

Commonwealth Accredited Organisations' Presentations to Senior Officials Marlborough House, 20 March 2018

(Texts of the ten presentations by one Lead author and one youth representative for each of the four CHOGM themes: Fairness, Prosperity, Security and Sustainability and the IFCO theme, Partnerships.)

FAIRNESS Part 1

Presentation on A Fairer Commonwealth, *Philippa Drew, Commonwealth Equalities Network (CEN)*

My name is Philippa Drew. I am speaking on behalf of the Informal Forum of Commonwealth Organisations. The submissions before you represent the views of some [70] accredited organisations, who in turn represent 1700 organisations and 41 million individual members, from around the Commonwealth. They are the product of a 4 months wide inclusive consultation. We also wanted to give young people a voice at this table to speak to you directly about how some of the issues affect the young in the Commonwealth. You will see and hear them before you this afternoon. We all ask you, as the Senior Officials who have a powerful influence on the proceedings and outcomes of the Heads of Government meeting, to take forward the recommendations set out.

I am presenting on A Fairer Commonwealth with my colleague Godfred Boahen from the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Workers.

My main points are:

I have mentioned youth. In the spirit of fairness I am going now to say a few words about the old. I am going to ask for a fair deal for the old. The report 'Ageing in the Commonwealth' published this year by the Commonwealth Association for the Aging known as CommonAge looks at the facts of ageing in the Commonwealth and the implications. This report is cited in our paper as an excellent example of the way that civil society can in partnership gather information which crosses countries while capturing detail. Such research can help governments get to grips with difficult and complex issues, such as those presented by an aging population. I'll just give you 2 points from the Report:

"In the majority of Commonwealth countries, the absolute size of the older population will increase by at least 100% over the next 25 years. These are mostly low- and middle- income countries."

"National strategies for healthy and active ageing enable governments to identify existing assets and deficits in community infrastructure. They are an invaluable planning tool for inclusive nationwide programmes."

There are some copies of the Report available and the Chief Executive of Common Age Ken Bluestone is present in the next room so you can discuss these issues with him. Our request to you for this Summit is to **make full use of the potential within the Commonwealth for gathering and sharing research** and in this context we ask

Commonwealth governments to plan an inclusive nationwide programme for health and active ageing to ensure a fair deal for the elderly.

My second point is about fairness and prosperity and security and sustainability. You cannot have a fair democracy, which is prosperous and sustainable and strong to deal with threats to its security without freedom of expression. We particularly focus attention in the Fairness paper on threats to those who defend human rights such as journalists and lawyers. There have been increasing and shocking numbers of journalists murdered in the Commonwealth. Why are they murdered? Because they are about to expose a scandal, or corruption, or hidden violence – all of them threats to democracy. **We ask for dialogue with Commonwealth Organisations and others to ensure safeguards for freedom of expression, Rec (c) in the paper. I can also add to Rec (d) to tell you that the draft Commonwealth principles on the role of the media referred to there will be published on 11 April. Copies of that draft are available at this meeting. The text we would like to see in the Communique is ‘to ask Heads of Government to note the development by a working group of Commonwealth Associations of a set of principles on the role of media in good governance and to commend them for consideration by the Foreign Ministers and Law Ministers’.**

Thank you for listening. I will now hand over to my colleague Godfred.

FAIRNESS Part 2

Godfred Boahen, Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW)

Ladies and gentlemen thank you for the opportunity to address you today on the CHOGM theme ‘a fairer future’. I stand before you as a son of the Commonwealth, born and raised in Ghana, emigrated to the United Kingdom, where I attended Oxford University and completed my PhD. I have lived different cultures within the Commonwealth and can therefore say that I understand how issues of fairness affect youth in both the rich Commonwealth countries and those that were colonised. In many ways my life can be considered as a successful example of how one can overcome unfairness or what the youth of the Commonwealth can achieve if their societies are made fairer. This is the reason why I support the recommendations in the Fairer Future paper.

