

Final Communiqué

Commonwealth Youth Forum 4

Abuja, Nigeria

25 November to 3 December 2003

Held in advance of the
Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2003



HUMAN RIGHTS

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

GOOD GOVERNANCE

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

YOUNG PEOPLE & ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

GLOBALISATION

YOUNG PEOPLE AND HIV/AIDS

APPENDIX 1.0 COMMONWEALTH YOUNG WOMEN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR CHOGM

Since the inception of the Commonwealth Youth Forum in 1997, young people of the Commonwealth have made important contributions to CHOGM by presenting their views and recommendations on issues which concern them and the people of the Commonwealth. Whilst progress has been made on many issues, a great deal more remains to be done. At this 4th CYF in Abuja, Nigeria, we have sought to address this and formulate aspirational yet realistic action plans for youth development. We have considered how young people can be used as a driving force for change and development, in collaboration with the Commonwealth, national governments, civil society and the business community. Our recommendations to governments are:

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLATFORMS WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH

Since the last CHOGM there have been a number of inspirational pan-Commonwealth meetings of young people. These have included the CitizenYou Citizenship Summit, the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, and Creating Commonwealth Youth Enterprise Summit. We fully support the work of the young participants and endorse their recommendations, and urge Heads of Government to do the same. We ask that such fora, including the CYF, continue as a collaborative effort between the formal and informal Commonwealth, as requested by CHOGM in 2002, and that young people be given a platform to represent themselves to CHOGM. Finally we strongly believe that links with young people's civil society organisations from suspended Commonwealth nations should be maintained. Mechanisms should be created to ensure the appropriate selection and safety of any representatives at Commonwealth fora.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Commonwealth nations should ensure the implementation of the UN Declaration on Human Rights. This implementation should be monitored through the establishment in each Commonwealth country of Human Rights Commissions independent of government. More education in and open dialogue about human rights is required to maintain religious and cultural identity while protecting and enforcing universal human rights. Fundamental human rights such as food, water and shelter must be provided to Commonwealth citizens. Furthermore Commonwealth nations should support each other in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Free education to secondary level should be a right for all young people and primary level education is a first step to achieving this.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE BUILDING

Governments should work with civil society organisations to minimise conflict situations within and between their nations and to rebuild communities damaged by conflict, by encouraging and supporting youth exchanges between war-torn communities, and promoting peer education as a tool for peace building. The school curriculum should include education about conflicts, their resolution and the role that young people can play in avoiding them.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Governments should facilitate greater youth participation. This can be achieved through greater emphasis on life-skills acquisition in formal and informal education. They should build closer working relationships with national youth councils and enshrine them in law, and work with stakeholders to establish a Social Entrepreneurship Fund, which will provide start-up capital to promising social initiatives.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

To maintain stability and peace, governments need to ensure that nations are governed effectively with processes that are transparent and accountable. They should clearly separate legislative and judicial powers. They should develop and enforce freedom of information legislation, and use ICT as a tool for spreading information and increasing transparency. Lastly, they should establish commissions bringing together all stakeholders including young people to combat corruption.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Governments should ensure that all young people can take advantage of the development opportunities ICT offers. They should adopt liberalisation and tax reduction policies regarding ICT facilities. They should create ICT resource rooms in schools and youth centres. To ensure these are used effectively they should work with all partners to create ICT skills development training programmes.

YOUTH ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Governments should create incentives and appropriate financial support, including loans, and grants to emerging youth enterprises. They should offer incentives for financial institutions to work with young people. Schemes like that of the successful Commonwealth Youth credit Initiative should be supported and replicated. They should also introduce enterprise development skills into the schools curriculum. We recommend a focus on enterprise development skills within the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan.

GLOBALISATION

Governments of developed nations should take further steps to actively support less developed nations (especially their young people) to take advantage of globalisation and mitigate its negative impacts. Governments should seek to remove all trade barriers between Commonwealth nations, while encouraging and supporting local industry and advocate for debt relief.

HIV/AIDS

Young people are agents for change in combating of the spread of HIV/AIDS, and in creating a supportive society for those affected by the virus. Governments should support young people's organisations to work collaboratively with other partners to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS issues, including developing youth friendly information centres and introducing HIV/AIDS education into the school curriculum in all countries. They should create and enforce anti-discrimination legislation on the grounds of HIV status, and support this through campaigns to increase understanding and eradicate stigmatisation. We request that key government figures make a public commitment to these campaigns. Furthermore support should be demonstrated through a commitment from governments to increase funding for HIV/AIDS programmes, especially those targeted at young people. Nations should work together to ensure equitable pricing and distribution of anti-retroviral drugs. Lastly, we are impressed by the Young Ambassadors for Positive Living Programme, which we wish to see expanded.

COMMONWEALTH YOUTH FORUM

CYF has become an established and successful part of the CHOGM and it is vital that it continues. We look forward to working with the host nation for CHOGM 2005.

