

Communiqué

The 2nd Stakeholder Forum of the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting
30 July - 1 August 2017 | Kampala, Uganda

‘Resourcing And Financing Youth Development; Empowering Young People.’

1. The 2nd Stakeholder Forum of the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (9CYMM) was held at the Commonwealth Munyonyo Speke Resort in Kampala, Uganda from the 31st July to the 1st of August 2017. The meeting was officially opened by the Secretary General RT Hon Patricia Scotland.
2. Delegations totaled over two hundred participants representing civil society, the academic community, ministers, senior government officials, international development agencies, practitioners and stakeholders, experts and activists working with young people from Commonwealth countries from the Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Pacific, and European regions.

Youth Development Principles

3. The Forum acknowledged young people as strategic partners in development and a powerful force for democracy, rule of law, social cohesion, community empowerment, social transformation, economic growth, peace and security, and sustainable development.
4. The Forum expressed support for the concept of Positive Youth Development (PYD) and re-affirmed the efficacy of rights-based, strengths-based and evidenced-based approaches to young people’s development.

Gender Equity and Mainstreaming

5. Delegates agreed that notwithstanding the efforts of the Commonwealth Secretariat, member countries and other development stakeholders in promoting gender equity and gender mainstreaming, it remains a relatively under represented issue in the youth development sector. The delegates further agreed that this situation negatively impacts young people's economic, social, political and technological wellbeing.
6. The Forum mandated that youth Policies and programmes should be designed utilizing a gender sensitive and mainstreaming approach.
7. Working with young people is a critical component of a flourishing and inclusive youth development system. The professionalisation of young workers supports their crucial role in empowering and nurturing young people to participate as strategic partners in development. The Forum was of the view that the youth work profession should be recognised and supported throughout the Commonwealth.
8. Radicalisation and the associated risks of young people are a global challenge that must be addressed. However, this is the symptom of a problem rather than the problem itself. Mass movements of young people (migrants, refugees, asylums seekers), marginalised young women, and young people displaying what is seen as disruptive and disillusioned behaviours must be given the voice, space and opportunities to collaboratively create the potential solutions. We must separate their perceived behaviour from who they are.

Financing and resourcing young people's development

9. The Forum reiterated the importance of appropriate investment in young people's development. In this regard, the building and strengthening of public-private partnerships and the development of other forms of sources or methods of financing be made an urgent priority.

10. The Forum re-emphasized the significance of youth mainstreaming in facilitating holistic development planning and in resourcing and financing of young people's development with a very strong accountability and monitoring framework.
11. The Forum encouraged that Public-Private Partnerships bring young people, especially young women, to the centre of negotiating for development for various projects.
12. The Forum encouraged the creation of young people's development funds wherever possible including considering young people's banks and accessing and using existing arrangements such as lotteries and betting houses.
13. The Forum supported the strengthening of social entrepreneurship so as young people develop community-based projects that would enhance the financing and development of young people's work.
14. The Forum encouraged the utilization of indigenous knowledge systems and interventions such as communal money banks as creative possibilities to harness financing for young people's development

Policy and Processes for Young People's development

15. The Forum encouraged having a policy environment, which is responsive, flexible, and enabling to assist in empowering young people to actively engage society's development and enhancement in a meaningful way.
16. The Forum suggested the redesigning of a legal framework towards business registration, patent rights and licensing of the young people's financing and resourcing to facilitate development.
17. The Forum encouraged the forming and improving of an independent, result-oriented, youth-inclusive structure that seeks to establish accountability, professionalism and regulation of the youth sector.

