding and influential stakeholders.
16. Ministers agreed on modalities that would govern their own future practice in their engagement with civil society. Under these modalities, the partner organisations of the Secretariat would be able to provide input to the agendas for the Senior Officials' and Law Ministers' Meetings. They could also submit substantive papers on issues to be discussed where invited and appropriate. They would continue to be accredited as observers for the duration of the relevant meeting. They would be permitted to submit a written report and would be allowed to make an oral presentation on their activities in the intervening period as a substantive part of the meeting. Accredited CSOs wishing to attend the Law Ministers' Meeting in respect of a particular item would have to apply to the Secretariat for special permission to do so, giving reasons for their application. The Secretariat, in consultation with Senior Officials, might then invite them to attend the meeting. Accredited CSOs wishing to make written submissions to Law Ministers would similarly apply to the Secretariat, and the Secretariat, in consultation with Senior Officials, might circulate those submissions. Where the Law Ministers' Meeting was of the view that it would assist its deliberations, it could (a) on its own motion; or (b) upon application by any person or organisation to the Commonwealth Secretariat and with the recommendation of Senior Officials, allow any person or organisation to place written submissions before it and/or make a short intervention at its meeting.

#### **International Co-operation in Criminal Matters**

17. The Secretariat had pursuant to a mandate given by Law Ministers in 2011:
  - (a) developed model legislation to assist member countries on domesticating, if they so wish, provisions of the revised Scheme relating to Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters within the Commonwealth (the Harare Scheme);
  - (b) developed and delivered capacity-building initiatives, in particular on the interception of telecommunications and asset recovery; and

(c) formulated a five-point action plan to reinvigorate the Commonwealth Network of Contact Persons (CNCP). The Meeting took note of the Secretariat's report on the delivery of the 2011 mandate. They commended and approved the Secretariat's proposed strategy on international cooperation with its focus on small and more vulnerable member states. Ministers recognised the Commonwealth's long-standing record as well as its comparative advantage in this area. They expressed their appreciation for the assistance given by the Commonwealth Secretariat as they discussed the needs, challenges and expectations in matters of international co-operation.

18. Ministers endorsed the Commonwealth Model Legislation on Mutual Legal Assistance. It was also emphasised that the Model Legislation, like the Harare Scheme itself, was not mandatory and its existence did not in itself provide a legal basis for requesting assistance. Commonwealth countries are at liberty to adopt, modify or disregard any provisions which are incompatible with the domestic policies and laws of member countries. In addition, some parts of the Model Legislation were specifically designated as optional, in particular the provisions relating to the interception of telecommunications and asset recovery. Ministers noted that other parts are either not included in or diverge from the Harare Scheme. These should be clearly identified in notes or guides to the Model Legislation. Ministers also sought clarification in the Model Legislation that the application of the Model Legislation to civil procedures should be related to an underlying criminal matter. This should be clearly identified in an explanatory note to the Model Legislation. Ministers also approved the dissemination of the Commonwealth Manual on international cooperation in criminal matters as well as the Secretariat's proposed programme of work and the five-point action plan on CNCP.

## Cybercrime

19. Pursuant to a mandate given at the 2011 Meeting of Law Ministers, the Secretariat established a Commonwealth Working Group of Experts on Cybercrime. Ministers received the report of the Working Group which presents the findings of experts and detailed, in relation to cybercrime: its magnitude, current trends, the practical implications of cybercrime, the Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative (CCI) and the way forward. It was stressed that cybercrime was a global matter and any weak link provided opportunities for criminals. Prevention was of crucial importance. The effort to combat cybercrime required collaboration with a wide range of national, regional and international organisations, and with the private sector and civil society. This would maximise the effectiveness of technical assistance, for which there was a great need, and avoid duplication. Ministers endorsed the recommendations of the report, which included that:
  - (a) every Commonwealth jurisdiction should have up-to-date and comprehensive legal framework;

(b) should be encouraged to bring their laws into line with the Commonwealth Model Law on Computer and Computer-Related Crime and the revised Harare Scheme; and

(c) to accede, where practicable, to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (the Budapest Convention) and/or consider becoming Party to other regional or international cybercrime conventions and participating in other initiatives to ensure co-ordinated action against cybercrime. This would be subject to the availability of funds. The Meeting noted that the CCI governance structure had been strengthened. It endorsed the CCI methodology and agreed that Member States should support it and engage with it.

20. Ministers recognised that the Commonwealth was leading the way in developing mechanisms to combat cybercrime. They approved the report of the Working Group and the Secretariat's programme of work in tackling cybercrime.

### **Strategy to combat corruption and related economic and financial crimes**

21. Ministers had adopted in 2005 in Accra the Commonwealth strategy against corruption at their Meeting and had re-affirmed it in 2008 in Edinburgh. The Meeting welcomed a report of the work of the Secretariat in implementing the strategy. Ministers acknowledged the threat that corruption posed to democracy and expressed their concern at the role of foreign entities in corrupt practices and tax evasion. They shared information on positive developments in their countries, including the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). The Meeting endorsed the Secretariat's programme of continuing work to: (a) develop and deliver technical assistance and capacity building, in a sustainable manner, to member countries, in particular small and vulnerable jurisdictions, in collaboration with other international and regional organisations with similar mandates; (b) provide, on request, and in collaboration with relevant agencies, mentoring and placements to assist member countries in the implementation of best practice; and (c) conduct needs assessments as necessary to facilitate requests for assistance. Ministers stressed that this programme should be complementary to and not duplicate programmes undertaken by other organisations.

### **Victims of crime in the criminal justice process**

22. Ministers received a report on the work of the Secretariat in fulfilment of the mandate given by Ministers in 2011 in respect of good practice in the support and protection of victims/witnesses. Although the mandate was now complete, Ministers reported developments in their jurisdictions and agreed that the issue continued to be important. The Meeting approved action by the Secretariat to continue to promote best practice in witness and victim assistance and protection measures in ongoing technical assistance and capacity-building programmes, where it is relevant and needed. Ministers

accepted the recommendations in the report and invited member countries which had yet to do so to take action, within their resources, in terms of national policies and practice, legislation and capacity building to provide assistance, support and protection of victims and witnesses.

### **Prosecution Disclosure Obligations**

23. At their 2011 meeting, Ministers mandated the Secretariat to continue dissemination of the model legislation and guidance on prosecution disclosure obligations in facilitating capacity building and technical assistance over the following 12 to 18 months. The Meeting noted that prosecution disclosure practice was evolving with fresh statutory provisions or rules of court in some countries. The application of the model legislation and guidance needed to take account of new developments and local circumstances, and issues had arisen where very large databases contained data that had to be disclosed. Ministers received a report on work undertaken by the Secretariat and noted that this mandate had been completed, but agreed that the Secretariat should continue to promote best disclosure practice in ongoing technical assistance and capacity-building programmes, where it is relevant and needed. The Meeting invited member countries that had, as yet, not addressed this issue, to draw on the model disclosure legislation and guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

### **The Counter-Terrorism Programme**

24. Ministers received a report on the work undertaken by the Secretariat in respect of counter-terrorism, which followed the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Terrorism (CPAT). The Meeting accepted its recommendations that the Secretariat continue to base any counter-terrorism work on the revised CPAT, and that such work be carried out only in instances where the Commonwealth had a comparative advantage and in close collaboration with relevant national, regional and international agencies. Ministers invited the Secretariat to facilitate targeted technical assistance and capacity building in response to regional needs and requests from member countries, in the Secretariat's interconnecting rule of law and justice mandates and programmes.