**Commonwealth Youth Forum
2nd December 2003
Abuja, Nigeria**

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights is an important issue affecting young people in the Commonwealth. Much work is still to be done to ensure that the human rights of all Commonwealth citizens are upheld.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Implementation and Monitoring of Human Rights legislation

Commonwealth nations should ensure the implementation of the UN Declaration on Human Rights. This implementation should be monitored, and violations should be addressed.

Action Plan

Government

- Governments should ensure appropriate monitoring systems are in place, through establishing human rights commissions. This body should have independence from government to ensure accountability.
- Human rights violations should be dealt with through the appropriate legal systems, and there needs to be a stronger push for addressing specific violations, in addition to the declaration.
- Legislation should be brought in (and adhered to) to combat discrimination in all its forms, and protect groups of people.
- Criminal Justice systems should not violate human rights, and there should be an emphasis on the rehabilitation of offenders.

Young People

- Young people should make themselves aware of, and promote, human rights legislation.
- Concerns should be raised through appropriate channels about human rights violations.

Success Indicators

- The establishment of human rights commissions in one member nation within each region by 2007.



2 Education and Information

All people should be aware of their human rights. Without this knowledge people are not able to participate fully in society. Education is the key to informing people about their rights.

Action Plan

Government

- Human rights education should be brought into the school curriculum, through citizenship education, ensuring young people are aware of their rights from an early age.
- Discrimination issues should be a key focus in human rights education.
- Information for people about their rights should be freely and easily accessible. Governments should publish information about constitutional law, in a variety of media, and ensure its accessibility.
- Each Commonwealth country is to establish a body to bring together government and civil society to educate young people about their rights. This would include a diverse range of stakeholders in order to co-ordinate relevant education programmes.

Media

- The media must sensitise people to rights issues

Youth and Civil Society Organisations

- Community organisations, youth organisations and NYCs should use their networks to organise seminars and workshops on human rights issues to better co-ordinate education programmes.

Young People

- Young people should ensure they are educated about their rights and are empowered as citizens.
- Peer education is important in informing young people about their rights.

Success Indicators

- Human rights education in school curriculum in one Commonwealth country in each region by 2006.
- Cross-sectoral human rights bodies established in one Commonwealth country in each region by 2006
- One civil society organisation in 5 member countries will have run seminars or workshops for young people by 2005



3 Support to generic human rights issues

In addressing human rights issues, there is a need for effective support to be offered to education, provision and other services, in order to sustain awareness about human rights issues and protect those rights.

Action Plan

Governments

- There should be a free and accessible legal system for people whose rights have been violated.
- More open dialogue is required to maintain religious and cultural identity while protecting and enforcing universal human rights.
- Governments need to reprioritise their resources to ensure human rights are met.

Civil society and youth organisations

- Support systems should be established for those who have been victims of human rights violations.
- NYCs should organise campaigns on discrimination and human rights issues so they are constantly brought to the attention of civil society.
- Young people should get involved in campaigns on human rights and discrimination issues.
- Young people should have the right to develop themselves through the establishment of a grant-giving body comprising a panel of representatives from youth development organisations.



Success indicators

- 5 NYCs will have run a campaign on a human rights issues by 2005.
- A grant-giving body will have been established in one country in every region by 2005.

4 Provision of Basic Needs

Fundamental human rights such as food, water, clothing and shelter must be provided. Without these, citizens cannot take their rightful place in society, and are unable to contribute fully to the development of communities and nations.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- Commonwealth nations should support each other in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and declare this at CHOGM 2003

Government

- Governments should act on the MDGs both within their own nation and in support of other nations where appropriate.

Business

- Business, particularly multi-national corporations should develop their activities to support the locality in which they are.

Youth and Civil Society organisations

- Civil Society organisations should tackle the problems of malnutrition.
- NYCs should campaign on these issues and work with government on policies, particularly lobbying government to fulfil the MDGs.

Young People

- Young people have a responsibility to be active in their communities on this issue.
- Information about irresponsible activities by member countries should be disseminated between young people and action should be taken.



Success Indicators

- Millennium Development Goals achieved on time.

5 Gender Balance/Equality

Throughout the Commonwealth, some societies and cultures appear to value one sex more than the other. Young people are well placed to redress these imbalances, although often unable to challenge their societies while valuing traditional practices and cultures. Redressing gender balance should not be seen as one sex overtaking another, but should be about reaching equity.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- Commonwealth fora related to gender issues should work more closely together.
- Networks for young men and young women should be established to look specifically at issues related to young people and gender.

Government

- The introduction of quotas for single-sex candidature (taking into account merit) in elections will allow for better female representation in government.
- The perception that women in positions of power are in reality only acting on instruction from men must be overcome, through greater transparency and accountability in government.

Business

- The media have a key responsibility in promoting positive images of both men and women, and highlighting inequality between the sexes.
- Issues such as opportunities, inequality over pay and conditions for women in the business community need to be addressed. Businesses need to address cultural values with regard to gender and employment, and should be prepared to move away from traditional roles.