On the theme of fairness, the Commonwealth has made great strides. We welcome the establishment of the Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform because it has potential to provide technical assistance to countries to reform outdated laws. In my own profession, the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work held festivals in East Africa for youth who care for their elders; to support them and for our organisation to develop relationships with other professions. A third example that I can highlight to show the success to achieve fairness in the Commonwealth is the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation, which is a partnership between the Commonwealth, Guyana, and indigenous people. This environmental partnership is a great example of how when principles of fairness are adopted, countries can profit economically from their natural resources at the same time as the environment is protected and young people can be provided jobs.

Yet despite these successes, across the Commonwealth, young peoples’ chances for success are still hampered because of unfairness. In the rich ABC countries black and white youth

are treated differently even though they are both children of the Commonwealth. For instance, in England a white student is more likely to gain a first-class degree than a black student. Across the Commonwealth 89% of countries have at least one law that hinders women's abilities to set up businesses. Therefore, unfairness persists in across all countries in the Commonwealth.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to conclude my short speech by highlighting some of the recommendations in the Fairer Future paper. These recommendations are topics that you know have been advocated for a while by civil society organisations. The fact that we have lobbied for them for so long underscores how seriously civil society organisations take these issues.

The first recommendation is that Commonwealth countries agree mechanisms for implementing the Commonwealth Charter. Countries could for instance agree a roadmap to full implementation and even a peer-review mechanism by which member states may be supported to fulfil their commitments under the Charter. As you will know, from youth perspective, the Charter is important, one reason being the recognition of the important role of youth in the Commonwealth.

A second recommendation is that countries should adopt laws and social policy that aim to reduce violence against women, children, and vulnerable. I support this recommendation not only because I am a social worker but also from my own experience, safeguarding policies will enable children to feel safe at school, women to fully participate in the economy, and people of different sexual and gender orientation to enjoy their entitlement of full citizenship.

Finally, we urge all countries to undertake legal reform to ensure that all citizens are treated equally. We urge the Commonwealth to increase support for the Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform to act as the centre for empowering all countries to change laws that lead to discrimination.

PROSPERITY Part 1 A more prosperous future.

Sharon Sukhram, Commonwealth Trade Union Group (CTUG)

My name is Sharon Sukhram and this is Tiffany Daniels. We are presenting the - A More Prosperous Future Paper. [Tiffany will elaborate on how the issues covered in this paper relate to young people, and why it's important that they have a voice if we are to have 'a more prosperous future'.]

'More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development' is highlighted as one of the Commonwealth's strategic outcomes in relation to prosperity. We welcome the commitment of Commonwealth Heads of Government to support meeting the sustainable development goals. We would agree that our shared vision of prosperity must be about more than growth and GDP – but about our wellbeing, health, education, equality, protecting our environment, respect for human rights and decent work.

Multilateral trade and investment and intra-Commonwealth trade based on Commonwealth values and principles can deliver this vision of prosperity. As the Commonwealth Trade Review in 2015 noted – multilateral trade must be consistent with the 2030 Global Agenda

for Development and contribute towards achieving the sustainable development goals. But in order to achieve this, trade and investment policy and agreements must be negotiated transparently and include the voices of the people of the Commonwealth – in line with democratic principles.

While there is a positive Commonwealth Effect in the area of trade, we can further collaborate to ensure that this is shared more equitably. In addition, more can be done to maximise the Commonwealth Effect including through creating a more enabling environment for small and medium sized businesses, encouraging women owned businesses, mechanisms to ease travel between Commonwealth countries, and greater transparency, accountability and diversity in public procurement.

We can and must continue work in partnership to promote trade and investment that creates what the ILO defines as Decent Work – full and productive employment, respect for rights at work, social dialogue and social protection – as summed up in Sustainable Development Goal 8 – economic growth and decent work. 43% of Commonwealth countries have at least one restriction on women’s employment. Women still make up the majority of workers in the informal sector, where low wages and exploitation is most prevalent. Investing in domestic business growth will promote greater formalisation, and requiring mandatory human rights due diligence in global value chains will support the aim of a more prosperous future. Commonwealth organisations are already working to support the Commonwealth Priorities for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment through for example – agreements with UN Development Business to make tenders available to women owned businesses; and trade unions are establishing good industrial relations practices and developing women leaders. Our continued and strengthened collaboration in these areas is vital for increased prosperity.