### **International Criminal Justice and International Humanitarian Law**

25. Ministers recalled the mandate given to the Secretariat at their 2011 Meeting to develop and implement programmes in member states to promote the revised Commonwealth Model Law to Implement the Rome Statute, which was adopted at that meeting. The Meeting received and approved a report containing recommendations that the Secretariat continue its work in disseminating information and providing assistance upon request in this area. Ministers approved the Secretariat's proposed future work, including activities to develop the knowledge and skills of young lawyers in international criminal justice, and the use of online facilities such as Commonwealth Connects to create networks.

## **International Child Abduction**

26. Ministers received a paper updating them on the Hague Conventions on child abduction and child protection, including initiatives such as the International Hague Network of Judges and the Malta Process. The Malta Process aims at addressing the differences between Islamic legal systems and other legal systems. Ministers were also presented with the accompanying report on action taken by the Secretariat. The report proposed future action by the Secretariat in collaboration with other relevant organisations in order to increase participation of Commonwealth judges in the International Hague Network of Judges and the proposed network of judges of Commonwealth and common law jurisdictions. The report also proposed that the Secretariat provide assistance upon request to countries regarding accession to the Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. Ministers agreed to the recommendations and mandated the Secretariat to undertake the proposed programme of work. INFORMATION PAPERS 27. The Meeting received and noted three papers presented at the Meeting of Law Ministers and Attorneys-General of Small Commonwealth Jurisdictions in September 2013, namely ‘Tackling Backlog of Criminal Cases in the Commonwealth’, ‘Model Law on Public Integrity and the Code of Conduct for Public Officials’ and ‘Sustainable Law Revision in Small Commonwealth Jurisdictions’.

## **Reports received**

28. Ministers received and took note of a number of reports. These were reports:
- (a) on the activities of the Gender Section of the Social Transformation Programmes Division of the Secretariat;
  - (b) on the activities of the Human Rights Unit of the Secretariat. Ministers expressed gratitude for the assistance provided by the Human Rights Unit and shared examples of human rights institutions in place in their jurisdictions;
  - (c) on the activities of the Secretariat in the field of maritime boundaries, oceans governance and the extractive industries;
  - (d) on the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross on the promotion and implementation of international humanitarian law;

## **Reports from partner organisations**

29. Ministers received and noted reports from the Secretariat’s partner organisations:
- (a) the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies (CALRAs);
  - (b) the Commonwealth Magistrates’ and Judges’ Association (CMJA);
  - (c) the Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA);

- (d) the Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute (CJEI);
- (e) the Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel (CALC);
- (f) the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA).

## **Sport**

### 7th Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting Communique

**Glasgow, Scotland | United Kingdom 2014**

**21st July 2014**

The 7th Commonwealth Sports Minister Meeting (7CSMM) was held in Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom on 21st July 2014. Delegations from 45 member countries attended the meeting. The meeting was opened by Commonwealth Secretary-General, HE Kamallesh Sharma, and chaired on behalf of the United Kingdom by Ms Shona Robison MSP, Minister for the Commonwealth Games and Sport, Scottish Government.

In acknowledging the important role that sport plays in contributing to a shared identity in the Commonwealth, the meeting focused on the positive impact sport can make across the wide development agenda shared by Commonwealth members. The meeting also considered ways to protect the integrity of sport, to ensure that its full potential can be harnessed for positive social and economic outcomes.

#### **Sport for Development and Peace (SDP)**

1. Ministers recognised the valuable role of sport in development and peace, as an approach to addressing a range of challenges and delivering significant benefits, and noted that this has been repeatedly and successfully demonstrated by practitioners across the Commonwealth. Ministers noted that this work occurs in a wide diversity of cultural and demographic contexts, and contributes to various development goals such health, education, youth empowerment, gender equity, equality and inclusion, social cohesion, economic growth, and community and peace building.
2. Ministers noted the power of sport to drive and support a range of development outcomes, and therefore its importance to successful delivery of the post-2015 development agenda. Ministers called for sport and the role it can play in social and economic development to be explicitly recognised in the post-2015 development agenda.
3. Ministers affirmed the importance of high-level policy commitments being translated into detailed policy frameworks and action plans to drive SDP activity to benefit millions of people across the Commonwealth. Ministers also agreed that national investment in sport should reflect its transformational potential across multiple policy areas.
4. Ministers commended and endorsed the work undertaken by the Commonwealth Secretariat since 6CSMM to support member governments to develop national SDP policies and action plans, including three SDP publications:

- The Commonwealth Guide to Development through Sport (SDP Guidelines), which were provided in final draft form at 6CSMM;
  - A workbook accompaniment to the SDP Guidelines, Implementing the Commonwealth Guide to Advancing Development through Sport: A Workbook for Analysis, Planning and Monitoring; and
  - Strengthening Sport for Development and Peace: National Policies and Strategies, a good practice guide.
5. Ministers commended the Governments of Barbados, Rwanda and Sri Lanka for piloting the SDP Guidelines with support from the Commonwealth Secretariat, and were pleased to note the success of these projects. In particular, Ministers noted the report on the impact that sport has played in sustaining peace and supporting reconciliation in former conflict areas of Sri Lanka; and the focus on improving health and preventing non-communicable diseases in Rwanda; further Ministers noted the importance demonstrated by the pilot projects of using sport intentionally for development and peace and the value of multi-sectorial collaboration.
  6. Ministers committed to the development of quality national policies to promote and support sustainable SDP programmes with clearly planned outcomes, and requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to extend technical support for the development of SDP National Action Plans to additional member states and monitor the impact of the existing pilots. Ministers agreed that sustainable funding for this work should be a priority for member states.
  7. Ministers recognised the importance of the Commonwealth Secretariat working with other international organisations to ensure continued advancement of SDP approaches. In particular they noted the MINEPS V Declaration of Berlin as a high-level policy statement for sport that complements the Commonwealth SDP Guidelines and policy work. Ministers requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to engage with UNESCO's follow-up process for the Berlin Declaration, to ensure alignment and complementarity of approaches and guidance given to member governments, thus ensuring the greatest benefit.
  8. Ministers noted the important role that physical education and school sport plays in introducing children to sport and physical activity, developing positive attitudes to continued participation in sport and leading healthy lives; and that increased quality and quantity of physical education and school sport can, by reaching children at a young age, support and deliver sport for development and peace outcomes.
  9. Ministers welcomed the steps taken by the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) to use the Games as an instrument for peace and development, and commended the partnership between the CGF and UNICEF. Ministers requested the CGF to build engagement with the

Commonwealth Secretariat to ensure alignment and enhancement of SDP policy and grassroots programming in the Commonwealth.

10. Ministers noted the importance of ensuring that SPD initiatives are sustainable. Ministers agreed that potential exists for partnerships with the private sector to further sport for development and peace, and requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to explore options. Ministers also recommended that development cooperation partners be encouraged to increase the priority and quantity of sporting interventions in development programme planning, and called for wide recognition of the power of sport for development and peace
11. Ministers agreed that potential exists to leverage expertise between Commonwealth member states for technological transfer to enable the production of sports equipment locally and at low cost, to increase grassroots sports participation. Ministers requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to explore options for such an undertaking.
12. Ministers applauded the formation of the Commonwealth Youth SDP working group, and endorsed it as the Commonwealth's leading youth voice in promoting best practices towards SDP. Ministers further endorsed the CYSDP's call for mechanisms in governmental processes and sporting organisations for the inclusion of youth voices, as a major stakeholder group in sport. Finally, Ministers agreed to consider support for any young person from their country who may be selected for membership of CYSDP, and to support the CYSDP to access major regional and global forums for advocacy about SDP.
13. Ministers recognised the Commonwealth Secretariat's enhanced commitment to supporting member governments in the area of SDP, with the creation of permanent SDP staff positions. Ministers also recognised with appreciation the contribution, by UK Sport and the Government of India, and most recently by sportscotland, of seconded staff and financial resources to the Secretariat to allow delivery of the SDP mandate. Ministers acknowledged the need to ensure adequate financial resources for the Commonwealth Secretariat to deliver its SDP mandate, and committed to consider providing funds for this work.

### **Integrity in Sport**

14. Ministers reiterated their belief in the importance of integrity in sport, recognising that if it is undermined then it corrodes the positive potential of sport. Ministers reaffirmed their 6CSMM request for the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport (CABOS) to develop a framework encapsulating a Commonwealth consensus on issues related to integrity in sport, including good governance, safeguarding of participants, and addressing match-fixing.

15. Ministers emphasised that good governance underpins the integrity of sport, and welcomed, as a principle of good governance, the need for shared collective responsibility by both governments and sporting organisations.
16. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that safeguards are in place to protect children and other vulnerable groups participating in sport. Ministers acknowledged that National Safeguarding in Sport policy instruments and systems are key to the protection of vulnerable participants, and thanked CABOS for outlining some of the key features of these.
17. Ministers noted with concern the growing threat to sport from manipulation of sporting competition for purposes relating to betting (match fixing). Ministers acknowledged that as this is a global issue which crosses many borders, it is important for the Commonwealth to work in partnership with other organisations. Ministers noted that this is an issue of transnational crime and requires the attention of law enforcement agencies. Ministers noted recent international developments in this area, including the Declaration of Berlin, the draft Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competition and the Sorbonne-ICSS Guiding Principles for Protecting the Integrity of Sports Competitions. Ministers committed to participating in the battle against the manipulation of sporting competitions, and requested CABOS to continue to collaborate with other international organisations to address this issue and provide advice to member governments.
18. Ministers recognised that the Government of Australia is a global leader in addressing the issue of match fixing at a national level, and received with appreciation Australia's provision of practical national policy templates and resources that can be adapted by individual member governments. Ministers noted that these resources have been tailored to allow for both countries where betting is legal and those where betting is illegal, and committed to consider using these resources in their own national context.
19. Ministers highlighted the importance of ensuring education programmes on integrity in sport are in place to inform and protect young athletes.
20. Ministers requested that CABOS continue to work with the Commonwealth Secretariat, consult with member governments and relevant international partners, and to collate and share members' good practice, to finalise the framework of Commonwealth Consensus on Integrity in Sport for 8CSMM in 2016. Ministers endorsed the recommendation by CABOS that the framework should cover other crucial aspects of integrity in sport, including equality and anti-doping. Ministers agreed to commit their efforts towards building respect and understanding, so as to combat racism and all other forms of discrimination in sport.
21. Ministers commended CABOS on the work undertaken in the area of integrity in sport to date, and thanked the members of CABOS for their continued

efforts to provide advice and expertise to member governments and the Commonwealth Secretariat in this and other aspects of sport.

### **Commonwealth Games and Major Events**

22. Ministers received presentations on efforts to create legacies from major events. Ministers congratulated the Government of the UK on the continued impact being achieved around the world by the International Inspiration programme launched to coincide with the London 2012 Olympic Games. Ministers also commended the Scottish Government on its work to ensure the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games delivers a legacy for Scotland across a range of areas, such as business, education and sport. Ministers noted that the planning for this started several years prior to the Games and evaluation will continue for several years after the Games have finished. Finally Ministers were pleased to hear of the raising of awareness of the Commonwealth and its values through the Commonwealth Class initiative supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat.
23. Ministers received an update on the activities of the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), including preparations for upcoming Commonwealth and Commonwealth Youth Games. Ministers wished Scotland success in hosting the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, Samoa and Saint Lucia success with hosting the Youth Games in 2015 and 2017 respectively, and Australia with hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2018.

### **8th CSMM and future Olympic year CSMMs**

24. Ministers welcomed the offer by the next Commonwealth Games host, Australia, to host and chair the 2016 CSMM in the margins of the Rio Olympic Games, with the meeting to be a full day meeting. Ministers agreed that CSMMs should remain on a two-year cycle and agreed to consider options for future Olympic years (2020 and beyond), with the understanding that meetings might be hosted separately from the Olympic host country and that this would create the opportunity for smaller members to host.

*Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom 21st July 2014*

## **Youth**

**Africa region**

**8-10 February 2015**

### **Communiqué**

**1<sup>st</sup> Africa Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, Yaoundé, Cameroon**

***‘Young People Building a Stable and Sustainable Future’***

1. The first Africa Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (AR-CYMM) was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on 8-10 February 2015.
2. Delegations from 15 member countries attended the AR-CYMM, of which ten were led at ministerial level. Delegates included Ministers, senior government officials and youth representatives from Commonwealth countries of the Africa region, as well as youth development stakeholders and experts.
3. The timing of the AR-CYMM, occurring just a few months before world leaders agree the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015-2030 at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), gave delegates the opportunity to reflect on the negotiations process for the SDGs in the context of youth development priorities for Africa.
4. In recognition of the important role of young people as partners in building a stable and sustainable future, delegates considered recommendations submitted by the Young Leaders Forum of the AR-CYMM, particularly on gender equality, peace and security, and health and wellbeing of young people.

