

4th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting

Honiara, Solomon Islands

24-26 May 2000

Communique

Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 24-26 May 2000

1. Commonwealth Youth Ministers met in Honiara, Solomon Islands from 24-26 May 2000. Thirty-nine countries, of which 16 were represented by Ministers, participated in the Meeting. Representatives of the Commonwealth Foundation, UNESCO, UN- ESCAP, CARICOM, the Peace Corps and the University of the South Pacific participated as observers. The Meeting was opened by the Hon Bartholomew Ulufa'alu, Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands and chaired by the Hon Hilda Kari, Minister for Women, Youth and Sports.
2. Ministers welcomed the occasion of their Meeting as providing an opportunity for a valuable exchange of national experiences in the development of young people and reaffirmed their continued commitment to the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP). They reviewed the implementation of the work programme agreed at their last meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1998, considered the Report of the Ministerial Review Group (MRG), discussed a work plan for the CYP to the year 2003 and noted the Reports of the Committee of Management (CoM).

CYP Progress Reports

3. Ministers commended the achievements under the Work Plan as set out in the Secretary-General's Report.
4. They noted the consistent progress and work undertaken by the CYP in implementing the mandates of the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM) 1998 in the three strategic areas of Human Resource Development, National Youth Policy and Youth Empowerment. They commended those governments that had achieved the target of formulating their National Youth Policies by 2000.

Human Resource Development

5. They noted the considerable achievements in the field of Human Resource Development and progress in extending access to the Diploma in Youth and Development studies through supported distance education. Ministers urged continued work to consolidate the pilot cycle, maintain the high levels of quality assurance and increase the reach of the Diploma and its access course, the CYP Certificate. They further recommended the Diploma be strengthened, within available resources, by additional modules in the area of Youth Development through Sports leadership, and through addressing emergent and region – specific issues. Training of grassroots youth leaders could be facilitated by adapting modules for non-formal education settings.

Youth Caucus

6. Ministers welcomed the report of the Youth Caucus and the significant contribution it had made to the governance process and the MRG. The valuable work of the Youth Caucus in

advocating the Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) and engaging the energies of youth networks across the Commonwealth was acknowledged. CYP's image was greatly enhanced by the ambassadorial work of the Caucus.

7. Ministers noted the report of the Commonwealth Youth Forum. They endorsed the recommendation that youth representatives should be selected where possible from transparent youth structures such as National Youth Councils, Youth Roundtables and Youth Parliaments. They also endorsed the recommendation that these bodies should receive adequate resources and support from their government to enable them to carry out their duties effectively. They also commended the increase in support and resources for the work of the Youth Forum and Youth Caucus from the CYP. They urged the CYP to work on strengthening the capacity of National Youth Councils and fora.

The Way Forward

8. Ministers commended the MRG Report on the CYP undertaken in order to prepare it for the challenges of the new Millennium.
9. They endorsed the Report of the MRG and commended the Secretariat for its comprehensive plan, which outlined strategies to implement the recommendations of the MRG, and urged action on it forthwith. The Meeting agreed that the Secretariat should take into consideration issues relating to the cycle, roles and relationships of the governance mechanisms. In particular, Ministers requested that future Commonwealth Youth Minister meetings become fora for discussions on major themes and addressing strategic issues confronting youth.
10. They accepted the independent consultants' review of the management and administration of the CYP and noted the progress in implementing new and improved management and communication practices, utilising information technology to achieve greater cost-effectiveness and efficiency.
11. Ministers agreed that the Memorandum of Understanding establishing the CYP in 1974 and subsequently amended in 1992 required revision to reflect the changes agreed in the governance of the programme. In order to effect this they decided governments be consulted on such amendments.

Implementing the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment

12. Ministers welcomed the continued commitment of member governments to implement of the PAYE. They endorsed the CYP Strategic Plan and Plan of Expenditure 2000-2003. Ministers appreciated the consolidation and deepening of the programme together with the increased regional focus of the CYP Strategic Plan that provided support to their efforts at the national and regional levels. They further emphasised that the CYP should continue to develop the social inclusion of young people. Minister called on Commonwealth governments to include CI reference to international development targets in the implementation of the PAYE.

Priority Issues 2000-2003

Youth Development Index (YDI)

13. Ministers endorsed the proposals to develop a multi-level YDI to assist member governments in evaluation and measurement of national progress in implementing the PAYE. They noted the potential of the YDI as both an advocacy and measurement tool. They recommended that a simple participatory methodology be developed to include active involvement by young people. Ministers requested that the CYP prepare a detailed yet flexible work plan with realistic timeframes and costs, taking into account the advantages of commencing with a staged approach including a small number of pilot projects in individual countries in the first instance.