In the context of the challenges posed by climate change, and the Commonwealth’s **welcome** commitment to support the Paris Agreement, our vision of prosperity must rest on protecting our planet. This provides an opportunity to create green jobs as we move to more low carbon economies and as part of this we should ensure a Just Transition – to ensure future economic growth leaves no one behind.

For growth to be inclusive, we must also ensure that the skills of future workforces matches demand and everyone, especially women and young people have access to training and quality apprenticeships – that lead to decent jobs. We would therefore encourage governments to sign up to the Incheon declaration and allocate at least 4-6% of GDP to education.

Education is just one of our valued public services that contributes to our greater prosperity and equality. We would encourage the Commonwealth to build on the Cotonou Agreement, which states that 'ACP states shall determine the development strategies for their economies and societies in all sovereignty'. Trade agreements should therefore ensure adequate protections for public services, as well as human rights and the environment.

Our public services need investment to meet growing demand. The IMF estimates that globally approximately \$600bn is lost due tax evasion - annually. Simpler tax systems will make state finance more transparent and efficient and enable greater accountability, including for multinational companies.

Reversing the trend of growing inequality is a huge challenge for us all, and as accredited commonwealth civil society organisations we are keen to continue working with you in partnership to deliver a more prosperous future for all Commonwealth citizens.

PROSPERITY, Part 2

Tiffany Daniels (Commonwealth youth activist and Chevening Fellow, Institute of Education, University College London)

I am a citizen of the Commonwealth Caribbean. My name is Tiffany Daniels. I am a young Guyanese and have had the distinct honour of working with and for young people across the Commonwealth both as a youth activist and a youth development practitioner. Today I wish to speak to you on Prosperity, specifically around the engagement of young people in unlocking sustainable and equitable economic growth for the 53 nations of the Commonwealth.

The World Bank estimates that “250-300 million youth are unemployed, and 150-200 million are in unpaid or poorly paid work”. Between now and 2030 around 600 million more young people will enter the job market, and by 2030 youth will account for more than 30% of the labour force. 66% of the young people who are not involved in education, employment or training are women. Unemployment levels are up to 10% higher for young women. The current reality is such that 53% of employees in LMIC are in jobs that do not match their skills.

The road to prosperity has been uneven.

The notion of prosperity and what this means for any Commonwealth citizen can range from an economic one where we speak of wealth independence, or it can be a social one, where we speak to the state of happiness and life satisfaction.

A young person living in poverty has more hurdles to jump to achieve academic success, in the hope that academic skills prepare you to be an active participant in the formal economy. Delayed transition from life in school to financial independence means that there is heightened dependence on family and state. This in turn results in delayed stable employment. This results also in a young person deprived of the luxury of choice, creates a tunnelled-vision for living, and sometimes even results in a young person having to choose economic participation over civic engagement.

To speak of prosperity for ALL is to acknowledge and address the wealth inequalities that exist within our nations, and to think beyond vague policies and towards addressing the barriers that may hinder marginalized youth groups from being able to access economic opportunities. It considers the urban young person, and the rural young person; it considers creating opportunities for the young man with a disability looking for a job AS WELL AS the young rural woman seeking to start her own business. To speak of prosperity for all necessitates reforming National Youth Employment & entrepreneurship interventions to embody a multi-stakeholder approach to allow for a young person to have equitable access

to training and capital to have a sustainable prosperous life. To speak of prosperity means that we speak of choice and the extent to which the scope of policies can guarantee widened choice for young people.

Across the Commonwealth there are examples of youth struggling to create prosperous futures for themselves yet there are just as many examples of young people working diligently to provide opportunities for their peers to have sustainable financial dependence.