### **Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

5. Youth ministers shared national progress and impediments related to the key resolutions adopted at the 8th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (8CYMM) in Papua New Guinea in 2013, aimed at ensuring strong recognition of young people in the post-2015 development agenda.
6. Youth Ministers reinforced their commitment to the resolutions agreed at 8CYMM in 2013, including to:
  - Take steps to integrate young people in the design and implementation of national youth policies and action plans;
  - Develop and prioritise the implementation of national youth mainstreaming strategies;
7. Ministers resolved to take action to advocate for stronger recognition of young people in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. They agreed to protect existing youth-specific targets in the draft SDGs, and to promote the

inclusion of additional youth targets, which are crucial to member countries in the region. Specifically, ministers agreed to advocate for the inclusion of the following targets:

- Ensure that all young people have access to opportunities to participate effectively in peace-building and the civic life of their societies, and in decision-making and monitoring across all sectors of national development.
  - Ensure universal access to information and communication technology, and achievement of targeted outcomes in education, health care, social cohesion, training and employment opportunities among the youth, through greater use of ICT.
  - Ensure young people have opportunities for sustained participation, ownership and leadership in local, regional and international mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and maintain peace.
  - Ensure early detection, treatment of and support for mental health issues and promote universal healthcare and education on sexual health and reproductive rights among adolescents and youth.
  - Ensure equal access for young women to all employment opportunities, and encourage their participation in traditionally male-dominated professions.
8. Ministers also supported the call by youth leaders for a youth monitoring mechanism for the SDGs, including the disaggregation of data, and analysis using the Commonwealth Youth Development Index.

### **Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship**

9. Ministers noted the emergence of a policy guide on youth entrepreneurship, developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and expressed interest in the potential for related technical assistance.
10. Ministers noted the achievements of the youth-led Commonwealth Asia Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (CAAYE), and agreed to support the replication of the CAAYE model in the Africa region, mandated by Heads of Government in Sri Lanka in 2013, noting that such a network would help lift economic growth and youth employment in member countries. Ministers further agreed to support youth entrepreneurship by facilitating easier access to technology and finance for young people, particularly those unable to furnish collateral.
11. Ministers emphasised the need to prioritise the engagement of young people in agriculture and the importance of integrating entrepreneurship education and training in school and university curricula.

12. Ministers endorsed the youth call to aim for a reduction in youth unemployment, and reiterated their commitment to the Africa Union rate of reduction of 2% annually.
13. Ministers agreed to ensure that bids by youth-owned enterprises are given more serious consideration in government procurement processes, through the establishment of mechanisms such as quotas.

### **Youth Participation and Civic Education**

14. Ministers reflected on existing and planned mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making processes and explored enhanced approaches to youth engagement and participation, with a particular focus on peace-building. Ministers endorsed the principles outlined in the Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peace-building and committed to using the principles where relevant to guide programme design and delivery.
15. Ministers recommended that the Commonwealth Youth Programme should include work on building inter-generational respect, understanding and constructive collaboration.
16. Ministers resolved to support young people to take a key role in disaster relief and recovery in times of crisis and natural disaster. Ministers expressed their support for, and solidarity with, Sierra Leone, and commended the remarkable work being done by young people there in the face of the Ebola crisis.
17. Ministers agreed to commit to clear, collaborative paths of action to deal with terrorism and other forces that are preventing peace, and therefore development, in Africa, in partnership with, and for the sake of young people.
18. Ministers agreed that young people should be seen as an opportunity and a resource, not as a threat, and that investment in youth development is critical to meaningful, constructive, intergenerational collaboration.
19. Ministers committed to enhancing youth participation in decision-making, as well as the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes, by taking steps to include targets for youth representation, through legitimate structures, in relevant governance and decision-making structures at national and international levels.
20. Ministers commended the work of the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC), and the commitment and expertise shown by the youth delegates to the ARCYMM. Ministers further called for greater intergenerational understanding and collaboration between youth leaders and decision makers.
21. Ministers noted the resource constraints faced by youth-led organisations such as National Youth Councils and student associations, and agreed to

provide greater support for building their capacity through legislation, financial assistance and/or other measures. They noted that this work can and should be supported by the CYC and the Commonwealth Students Association, working in partnership with the Pan-Africa Youth Union.

### **Youth Policy Frameworks and Action Plans**

22. Ministers agreed to strengthen the development of national youth policies that are inclusive of, and relevant to, young people's needs and capabilities and prioritise action and resources to ensure meaningful implementation.
23. Ministers noted the challenges of an increasingly complex environment of regional and global youth policy frameworks, and the expiry of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2007-2015). Ministers endorsed the Commonwealth's proposal to explore harmonisation of the multiple policy frameworks, and agreed to provide input to the process.
24. Ministers resolved to strengthen efforts to monitor and evaluate youth policies, and to track progress in youth development with the help of regular reporting and tools such as the Commonwealth Youth Development Index.

### **Youth Work Professionalisation**

25. Ministers reinforced their commitment to youth work as an essential component of the enabling environment that underpins effective youth development. Ministers also committed to implementing the mandate by the Commonwealth Heads of Government for the professionalisation of youth work and the recognition of youth workers at the national level, through mechanisms such as Commonwealth Youth Work Week and the Commonwealth Youth Worker Awards.
26. Ministers noted the importance of education and training for youth workers and agreed to facilitate and support youth work education across the Commonwealth, including engagement with the emerging Commonwealth consortium for a bachelor's degree in youth development work. Ministers recommended additional engagement with ministries of education and the University Council of the Africa Union.
27. Ministers took note of the main challenges facing youth workers in the region and agreed to better support the contribution of youth workers.
28. Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Government and the people of the Republic of Cameroon for their hospitality in hosting the AR-CYMM, and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Youth Council and the National Youth Council of Cameroon for the organisation of the event.

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Caribbean  
28-30 April 2015

## Communiqué

Caribbean Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda

### *'Youth Participation at the heart of national development'*

1. The Caribbean Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CR-CYMM) was held in St. John, Antigua and Barbuda, on 28-30 April 2015. The meeting was officially opened by H.E. Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda.
2. Delegations from eleven (11) member countries and four (4) overseas territories attended the CR-CYMM, of which ten (10) were led at the Ministerial level. Delegates included Ministers, senior government officials and youth representatives from Commonwealth countries of the Caribbean region, as well as youth development stakeholders and experts.
3. The timing of the CR-CYMM, occurring just a few months before world leaders agree the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015-2030 at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), gave delegates the opportunity to reflect on the negotiations process for the SDGs in the context of youth development priorities for Caribbean.
4. In recognition of the important contribution of young people as partners in regional and national development, delegates considered recommendations submitted by the Youth Leaders Forum of the CR-CYMM, particularly on employment, entrepreneurship, professionalization of youth work, peace building, strengthening national youth participation structures, and developing and implementing National Youth Policies.

### **Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

5. Ministers shared national progress and impediments related to the key resolutions adopted at the 8th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (8CYMM) in Papua New Guinea in 2013, aimed at ensuring strong recognition of young people in the post-2015 development agenda.
6. Ministers reinforced their commitment to the resolutions agreed at 8CYMM in 2013, and resolved to take further practical action, especially in the area of youth policy design and implementation, strengthening youth participation mechanisms, and youth employment and entrepreneurship.
7. Ministers resolved to take action to advocate for stronger recognition of young people in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. They agreed to protect the existing youth-specific targets in the draft SDGs, and to promote the inclusion of additional youth targets that are crucial to member countries in

the region. Specifically, ministers agreed to advocate for the inclusion of the following targets:

I. Ensure that all young people have access to opportunities to participate effectively in peace-building and the civic life of their societies, and in decision-making and monitoring across all sectors of national development.

