

Final Communiqué

Commonwealth Youth Forum 6



Entebbe, Uganda

November 14th - 21st 2007

Held in advance of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2007



Commonwealth Youth Forum



YOUNG PEOPLE & DEVELOPMENT:
Breaking Barriers, Unleashing Potential

COMMONWEALTH YOUTH EXCHANGE COUNCIL

CYEC is a youth development CSO which believes young adults are an essential resource for the development of Commonwealth nations. We support youth-led development activities and high quality community-based youth exchange. We promote young people's skills exchange, youth organisation capacity-building and inter-change, and platforms for young people's voice in the Commonwealth. CYEC is proud to be the founder, facilitator and supporter of the Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) which has developed as a pan-Commonwealth platform for young people to share concerns and recommendations with the wider Commonwealth at the time of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings and beyond.

CYF6 was a great success and the voice of young people is an even more integral part of the CHOGM process. CYEC was delighted to work closely with the Republic of Uganda through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, in collaboration with our partners at the Uganda National Youth Council, CYP and Commonwealth youth constituencies. CYF is a unique partnership between young people, civil society and governments. We commend the recommendations contained in this Communiqué. We look forward to working with young people and Trinidad & Tobago, the host nation for CHOGM 2009.

Vic Craggs OBE

Chief Executive

Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council



COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME

CYP works to engage and empower young people (aged 15-29) to enhance their contribution to development. Our mission is grounded within a rights-based approach, guided by the realities facing young people in the Commonwealth, and anchored in the belief that young people are:

- a force for peace, democracy, equality and good governance
- a catalyst for global consensus building; and
- an essential resource for poverty eradication and sustainable development

Together with the Government and National Youth Council of Uganda, CYEC, CYP youth representatives and others, we feel these principles have been amply demonstrated by the success of the 6th Commonwealth Youth Forum. We are proud also that CYF6 was linked to the 2007 Heads of Government Meeting through a special Youth Dialogue, at which Secretary-General Don McKinnon declared: "I care passionately for the young people of the Commonwealth and believe that this short meeting can help secure strong support and commitments...It's a legacy issue for me". We will continue the legacy by sharing the CYF6 communiqué widely, including with Commonwealth Youth Ministers at their meeting in Sri Lanka in April 2008.

Dr Fatiha Serour

Director, Youth Affairs Division/Commonwealth Youth Programme

Commonwealth Secretariat



CYF6 International Planning Team

During 2007, two international youth planning team meetings took place in London (February) and Entebbe (August).

Joseph Okwakau (CYF6 Chairperson (Chairperson Uganda National Youth Council) • **Nosheen Abbas** (Pakistan RYC)
Modupe Adefeso (Nigeria) • **Matthew Albert** (Australia RYC) • **Mobafa Baker** (Trinidad & Tobago, Chair PCYC)
Daniela De Bono (Malta) • **Jean Paul De Lucca** (Malta, Chair CYF5) • **Kevin Grimwood** (New Zealand RYC and 16CCEM)
Chris Hulme (UK) • **Johnah Josiah** (Kenya RYC) • **Geoffrey Kasanvu** (Uganda) • **Samuel Kavuma** (Uganda RYC)
Alexandra Lowe (UK) • **Isa Matovu** (Uganda) • **Shaft Nasser Mukwaya** (Uganda Head CYF6 Secretariat)
Peace Mutuuzo (Uganda) • **Hon Mariam Nalubega MP** (Uganda) • **Moses Nsubuga** (Uganda)
Hon Denis Hamson Obua MP (Uganda) • **Geoffrey Okiswa** (Uganda) • **James Okwi** (Uganda RYC)
Andrew Robertson (UK) • **Barbara Soetan** (UK, 16CCEM) • **Awel Uwihanganye** (Uganda)

Supported by:

Jane Mpagi (CYF6 Coordinator, CHOGM 2007 Secretariat),

Francis Kyeteka Mondo (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development Uganda)

Vic Craggs, Helen Jones (Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council)

Fatiha Serour, Rajkumar Bidla (Commonwealth Youth Programme) • **Grace Ekudu-Adoku** (UNICEF Uganda)



Syda N. M. Bbumba (MP)
MINISTER
MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



The Republic of Uganda, through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in collaboration with the National Youth Council of Uganda is proud and honoured to have hosted the Sixth Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) which took place at the Imperial Botanical Beach Hotel, Entebbe, Uganda from 14th - 21st November 2007.

CYF is one of the most important events linked to Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). It gives an opportunity to young people to come together and share information, exchange ideas, identify strategies and develop plans of action to enable them to contribute to the advancement of Commonwealth values.