The recommendations in the documents before you outline the next steps we, as a collective Commonwealth, should take towards secure and meaningful job creation and to harness the entrepreneurial intention and innovation of our young people for national development.

The upcoming Heads of Government meeting and the other associated meetings create a powerful socio-political space for us to not only dream, but for critical reflection and collective engagement with these issues that are barriers to prosperity, for your generation and mine, and for those to come. It is a space to challenge the unitary meaning of what is possible with an open mind - a space that allows us to brainstorm ambitiously, reimagine innovatively and prioritise feasible policy alternatives that can bring a common prosperous future for the Commonwealth, and to do so in partnership – young people, civil society, governments, private sector - all hand-in hand, each with a valued role to play and responsibility to bear. The Commonwealth Charter outlines that “the future success of the Commonwealth rests with the continued commitment and contributions of young people”. I hope that with embracing the recommendations before you the Commonwealth can break new ground to create a prosperous future for its people.

SECURITY, Part 1

Melusi Simalane, Commonwealth Equality Network (CEN, Swaziland)

Your Excellencies, I am Melusi Simelane, and I am from The Kingdom of Swaziland. My colleague, Ms Imogen Fell, and I are presenting on a More Secure Commonwealth. When asked to speak as a representative of The Commonwealth Equality Network, I could not imagine representing more than a third of the commonwealth’s population. Instead, I will speak for myself in the hope that my truth inspires us all to remember that 37 of our 52 member states’ criminalise consensual same-sex relations/activity.

Security for marginalised people is often thought of, in terms of protection from violence. Resources invested in protection are prone to exhaustion, without addressing the source of violence and what defines violence. It is the very exclusion of marginalised people from structures that define, develop, innovate, formulate, comprises and perpetuates violence. Inclusion of true diversity in decision-making structures on all levels of society, presents the first opportunity for making a **safer and secure future**.

Here is an extract from the Industrial Court of Swaziland, in a judgement between a workers union and its employer, in 2006

*“Privacy is a basic human right and... underpins human dignity as well as other fundamental rights such as freedom of association and expression.
A **fair and democratic society** requires respect for autonomy of the individual and limits the power of the state and private entities to intrude on that autonomy.”*

In addition, the High Court in (2015) ruled that a mother could not force a potential father to take a paternity test. It ruled that, “it violates the **dignity and privacy** of the potential father”.

Is it not a violation of privacy then, to criminalise same-sex relations? Do we not have the same rights to privacy of our personal lives, as long as it is between consensual adults?

With your permission, I would love to relay the ordeal I face, living in Swaziland as a **gay man**. Should I be suspected of having committed the sodomy offence, I am liable to arrest without a warrant. This in accordance with the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act of 1938. A senior police officer in the Domestic Violence and Child Protection Unit has recently confirmed this to me.

Furthermore, a National Register for Sex Offenders will enlist me, under clause 56 of the soon to be passed SODV Bill. It cannot be justice to have my name **branded as a sex offender** for being in a consensual loving relationship with another adult male.

That is only the state-sanctioned fear that I live under. There is the societal stigma and discrimination that can too often translate into **physical violence**. Notwithstanding the emotional and sometimes psychological violence, that translates to mental illnesses. Because of blistering utterances made by senior and influential figures, Swaziland continues to be an **unfriendly and threatening** place for LGBTI persons.

The criminalisation of same-sex relationships violates the privacy and further **disregards the dignity of the human**. It is degrading in an incomprehensible way, as it suggests we are simply a sexual act rather than a whole person who contributes to society in numerous meaningful ways.

The time is now, for the Commonwealth to take a stand and encourage all its member states to treat their citizens with **dignity and respect**, removing outdated laws and replacing them with laws that nurtures and encourage everyone in society irrespective of their sexuality.

We need legal reform; safety, security and wellbeing; access to services; access to justice, and meaningful socio-economic participation. The issue of a secure future cannot be divorced from the issue of justice, justice for victims of violence. More than that, understanding that the experience of marginalisation changes as the differences that one person embodies constellate to leave them vulnerable to oppression in ways that others might not experience.