II. Ensure universal access to information and communication technology, and achievement of targeted outcomes in education, health care, social cohesion, training and employment opportunities among the youth, through greater use of ICT.

III. Ensure young people have opportunities for sustained participation, ownership and leadership in local, regional and international mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and maintain peace.

IV. Ensure early detection, treatment of and support for mental health issues, and promote universal healthcare and education on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights among adolescents and youth.

V. Ensure equal access for young women to all employment opportunities, and encourage their participation in traditionally male-dominated professions.

8. Ministers also supported the call by youth leaders for a youth monitoring mechanism for the SDGs, including the disaggregation of data, and analysis using the Commonwealth Youth Development Index.

### **Strengthening the Implementing National Youth Policies**

9. Ministers further reinforced their commitment to the resolutions agreed at the 8th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM) in Papua New Guinea, in 2013, and resolved to take further practical action.
10. Ministers took note of the regional challenges and opportunities for the implementation of national youth policies. Ministers agreed to work together to strengthen national youth policy frameworks across the region, ensuring that national youth policies are inclusive of, and relevant to, young people's needs and capabilities. They also agreed to prioritise action and resources to ensure meaningful implementation.
11. Ministers noted the challenges of an increasingly complex environment of regional and global youth policy frameworks, and the expiry of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2007-2015). Ministers endorsed the Commonwealth's proposal to explore harmonisation of the multiple policy frameworks, as part of a broader Commonwealth youth policy environment, and agreed to provide input to the process.
12. Ministers also noted the need to ensure the regional agenda for youth development programming is cohesive, and programmatic objectives are agreed through collective engagement. They agreed to determine and

execute a strategic mechanism for the further harmonization of the youth development agendas of all international development partners operating in the Caribbean region (i.e. United Nations Systems, The Commonwealth, Organization of American States (OAS) and The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and other recognised bodies).

13. Ministers committed to advocate for adequate resourcing and prioritisation for Ministries responsible for youth development to ensure they are able to execute their vital mandates, in alignment with best practice, approved national policy and legislative frameworks.
14. Ministers confirmed that Ministries responsible for youth development should be supported by a formalised inter-ministerial approach to implementation, to facilitate the prioritisation of youth development and allow related policy agendas to be fulfilled through collaboration and shared responsibility. Ministers also agreed to employ the full weight of their offices to coordinate the commitment and support of Heads of Government, Ministers of Finance, and other relevant Ministers, to prioritise and promote youth development.
15. Ministers agreed to work towards the identification and implementation of a 'model' youth ministry/department, with an appropriate structure and adequate resourcing, to underpin successful implementation of policy and to handle the peculiar vulnerabilities of the youth populations both nationally and regionally.
16. Ministers noted that policy documents must be developed through a multi-sectoral development process to ensure that they transcend political regimes. Further, policy and programmes must be cohesive and evidence based, and should be supported by mandatory monitoring and evaluative components.
17. Ministers acknowledged the importance of a mainstreaming approach to youth policy design and implementation and agreed to incorporate youth mainstreaming principles and strategies in national youth policy processes.
18. Ministers resolved to strengthen efforts to implement, monitor and evaluate youth policies, and to track progress in youth development with the help of regular reporting and tools such as the Commonwealth Youth Development Index.

### **Youth in Peace Building**

19. Ministers reflected on the issue of crime and violence in the Caribbean region and its relationship to social and economic development. Ministers endorsed the principles outlined in the Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peace-building and committed to using the principles where relevant to guide programme design and delivery in dealing with crime and violence.

20. Ministers agreed to promote clear, collaborative regional level action to deal with crime and violence, including development of strategies to promote safety and security of young people.
21. Ministers noted best practice examples of non-traditional methods of engaging at-risk youth, and resolved to work with civil society organisations, development partners and stakeholders to facilitate collective action to engage young people, especially at-risk youth, in peace building.

### **Youth Participation in National Development**

22. Ministers reflected on mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making processes and explored strategies to enhance youth engagement and participation particularly in national and regional development planning, and other areas of national progress.
23. Ministers committed to enhancing youth participation in decision-making, as well as the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes, by taking steps to include targets for youth representation, through legitimate structures, in relevant governance and decision-making structures at national and international levels.
24. Ministers endorsed the establishment of the Caribbean Regional Youth Council (CRYC) as the official representative regional youth body, and commended their work to date and agreed to assist them to explore possible sources of financial support. Ministers also commended the work of the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) and Commonwealth Student Association (CSA) in engaging and uniting youth and student organisations in the Commonwealth.
25. Ministers noted the resource constraints faced by youth-led and youth-serving organisations, especially National Youth Councils and student associations, and agreed to provide greater support for building their capacity through legislation, financial assistance and/or other measures if not already being done. They agreed that this support should be provided in parallel with efforts to strengthen governance structures of such bodies and depoliticise them. They further noted that this work can and should be supported by the CYC and the CSA.
26. Ministers took note of the upcoming 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers to be held in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, June 22 - 26, 2015. Ministers acknowledged the plans for the 1st Commonwealth Students Congress to be held as part of the Conference and agreed to encourage the participation of national student leaders to attend and contribute to shaping Education policy in the Commonwealth.
27. Ministers also noted the upcoming Commonwealth Youth Forum and 2nd CYC General Assembly as part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta in November 2015, and agreed to encourage the

participation of representative youth leaders to attend and contribute to shaping policy in the Commonwealth.

### **Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship**

28. Ministers noted the establishment of the youth-led Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs - Caribbean and Canada (CAYE-C&C), and agreed to provide support, noting that such a network would help lift economic growth and youth employment in member countries. Ministers further agreed to continue to strengthen and support youth entrepreneurship by facilitating easier access to technology and finance for young people, particularly those unable to furnish collateral.
29. Ministers noted the emergence of a Policy Guide on Youth Entrepreneurship, developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and committed to develop, and where necessary refine, national/regional youth entrepreneurship strategies in collaboration with the Commonwealth and other regional partners, including the CAYE-C&C.
30. Ministers emphasised the need to promote the integration of entrepreneurship education and training in school and university curricula.
31. Ministers resolved to leverage the Commonwealth network and other development partners to ensure entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for young people in the knowledge economy and in the emerging sectors of the creative industries and sports.

### **Youth Work Professionalisation**

32. Ministers reinforced their commitment to youth work as an essential component of the enabling environment that underpins effective youth development. Ministers also committed to implementing the mandate by the Commonwealth Heads of Government to enhance the professionalisation of youth work and the recognition of youth workers at the national level, through mechanisms such as Commonwealth Youth Work Week and the Commonwealth Youth Worker Awards.
33. Ministers noted the importance of education and training for youth workers and agreed to facilitate and support youth work education across the Commonwealth, including engagement with the emerging Commonwealth Consortium for a bachelor's degree in youth development work, and the possibility of the development of a post-graduate degree. They further noted that the Commonwealth Competency Standards for youth development work should act as a guide for the capacity building of workers. Ministers also agreed that it is vital to ensure that youth development officers have a grounding in grassroots youth development work and bring a genuine understanding and passion for all young people's advancement to their work.

34. Ministers commended the contributions of the regional finalists of the Commonwealth Youth Worker Awards, in particular the challenges that they and other youth workers in the region face, and agreed to better support the contribution of youth work professionals.

### **Commonwealth Engagement**

35. Ministers recommended for the consideration of the Commonwealth Secretariat the establishment of an on-line portal to facilitate the sharing of best practice in youth development among Commonwealth member states in the Caribbean and beyond.
36. Ministers agreed that there is an urgent need for continued technical support from the Commonwealth, after the implementation of a new operating model for the Commonwealth Youth Programme. In particular, such support is required to define and build an ideal ecosystem for youth development, which would allow for the facilitation of access, opportunity, and funding to youth departments, youth/civic organizations and other recognized youth networks.
37. Ministers noted the urgency of appointing a CYP Regional Representative for the Caribbean region and requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to take the necessary action to expedite this matter. Ministers noted with appreciation the offer from the Government of Barbados to host the CYP Regional Representative, in addition to the offer from the Government of Guyana.

### **Closing**

38. Youth delegates expressed their appreciation to the Ministers of the Commonwealth Caribbean Region for their participatory approach and genuine partnership, and noted that they look forward to a continuance of this inclusive and mutually beneficial relationship and the implementation of the agreements made.
39. Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Government and the people of the Antigua and Barbuda for their hospitality in hosting the CR-CYMM, and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Youth Council and the Caribbean Regional Youth Council for the organisation of the event.

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## Asia

28-30 July 2015

### Communiqué

#### Asia Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, New Delhi, India

##### *‘Youth Participation at the heart of sustainable development’*

1. The Asia Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (AsR-CYMM) was held in New Delhi, India on 28-30 July 2015. The meeting was officially opened by Hon Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India.
2. Delegates to the meeting expressed their sincere condolences to the Government and people of India on the passing away of Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India.
3. All eight member countries from the Commonwealth Asia region attended the AsR-CYMM, of which five were led at the Ministerial level. Delegates included Ministers, senior government officials and youth representatives, as well as youth development stakeholders and experts.
4. The timing of the AsR-CYMM, occurring just two months before world leaders finalise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015-2030 at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), gave delegates the opportunity to deliberate national youth development priorities in that context.
5. In recognition of the important contribution of young people as partners in regional and national development, delegates considered recommendations submitted by the Youth Leaders Forum of the AsR-CYMM, particularly on decent employment, entrepreneurship and skills development, professionalising youth work, peace building, strengthening national youth participation structures, and developing and implementing National Youth Policies.

#### Young People in National and Global Development Agendas

5. Youth ministers agreed strategies/key actions to ensure youth empowerment and development priorities are included in national and regional development frameworks, especially in light of the new SDGs.
6. Ministers reinforced their commitment to the resolutions agreed at 8CYMM in 2013, and resolved to take further practical action, especially in the area of youth policy design and implementation, strengthening youth participation mechanisms, and youth employment and skills development and entrepreneurship.

7. Ministers agreed to champion a youth focus in their countries in programming and interventions at national and regional level to achieve the goals of the SDG targets and indicators.
8. Ministers also supported the call by youth leaders for a youth-focussed monitoring mechanism for the SDGs, including the disaggregation of data, and analysis using the Commonwealth Youth Development Index.
9. Ministers agreed to advocate for adequate financing for youth development at sub-national, national and regional levels.

### **Youth Employment, Skills Development and Entrepreneurship**

10. Ministers reiterated that economic empowerment and entrepreneurship are critical for growth and as a solution to unemployment.
11. Ministers commended the progress made by the Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs - Asia (CAYE-A), and agreed to provide further support, noting that such a network helps lift economic growth and youth employment in member countries. Ministers further agreed to continue to strengthen and support youth entrepreneurship by facilitating easier access to technology and finance for young people, particularly those unable to furnish collateral, and simplifying the regulatory environment for youth.
12. Ministers noted the emergence of a Policy Guide on Youth Entrepreneurship, developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and committed to develop, and where necessary refine, national/regional youth entrepreneurship strategies in collaboration with the Commonwealth and other regional partners, including the CAYE-Asia.
13. Ministers resolved to work with the Commonwealth and other development partners to ensure entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for young people in new and emerging economies.
14. Ministers agreed to strengthen skills training education relevant to the existing and future needs of labour markets, including partnerships with industry, and utilisation of existing education and training infrastructures, to enhance employability of young people and economic development.
15. Ministers noted the introduction of World Youth Skills Day and its take up in member countries.
16. Ministers agreed to facilitate the formation of a virtual regional network between ministries to identify and share good practices in skills development and entrepreneurship programming with the support of the Commonwealth.
17. Ministers noted that life skills are just as important as technical skills, in particular in the context of preparing for an unknown economic future. They

also noted the importance of identifying different but equally valuable educational pathways to meet young people's diverse needs and aspirations.

### **Youth Participation in Governance**

18. Ministers committed to enhancing youth participation in decision-making, as well as youth participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of government programmes, by taking steps to include targets for youth representation, through legitimate structures, in relevant governance and decision-making structures at national, regional and international levels.
19. Ministers agreed to establish/strengthen national youth councils (NYCs) or other national youth-led bodies in their countries, acknowledging the potential role and contribution of NYCs to sustainable development, peace and democracy. Ministers requested the Commonwealth's assistance in developing guidance on principles and structures of successful youth council models.
20. Ministers commended the progress of the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) and Commonwealth Students' Association (CSA) in engaging and uniting youth and student organisations in the Commonwealth. They also noted the need to strengthen communication and coordination mechanisms between youth networks, youth ministries and the Commonwealth.
21. Ministers noted the resource constraints faced by youth-led and youth-serving organisations, especially National Youth Councils and student associations, and agreed to provide greater support for building their capacity through legislation, financial assistance and/or other measures.
22. Ministers recognised the importance of participation by representative youth leaders at key regional and international meetings such as the upcoming Commonwealth Youth Forum and 2nd CYC General Assembly as part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta in November 21-25 2015, and agreed to encourage and support them to attend and contribute to shaping policy through an inclusive and transparent process.
23. Ministers commended the participating youth leaders on the relevance of their inputs to the AsR-CYMM, noting that it is critical for young people to be involved in development policies, strategies and implementation to ensure sustainability and relevance to young people.
24. Youth delegates expressed their deep appreciation for the financial and in-kind contributions from the Governments of Pakistan and Sri Lanka in support of the Commonwealth Youth Council.

### **National Youth Policy Frameworks and Action Plans**

25. Ministers shared national experiences of the processes, challenges and opportunities for the design and implementation of national youth policies, and ensuring that national youth policies are inclusive of, and relevant to, young people's needs and capabilities. Ministers commended the work

presented by a number of countries on evidence-based, youth-inclusive, comprehensive processes followed for National Youth Policy reviews. Ministers agreed to work together to strengthen national youth policy frameworks and action plans across the region, and to prioritise action and resources to ensure meaningful implementation.