Youth and Civil Society Organisations

- Organisations should ensure they are representative of their communities, and strive for equal participation of both sexes.
- Organisations should develop empowerment programmes for women, to increase their skills, knowledge and esteem, and encourage them to be assertive in their goals.
- NYCs should campaign on issues of gender inequality.

Young People

- A commitment needs to be made to combat gender inequalities, both in campaigning on issues and in their own behaviours.



Success Indicators

- Networks for young men and women across the Commonwealth established by end 2004.
- By 2007, a 5% increase in the number of women holding political office across the Commonwealth.
- By 2006, a 5% increase in the number of women holding office in NYCs.

6 Right to Education

Education should be a right for all, and should be accessible to all people.

Action plan

Government

- Free, compulsory, formal education for young people to secondary school level should be made available. We recognise that primary education is the first step towards achieving this.
- Support may need to be given to families to enable young people to attend school and tertiary education, through grants and loans.
- Families should be encouraged via legislation to see the value of education.
- More needs to be done to redress gender imbalance in the education system, through specific targeting of young women for education.
- The underachievement of young men in education needs to be addressed. Areas of the school curriculum should be evaluated to ensure an equal platform for men.

Business

- The media should promote education opportunities, and show families the benefit of young peoples' education.
- Businesses should support young people in education, through work experience, sponsorship, and vocational training.

Youth and Civil Society Organisations

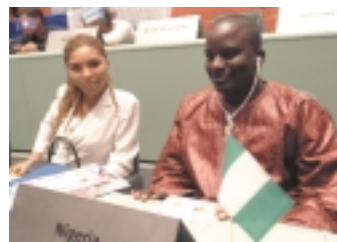
- Youth organisations should support formal education by creating informal education programmes.

Young people

- Young people should take formal education opportunities offered to them (including participation in school councils), and encourage their peers to commence and remain in education.
- Young people can contribute towards their own education, and that of others, through peer education programmes.

Success Indicators

- Free compulsory education established at primary school level in all countries by 2015, in line with the MDGs.
- There will be a clear increase in the number of business related schemes to support education in all countries.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict in the world affects young people by exposing them to dangers and restricting their opportunities for education and development. CYF is concerned for the effects of this on the young people of the Commonwealth.

Recommendations

1 Youth Exchange Programmes

Young people should be encouraged and given the opportunity to intermingle with other young people from areas of the same conflict. By sharing different cultures, traditions and behavioural patterns of people they meet, youth can become more tolerant and accommodating towards one another, establishing ties and personal relationships amongst young people.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- The Commonwealth Youth Programme at a Commonwealth and regional level should instigate, support and contribute to the funding of youth exchange programmes between peoples in conflict within the Commonwealth.

Government

- Provide support through funding and an appropriate fiscal and legislative environment for youth and civil society organisations to work effectively.

Youth and Civil Society Organisations

- Youth exchange organisations should be established to administer the programmes at a local level. These should work in collaboration with CYEC.
- National Youth Councils should support these projects by identifying and supporting appropriate young people to be involved in the management of these organisations. They should also promote awareness of these opportunities within their networks.

Individual young people

- Take part in the programmes where appropriate and to spread the knowledge of the programmes within their peer group.

Success indicators

- That 2 youth exchanges occur per year by 2005
- Education about conflicts and their resolutions



2 Education

Education should be available to young people at all levels about conflicts, their resolutions and the role young people can play in avoiding conflicts. Young people should be encouraged through this to employ dialogue and consultations in solving conflict. CYF believes that this would help reduce conflict by redirecting the thinking of young people towards positive resolutions.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- CYP should instigate and support the creation of conflict resolution clubs. They should also instigate and support peer education programmes within those clubs and other youth organisations.

Government

- Integrate education about conflicts, their resolutions and the role young people can play in avoiding conflicts, within the school curriculum.

Business

- The media should make an effort not to misrepresent conflict.

Civil Society

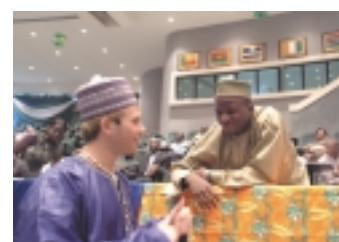
- Should monitor the media representation of conflict and seek redress when it is misrepresented.

Youth Organisations

- Should organise peer education programmes about conflicts, their resolutions and the role young people can play in avoiding conflicts.
- The formation of conflict resolution clubs to organise such peer education programmes and be advocates for peace within their communities.
- As individual young people of the Commonwealth we;
- Should become involved in peer education programmes as above and take advantage of all available opportunities to address these issues.
- Should not seek conflicts as a way of solving our grievances against government or society.

Success indicators

- The presence of conflict resolution clubs
- The existence of well evaluated peer education programmes
- Education about conflict etc. being entered into the curriculum of one member country from each region of the Commonwealth.



YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Youth participation is a right and a duty for young people. They should be involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of decision-making processes at all levels of society.

Recommendations

1 Ensuring Youth Participation throughout the Commonwealth

Young people are enthusiastic and wish to contribute to their communities - at a grass root, state, regional and Commonwealth level. Sadly, in many cases their spirits are being dampened due to a lack of official support, funds, and incentives to persevere.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- The Commonwealth Secretariat should work to expand its current Commonwealth Youth Service Award scheme. To enable this it should seek further funding from private corporations, and donor agencies. This award would reward youth organisations that have performed outstandingly. This would serve to promote commitment, good practice and motivate organisations.
- To increase the capacity of young people and their organisations, the Commonwealth Youth Programme should facilitate a mentoring scheme to provide guidance and advice to leaders from national and regional youth organisations. The mentors should be experienced leaders in business and civil society.
- To increase young people's access to education about and understanding of the Commonwealth, youth friendly website and brochure should be produced and widely disseminated.
- The young people of suspended Commonwealth nations should not be excluded from participation via youth representatives at Commonwealth Civil Society Fora e.g. The Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF). However, due care must be taken to ensure the appropriate selection and safety of such delegates.

Governments

- Where NYCs exist, governments should enshrine them in law. Where they are not yet in existence, Governments should honour their commitment to the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment and should establish them as a matter of urgency.
- Adequate resources for the NYCs' operation and activities should be made available through a national budgeting process. NYCs should be a social partner of government but maintain their autonomy.
- Age discrimination for positions of public office (both civil service and political) should be removed. Qualification should be based on merit. This should include candidacy age.
- NYCs should work with their governments, civil society and private sector partners to establish a Social Entrepreneurship Fund (SEF). These SEF grants should provide start up capital to promising social initiatives by young individuals and youth organizations.
- CYF recommends that Governments should encourage the private sector to contribute to the SEF fund, by giving corporate tax rebates for every substantial contributions made.
- Governments should encourage youth participation by emphasizing the importance of life skills acquisition through extra-curricular activities (ECA) in schools. Governments could consider incentive and award schemes, including, scholarships to young people in recognition of their contribution.
- Citizenship (civics) should be mainstreamed into the school curriculum to encourage youth participation and active citizenship in our local communities, wider society and the Commonwealth.
- Governments should actively seek input from NYCs and take positive action on the issues raised. This would foster sustainable communication between governments and young people and add value to public policy, demonstrating good governance.



Non-Governmental Organisations and National Youth Councils

- NYCs should provide advice and support to young people, enabling them to build the capacity of their organisations. One method would be to create a mentoring scheme to network grass root youth leaders with appropriate leaders from the local business and civil society.
- NYCs should establish and maintain a database of youth organisations. This could include profiles of young people, with respect to their skills, interests and experiences. This database could be used to ensure the optimum use of human resources for youth initiatives.
- NYCs should create transparent and equitable processes for the selection of credible and accountable young leaders to represent their peers in government, regional and international fora.
- NYCs across the Commonwealth should co-operate in sharing resources and intellectual capital (ideas and talents).
- NYCs should take part in bi and multi-lateral youth exchange programmes. In addition, NYCs should better utilise the framework of the Commonwealth Youth Programme to formulate strategies to tackle the problems facing young people in their regions.

Business

- Businesses have a major role in encouraging young people's active participation in communities. They should recognise the added value in terms of skills and outlook that young people who volunteer bring to their workplace. They should be encouraged to enable young people to volunteer and take part in community activities. This could be achieved through sponsoring local youth projects and developing employment policies enabling young people to undertake voluntary activity.

Young People and Youth Organisations

- Young people should encourage their youth organisations to register with their NYC for greater support, advice and to strengthen the youth voice. They should also capitalize on networking opportunities provided by NYCs to share ideas on their achievements, lessons learned and future action plans.
- Young people should be pro-active in encouraging their peers to participate in youth activities, volunteerism, community activities and decision-making processes. In addition they should be encouraged to develop realistic visions, and formulate innovative and practical action plans to achieve these. Successful results will build credibility and instil confidence in young people and so making government and private sector support more likely.
- Young people should be proactive in feeding in to the policy making process of governments. A variety of methods can be used, but the NYC should act as the main conduit for young people's voices to ensure the authenticity and constructiveness of feedback received.
- Youth organisations should endeavour to be self-resourcing and should be innovative in funding their own projects.
- Young people should be encouraged to stand for elections.