Economic Enfranchisement

14. Ministers focused on the issue of economic enfranchisement, building on the statements of intent from the Malaysia 1998 meeting. They concluded that the policies and strategies to support youth enterprise development should be encouraged. In particular, businesses and the financial sector should be encouraged to support micro-credit initiatives for young people. Social attitudes and lack of diversity in school curricula that hinder the nurturing of entrepreneurial skills and access to business opportunities for young people should be challenged.
15. Governments were urged to consider steps such as:
- setting up of inter-sectoral committees charged with the promotion of youth businesses;
 - ensuring appropriate entrepreneurial education, necessary budgetary allocations and other resources for developing youth enterprises;
 - disseminating information on best practices in promoting youth businesses and documenting case studies of success stories;
 - mobilising the private sector with appropriate incentives; and
 - collaborating in the promotion of a Commonwealth Youth Business Caucus and Youth Chambers of Commerce.
16. The success of the CYCI was commended and Ministers further recommended the development of a Commonwealth association of CYCI partners.

Youth Participation in the Commonwealth

17. Ministers discussed ways of deepening youth participation in development. Having identified inhibiting factors to such participation, they recommended that:
- effective youth structures be established, taking into account local and cultural factors to facilitate youth participation. Governments should provide adequate resources for promoting youth participation, and should ensure that young people are empowered to express their views even where these are critical of government policies;
 - youth structures should operate in a transparent and accountable manner. They should also facilitate the involvement of youth in development at every level, with, adequate training;
 - a good practice guide to facilitate the active participation of young people should be drawn up by CYP; and
 - CYP and governments should facilitate inter-generational dialogue across all strata of society, including civil society, the private sector and government institutions.

Young People and HIV/AIDS

18. Ministers acknowledged the call from Heads of Government that HIV/AIDS constituted a global emergency. They urged the Commonwealth to assist countries to release resources to

counter the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

19. They strongly recommended that CYP incorporate youth-led responses to HIV/AIDS in Commonwealth-wide programmes where appropriate. CYP should encourage research on new interventions to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS amongst young people. They suggested that awareness programmes, appropriate education including moral, sexual and reproductive health education and family support be key elements in new strategies.

Reports from Collaborating Agencies

20. Ministers received the Report from the Commonwealth Foundation on Citizenship in the New Millennium. They noted the increasingly important role of civil society in strengthening and maintaining democracy required young women and men's full participation. Ministers commended the Report for highlighting the diversity and richness of culture within the Commonwealth family.
21. Ministers noted the Report submitted by the CHOGM Committee on Co-operation through Sport and endorsed, where appropriate, its recommendations. In particular, Ministers emphasised the importance of sport in the life of young people. Ministers recommended that the CYP and governments facilitate the sharing of expertise in using sport as a tool for development.

Commonwealth Youth Service Awards

22. Ministers received the Report of the Assessment Panel that comprised representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Zambia, New Zealand and a representative from the Youth Caucus. The projects which received awards were:
 - Capacity-Building and Youth Training Project- Sierra Leone
The focus of this project was on empowering unskilled and unemployed young people through skills training and enabling them to undertake carpentry, tailoring, catering, home management and bakery for income generation.
 - Canada FreeRide-Canada
This innovative bilingual project was conceived and implemented by a group of young people involved in the promotion of youth mental health and good mental health practices. The need for the project arose out of concerns for a facility, which would provide physical activity, coping mechanisms and skills to enhance positive mental health.
 - Nangadoa Yanquona (KAVA) project - Fiji
This farming project involved 60 members who worked as a group to plant five thousand Kava plants for each of them on their respective pieces of land. With the current market price of this culturally important commodity, each of them is assured of an income when the crop is harvested.
23. Ministers accepted the recommendations of the Assessment Panel that:
 - the criteria for projects to be submitted should be linked to the PAYE;
 - the CYP should document and disseminate the best practices of winning projects across the Commonwealth;
 - greater efforts should be made by CYP to promote the Award Schemes and achieve a higher profile for the positive actions of young people in the Commonwealth; and
 - at the Regional and pan-Commonwealth levels, the Regional Youth Forum and Youth Caucus should be responsible in collaboration with the pan-Commonwealth office and Regional Centres for the selection of the winners.

Message to the Commonwealth High Level Review Group

24. Ministers agreed to submit the attached message to the members of the Commonwealth High Level Review Group established at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Durban in 1999. They further agreed that the same message be sent to the next CHOGM.

Appreciation

25. Ministers expressed their warm appreciation to the Governor-General, the Government, the Parliament and the good people of the Solomon Islands for their warm and generous hospitality. They acknowledged the special arrangements made for CYMM, especially in allowing the use of Parliament House as the venue for the Meeting. Ministers also acknowledged the untiring efforts of the Solomon Islands CYMM Task Force, the assistance of the CYP South Pacific Regional Centre and the many young people who volunteered their help in so many ways.

Next Meeting

26. Ministers agreed to accept the generous offer of the Government of Mauritius to host their next Meeting in 2003

Commonwealth Secretariat
Honiara, Solomon Islands
26 May 2000