26. Ministers noted the challenges of an increasingly complex environment of regional and global youth policy frameworks, and the expiry of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2007-2015). Ministers endorsed the Commonwealth's proposal to harmonise the multiple policy frameworks, as part of a broader Commonwealth youth policy environment, and agreed to collaborate in the process.
27. Ministers committed to advocate for adequate resourcing and prioritisation for youth development across all relevant ministries, to ensure they are able to execute their vital mandates, in alignment with best practice, approved national policy and legislative frameworks. Ministers also acknowledged the importance of having competent young people working within ministries to provide youth perspectives on policy and programme design, and contribute to implementation.
28. Ministers agreed that policy documents must be developed through a multi-sectoral development process to ensure that wide relevance and ownership, and transcend political regimes. Further, policy and programmes must be cohesive and evidence based, and should be supported by mandatory monitoring and evaluative components. Ministers agreed that data is critical to the design and monitoring of policies and programming, and should be validated, regularly updated, and shared.
29. Ministers acknowledged the importance of a mainstreaming approach to youth policy design and implementation and agreed to incorporate youth mainstreaming principles and strategies in national youth policy processes. Ministers resolved to strengthen efforts to implement, monitor and evaluate youth policies, to track progress in youth development with the help of regular reporting and tools such as the Commonwealth Youth Development Index, and to aim for a review of National Youth Policies every five years.
30. Ministers noted the importance of recognising emerging topics in youth policies, such as the increasing agency of young people to address their own issues, and the advent of social media, which has the potential to be a force for liberty and socialisation if used positively, but conversely a threat if used for activities such as cyberbullying.

### **Professionalising Youth Work**

31. Ministers reinforced their commitment to youth work as an essential component of the enabling environment that underpins effective youth development. Ministers also committed to continue implementing the mandate by the Commonwealth Heads of Government to enhance the

competencies and professionalism of youth work and the recognition of youth work in youth policy, and where possible, in legislation.

32. Ministers reconfirmed the importance of education and training for youth workers and agreed to facilitate and support youth work education across the Commonwealth, including engagement with the emerging Commonwealth Consortium for a bachelor's degree in youth development work, and the 2016 Commonwealth Youth Work Conference. They further noted that the Commonwealth Competency Standards for Youth Development Work should act as a guide for the capacity building and evaluation of youth workers.
33. Ministers agreed to collaborate on the celebration of Commonwealth Youth Work Week and encourage applications for the annual Commonwealth Youth Worker awards.
34. Ministers commended the work of the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) in India, and agreed to explore the possibilities for establishing or strengthening youth development focused institutions and think tanks in their own countries to provide an academic core for youth development research and practice.
35. Ministers discussed the issue of setting up systematic field mechanisms for the empowerment, non-formal education and care of young people, and agreed to work towards the identification and implementation of good models of youth work practice such as that outlined in the Commonwealth's Co-Creating Youth Spaces model.
36. Ministers commended the contributions of the regional finalists of the Commonwealth Youth Worker Awards, in particular the challenges that they and other youth workers in the region face, and agreed to better support the contribution of youth work professionals.

### **Youth and Peaceful Societies**

37. Ministers reflected on the promotion of peace, harmony and social cohesion, as a counter to conflict and extremism, and a force for social and economic development.
38. Ministers committed to taking a collective, regional approach to peace building, and resolution of conflicts and disputes, noting that young people and youth ministers can play a leadership role in promoting friendship, understanding and unity, in the Asia region and as a global exemplar.
39. Ministers endorsed the principles outlined in the Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peace-building and committed to using the principles where relevant to guide programme design and delivery in dealing with crime and violence.
40. Ministers reiterated the importance of social values and values based education. They also agreed to explore mechanisms for engagement

between young people of diverse backgrounds, and inter-generational and intercultural dialogue and understanding.

### **Commonwealth Engagement**

41. Ministers commended the contribution of the Commonwealth to furthering youth development policy and practice in the Asia Region, and agreed that there is a strong need for continued technical support after the implementation of the new operating model for the Commonwealth Youth Programme.

### **Closing**

42. Ministers requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to assist and follow up on the implementation of the resolutions contained in this communique on an annual basis.
43. Youth delegates expressed their appreciation to the Ministers of the Commonwealth Asia Region for their participatory approach and genuine partnership, and noted that they look forward to a continuation of this inclusive and mutually beneficial relationship and the implementation of the agreements made.
44. Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Government and the people of India for their hospitality in hosting the AsR-CYMM, and the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Youth Council for organising the event, and commended the interactive and productive format.

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## Pacific

1-3 September 2015

### Communiqué

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Pacific Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, Apia, Samoa

##### *‘Youth as Partners in Sustainable Small Island Development’*

1. The first Pacific Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (PR-CYMM) was held in Apia, Samoa on 1-3 September 2015. The meeting was officially opened by the Hon. Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa, chaired by the Hon. Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua, Minister for Women, Community and Social Development, Government of Samoa
2. Nine member countries and one territory from the Commonwealth Pacific region attended the PR-CYMM, of which seven were led at the Ministerial level. Delegates included Ministers, senior government officials and youth representatives, as well as youth development stakeholders and experts.
3. The timing of the PR-CYMM, occurring just three weeks before world leaders finalise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015-2030 at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), gave delegates the opportunity to deliberate national youth development priorities in that context.
4. In recognition of the important contribution of young people as partners in regional and national development, delegates considered recommendations submitted by the Youth Leaders Forum of the PR-CYMM, particularly on youth employment and entrepreneurship, professionalising youth work, climate change, strengthening national youth participation structures, and developing and implementing National Youth Policies.

#### **Young People in National and Global Development Agendas**

5. Youth ministers agreed strategies/key actions to ensure youth empowerment and development priorities are included in national and regional development frameworks, especially in light of the new SDGs.
6. Ministers reinforced their commitment to the resolutions agreed at 8CYMM in 2013 and the UN SIDS Conference Samoa Pathways in 2014 (which incorporates recommendations from the SIDS TALAVOU Youth Forum declaration), and resolved to take further practical action, especially in the areas of youth policy design and implementation, strengthening youth participation mechanisms, and youth employment and entrepreneurship.
7. Ministers agreed to champion a youth focus in their countries in programming and interventions at national and regional level to achieve the goals of the Pacific Youth Development Framework and the SDG targets.

8. Ministers supported the call by youth leaders for a youth-focused, evidence-based monitoring mechanism for the Pacific Youth Development Framework and the SDGs, including the disaggregation of data and standardising of indicators, and analysis using tools such as the Commonwealth Youth Development Index.
9. Ministers agreed to advocate for adequate financial and technical resources and partnerships for youth development at national, regional and international levels.

#### **Youth Participation- Young People as Partners in National Development**

10. Ministers noted the resource constraints faced by youth-led and youth-serving organisations, especially National Youth Councils, student associations and the Pacific Youth Council, and agreed to provide greater support for building their capacity through legislation, financial assistance and/or other measures, and to facilitate access to decision makers.
11. Ministers agreed greater support for the Pacific Youth Council and other Regional Youth Platforms and agreed to assist the young people by exploring possible sources of technical and financial support, and access to decision-makers.
12. Ministers agreed to establish/strengthen national youth councils (NYCs), acknowledging the role and contribution of NYCs to sustainable development, youth engagement and community cohesion. Ministers requested the Commonwealth's assistance in developing guidance on principles and structures of successful youth council models.
13. Ministers commended the progress of the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) and Commonwealth Students' Association (CSA) in engaging and uniting youth and student organisations in the Commonwealth. They also noted the need to strengthen communication and coordination mechanisms between youth networks, youth ministries and the Commonwealth.
14. Ministers noted the upcoming Commonwealth Youth Forum and 2nd CYC General Assembly as part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta in November 21-25 2015, and agreed to encourage and support the participation of representative youth leaders to attend and contribute to shaping policy in the Commonwealth.
15. Ministers commended the participating youth leaders on the relevance of their inputs to the PR-CYMM, noting that it is critical for young people to be involved in development policies, strategies and implementation to ensure sustainability and relevance to young people.

#### **Youth and Climate Change**

16. Ministers acknowledged that young people are at the frontlines of climate change and already affected by its impact in their daily life; and should be included in decision making and action on climate change issues.

17. Ministers agreed to provide greater support to ensure that young people are empowered and equipped with the necessary information and skills to act as equal partners in the global and regional response to climate change. Such support should include allocation of resources to youth-led action, integration of accessible climate change education in school curricula, and advocacy for the implementation of existing national climate change related policies and commitments.
18. Ministers commended the report from the Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network Expert Group Meeting, and also the South-South Youth Sub Regional Initiative on Climate Change Conference, and committed to using the recommendations where relevant in UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) position planning, and to guide policy and programme design and delivery in dealing with youth and climate change.
19. Ministers recognised that young people are climate change action champions and delivering significant initiatives, and agreed to promote and increase platforms for these initiatives to be shared across the Pacific region.
20. Ministers agreed to advocate for inclusion of young climate change experts in national negotiation teams attending key international climate change negotiations, including to COP21 in December 2015.
21. Ministers expressed support and solidarity for countries in the region currently experiencing adverse effects of climate change related disasters, and commended the role that young people are playing in post disaster recovery and rebuilding.

### **Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship**

22. Ministers reiterated that youth economic empowerment, entrepreneurship and innovative job creation are critical for economic growth and as a solution to unemployment. This should be delivered through an integrated mechanism, bringing together all relevant sectors and stakeholders.
23. Ministers agreed to foster a culture of youth entrepreneurship by:
  - I. Including entrepreneurship skills curricula in both formal and non-formal education and training institutions;
  - II. Creating national and regional networks using the Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (CAYE) model; and
  - III. Facilitation of youth-specific segments in regional trade shows and entrepreneurship competitions.
24. Ministers noted the emergence of a Policy Guide on Youth Entrepreneurship, developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and committed to develop, and where necessary refine, national/regional youth

entrepreneurship strategies in collaboration with the Commonwealth and other regional partners.

25. Ministers resolved to work with the Commonwealth, young people, and other development partners to explore entrepreneurship, employment and training opportunities for young people in new and emerging economies, especially the blue and green economies.
26. Ministers committed to encourage and strengthen labour mobility schemes in the Pacific, including seasonal worker schemes in Australia and New Zealand.
27. Ministers noted the critical importance of sound ICT infrastructure, policy and programming to expand education and employment opportunities, and agreed to advocate for increased prioritisation and investment.

### **National Youth Policy Frameworks and Action Plans**

28. Ministers noted the importance of national youth policies, and shared national experiences of the challenges and opportunities of development and implementation of national youth policies. Ministers agreed to work together to strengthen national youth policy frameworks and action plans across the region, ensuring that national youth policies are inclusive of, and relevant to, young people's needs and capabilities. They also agreed to prioritise action and resources to ensure meaningful implementation.
29. Ministers noted the challenges of an increasingly complex environment of regional and global youth policy frameworks, and the expiry of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2007-2015). Ministers endorsed the Commonwealth's work to harmonise the multiple regional and global policy frameworks, as part of a broader Commonwealth youth policy environment, and agreed to provide input to the process.
30. Ministers noted the need to ensure the regional agenda for youth development programming is cohesive, and programmatic objectives are agreed through collective engagement. Ministers noted the progress made in the development and implementation of the Pacific Youth Development Framework, a regional effort aimed at managing a coordinated approach to youth-centred development in the Pacific, and agreed to provide greater support to strengthen and implement the Framework.
31. Ministers committed to advocate for adequate resourcing and prioritisation for Ministries responsible for youth development to ensure they are able to execute their vital mandates, in alignment with best practice, approved national policy and legislative frameworks. Ministers also agreed to employ the full weight of their offices to coordinate the commitment and support of Heads of Government, Ministers of Finance, and other relevant Ministers, to prioritise and promote youth development

32. Ministers acknowledged the importance of a mainstreaming approach to youth policy design and implementation and agreed to incorporate youth mainstreaming principles and strategies in national youth policy processes.
33. Ministers recognised sport for development and peace as a proven strategy for the delivery of the SDGs and PYDF priority areas, and to develop skills for youth contribution and meaningful participation.
34. Ministers resolved to strengthen efforts to implement, monitor and evaluate youth policies, and to track progress in youth development with the help of regular reporting and tools such as the Commonwealth Youth Development Index.

### **Professionalising Youth Work**

35. Ministers reinforced their commitment to youth work as an essential component of the enabling environment that underpins effective youth development. Ministers also committed to implementing the mandate by the Commonwealth Heads of Government to enhance the professionalisation of youth work and the recognition of youth work in youth policy, and where possible, in legislation.
36. Ministers noted the importance of education and training for youth workers and agreed to facilitate and support youth work education in the Pacific region, including engagement with the emerging Commonwealth Consortium for a bachelor's degree in youth development work, and the 2016 Commonwealth Youth Work Conference.
37. Ministers agreed to collaborate in the celebration of Commonwealth Youth Work Week and encourage applications for the annual Commonwealth Youth Worker awards.
38. Ministers requested Commonwealth support in establishing national youth work accreditation and qualifications frameworks.

### **Partnerships**

39. Ministers encouraged continued collaboration and strong partnerships across the region by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Pacific Youth Council, and other regional and international partner organisations, to ensure strong development outcomes for young people.

### **Commonwealth Engagement**

40. Ministers agreed that there is a strong need for continued technical support from the Commonwealth, after the implementation of the new operating model for the Commonwealth Youth Programme.
41. Ministers agreed to join with the other Commonwealth regions to provide annual progress reports on CYMM resolutions.

## **Closing**

Youth delegates expressed their appreciation to the Ministers of the Commonwealth Pacific Region for their participatory approach and genuine partnership, and noted that they look forward to a continuation of this inclusive and mutually beneficial relationship and the implementation of the agreements made.

Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Government and the people of Samoa for their hospitality in hosting the PR-CYMM, and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Youth Council and Samoa National Youth Council for organising the event.

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