



Commonwealth Youth Council General Assembly  
St Pauls' Bay, Malta, 21-25 November 2015

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CYC-GA (15) CCYC-INFO

## CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH YOUTH COUNCIL

Malta  
November 2015



**Constitution of the Commonwealth Youth Council**

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*This Constitution is the culmination of several years of work by young people across the Commonwealth, and supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat through the Commonwealth Youth Affairs Division and its partners. The Constitution was drafted by a democratic committee of young people, and reviewed by national and regional youth conferences in all the four regions of the Commonwealth. That work was followed by expansion to online consultations, followed by a transparent youth-led peer review of expert reports and opinions from youth workers, youth ministries/departments of member governments, civil society, private sector and NGOs; all representing the voices and interests of young people who make up half of the Commonwealth's population. The Commonwealth Youth Council is being established as an autonomous, international, youth-led organisation to replace the Pan Commonwealth Youth Caucus and further advance the youth development agenda, and to help further the objectives and principles of the Commonwealth to ensure a relevant, vibrant, effective, and prosperous Commonwealth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.*

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## **PREAMBLE**

**IN CONFORMITY** with the objectives and principles of the Commonwealth,

**RECOGNISING** that young people make up over half of the Commonwealth's population, and that the present and future success of the Commonwealth rests with the continued commitment and contributions of young people in upholding and promoting the Commonwealth and its values and principles, and advancing the youth development agenda for a relevant, vibrant, effective and prosperous Commonwealth,

**FULFILLING** the commitment made to young people at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 1973 held in Ottawa, Canada, which established the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), with a mandate to assist governments to realise the potential of young people; and to engage and empower young people to enhance our contribution to development through effective participation, advocacy and action,

**KEEPING** with the spirit of the theme of the celebrations of the 60th year of the Commonwealth in 2009, '*servicing a new generation*',

**DECLARING THAT** in achieving the broad objectives in the Commonwealth Charter as stated in Article XIII, it is desirable to establish an internationally recognised youth-led organisation to mobilise, harmonise, formalise, recognise, legitimise, utilise, and prioritise the important role of young people in the Commonwealth,

**MINDFUL** that the World Programme of Action of Youth, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1995; the World Youth Ministers Meeting held at Portugal (1998); the Commonwealth Harare Declaration, translated into the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment; all provide policy frameworks and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people around the world,

**DESIRING** to establish, within the terms of Article XIII of the Commonwealth Charter on the importance of young people in the Commonwealth, as recommended by the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, and adopted by Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Perth, Australia in 2011, an international youth-led organisation to be known as the Commonwealth Youth Council (hereinafter referred to as the "Council" or "CYC"), which shall play an integral role in advancing the youth development agenda and the co-ordination of activities and policies of the Commonwealth in the field of youth;

**RECOGNISING** the challenges facing our societies, in particular young people, and convinced that our generation has an important role to play in solving these challenges and helping to build a better world, supporting youth empowerment, employment and development; and improving the lives of all peoples of the Commonwealth and the world at large;

**AGREE** to the present this Constitution, and do hereby establish the Commonwealth Youth Council.

## ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of the organisation shall be the Commonwealth Youth Council, hereinafter referred to as the "Council or CYC".

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## ARTICLE 2: VISION AND MISSION OF THE COUNCIL

1. The vision of the Council shall be: *'empowered and engaged young people, working for a better world'*.
  2. The mission of the Council shall be: *"Empowering and engaging young people in sustainable development, democracy and the values of the Commonwealth"*
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## ARTICLE 3: OBJECTIVES OF THE COUNCIL

### Objectives

The primary objectives of the Council shall be:

- a) to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Commonwealth by promoting mutual collaboration among young people, and working in partnership with state and non-state actors in order to empower the young people of the Commonwealth, without distinction of race, ethnic origin, caste, colour, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, special needs, socio-economic status, marital status, language, religious belief or political opinion;
  - b) to be a global platform which mainstreams young people into the work of the Commonwealth at all levels; supporting and advocating for an enabling environment that facilitates the active participation and influence of young people in decision-making processes, and the consideration of youth-specific needs in all policy areas;
  - c) to be a centre for mobilising, harmonising, formalising, recognising, legitimising, utilising, and prioritising the voices and actions of young people in the advancement of youth; and to be a unified voice for youth in the Commonwealth; and to encourage and extend, as appropriate, assistance to Commonwealth countries, in particular small states, in the promotion and acceleration of their youth development strategies;
  - d) to advocate the inclusion and , and encourage governments to include young people in delegations to international functions and as members of in particular, Commonwealth Ministerial Meetings, Commonwealth Heads of Governments meetings and United Nations meetings; and to support young people's participation in election observer missions, Commonwealth Board of Governors and other Commonwealth meetings;
  - e) to be a centre for information on youth work and development, and accordingly collect, monitor, analyse and disseminate information including the exchange of experiences and best practices in youth-led development; and to provide a website, online resources and to create project plans and campaigns so that young people can be integral in the achievement of the Commonwealth youth development agenda and sustainable development; and
  - f) to partner with the Commonwealth Secretariat and other Commonwealth organisations with a focus on youth development, to ensure a relevant, impactful and unified youth development agenda across the Commonwealth.
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**ARTICLE 4: REGISTERED OFFICE AND LOCATION OF THE COUNCIL**