In the Commonwealth, we want to see a family of **shared values and togetherness** that leaves no one behind. How are we going to reach that common goal of a collective family,

when we are, in fact not equal in the commonwealth? It is for that reason that I am today, calling for the Commonwealth to push for the *repeal of laws that criminalise consensual same sex relations between adults and introduce strong anti-discrimination legislation that protects all citizens and enables them to give their best to society for the good of all citizens*”

Thank you, I will now pass on to my colleague, **Imogen**.

SECURITY, Part 2

Imogen Fell, PhD Researcher, Centre for the Study of Modern Slavery, St Mary's University

Your excellencies, I am Imogen Fell, a PhD student at St Mary's University conducting a study into child exploitation in the Philippines.

An integral aspect within the theme of “A More Secure Future” is the Sustainable Development Goal 8.7, which is a target to eliminate forced labour including cruel forms of child labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking.

Addressing such issues as a commonwealth is necessary for a society that is prosperous and sustainable. It must be recognised that problems, which affect the most vulnerable have a significant impact on our socio-economic development. Thus, ways to end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and the worst forms of child labour are among the global priorities that need to be addressed.

A Security Focus

The prevalence of tackling forced labour, child labour, human trafficking and putting an end modern slavery is at the forefront of our united approach to ensuring the security of the commonwealth's 2.4 billion citizens.

Many Commonwealth citizens continue to be treated inhumanely, through abduction, being bought, sold and abused for financial gain, sexual gratification, and as soldiers at war where choices are beyond their control.

The target effects all members of the Commonwealth, where supply and demand are prevalent.

At the core of human exploitation there is financial gain for exploiters and the humiliating degradation of a person's dignity for victims. The reality is that slavery and trafficking is a hugely detrimental not only in limiting people's lives, the social cost from the conduct of organised crime, hidden digital economies and the limited productivity of victims have a negative impact on the wider economy.

Our generation has seen rapid population growth, the effects of globalization, and climate change that have fuelled poverty and instability.

The complexities of technology especially play a significant role in human trafficking where the digital networks like the Dark web and cryptocurrencies are enabling the worst forms of exploitation and abuse, including trafficking and ‘made to order’ online child abuse. For all

members this is a growing concern for our citizens but also for the protection of Children, where 1 in 3 children are internet users.

In this environment, the issues have amplified globally but with Commonwealth member countries being particularly vulnerable:

Because of location in areas of instability, countries are susceptible to potential large refugee populations; It is forecast that member countries could be home to 30.4% of the world's population by 2050.

Commonwealth citizens are also victims beyond the Commonwealth's borders. In Qatar for example, 30,300 people are estimated to be suffering some form of exploitation and abuse, and these are predominantly citizens of Commonwealth nations.

In recent years, the Commonwealth has drawn particular attention to child, early and forced marriage.

43% of women in the Commonwealth married when they were younger than 18 years old. That amounts to 24,000 girls every day, or 17 girls every minute, a cause for serious concern.

However, the largest unlegislated area is the supply chain where comprehensive legislation is vital to ensuring the legal protection of the most vulnerable.

Commonwealth members have also taken positive action in approaching the target.

The majority of members have criminalized human trafficking in line with international standards, with several nations either adopting training, support or increasing awareness among officials, businesses and the public. It is asked that more comprehensive Modern Slavery legislation and enforcement of legislation can be implemented around the abuses covered by the target.

In order to address the target it is recommended:

- That immediate action to develop, strengthen and implement national strategies and legislation to prevent and respond to human trafficking and exploitation in line with the target;
- That efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence and its root causes is intensified, with a view to eliminating the demand for forced labour, forced marriage, trafficking and all forms of exploitation, especially of women and girls;
- That information-sharing platforms and fora are created, and funds are invested to support the meeting of parliamentarians, government, civil society and businesses in order to share good practice and build partnerships to support member countries to achieve SDG8.7;
- That support is provided to increase transparency in institutions and support public financial management reforms, enhanced public procurement transparency, and establish public beneficial ownership registers to ensure that the proceeds of trafficking, crime and corruption are not laundered in Commonwealth jurisdictions.