Success Indicators

- An expanded Commonwealth Youth award scheme to be implemented by mid 2005.
- A functional Commonwealth mentor scheme to be established by mid 2005.
- Government funding for NYCs to be approved by mid 2005.
- Age discrimination for public office to be abolished by mid 2005.
- Social Entrepreneurship Fund (SEF) to be set up by 2005. Corporate tax rebates for donors to be approved by end 2005.
- Public scholarship boards to be set up by mid 2005.
- Revamp of National Education curriculum in all Commonwealth countries by mid 2005.
- Government – Young people feedback channels to be established by mid 2005.
- A National Youth Councils' (NYC) Mentor Scheme to be established by mid 2005.
- Database of young people to be collated by mid 2005.
- Youth Representation in government by mid 2005.
- Non Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP)-led Pilot Youth exchange programmes to be conducted by end 2005.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

There is great concern that in some areas of the Commonwealth governance of countries and organisations is not being done well. If nations are not governed effectively, it can result in serious issues for the people and the development of the nation.

Recommendations

1 Ensuring Good Governance

CYF recognises the need to ensure that nations are governed effectively, with processes that are transparent and accountable.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- Commonwealth election observer missions to nations must themselves be transparent and free from political influence. There is a need to review how these are formed and operated to ensure this.

Government

- Law development (Legislative) and law enforcement (Judicial) should be clearly separated.
- Commissions should be established to combat corruption. This should bring together representatives from civil society and politicians, and should ensure governments are free from corruption.
- There should be legislation to ensure there is freedom of information.
- There should be clear two way communication between governments and their peoples.

Business

- The media should report on issues of government in fair ways, and should take a role in disseminating fair and accurate information to people. It should recognise its responsibility in highlighting issues of importance, and exposing corruption where it finds it.

Youth and Civil Society Organisations

- NYCs should practice values of good governance throughout their organisation, in its structures, through its networks, and encourage young people to act in the same way.
- NYCs and other civil society organisations should work together to lobby government on and raise awareness of issues of concern regarding governance.

Young people

- Young people should act as electoral observers where possible.
- Should voice their concerns about governance through appropriate feedback channels.



INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technology (ICT) plays a vital role in enhancing the development of nations. However, CYF4 observes that a digital divide is being created, as some nations advance in the ICT while others are being left behind. There is a great need to assess the impact of ICT in less developed countries so as to enable them to progress along side the developed nations.

CYF believes that if all of our recommendations are fully implemented, together we shall live as a Commonwealth, Common People enjoying Common Technology.

Recommendations

1 Information, Communication Technology and Education

The information and Communication technology should be seen as a springboard for effective learning process.

Action Plans

Commonwealth

- The Commonwealth should encourage governments to promote vocational and hands-on experimental training in the sector of information and communication technology.

Governments

- ICT resource rooms should be created in schools and youth centers to improve access to ICT.
- Governments should work in partnership with civil society, the private sector and young people's organisations to create training programmes to develop young people's ICT skills. They should encourage the use of peer education as a tool for reaching a greater number of young people.

Young People

- Young people should be determined to learn new ICT techniques so that they can maximise their potential. They should use these skills to establish and sustain networks in their communities and across the Commonwealth.

Success Indicators

- By 2005, at least 25% of secondary schools and youth centers should be equipped with ICT facilities.
- 50% of 15-25 year olds should have received basic ICT training by the 2007 CHOGM.



2 ICT and Governance

CYF agreed that the introduction of ICT in governance makes information more accessible and so enhances the transparency and efficiency of administrative processes.

Action Plan

Commonwealth and Governments

- The Commonwealth and its member nations should implement an e-governance system, which would provide adequate information on good governance. This should be made accessible to young people and all stakeholders involved in the governance of the Commonwealth and member nations. This will be an important tool in challenging corruption
- Governments should monitor the impact of ICT on its people, their health and work habits.

Success Indicators

- By 2005, the Commonwealth and governments should have started the first phase of the implementation of ICT programmes in government administration.



3 ICT and International Trade

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- The Commonwealth should call on developed member nations to generously donate used, but not obsolete, ICT facilities to less developed member nations, supporting and promoting schemes already in place to do this, e.g. Computer Aid International.

Governments

- Governments should adopt tax reduction and trade liberalisation policies on the transfer of ICT facilities.

Civil Society and Young People

- Civil society should create avenues for young people to easily procure grants and loans, which should enable them to purchase ICT equipment and the necessary training to use it.



Success Indicators

- There should be evidence of an increased flow of ICT facilities from developed to developing nations, particularly to schools and youth centres and organisations
- By 2005 member countries should have adopted common tax reduction and trade liberalisation policies.
- Grant and loan procurement systems to help young people should be in place in every Commonwealth nation.

YOUNG PEOPLE & ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

The CYF fully endorses the recommendations of the Creating Common Wealth conference held in Australia, October 2003.

Encouraging a spirit of entrepreneurship amongst young people is an important issue that needs investment and attention, by private and public sectors alike. Society needs to recognise that failure is part and parcel of the learning process, which needs to be destigmatised. If this is achieved, it will secure sustainable futures for the young people of today.