1. The Council's offices shall be registered and shall operate in conformity with the laws, policies and guidelines of the Commonwealth, and with Commonwealth member governments, non-governmental organisations, private sector institutions and civil society stakeholders, where applicable.
2. The Council's registered office and Secretariat shall be located at a designated premises unanimously agreed by the Executive of the Council, in consultation the Commonwealth Secretariat's Youth Affairs Division.
3. The location may be modified by a decision of the Executive of the Council.

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**ARTICLE 5: LEGAL STATUS AND RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

1. The Council shall be a non-profit organisation, and none of its net income or net worth shall be used to the personal benefit of its members.
2. The Council shall be incorporated under the relevant laws of the country in which its registered office is located, and its membership and activities shall be international in scope.
3. The Executive shall establish and adopt additional by-laws, memorandum of associations, protocols and other legal instruments in conformity with the values and principles of the Commonwealth under this constitution and with the applicable laws, for the purpose of incorporating and registering the Council in Commonwealth member countries, where required.
4. The Council shall enjoy consultative status with the Commonwealth Secretariat and other Commonwealth institutions and it shall be eligible and supported to apply for formal Commonwealth accreditation.
5. The Council shall seek and make grants from and to, and cooperate with, other specialised organisations and agencies; enter into agreements and contracts; and acquire consultative status or Observer Status through accreditations with United Nations agencies including the Economic and Social Council along with other national, regional and international bodies worldwide; for the purposes of mutual recognition, partnership, and programme design and delivery.
6. The Council shall create and use its own logo and the logo of the Commonwealth and such other instruments as may be deemed necessary, subject to the approval of the Commonwealth and in conformity with the principles and policies of the Commonwealth.

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## **ARTICLE 6: LEGITIMACY AND CONSTITUENCY OF THE COUNCIL**

1. The Council shall work for and represent young people who are 15 to 29 years of age. Unless the context otherwise requires, for the purpose of this Constitution, the term **“Young people or Youth”** means persons who are 15 to 29 years of age;
2. The Council shall act as a coalition of National Youth Councils and other youth-led civil society and private sector institutions in the Commonwealth.
3. The Council shall recognise and accord membership and observer status to international, regional, national youth councils and other youth-led institutions.
4. The Council shall establish a broad-based membership with an inclusive, democratic leadership structure, representing Commonwealth youth at national, regional and international levels.
5. The Council shall be accountable to and shall report to youth, and consult with the Commonwealth and other related institutions.

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## **ARTICLE 7: MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Membership in the Council shall be open to representative and democratic youth-led organisations from Commonwealth member countries, with a broad-based membership and wide coverage, consisting of young people (15 to 29 years of age), regardless of their race, ethnic origin, caste, colour, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, special needs, socio-economic status, marital status, language, religious belief or political opinion, unless the Council decides otherwise through a resolution of the CYC General Assembly .
2. Members shall be represented at official CYC sessions and events by National and Regional Delegations, with clearly specified voting rights.
3. Requirements for obtaining Member status in the Council shall include but shall not be limited to the following:
  - a) the organisation’s objectives and activities shall be relevant to the work of the Council;
  - b) the organisation shall have been in existence (officially registered) for at least one year before the General Assembly at which it shall be considered for member status;
  - c) the organisation shall have democratic and transparent governance and decision-making mechanisms, where young people have a majority voice in the organisation's decision-making; and
  - d) the members of the organisation shall agree to support or participate in the work of the Council.