The evolving regional networks of Commonwealth parliamentary human rights committees, with support from the Commonwealth Secretariat, could be brought together regionally and then on a Commonwealth-wide basis before the 2020 Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meeting by starting action this year to build a pool of Parliamentarians educated and mobilized to work in legislatures to achieve the target.

It is asked that the creation of a new Ministerial framework, with annual meetings will take the target process forward, ensuring momentum is generated, and appraised leading up to the target's date of 2030.

Furthermore, I ask that Commonwealth members consider where necessary improvements and a stronger enforcement of existing legislation that would support them in achieving the target, with further support provided in conducting a review.

These factors are a step towards realistically making an impact in line with our resources. The Commonwealth's partnership and collaboration will provide an adequate platform given the breath of expertise and knowledge across our members.

Thank you very much for your time your excellencies, we are both ready to take your questions.

SUSTAINABILITY, Part 1

Simeon Shtebunaev

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Simeon Shtebunaev and this is my colleague Jyoti Soni. Thank you for the opportunity to present our paper on the theme of 'a more sustainable future', which clearly **underpins** the overarching theme of this year's CHOGM - 'Towards a Common Future'. We are speaking on behalf of civil society and represent the views of the Commonwealth accredited organisations.

We acknowledge that the Commonwealth is committed to sustainable development. This commitment is exemplified by the inclusion of sustainable development as **value nine** out of the sixteen core values within the Commonwealth Charter. The need to work collectively towards achieving those values has never been stronger, as the Commonwealth **faces broad and varied challenges** ranging from climate change to population growth, from civil conflict to gender inequality, from migration to poverty. Challenges insurmountable by one nation alone.

Last year we were reminded of the **vulnerability of small island states** by the devastating weather events, caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean. Extreme weather events such as these will most probably shape our common future and **the need for cooperation between nations** is critical.

We acknowledge the Commonwealth's commitment to international agreements such as the Paris Climate Accord. At the last meeting of Heads of Government the Commonwealth welcomed the **United Nations 2030 Agenda committing to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals** and adopted the 'Malta Declaration on Governance for Resilience'. We

also welcome the Commonwealth nations' participation in the adoption and implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

We want to take the opportunity to commend the Secretary General for her trailblazing initiative in **announcing the Commonwealth Blue Charter** at the United Nations last year, highlighting the importance of the 'blue' economy worldwide, in safeguarding the environment and preserving livelihoods for all. We endorse this initiative wholeheartedly and will do all we can to support it.

We are delighted that one of our recommendations has, coincidentally, already been acted upon. **The Curriculum Framework for Sustainable Development** was referenced in the Nadi Declaration 'Education can deliver', adopted in February this year. We would like to thank the Commonwealth Education ministers, who met in Fiji, for their engagement and commitment to educating the youth on sustainable development, particularly as more than half of the Commonwealth's population is under the age of thirty.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Commonwealth has the unique potential to reach a **third of the world's youth**. Youth, ready to work for our common future. We will be the generation to follow in the footsteps set by you today. The time is now to talk about delivery and implementation. It is because of this that I support the recommendations made in this paper.

Thank you for providing us with this opportunity for engagement. I would like to hand over to my colleague **Jyoti Soni**.

SUSTAINABILITY, Part 2

Jyoti Soni

Thank you, Simeon. I would now like to highlight some of the key recommendations contained in our paper 'A more sustainable future' which a number of Commonwealth organisations have contributed to.

We all have different ideas of **sustainability**; I am the mother of two young children and for me the idea of sustainability boils down to **leaving a cleaner earth for them to live in**. Things that we took granted as children like fresh air to breathe and open places to play, I would like my children not to take them granted and **not grow up before their time**.

To achieve these sustainable goals we have categorised our recommendations under two groups - **What** and **How**.

So let's get to the **What**

1. **Reduce emissions:** We want to develop and implement technologies to reduce energy consumptions particularly towards **transport and buildings**. How we do it by using capacity building and **focusing on urbanisation** and creating more walkable and self-sustaining neighbourhoods.

2. So what do we mean by **Focus on urbanisation**: Many Commonwealth cities (for example where I come from in India) are now growing at an exceptional rate and have become magnets for large scale rural to urban migration. We all know the numbers and studies which talks about the pressure of rapid urbanisation to all tiers of the cities.

Commonwealth countries should be encouraged to develop appropriate strategies which should be supported by integrated development planning and sustainable urban design. And we believe this will help to strike a balance between **policy led, market led, and community led development**.

3. We need **resilience strategies** to be both developed and implemented at the time of crisis from national to local level. This will empower communities to prepare for, cope with and recover more quickly from crises and will help to **'build back better'**.
4. We like to emphasise that we need to take advantage of the technology available to **'improve information and data gathering**. We think it should translate to **better evidence-based policy making'**:
5. We like to emphasise that commonwealth should **accelerate progress towards Universal Health Coverage** and build on the commitments made at the May 2017 health summit. No life should be left behind and everyone is healthy to pursue their dreams.

Now that we have spoken about WHAT needs to be done let's talk about HOW this can be implemented:

1. **We need to build capacity by promoting education, training and skills development** to meet the needs of the 'green' and 'blue' economies so that no-one, particularly those currently in polluting industries, is left behind.

We know there are critical capacity gaps, particularly in local government and among health professionals. There is also a critical shortage of planners and architects in many of the Commonwealth countries which are urbanising most rapidly and are among the most vulnerable. We must address this together if we are to achieve a more sustainable future.

2. We also look to you as leaders to **empower and engage** local government, city leaders and local communities while **strengthening leadership and governance to help create the future we need**.
3. We also recognise that **more effective public and private sector cooperation is required to create a more sustainable Commonwealth, and this will help to build capacity and drive innovation**.
4. The Commonwealth family provides a unique opportunity to share experience and expertise. Many Commonwealth nations face similar challenges and here we would like to end by emphasising the importance of **'promoting Partnerships and knowledge sharing to accelerate learning'** .

We must have access to more collaborative knowledge within the Commonwealth so that these learnings **are accessible by those who need it, when and where they need it most.**

Thank you for engaging with us, we welcome any questions you may have...

PARTNERSHIPS, Part 1

Rory Evans, Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS)

- The Sustainable Development Goals, the priorities identified in the 2015 CHOGM communique in Malta, and those you have heard today from AOs, is highly ambitious. Yet none of these priorities can be achieved without a collaborative approach that maximises the impact of our individual governments, and especially the underutilised impact of Commonwealth civil society.
- Partnership is central to the Commonwealth, and Commonwealth organisations frequently work collaboratively on a huge range of issues that have extensive impact.
- At the RCS, for example, we work with our partners in Commonwealth Accredited organisations like the Commonwealth Equality Network and The Commonwealth Forestry Association, as well as through our Commonwealth Youth Gender Equality Network (CYGEN). That's because we know the value of cooperating between organisations and across Commonwealth national borders is the most effective way to get results and leverage maximum impact.
- We often hear about 'the Commonwealth Effect' in reference to trade; it's time we heard more about it when we talk about the power of civil society.
- All Commonwealth Organisations share this vision, as exemplified by fantastic collaborative work that does not get the credit it deserves. To name an example: the Mental Health Legislative Reform project that convened Commonwealth civil society health expertise and national governments to improve mental health legislation in Botswana and the Seychelles.
- The reach of Commonwealth organisations is truly massive. Our mapping of accredited organisations show that Commonwealth organisations represent
 - over 1,700 institutional members
 - almost 41 million individual or branch members
 - A combined budget of almost £55m.
 - There are gaps in this data, so the truly value is certainly higher.
- The potential for partnerships and support from the Secretariat to Commonwealth organisations is currently being underutilised despite the enormous potential for impact.
- We are making some clear and crucial recommendations to maximise the impact of the Secretariat through partnerships with and between Commonwealth accredited organisations
- The first is to properly resource Commonwealth organisations and the partnerships office of the Secretariat, to enable the delivery of the Commonwealth Secretariat's ambitious Strategic Plan.