Recommendations

1 Capital and Funding of Youth Enterprises

The main obstacle to youth enterprise development centres on the difficulties in securing capital and funding.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- Commonwealth states should encourage the Commonwealth Business Forum to recognise the importance and potential of youth entrepreneurs, as well as to provide support in the area of financial backing and skills development.
- The Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative (CYCI) should be implemented in all Commonwealth countries. Awards should be given to those who have excelled in youth enterprise schemes in their respective countries, to encourage competition and stimulate interest in the Initiative and its objectives.

Governments and Businesses

- Governments should give incentives to financial institutions to provide easy access to credit facilities to young people. This includes acting as a guarantor, sharing of start-up capital, and loans with reasonable repayment periods. Young entrepreneurs should also be given tax relief, in the initial phases of their enterprise development.
- The allocation of government funds for youth enterprises needs to be conducted in a manner that allows for transparency and accountability. Funding should not be accompanied by overly prescriptive conditions, enabling young people to have ownership of the project. Funding should be accompanied by the provision of skills development, capacity building, and advice.
- Governments and businesses should cooperate in the establishment of scholarship schemes to enable young entrepreneurs to pursue higher education in fields relevant to the furtherance of their enterprises. The entrepreneurship focus should be adopted under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship programme.

Success Indicators

By the next CYMM:

- The CYCI (or similar schemes) should be implemented in all member countries;
- Skill development forums should have been developed and held;
- Partnerships should have been created between governments and financial institutions to provide favourable conditions for young entrepreneurs; and
- Scholarship schemes for young entrepreneurs should have been established (or extended).



2 Education and Information sharing

Young people need to be educated about the available prospects for entrepreneurship, and how they can best exploit these windows of opportunity.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- Commonwealth nations should create a comprehensive database that provides adequate information on successful young people enterprises and practices, from across the Commonwealth.

Governments

- Governments should promote models of successful business plans for budding young entrepreneurs to emulate.
- Enterprise development skills should be built into the curriculum, especially in secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

Young people and Businesses

- Young people should form youth entrepreneur networks, involving business consortia. This will enable the sharing of, and increased access to, useful contacts and a wide range of resources.



- Young people should collaborate with the private sector to establish networks of community information centres. These centres will advise young people about opportunities for enterprise development in their local communities, and assist them in recognising locational factors that would impact on their enterprises.

Success Indicators

By the next CYMM:

- A Commonwealth database and a set of national models of successful business plans should be made available to the public; and
- There should also be at least one youth entrepreneur network established in each country.

3 Resource Management Frameworks

Infrastructural changes need to be made to encourage young people to establish economic initiatives that promote youth empowerment.

Action Plan

Governments

- Bureaucratic constraints on the establishment of small and medium enterprises (in particular youth indigenous enterprises) need to be reduced in addition to the provision of social support.
- Monitoring systems relating to the implementation of these strategies should be developed to ensure that progress is being made and technical assistance provided where necessary.

Success Indicators

By the next CYMM:

- Member countries should each have established a youth entrepreneurship taskforce with a focus on monitoring the status of youth enterprise and the reduction of bureaucratic constraints.

GLOBALISATION

The impact of globalisation on young people should be looked at as a process of growth and change. Globalisation results in the increased integration of diverse people and cultures across the Commonwealth. This must be harnessed to improve the quality of life and living standards of Commonwealth citizens, especially young people. The negative effects of the dominance of developed nations on developing countries must be addressed.

Recommendations

1

Achieving balance between preservation of traditional culture and development

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- The cultural integrity and values of each member nation should be respected and promoted to reduce the negative impact caused by the dominance of developed nations.
- Developed countries should formulate trade initiatives to enable the young people of less developed countries to take full advantage of the opportunities that globalisation can offer.



Governments

- Governments need to take advantage of the opportunities that globalisation offers, and translate them into poverty reduction and improved living standards for all their citizens, especially young people. Developed nations should actively support less developed nations and be proactive in mitigating the negative effects of globalisation.
- Commonwealth governments should support emerging and existing local industry and promote local goods to reduce the trade imbalance and employment effects. Notwithstanding this, nations should move towards the reduction of all trade barriers.

Young People

- Young people should play an active role in their own education and that of their peers about the impact of globalisation on development and the opportunities to improve their standard of living. This can be achieved through partnerships with civil society organisations, the private sector and governments.

Success Indicators

- The Commonwealth should have revisited its resolutions on globalisation contained within the Coolum Declaration by CHOGM 2005. Governments should evaluate the impact of globalisation to young people and recommend the strategies all stakeholders can implement at every CHOGM.
- Partnerships should have been developed between NYCs, and/or youth organisations, civil society, and governments etc. by the end of 2004.



2 Commonwealth Visa scheme

In addition to the merit of globalisation on sharing of information, the Commonwealth could facilitate a greater movement of people.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- There should be the introduction of a Commonwealth Visa, to enable people to travel for limited periods of time between Commonwealth countries without the need for separate visas. This would not be for work purposes, and would only encompass short visits.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is the greatest threat to youth development across the world. HIV/AIDS is prevalent across all parts of the Commonwealth and its incidence continues to increase at an alarming rate. Education is an essential tool in preventing the spread of the virus. Despite committed efforts, we are concerned that the number of infections continues to rise, especially among young people, and believe that new educational tools should be developed to halt this spread.