4. Members, through their Delegation to the Council, shall recommend and support candidates for, and vote in elections for the various offices of the Council, and shall have full speaking rights at Council events.
  5. National Youth Councils from Commonwealth member countries that meet membership requirements shall be granted automatic Member status in the Council, and shall take part in the consultations and decisions of the Council.
  6. The Council shall admit member delegations from Commonwealth Overseas Territories and other countries interested in the values and objectives of the Commonwealth, or with ties, or affiliated, to the Commonwealth;
  7. Member organisations shall submit a progress report on their activities every two years to the General Assembly.
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#### **ARTICLE 8: AFFILIATED OBSERVERS OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Affiliated Observer status in the Council shall be open to all persons and organisations of all nations of the world, regardless of their race, ethnic origin, caste, colour, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, special needs, socio-economic status, marital status, language, religious belief or political opinion unless the Council decides otherwise through a resolution of the General Assembly.
2. Requirements for obtaining Affiliated Observer status in the Council shall include but shall not be limited to the following:
  - a) the observer organisation's objectives and activities shall be relevant to the work of the Council;
  - b) the organisation shall have been in existence (officially registered) for at least two years before the General Assembly at which they shall be considered for Observer status;
  - c) the organisation shall have democratic and transparent governance and decision making mechanisms, where young people have a majority voice in the organisation's decision-making; and
  - d) the members of the organisation shall agree to support or participate in the work of the Council.
3. Affiliated Observers shall have the opportunity to attend the Council's General Assembly and other international conferences and events as observers, make written and oral statements at these events by invitation, organise side events by invitation and have opportunities to network and lobby to expand their contacts and knowledge base and explore possible partnerships and joint ventures with various stakeholders.
4. Affiliated Observers may recommend and support candidates from Member organisations for election to the various offices of the Council, but shall have no voting rights.

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## **ARTICLE 9: APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATED OBSERVER STATUS**

1. Organisations wishing to join the Council as either Members or Affiliated Observers may apply using the official Membership Application Form.
2. The Council shall empower the CYC's Executive to create a Membership Committee, responsible for approving Members and Affiliate Observers of the Council. The membership Committee shall review applications and submit recommended applicants for consideration at the General Assembly.
3. The Membership Committee shall consist of representatives from Member organisations of the Council, including at least one representative from each region of the Commonwealth, and external parties by invitation.

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## **ARTICLE 10: REVIEW AND SUSPENSION OF MEMBER AND AFFILIATED OBSERVER**

1. Full Members and Affiliated Observers shall be accorded status for an unlimited period of time as long as they comply with the Constitution, principles and rules and regulations guiding the Council.
2. Any Member or Affiliated Observer who fails to adhere to the principles and values of the Commonwealth and the Constitution, principles and rules and regulations of the Council shall be suspended.

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## **ARTICLE 11: WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBER AND AFFILIATED OBSERVER**

A Member or Affiliated Observer may withdraw from the Council at any time by notification in writing of its intention to withdraw, accompanied by a resolution or minutes of the organisation's relevant meeting, signed by its Executive and addressed to the Chief Executive of the Council.

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## **ARTICLE 12: STRUCTURE OF THE COMMONWEALTH YOUTH COUNCIL**

1. The structure of the Council shall comprise:
  - a) the Commonwealth Youth Council General Assembly (Referred to as the 'General Assembly');
  - b) the Commonwealth Youth Council Executive (Referred to as the 'Executive');
  - c) Commonwealth Regional Youth Delegations (referred to as 'Regional Delegations');
  - d) National Youth Delegations (referred to as 'National Delegations');
  - e) Commonwealth Youth Council Standing and Thematic Committees (referred to as the 'Committees');

- f) the Secretariat of the Commonwealth Youth Council (referred to as the 'CYC Secretariat');
- g) the Commonwealth Youth Development Stakeholders Panel referred to as the 'Stakeholders Panel'; and
- h) Other subsidiary institutions, including existing and emerging subsidiary organisations, networks, alliances, coalitions, conferences, Commonwealth youth forums, and standing committees (referred to as the 'Affiliated Bodies').

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## **ARTICLE 13: COMMONWEALTH YOUTH COUNCIL GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

### **Composition**

1. The Council shall establish the Commonwealth Youth Council General Assembly (referred to as the 'the Assembly'), which shall be the highest and most powerful decision-making body of the Council and shall consist of representatives of all Full Members and Affiliated Observers.
2. There shall be a President of the Assembly who shall be agreed by a simple majority of the Executive from among three (3) persons nominated by the National Delegation of the host country of the Assembly. In nominating the person, the National Delegation shall give particular attention to the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination, and capabilities to perform the role of President.
3. The President shall act as the speaker of the General Assembly and shall chair the proceedings of the Assembly, and his/her designation as President of the General Assembly shall end at the completion of the entire General Assembly.