Young people are the greatest resource for Commonwealth nations' future development. Challenges facing youth are multi-dimensional and require a multi-sectoral approach to solve. The Commonwealth Youth Forum provides a clear channel through which young people can champion their cause and become agents of their own destiny. Uganda is delighted that CYF6 produced strong recommendations and outcomes. Youth are key partners in development: it is right and fitting that their voices are now an integral part of CHOGM.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Uganda, I am grateful to many organisations and individuals who provided financial and technical assistance that enabled us to convene a successful Youth Forum. They include the UN System particularly UNICEF and UNFPA; British Airways and the British Council.

I am also grateful to Commonwealth Secretariat/Commonwealth Youth Programme and Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council staff for their guidance.

I appeal to all Commonwealth nations to spare no effort in implementing the recommendations of the young people.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Syda N. M. Bbumba'.

Syda N. M. Bbumba (MP)



Communiqué Statement to Heads of Government (CHOGM)

We, the delegates of the sixth Commonwealth Youth Forum, representing 47 Commonwealth member countries and territories, are pleased to report that we have held fruitful discussions under the theme of 'Breaking Barriers: Unleashing Young People's Potential for Development'. We thank our Ugandan hosts for this opportunity. We have committed ourselves to achieving substantial outcomes before young Commonwealth representatives meet again in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009 and ask you for your help in realising these. Young people make up more than half of the Commonwealth's population. We must continue to invest in young people as their involvement can ensure advancements for generations to come.

Recommendations for your Action:

We urge the Commonwealth and member governments to support and facilitate developing member countries to adopt technologies and development processes geared towards fighting poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation. We are concerned by the recent lack of meetings of the Commonwealth Environment Ministers that previously occurred in the lead up to CHOGM. We believe that such meetings provide an important opportunity to ensure CHOGM continually focuses on environmental issues. In order to ensure the relevance of the Commonwealth's work on environmental matters into the future, we, the young people of the Commonwealth, strongly commend to you our full participation within future CEMMs leading up to the 2009 CHOGM.

We urge the Commonwealth to work together with international bodies to promote trade policies which are fair, equitable and provide a level playing field for all countries, especially developing countries, by removing trade barriers and encouraging a stronger lobbying presence for the Commonwealth at international organisations like the World Trade Organisation.

As young people we do not have the same social, political and economic power as other demographics. Many of us are disproportionately affected by disease, hunger, poor sanitation and inaccessible health care. We feel that a high-level panel focusing on young people's health issues in the Commonwealth, that is made up of young people, and reports directly to the Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting would provide us with the opportunity to ensure that health policies are informed by grassroots input from young people and would assist us in mitigating the growing disparities in disease burden across the Commonwealth.

Young people are an integral part of peace building as well as peaceful social transformation. Violence and conflict has often come about when young people feel socially, economically and politically disenfranchised. In order to promote peace and understanding, structured facilitation between groups of disenfranchised young people must be supported. Further, young people should be encouraged to participate in peace building processes such as conflict and alternative dispute resolution initiatives and election observation.

In order to ensure the relevance of the Commonwealth to the future, we urge the Commonwealth to provide financial support to youth policies in line with the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment, the Commonwealth Youth Programme and the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council. Also, to include young people meaningfully at all levels, especially in the Commonwealth Ministers' Meetings. We would ask you to create meaningful and constructive mechanisms to engage us in policy making at national and global levels, for example through National Youth Councils.

We commend our ideas and initiatives as presented above, to you, the Heads of Commonwealth Governments in Uganda, 2007.

The Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF), which takes place as a precursor to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), reflects the spirit of the Commonwealth. This, the sixth meeting of the Forum and the tenth anniversary of the CYF, has brought together young people between the ages of 18 – 25 from across the Commonwealth to discuss issues affecting young people and make recommendations to address these issues. The CYF reflects the Commonwealth's commitment to the principles of democracy and diversity and provides young people with an opportunity to discuss issues, share their experiences and identify best practices. The Forum was held under the theme of *Breaking Barriers: Unleashing Young People's Potential for Development* and discussions were guided by three sub-themes, *Conflict Management and Social Transformation, Sustainable Development and Rapid Climate Change and Young People and Health*.

