



**Tenth Commonwealth
Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting**

"Women's Leadership for Enterprise"

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 17-19 June 2013

DHAKA COMMUNIQUÉ 2013

The 10th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (10WAMM) was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 17-19 June 2013. This triennial Meeting was opened by Hon Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and chaired by Hon Meher Afroze Chumki, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs, Bangladesh. The theme of the meeting was 'Women's Leadership for Enterprise', delegations from 30 countries attended.

We the Commonwealth Ministers:

1. Reaffirm the importance of women's leadership for enterprise and emphasise women's holistic empowerment as a driver of economic growth, political stability, peace, social justice and inclusive sustainable development.
2. Note the priorities outlined in the 9WAMM Communiqué and emphasise the continued focus on women's socio-economic empowerment, as reflected in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 (PoA).
3. Welcome the Commonwealth Heads of Government Perth Communiqué, highlighting the need for promoting women's decision-making at all levels, increasing efforts to eliminate gender-based violence and recognising women as agents of change for economic development.
4. Welcome the Charter of the Commonwealth adopted by Heads of Government in December 2012, in particular Article 12, which recognises gender equality and women's empowerment as basic human rights and essential components of human development.
5. Commend efforts by the global community to articulate a vision of gender equality and women's empowerment in the post-2015 agenda. Note that with two years until the target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), gender equality remains a challenge for many countries.

The post-2015 development framework

6. Support a twin-track approach to gender equality in the post-2015 development framework: a stand-alone goal to ensure that gender equality is an objective in its own right and mainstreamed across all other goals. This approach has also been proposed by the UN Secretary-General's high-level panel of eminent persons on the post-2015 development agenda.
7. Recommend that the context of the post-2015 development framework should address gender inequality in social institutions, norms and practices and emphasise the importance of working with men and boys as partners.
8. Recognise that violence against women and children remains a critical issue affecting women's empowerment and should receive priority attention in the post-2015 development framework.
9. Acknowledge the impact of climate change and natural disasters on women's economic empowerment and livelihoods and recommend that it be given due priority in the post-2015 development framework.

Women's economic empowerment

10. Acknowledge the progress made so far in empowering women entrepreneurs and note that strengthening women's economic opportunities including enterprise development, will enable them to take up leadership roles.
11. Call for the creation of an enabling environment for everyone, both in the formal and informal sectors, and including those who may want to start up or grow their business. Taking into account that lack of access to finance is a major challenge for women entrepreneurs, call for the Commonwealth to explore innovative, inclusive and accessible financing mechanisms including public private partnership.
12. Call for the development of gender responsive policy and the collection of disaggregated data, including in financial institutions, for monitoring access to finance; and recognise the benefits of members of the Commonwealth sharing good practices and developing support networks.

Women's leadership for democracy and development

13. Observe with concern the under-representation of women leaders and decision-makers in politics, public service, corporate boards and in communities and the resulting negative impact on democracy and development. Call for strengthened systems to increase representation of women in decision-making at all levels, including through affirmative policies and electoral reform, where appropriate, for advancing women's effective political leadership.

Social justice

14. Encourage the adoption, ratification and domestication of and reporting on international instruments that promote and protect the human rights and dignity of women. Call for urgent measures to address violence against women and children and for the comprehensive implementation of laws and strengthened jurisprudence of equality.
15. Recognise the need for social protection measures to respond to women's multiple roles. Note the importance of women's unimpeded access to justice and effective legal assistance and to own and inherit property and land.

Plan of Action

16. Acknowledge efforts by Commonwealth countries to implement, monitor and report on the PoA. Recognise the central role of the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group in tracking progress and promoting implementation of PoA targets post-2015 and call for an assessment in order to enhance its effectiveness.

Senior Officials Meeting

17. Received a report from Senior Officials and endorsed their recommendations on the End Term Review (ETR) of the PoA. They noted the importance of the ETR in informing the future direction of Commonwealth gender priorities.
18. Recommend that the outcomes of 10WAMM be presented at the upcoming CHOGM and the ETR at the 2017 CHOGM, after further review by 11WAMM.
19. Thank the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting.
20. Welcome the offer by the Government of Samoa to host 11WAMM.