### **Functions and powers**

4. In addition to exercising other functions specified in this Constitution, the General Assembly shall:
  - a) determine the guiding principles and the policies of the Council;
  - b) consider reports of the Executive of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Members, Affiliated Observers, subsidiary institutions and standing committees of the Council;
  - c) have the authority to adopt, by a two-thirds majority of delegations and through a democratic voting process, resolutions, declarations or agreements with respect to any matter within the competence of the Council and to make recommendations to the Commonwealth and other institutions concerning such resolutions, declarations or agreements;
  - d) elect or dismiss the Executive, approve new members of the Council recommended by the Membership Committee, review and approve Member and Affiliated Observer termination notices; and
  - e) adopt its own rules of procedure.

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## **ARTICLE 14: THE EXECUTIVE OF THE COUNCIL**

### **Composition**

1. The CYC Executive elected by the Assembly shall act as trustees of the Council and provide leadership and direction for the Council. It shall consist of the following officers:
  - a) CHAIRPERSON;
  - b) VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES;
  - c) VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT;
  - d) VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR POLICY, ADVOCACY AND PROJECTS;
  - e) REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE - AFRICA & EUROPE
  - f) REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE - ASIA
  - g) REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE – CARIBBEAN & THE AMERICAS
  - h) REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE - PACIFIC
  - i) REPRESENTATIVE - SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS
2. The CYC's Chief Executive shall become an ex-officio member of the CYC Executive with no voting rights after his/her appointment.

### **Functions and Powers**

3. The functions and powers of the CYC Executive shall be the following:
  - a) the CYC Executive shall prepare the agenda for the General Assembly. It shall examine the proposed strategy and programme of work for the Council, and corresponding budget estimates, submitted to it by the Chief Executive, and shall submit them with such recommendations as it considers desirable to the General Assembly;
  - b) the Chairperson of the Council shall present, on behalf of the Council, with or without comments, the reports on the activities of the Council which the Chief Executive is required to prepare in accordance with the provisions this constitution;
  - c) the CYC Executive, acting under the authority of the General Assembly, shall be responsible for the execution of the Council's programme, as adopted by the General Assembly, through the Secretariat;
  - d) subject to decisions of the General Assembly, the CYC Executive shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

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## **ARTICLE 15: COMMONWEALTH REGIONAL YOUTH DELEGATIONS**

### **Composition**

1. There shall be established a Regional Youth Delegation (referred to as the "Regional Delegation"), from each of the four (4) regions of the Commonwealth. The Regional Delegation shall not be construed as a competitor or a substitute for existing or emerging constituent Regional Councils, and shall work in partnership with such Regional Councils.
2. Regional Representatives as provided in article 14, shall serve as head of the Regional Delegations and be responsible for the overall conduct of the affairs of the Council in their respective regions.
3. Members of each Regional Delegation shall consist of representatives from each of the Commonwealth countries from the respective regions, part of the CYC's General Assembly.

### **Functions and Powers**

4. The functions and powers of the Regional Delegation shall be the following:
  - a) the primary role of each Regional Delegation shall be to represent and promote the interest of existing and emerging Regional and National Youth Councils and youth-led organisations which form part of the membership the CYC.
  - b) each Regional Delegation shall submit to the Council, at such times and in such manner as shall be determined by the CYC's Executive, reports on the laws, regulations and statistics relating to youth issues and activities in their region, and on actions taken for youth development and empowerment by the Regional Delegations, National Delegations, and CYC members.
  - c) each Regional Delegation shall meet in regular sessions, as necessary and may meet in special sessions upon the request of the majority of the members.

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## **ARTICLE 16: COMMONWEALTH NATIONAL YOUTH DELEGATIONS**

### **Composition**

1. There shall be established a National Youth Delegation (referred to as the "National Delegation"), from each of the Commonwealth member countries. The number of delegates per delegation shall be determined by the CYC Secretariat.
2. A designated CYC Member and Affiliate Observer organisations, in consultation with the government department responsible for youth or an institution interested in youth affairs in each country, as part of a joint committee, shall call for nominations of candidates for the National Delegation.
3. Youth-led organisations may nominate interested candidates to be part of the national delegation. Voting shall be conducted and the candidate with highest votes shall be designated as head of the national delegation.
4. Where elections for the national delegation cannot be held, due to prevailing circumstances, the joint committee shall nominate the head and members of the delegation, subject to the approval of the CYC.