18. The Forum reiterated the consideration of tax breaks for young people's businesses so as to facilitate for their development and contribution to the broader economy of countries.
19. The Forum suggested the establishment of an independent monitoring and evaluation framework for young people-related businesses, projects, activities and financing.
20. The Forum re-emphasised the need to establish a safe, responsive and flexible platform - established and managed by the young people themselves - for young people to participate in policy development, consultation and dissemination so as to enable them to make informed decisions on theirs and other young people's lives.
21. The Forum encouraged the introduction of incentives for businesses that promote young people's development, capacity enhancement and financing for young people including recognition of financial mechanisms where young people are financially responsible such as Young People's Banks.
22. The Forum suggested the facilitation of gender equity and equality for the mainstreaming of young people's policies with the understanding that gender issues go beyond any binary economic, sexual, political and social realities.
23. The Forum encouraged the move to a practical, rather than theoretical, education system, putting more emphasis on skilling young people appropriately in innovation and entrepreneurship.

Age-based and gender equality and equity

24. The Forum suggested the collection of quality, timely and relevant data disaggregated and disseminated by age and sex so that research and evaluation of young people and young women can provide an accurate picture.
25. The Forum suggested the utilisation of indigenous knowledge systems that are familiar and relevant to young people,

especially young women and vulnerable youth, to ensure that the policies and programmes can be successfully developed, implemented and sustained.

26. The Forum advocated for young women and girls need to access formal financial systems and education to gain financial independence that will facilitate for the furthering of their economic rights and the financing of young people's development agenda.

27. The Forum endorsed the creation and facilitation of safe spaces to ensure the safety and security of young people in their personal, private and public spaces. This means young women and girls should be free from sexual and domestic violence so as to facilitate for their full participation as equal leaders in society broadly. This takes the education of men and women, girls and boys on social cohesion and human rights.

Capacity Development

28. The Forum recommended investment in the capacity of actors and agents in the young people's development system through the commitment of resources to education, training and workforce development.

29. The Forum encouraged governments to develop relationships with educational institutions to create accessible pathways to actors in young people's development across government institutions and agencies. This may be promoted through the provision of scholarships to young workers to enhance the national human resource capacity.

30. The Forum encouraged governments to work alongside educational institutions to create responsive qualifications with practical and entrepreneurial outcomes that are agile to changing needs in the labour market.

31. The Forum acknowledged the key role of government as a partner in a learning youth development system. It observed that governments investing in research and evidence to inform decision-making would achieve this.

32. The Forum recommended that governments commit resources to building capacity across the youth development sector to engage in evidence-based practice, planning and evaluation.
33. The Forum encouraged governments to provide practical support to organisations to develop their capacity to design, implement and evaluate programmes and services, in partnership with young people as expert participants.
34. The Forum encouraged governments to support professionalization and include professional young workers in consultation and decision-making on policy.
35. The Forum recommended that governments commit resources to young people's work, as a key vehicle to build the associated capabilities of volunteerism, mentorship and coaching.
36. The Forum encouraged governments to strengthen collaborative approaches to working with young people, with young workers and with civil society.
37. The Forum recommended that ministers enhance their relationship with the international young people's work community through the newly established Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers Association (CAYWA).

Peace and Security

38. The Forum recommended that young people be given the voice, space and opportunity to work collaboratively with government departments and officials (local, regional, national and international) to create restorative legislation, policy and education programmes which support the development and delivery of appropriate practices and support systems to address the root causes of violence and unrest in their communities.
39. The Forum recognised that many young people are already doing great work in their communities, in all aspects and

localities. Through formal recognition of young people as peace builders and support for the already existing young people-led work, more will be achieved.

40. The Forum encouraged that further investment be made into socially cohesive programmes that take an assets-based approach, rather than programmes focusing on young people's deficits alone. Social cohesion will only be achieved when programmes focus on similarities and opportunities for celebrating our positive and constructive differences. In order to create that environment, it is important to provide suitable and appropriate policy, legislation and education at all levels of society, which in turn support the development and delivery of effective practices and support systems.

41. The Forum noted that engagement and dialogue must be used to engender the environment that promotes dignity, respect, and agency amongst all young people. The assets-based model must be supported by asset-based language in policy, legislation and education allows for this to occur.

Conclusion

42. The delegates of young people expressed their appreciation to the Ministers of the Commonwealth 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 recommendations made to the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting.