

***“Young People at the Centre of Sustainable and Inclusive Development”***  
**Magapura Commitment to Young People**  
**by Commonwealth Heads of Government**

We, the Commonwealth Heads of Government, recognise the vital role that young people can and must play at the centre of sustainable and inclusive development. Investing in young people today is the foundation for a prosperous and equitable tomorrow. We commit unequivocally to investing in young people and placing them at the centre of sustainable and inclusive development, thus harnessing their creativity, leadership and social capital towards the progress and resilience of Commonwealth countries, and a more democratic and prosperous Commonwealth.

1. We therefore aim to realise the transformational potential of **young people** by ensuring that our countries’ national policies, plans and programming have a clear priority in favour of youth, with goals which focus on young people’s concerns and aspirations, and which enable them to contribute meaningfully to national development.
2. We acknowledge that many young people face **grave challenges and uncertainties**, including unemployment and underemployment; lack of access to quality education; sexual violence in armed conflict and violence, especially against young women; the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS; concerns over systemic corruption, poor governance and human rights violations; limited access to technology; environmental degradation and climate change; inequity; and marginalisation and discrimination.
3. We also recognise that with over 60 percent of its population aged under 30, the Commonwealth is well placed to reap a **demographic dividend**, and that investment in young people an essential element for national development strategies.
4. The **post-2015 development agenda** is crucial to young people, who will be its heirs, custodians and champions. We acknowledge the call of Commonwealth Youth Ministers and Youth Leaders for a specific, stand-alone goal on youth empowerment and participation, and youth-specific indicators on all relevant goals. We also acknowledge the recommendations from Commonwealth Education Ministers on education targets for the post-2015 framework.
5. We welcome the recently launched **Commonwealth Youth Development Index**, and its capacity to identify needs, measure progress achieved and assist Commonwealth states in shaping sustainable evidence-based youth development policies. We support national and international efforts to improve collection of youth-specific data to ensure a clear picture of young people’s development.
6. We acknowledge the importance of **youth voice and youth-led development initiatives** to promote young people’s key role at the centre of sustainable and inclusive development. Accordingly, we welcome the establishment of the **Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC)**. We recognise the CYC’s autonomous, youth-led status, and the value of its role as a recognised representative body within and beyond the Commonwealth. We appreciate the generous offers made to ensure that the CYC is resourced over the next two years to establish strong foundations, and to take forward its youth-led development agenda. In this context, we express our deepest appreciation for and welcome the Government of Sri Lanka’s offer to host

the Secretariat of the CYC. We look forward to strong partnerships between the CYC, member governments, youth and relevant Commonwealth institutions. We receive with appreciation the recommendations of the inaugural CYC Executive representing the 9<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Youth Forum. We also welcome the hosting of the World Conference on Youth by the Government of Sri Lanka in May 2014, particularly focussed on the participation and involvement of young people in achieving internationally agreed development goals.

7. We reaffirm the importance of **job creation and youth enterprise** for inclusive economic growth, which is vital to national prosperity and social cohesion, and commit to enhancing and investing in relevant policies, regulations and programming. We urge business leaders to prioritise opportunities for young people, and support efforts to address skills training to fit industry needs, especially through technical and vocational education and training (TVET). We commend the Commonwealth Asia Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (CAAYE), and encourage replication of the model to build young entrepreneurs' networks in all regions of the Commonwealth. We welcome the Government of Sri Lanka's proposal to the United Nations to declare an "International Skills Day" to promote and recognise youth skills development.
8. We recognize the critical importance to young people of access to **new technologies and information**, including connectivity through social media and ICT curriculum in schools, to effectively communicate and mobilise paid employment opportunities, engage in development initiatives, and build higher expectations of themselves and their communities. We note that ICT can be an effective instrument for rural and small state empowerment, making isolated communities a meaningful stakeholder in the global community.
9. We recognise the significance of **healthy young people** to national development, and note with concern the disproportionately high rates of HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases in many Commonwealth countries. We recognise the value of increasing investments in health care for young people, including enhancement of health education, prioritising the areas of HIV/AIDS, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and sexual and reproductive health.
10. We are deeply concerned at the vulnerability of our young people to involvement in crime and to the illicit use of narcotic drugs. We resolve to take concerted action to protect them from such dangers and harness their energies in constructive ways.
11. We acknowledge the important contribution that sport and physical activity can make to improving well-being and healthy lifestyles, and as a tool for development and peace promoting education, equality, inclusion and social cohesion. We welcome the efforts by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Games Federation to advance **Sport for Development and Peace**. We look forward to the 20<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Games to be held in Glasgow in 2014, and urge stakeholders to intensify efforts to use the Games as an instrument for development and peace.
12. We underscore the importance of a focus on **vulnerable groups** of young people, particularly the differently abled, and those who live below the poverty line, in disaster-prone environments, or conflict and post-conflict situations. We also reiterate the Commonwealth's commitment to promoting mutual respect and

understanding, and recognise the leadership potential of young people of different religions and ethnicities in building peaceful and inclusive societies.

13. We commend the significant contribution made to youth development and empowerment by professional youth development workers across all sectors. We acknowledge the Commonwealth Secretariat's ongoing commitment to **youth work education and professionalisation**, and the strong commitment demonstrated by the Government of South Africa in hosting the inaugural *Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work Education and Training* earlier this year.
14. We also, on its 40th Anniversary, reaffirm our commitment to the **Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP)** as a longstanding and unique instrument for promoting youth empowerment and development in the Commonwealth. We note the renewal strategy to position the CYP for contemporary and effective programming into the future, and to deliver thought leadership that contributes unique ideas to Commonwealth and global youth development. We recognise that funding constraints are limiting the CYP's capacity to deliver such initiatives in support of Commonwealth youth priorities and needs. We reiterate our earlier decision that a new assessed contributions formula should be developed, which should now be finalised promptly in order to increase and consolidate sustainable support for the CYP, and that countries should honour their financial commitments. We also reaffirm our commitment to other pan-Commonwealth youth development initiatives, including the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan and other youth exchange programmes.
15. We recognise the valuable role of **civil society**, especially youth-focused and youth-led organisations and networks, and the contribution of the **private sector** for youth development. We therefore call for increased **coherence, cross-sector partnerships and collective action** for the development, empowerment and inclusion of young people.

15 November 2013