5. Where a youth-led national youth council or an independent youth-led organisation exists in a country, the Council shall designate it as the Lead Organisation in the National Delegation and related processes.
6. The selection or election of the National Delegation shall be guided by the CYC's Handbook for General Assembly and Elections Regulations;
7. The National Delegation shall reflect the participation and interest of young people from all sectors of the youth population, to include, but not limited to the following: women, minority and indigenous groups, youth with disabilities, and rural and urban youth, regardless of their race, ethnic origin, caste, colour, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, special needs, socio-economic status, marital status, language, religious belief or political opinion, unless the Council decides otherwise through a resolution of the CYC General Assembly .
8. The Minister of Youth or a representative of the government or civil society or private sector organisation in each country shall, upon a request approved by the CYC Executive be part of the National Delegation, with observer status and with no voting rights.
9. The head of the national student association, or national youth parliament, or national youth council or a national youth-led body approved by the CYC, if any, in each country shall automatically be a member of that country's National Delegation to the CYC.

## **Functions and Powers**

1. The functions and powers of the National Delegation shall be the following:
  - a) the primary role of each National Delegation shall be to represent and promote the interest of existing and emerging National Youth Councils and youth-led organisations at the country level;
  - b) the National Delegation shall advocate for and facilitate the inclusion of youth representatives in official government and civil society delegations to events including, but not limited to, the following: Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), United Nations General Assembly, and Ministers and Senior Official meetings and events at national, regional and international levels.
  - c) each National Delegation shall submit to the Council and regional Delegation, at such times and in such manner as shall be determined by the CYC Executive, reports on the laws, youth policies, regulations and statistics relating to youth in their country, and on actions taken for youth development and empowerment by the National Delegation and CYC Members.

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## **ARTICLE 17: STANDING COMMITTEES AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE COUNCIL**

1. The Council shall establish standing committees and subsidiary bodies (referred to as "Committees") on thematic issues of the Council which shall support the Council in all technical operations and practical work within the Commonwealth youth constituency.
2. Committees which may be established, and which shall be managed by the subsidiary or affiliated bodies of the Council, to address all aspect of youth issues and international development shall include but shall not be limited to: Human Rights and Democracy; Climate

Change and the Environment; Education and Skills; Youth Employment and Enterprise; Peace Building, Respect and Understanding; Health and Wellbeing; Women, Children and Disability Issues; Sports for Development and Peace; Arts and Entertainment; Tourism and Culture; and Youth Migration.

3. The Council shall apply for and hold funds on behalf of the Committees, and shall administer any logistics and support on behalf the Committees.
4. Committees shall duly correspond with the various bodies of the Council by consultation as appropriate, and send reports and feedback as and when requested. Committees shall submit a progress report about their activities every two years to the General Assembly, and the content and context of so such reports shall be determined by the CYC Secretariat for administrative purposes of monitoring and evaluation.
5. The committees shall adopt their own rules of procedure.

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#### **ARTICLE 18: SECRETARIAT AND APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

1. The Council shall establish its Secretariat in a Commonwealth member country, as decided by the Council, and the CYC Chief Executive shall be based at the Secretariat, unless a majority of the CYC Executive have agreed for the Chief Executive to be based elsewhere.
2. The Secretariat shall consist of the Chief Executive and such staff as may be required and as far as resources allow, all of whom shall be persons appointed from the age of 18 to 29 years in accordance with the employment law in the host country(with exceptions accepted on a case by case basis, when need arises due to special circumstances, and with the unanimous approval of the CYC Executive)
3. The Chief Executive will be an ex-officio member of the Executive, and report to the Chairperson of the Council.
4. The Chief Executive Officer appointed, and employed by the Executive shall be accountable to the Executive for the efficient and effective management of the Council, securing the resources required for the Council's functioning and the daily operations of the Secretariat, as well as for the promotion of the interests of the Council and communications with its members, committees, task forces, working groups and partners.
5. The CYC Chief Executive shall be appointed by the Executive and endorsed by the Assembly for a period of three (3) years, under such conditions as the Assembly may approve. The CYC Chief Executive may be appointed for a further term of three (3) years on the recommendation of the CYC Executive but shall not be eligible for re-appointment for a subsequent term.
6. The CYC Executive shall consider candidates for the position of Chief Executive in consultation with the Stakeholders Panel, in order to assess job requirements, person specification, travel, visa and administrative requirements, and other arrangements and implications.
7. The Chief Executive shall serve under a contract which shall be signed on behalf of the Council by the Chairperson, and which shall require that three months' notice of termination be given on either side. In exceptional circumstances, the Executive, subject to subsequent confirmation by the General Assembly, shall have the power to relieve the CYC Chief Executive of his/her duties

by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegations where, in the Executive's opinion, his/her conduct is such as to warrant such action.