Recommendations

1 Education

We, the young people of the Commonwealth, urge all stakeholders to consider how education can prevent the spread of the disease and enable people who are HIV positive to lead a normal life.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- Should, in collaboration with governments and donor agencies, invest in education in all Commonwealth countries, even those where the prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS are still low.
- We recommend the establishment of a Commonwealth HIV/AIDS education fund.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat/CYP should work in collaboration with Young Ambassadors for Positive Living to create a website. This will provide information and educational resources on HIV/AIDS – including issues of drugs, alcohol, and violence and their role in increasing transmission rates. It will also include information on in-country programmes, examples of good practice and testimonials of "positive living".

Government

- Should work in collaboration with youth organisations, healthcare professionals and civil society organisations to establish youth friendly health and education centres with facilities and support services for young people. These should also offer testing, referral services, counselling, social support, and support with healthy living.
- Should ensure that sex education is part of the national school curriculum. Such education should include all information about the virus, measures to protect against HIV infection, and the importance of knowing one's HIV status.

Youth and Civil Society Organisations

- NYCs and youth organisations should collaborate with other NGOs, health professionals, government and civil society in the dissemination of information and implementation of education programmes, including drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres.
- Should organise the training of facilitators to conduct programmes for HIV/AIDS eradication.
- Should organise seminars and lectures among themselves to share information on HIV/AIDS education.

Young People

- Participate as peer educators
- Act as role models for other young people
- Engage in educational opportunities offered to them

Success Indicators

- By the year 2005, reports of achievements gained in the promotion of education for HIV/AIDS eradication.
- Comprehensive HIV/AIDS education should be included in the national curriculum of all member nations by 2005



2 Stigma of HIV/AIDS

Young people living with HIV/AIDS suffer from the stigma still associated with the virus. CYF believes that all Commonwealth nations should work towards removing this stigma, which has a direct negative impact on millions of people across the Commonwealth, through discrimination aimed at people living with HIV/AIDS. All Commonwealth nations should support and empower people - particularly young people - living with HIV/AIDS, so that they may be confident and self-sufficient.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- CYP should continue to support the Young Ambassadors for Positive Living scheme (YAPL) and expand it into areas of need.

Government

- Governments should enforce laws that protect the rights of people with HIV/AIDS, and bring in legislation where it does not already exist.
- Governments should bring in and enforce anti-discrimination legislation to ensure those living with HIV/AIDS are not victimised. National policies about discrimination should be introduced. This should be part of the human rights agenda discussed within that section.
- Governments should, with civil society organisations, establish destigmatisation strategies for communities. This would help to remove the negative perceptions some people have about HIV/AIDS.
- Healthcare services should, through consultation with clients, monitor how healthcare professionals respond to people living with HIV/AIDS. This should ensure quality service provision for, and positive attitudes to, those living with the virus.
- Governments should involve people who are infected by the virus in policy formation and development of implementation processes.

Business

- Businesses should combat discrimination wherever it exists within their workplaces, and should not discriminate against people living with HIV/AIDS. They should develop appropriate employment policies to ensure this.

Youth and Civil Society Organisations

- Co-operatives should be formed by those living with HIV/AIDS for economic activity, and should be supported by youth and community organisations. This would promote self-sufficiency for those living with the virus and thus empower them as well as supporting them financially.

Young People

- Young people who are HIV positive can become young ambassadors for positive living.
- Young people should ensure their actions are not discriminatory towards people living with HIV/AIDS, and should combat discriminatory practice where they find it with their peers.



Success Indicators

- YAPL should be established in a further 6 countries by 2005
- 50% of member governments will have legislated against discrimination on the grounds HIV infection by 2005, and 100% by 2007.

3 Awareness of HIV/AIDS

Awareness of the virus and its implications is still at an unacceptably low level. As well as contributing to stigmatisation, this also results in the continuation of risky behaviours. It is essential that awareness programmes are developed in order to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS throughout the Commonwealth.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- A Commonwealth strategy to communicate awareness of HIV/AIDS should be developed which can be implemented in member countries. This strategy must be formulated in consultation with all stakeholders, and in particular with young people living with HIV/AIDS.
- There should be Commonwealth action to ensure the reasonable pricing and equitable distribution of anti-retroviral medication.

Government

- Governments must show strong political will in order to raise the profile and awareness of HIV/AIDS issues. They should implement a strategy of HIV/AIDS awareness as outlined above and increase their promotion of World AIDS day, through the education system and the media.

Media

- Mainstream media should carry messages and case studies of young people with HIV/AIDS through a variety of means (prime time TV, soap operas, radio, film, print, music, call-ins etc.)
- The media should work with all stakeholders to lead awareness-raising and advertising campaigns, using images of young people to increase their relevance.



Youth Organisations and Civil Society

- Community based awareness programmes should be implemented, featuring presentations by those affected by the virus. Community leaders should seek to raise awareness, and reduce stigma by announcing their HIV status.

Young People

- Young people should be receptive to awareness programmes and encourage their peers to attend.
- Young people should be involved in the design and delivery of awareness programmes.

Success Indicators

- By the next CYMM, a Commonwealth AIDS awareness strategy should have been developed and implemented by member countries. This strategy will include an increase in mainstream media messages relating to HIV/AIDS, more peer education and increased awareness of world AIDS day.
- Surveys of young people will show that young people have an increased awareness of HIV/AIDS modes of transmission, and will show behavioural change.

APPENDIX 1.0

COMMONWEALTH YOUNG WOMEN

As young women of the Commonwealth, we face a myriad of issues that are quite distinct from the problems of our male counterparts. Many women around the Commonwealth are subjected to exploitation, prejudice and discrimination. Such attitudes and a lack of investment in women hinder the development of nations. It is important to recognise the contribution that women make to the progress of society. Women, especially young women, are a powerful force for social, economic and political change.

The women delegates of Commonwealth Youth Forum 4 are committed to upholding the values of sisterhood and solidarity amongst women around the Commonwealth. We have come together to shape a set of recommendations for our Heads of Government to review and more importantly, implement.

Recommendations

1 Health and Welfare

Women's health and well-being is an important priority in the development of the family in particular and society in general.

Governments & Civil Society

- Governments and Civil Society should initiate widespread hygiene education programmes, particularly in rural areas, about effective methods of preventing disease.
- Governments and Civil Society should adopt widespread educational programmes informing young women about effective family planning and safe sex.
- Governments and Civil Society should implement and monitor the effective operation of health services for women at a community level.

Civil Society

- Civil Society should support programmes for young women living with HIV/AIDS at a local level. Such programmes should be shaped to cater for the specific needs of these women.
- Civil Society should make free legal advice and services available and accessible to women when their legal rights have been violated.
- Civil Society should establish a strong network of community organisations and NGOs in every nation to closely monitor and protect women from the violation of their rights. This network should be independent of government and have sufficient power to be an effective lobby and advocacy collective.
- Civil Society should establish community women's health centres to provide health services, counselling and facilities specially designed to meet the needs of women.

Business

- Businesses should work in collaboration with the government and the community sector to provide essential resources to implement the above-mentioned programmes.

Young People

- Young women should create support networks to help each other.

Success indicators

- A decline in levels of disease outbreaks,
- A increase in life expectancy of women in less developed countries,
- A reduction in the occurrence of HIV/AIDS amongst women,
- A reduction in cases of the violation of women's rights



2 Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment of young women will be a powerful weapon to change the status and role of women in Commonwealth society.

Government

- Governments should legislate the implementation of affirmative action policies across public and private sectors. This involves the positive promotion of women to positions of executive decision-making power through mechanisms such as gender-based quotas for women in Parliament and company executive boards.
- Governments should make legislation for policies of equal employment opportunities, pay equity and better working conditions for women in employment.

Civil Society & Business

- Civil Society and business should implement special employment and skill training programs targeting young women with little opportunity for education to build upon their skills and further their employment prospects
- Civil Society and business should support programmes for young mothers, involving the provision of community childcare facilities and opportunities for further education, should be implemented at a local community level
- Civil Society and business should provide scholarships for young women in tertiary education to assist them in overcoming any barriers to their learning

Business

- Business firms should adopt programmes of equal employment opportunities and affirmative action for young women as part of its organisational strategy, recognising the valuable contribution women employees can make to an organisation.



3 Political and Civil Participation

Young women are often marginalised from decision-making processes at all levels. To become powerful agents for positive change, young women must have the opportunity to engage and participate in political and civil development.

Government

- Governments should adopt legislative and constitutional measures to enshrine and protect the equal rights of women
- Governments should actively promote the legal rights of women in all aspects of society

Civil society

- Civil society should implement empowerment and leadership programmes specifically targeting young women, with the partnership of stakeholders including the government, community and private organisations

Young People

- Young women should establish women's collectives in their education institutions and local communities, and engage in autonomous organising to assess and respond to women's issues
- Young women and men should engage in discussion fora to exchange views and reach mutual understanding regarding women's issues. Only then can both genders work together to promote equality for all people.



4 Support Network

Collaboration and partnerships between all stakeholders is necessary in the advancement of women's rights and opportunities in the Commonwealth.

Action Plan

Commonwealth

- A Commonwealth Young Women's Network should be established, in affiliation with the Commonwealth Women's Network and Commonwealth Business Women's Forum. The network, consisting of young women from all Commonwealth members, will collaborate to share resources, ideas and engage in joint projects across the Commonwealth to address the urgent issues faced by young women.





CVf