- The Secretariat in association with the Accreditation Committee should publish the annual achievements of Cos as evidence of their amplifying impact on the Commonwealth family.
- As championed by the people's forum, the organisation of Commonwealth Ministerial meetings to expand the use of policy dialogues between government and civil society.
- To explore the potential of supporting the co-location of organisations in Commonwealth hubs outside of the UK to increase collaboration and profile across the globe.
- We are keen to work with COMSEC to achieve both the SDGs and the Secretariat's ambitious strategic plan. As COs, we will commit to mapping our work against the SDGs, to demonstrate to governments the vast potential for closer partnership on achieving national and international development plans.
- We will also commit to working more collaboratively across our thematic silos on interdisciplinary partnerships to address joint challenges, to maximise the civil society 'Commonwealth effect'.

PARTNERSHIPS Part 2

Nicholas Watts, Informal Forum of Commonwealth Organisations

We have just listened to the COs' papers on the themes of CHOGM. They are all 'partnership' papers, supporting momentum towards 'A Common Future'.

Here, let me comment on our intentions, some implications, and some overlapping recommendations.

First, we have attempted to show the crucial contribution COs make to the 'Commonwealth Family', supplying institutional memory, continuity, innovation and contributions of professional expertise, advocacy and voluntary activity. These are valuable assets, vital to an organisation facing acute resource constraints, and offer potential for leverage to help support the Commonwealth in its prosecution of the SDGs, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Curriculum for the SDGs the Commonwealth Blue Charter and the Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform and the Commonwealth Initiative for Digital Health: commitments of the Commonwealth strongly supported by COs.

As we have shown, the COs have been active collaborators in initiation of a number of the key Commonwealth partnerships. Here, we are proposing further, collective initiatives in pursuit of human rights and security, media freedom and safety, indispensable contributions to realisation of the Commonwealth Charter.

Our recommendations range across the interests of the 70-plus COs, but they converge on some key needs. The most obvious of these is the need to develop capacity (in the form of individual skills and institutional arrangements) for production of data to support evidence-based policy as well as monitoring and

evaluation of implementation of the SDGs, and of the other recommendations we make. The CCEM in Fiji endorsed the Curriculum Framework and introduced a new 'Commonwealth Education Partnership for Sustainable Development' in both of which COs will be ready to engage, to support relevant development of curriculum and skills.

The kind, and sources, of data will be important. The potential of 'citizen science' in the context of community engagement in the SDG decision process will be key to ensuring development of the trust necessary for successful implementation of the SDGs. There is clearly potential, here, for a 'Commonwealth knowledge economy' for the SDGs, to collate and make accessible relevant data sources, and to share good practice in development of data resources.

The recommendations frequently return to the need for multi-level and intersectoral governance that addresses local, national and regional levels and works across silos of disciplines and professions, and we look forward to development of enhanced, integrated models of governance, including more regional cooperation between COs outside the 'London bubble'.

In the period since our last meeting, the Health and Education Unit at the Secretariat has been disbanded. Almost half of the COs have education, or health, at the heart of their remit (see also reference to education and health initiatives in the preceding presentations). COs will therefore look toward the Secretariat to develop identifiable interlocutors in the Secretariat for health and education. COs are committed to mapping their activities against the SDGs, and to exploring, reviewing or reinvigorating the potential of partnerships, or umbrella groupings, using common criteria, for example inter alia across the fields of culture, human settlements, education, health, law and human rights.

To help us leverage the potential of COs, we need resources, both in the Secretariat's Partnerships Office, and across the Secretariat's divisions, so that we may secure funding for mutually beneficial projects, with the support of the Secretariat's convening power. Examples may lie in education for the SDGs, implementation of the Commonwealth Blue Charter or the CWIDH, all initiatives with shared origins in the intergovernmental Commonwealth and its CO partners.