8. The CYC Chief Executive shall appoint the staff of the Secretariat in accordance with staff regulations to be approved by the Executive. Subject to the paramount consideration of securing the highest standards of integrity, efficiency and technical competence, and visa and resource considerations, appointment to the staff shall be on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

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#### **ARTICLE 19: COMMONWEALTH YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS PANEL**

1. The Council shall establish the Commonwealth Youth Development Stakeholders Panel (referred to as the 'Stakeholders Panel'), and accord it the status of 'Affiliated Observer', for the purpose of enabling the Council or its committees and subsidiary bodies to secure expert information or opinions from persons having special competence on youth development issues.
2. Stakeholders Panel members shall be invited to the General Assembly and to participate in the activities of the Council, but shall not have voting rights at the Assembly, and shall not control the decisions of the Council.
3. The Stakeholders Panel shall act as a forum for inter-generational dialogue, advocacy and action in a mutually respectful partnership, working together for the good of young people and society.
4. The Stakeholders Panel shall provide expert analysis on issues directly from its experience in the field and help to monitor and advocate for the needs of the Council.
5. Membership of the Stakeholders Panel shall be by invitation and approved by the Executive. The Panel shall consist of, but shall not be limited to the following eminent persons and local groups: youth and youth workers, heads of governments, High Commissioners, Ministers, Members of Parliament, staff of the Commonwealth Secretariat, heads of international and inter-governmental agencies, representatives from national youth councils, youth-led organisations, community groups, minorities, trade and students unions, donor agencies, civil society and private sector institutions.
6. The Commonwealth Secretary General or, or by delegation to the Deputy Secretary General or Director of the Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Affairs Division, shall serve as the Chair of the Stakeholders Panel.
7. The Chairperson of the Council shall serve as Secretary to the Stakeholders Panel.

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#### **ARTICLE 20: MEETING AND QUORUM OF THE COUNCIL**

1. The quorum of the Council shall be a two-thirds majority of the registered National Delegations to the General Assembly from members and affiliated observers of the Council.
2. The General Assembly shall hold an ordinary session every two years, unless otherwise agreed by the Executive. Special sessions shall be convened by the Chairperson of the Council at the request of a two-thirds majority of the delegations to the General Assembly from members and affiliated observers of the Council.
3. The Ordinary Session of the Assembly shall be held at the venue and host country of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings, unless otherwise determined by the General Assembly.



4. the Executive, the Regional Delegations, and National Delegations, shall hold regular sessions as necessary using the best available medium
  5. All Executive decisions shall be by consensus in keeping with the values and principles of the Commonwealth.
  6. All voting shall be done by delegations and each delegation shall have one vote.
  7. Decisions shall be made by a majority of the delegations present and voting unless otherwise specified in this Constitution or in the rules of procedure adopted.
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## **ARTICLE 21: ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

### **1. Election and Voting Rights**

- a) The voting rights and elections procedures for the election of the Executive and delegations shall be prescribed in the CYC's Manual for Elections Regulations and General Assembly.
- b) At any elections or decisions, voting shall be by secret ballot (via physical or secure online mechanisms).
- c) Voting by proxy shall be allowed if a delegation already registered to vote is unable to attend the Youth Assembly or a decision-making process. The delegation shall appoint a delegation they trust to vote on their behalf or shall do so by such means as may be approved by the Council.

### **2. Qualifications and Term of Office**

- a) No person on the Executive shall be under the age of 15 years or reach their 30<sup>th</sup> birthday during their term of office (with exceptions accepted on a case by case basis, when need arises due to special circumstances, and with the unanimous approval of the CYC Electoral Board)
- b) The term of office of the Executive shall be 2 years non-renewable.
- c) The term of office of a Regional Delegation shall be two (2) years renewable once
- d) The term of office of a National Delegation shall be two (2) years renewable once.
- e) Each National Delegation shall have gender equality in representation and include youth under 24 years of age.
- f) The Chairperson of the Council shall rotate in alphabetical order between the regions of the Commonwealth to include Africa and Europe, Asia, Caribbean and Americas, and the Pacific.
- g) No country or member organisation shall hold an elected position of the Council for two consecutive terms, from the respective region on rotation.

- h) There shall be a transition period of three (3) months before the new Executive assumes office after election at the General Assembly. During the transition period, the new Executive shall shadow the outgoing Executive. At the end of the three months, the outgoing Executive shall relinquish their position and the new Executive shall officially assume duties.

### **3. Admission and Removal of the Executive**

- a) Executive members shall give three (3) months' notice of intention to resign or withdraw from the Executive. In exceptional circumstances, the three (3) month period may be waived at the discretion of the Executive of the Council.
- b) An Executive Officer may be removed by a motion proposed by any delegation at any general meeting, if the delegation is not satisfied with the conduct of the Officer, and the motion is supported by a two-thirds majority of the general delegations of the Council. If the motion is approved, then fresh elections shall immediately be conducted and any qualified and competent member from the same region may be nominated, and shall complete the term of office of the removed member
- c) In the event of resignation or withdrawal from the Executive, his/her term of office shall be terminated on the date when the withdrawal or resignation becomes effective. The CYC Executive shall appoint an interim candidate to occupy the vacant position until the next General Assembly or special session of the Council where fresh elections shall be conducted.

### **4. Returning Officer and Electoral Board**

Electoral Regulations shall be made under this Constitution which shall provide for

- a) the election and functions of the Returning Officer;
- b) the composition and duties of the Electoral Board;
- c) the appointment and functions of Members of the Electoral Board;
- d) the selection of the Chairperson and Secretary of the Electoral Board; and
- e) such other related matters.

### **4. Arbitrators to the Council**

- a) There shall be Arbitrators of the Council, nominated by the Executive of the Council and approved by a simple majority of the General Assembly, who shall arbitrate on issues relating to the Council, this Constitution and regulations made under it as they arise.
- b) The Arbitrators shall consist of four (4) young persons (15 to 29 years of age, and with appropriate or knowledge of the CYC Constitution), each representing one of the Commonwealth regions.

- c) The Arbitrators shall not vote, nor be voted for, in the elections of CYC Executive. There shall be a moderator and secretary to the Arbitrators, agreed on, by consensus, or otherwise rotated annually, among the Arbitrators.
  - d) The Stakeholders Panel and partners of the Council shall advise on the appointment of the Arbitrators.
  - e) The Arbitrators shall be responsible for observing the general conduct of all elections, hear appeals and disciplinary cases referred to them by members and delegations, and shall help address issues concerning this Constitution, and judiciously advise the Council on appropriate course of action.
  - f) The Arbitrators shall act as custodian of this Constitution, and shall help with registration and incorporation of the Council.
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#### **ARTICLE 22: ASSETS AND PROPERTY OF THE COUNCIL**

- 1. The CYC Chief Executive and the CYC Executive shall have primary responsibility for all properties of the Council and shall ensure that assets and resources are used only for their designated purpose and in a proper manner.
  - 2. Special attention shall be paid to the prevention of loss of assets and resources by way of deterioration or theft. Individual members shall be held liable for loss or theft of assets and resources under their control and possession.
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#### **ARTICLE 23: FINANCE AND BUDGET OF THE COUNCIL**

- 1. The budget shall be administered by the Secretariat of the Council, in accordance with Commonwealth standards of accounting and accountability.
  - 2. The General Assembly shall approve and give final effect to the budget and to the apportionment of financial responsibility among the members of the Council, subject to such arrangement with the Commonwealth and other partners as may be provided in the agreement to be entered into within the confines of this Constitution.
  - 3. The Council may accept voluntary contributions, gifts, bequests and subventions directly from governments, public and private institutions, associations and private persons, subject to the conditions specified in the Financial Regulations.
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#### **ARTICLE 24: EXPENSES OF DELEGATES**

- 1. Each delegation or its government and institution shall bear the expenses of sending its National Delegation to the General Assembly or to any activity of the Council where it may participate to represent the voices of its young people at important Commonwealth activities.
  - 2. The Council shall raise funds, or otherwise may seek funding to support delegations, subject to availability of funds.
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## **ARTICLE 25: AUDITING OF ACCOUNTS**

1. The Executive shall appoint a qualified person or organisation to be the auditor of the Council.
2. The report of the audited account of the Council shall be submitted to the General Assembly at its bi-annual assembly, and shall require the two-thirds approval of all the delegations present, before the report shall be accepted.

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## **ARTICLE 26: PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION AND POLITICISATION**

1. Members shall ensure that transactions with third parties are carried out in accordance with all relevant policies and legislation. Engaging in corrupt practices is a fundamental breach of this Constitution and the core values of the Council.
2. No payment, in cash or otherwise, which could be interpreted as a bribe shall be paid to, or accepted from, an individual or organisation with the express or perceived intention of gaining a commercial or political advantage or favour accruing to the Council.
3. Members shall ensure that dealings, engagements and partnerships with member governments are carried out in a non-partisan, objective and constructive manner. Nothing in this section shall restrict the individual rights of members from exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

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## **ARTICLE 27: COMMUNICATIONS & CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

1. Any interactions with the media relating to the Council and its constituents shall be undertaken solely by persons appointed by the Executive or persons designated by the CYC Chief Executive or persons designated by the Regional or National Delegations.
2. If any doubt arises in relation to any communication and/or confidential information, the matter shall be referred to the CYC Chief Executive or appropriate persons in the Executive. Any matter arising which may have a potentially negative impact on the Council's image or reputation shall be communicated immediately to the Executive through the CYC Chief Executive.
3. Confidential information about the Council and its constituents shall not be revealed to anyone, inside or outside the Council, who has not been authorised to receive it. Any such data may be subject to the provisions of national data protection laws, or subject to freedom of information for the purposes of transparency and access to information by the public and authorities concerned.

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## **ARTICLE 28: DISSOLUTION**

1. Members of the Council may decide to dissolve the Council through a decision taken at the General Assembly by a three-quarters (75%) majority of the Delegations of the Council.
2. All delegation shall be duly convened, in compliance with the provisions of the Council.

3. Any assets owned by the Council at the time of dissolution shall be transferred, in consultation with the Commonwealth Secretariat and in accordance with the provisions of the national law relating to the organisation, to an organisation having similar aims to those of the Council.
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#### **ARTICLE 29: AMENDMENTS OF THE CONSTITUTION**

1. At any time after the second regular session of the General Assembly, any delegation may propose amendments to this Constitution. The text of any proposed amendments shall be promptly communicated by the CYC Chief Executive to all delegations, members and observers and shall be considered at the next General Assembly.
  2. Proposals for amendments to this Constitution shall become effective upon receiving the approval of the Assembly by a two-thirds majority of Delegations of the Council; provided, however, that those amendments which involve any fundamental change in the name and objectives of the Council shall require subsequent acceptance on the part of all delegations before they come into force. Any amendments that shall come into force shall be binding on all members and observers.
  3. The draft texts of proposed amendments shall be communicated by the CYC Chief Executive to members and observers at least three (3) months in advance of their consideration by the Assembly.
  4. The Constitution shall come into force immediately following its adoption.
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#### **ARTICLE 30: INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

Any question or dispute concerning the interpretation of this Constitution shall be referred for determination to the Arbitrators or to a legal expert, as determined by the CYC General Assembly.

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#### **ARTICLE 31: ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

1. This Constitution shall be subject to adoption.
2. This Constitution shall remain open for signature at the inaugural CYC General Assembly. Signature may take place either before or after the CYC General Assembly
3. The CYC Chief Executive shall send certified copies of the texts to each of the delegations, members and affiliated observers of the CYC and, upon the coming into force of the Constitution.
4. This Constitution shall come into force when it has been accepted by the National Delegations of two-thirds of member countries of the Commonwealth.
5. We, the undersigned, duly authorised to that effect, have signed this Constitution, on behalf of our national and regional delegations and young people of the Commonwealth.

**Done on:** Day \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Name and signature of Head of delegation	Name of National Youth Council or National Youth-led organisation	Date
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Antigua and Barbuda

Australia

The Bahamas

Bangladesh

Barbados

Belize

Botswana

Brunei

Cameroon

Canada

Cyprus

Dominica

Fiji (suspended)

Ghana

Grenada

Guyana

India

Jamaica

Kenya

Kiribati

Lesotho

Malawi

Malaysia

The Maldives

Malta

Mauritius

Mozambique

Namibia

Nauru

New Zealand

Nigeria

Pakistan

Papua New Guinea

Rwanda

St. Kitts and Nevis

St. Lucia

St. Vincent and the

Grenadines

Samoa

Seychelles

Sierra Leone

Singapore

Solomon Islands

South Africa

Sri Lanka

Swaziland

Tanzania

Tonga

Trinidad and Tobago

Tuvalu

United Kingdom

Uganda

Vanuatu

Zambia

**Overseas Territories**

Anguilla

Bermuda

British Virgin Islands

Cook Islands

Cayman Islands

Montserrat

Niue

Turks and Caicos Islands