As the delegates of the sixth Commonwealth Youth Forum held at the Imperial Botanical Beach Hotel in Entebbe from the 14th to 21st of November 2007, we would like to extend our thanks to the Government of the Republic of Uganda for providing financial resources and hosting the most well-attended Youth Forum to date. We also thank them for their generous welcome, hospitality and support in the lead up to and during the Forum. Our thanks goes to the President of Uganda, His Excellency Yoweri Museveni and the Commonwealth Secretary General, the Right Honourable Don McKinnon, and the Deputy Secretary General, Mrs. Florence Mugasha, for their commitment to taking our communiqué to the Heads of Government Meeting. The support of the Government of Uganda was felt strongly through the substantial assistance provided continuously by the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Hon. Syda Bbumba, and the Minister of State for Youth and Children's Affairs, Hon. Maj. James Kinobe. We appreciate their sustained support as well as the freedom they gave the Ugandan National Youth Council and the International Planning Team.

We are also indebted to our Ugandan hosts and especially the Uganda National Youth Council who provided a warm welcome for all international and Ugandan delegates alike. Additionally, we would like to thank all those who volunteered their time as keynote speakers, facilitators of skills workshops, and provided assistance with logistical and administrative support. We are also grateful to British Airways and UNICEF for their financial support. Finally, our appreciation goes to the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council and the Commonwealth Youth Programme for providing advice, logistical support and resources that supported the running of the most successful Commonwealth Youth Forum to date.

Entebbe, Uganda
20th November 2007



Executive Summary

Young People and Development – Breaking Barriers, Unleashing Potential

Give young people half a chance and we will astound you, not only with our energy, enthusiasm and idealism, but also with our maturity and willingness to engage constructively in the process of improving our communities and our world. Failing to use young people as a resource and failing to invest in young people would be to miss an immense opportunity at the current time. Young people's involvement now can ensure advancements for generations to come. Vulnerable young people, especially those marginalised by disability, must be given the same opportunities to participate in the development process.

Structural change in the governance of international organisations must be an absolute priority, to ensure that young grassroots activists are involved in shaping policy decisions. At the national level this means revising or formulating robust youth policies that enable young people to play key roles in development. Meaningful and constructive mechanisms to engage young people should include supporting and developing National Youth Councils. Positive media coverage of these efforts, where they are already achieving substantial outcomes, would help to challenge current stereotypes about young people.



Conflict Management and Social Transformation

As young people of the Commonwealth we hold the view that Conflict Management and Social Transformation was a productive and important theme for our discussions at CYF6. We understand conflict to be a situation where individuals or groups perceive that their interests are different and power relationships are unequal. Conflict is a part of change and is inevitable in society. It can be destructive and constructive, but its resolution is an important part of Social Transformation, and must involve all partners. At the core of our discussions was the acknowledgement that the resolution of conflict accelerated the pace of social transformation. The delegates articulated the belief that young people can play a more significant role in the management of conflict as they themselves are often most affected. We also believe that the view that efficient and effective programmes, social services and infrastructure are necessary requirements for social transformation.

One of the most important recommendations that we have proposed was that the Commonwealth Heads of Government must ensure, through appropriate structures and policies, greater participation of young people in national decision-making and global governance.

Sustainable Development and Rapid Climate Change

We recognise that rapidly changing climatic conditions are a direct result of the lifestyles, actions and decisions of the human race. It is with considerable regret that we note that governments have failed to react adequately to warnings about climate change. Some of the biggest polluters are member states and we therefore believe that Commonwealth agreements and solutions could provide the sorely needed global leadership. The development and prosperity of industrialised countries cannot be at the expense of developing countries or future generations. Young people will bear the brunt of unsustainable development policies pursued today. We must be involved in global efforts to create solutions, focusing on reducing present pollution levels and adaptation to changes in climate.

We observe that the continued underdevelopment amongst the majority of Commonwealth countries is characterised by subsistence production processes that are detrimental to the environment, maintain high levels of poverty, youth unemployment, brain drain, low-quality exports and inadequate energy supplies.

The Commonwealth must provide leadership by ensuring the implementation of existing agreements and protocols on sustainable development. This ought to include promoting fair and equitable trade policies, especially for developing countries, therefore providing a 'level playing field' for all peoples. The private sector can be brought on board using incentives to encourage their investment in environmentally friendly technology and practices. The process of development can be a disruptive one and civil society can play an important role in the upholding of cultural traditions and preservation of natural environments. Finally, we have committed ourselves to the principles of active, responsible and moral citizenship by making individual lifestyle choices that are consistent with the principles of sustainable development. We ask for support in doing this through further opportunities to meet, exchange ideas and acquire the knowledge and skills required to influence climate change policy-making.

Young People and Health

We are concerned that disparities in disease burden, access to health care and life expectancy in the Commonwealth have not been eradicated, and in many instances are diverging further. As young people, we do not have the same social, political and economic power as other demographics; hence a disproportionate percentage of our generation live in poverty, incommensurately affected by widespread disease, hunger, poor sanitation and inaccessible health care. Young people today are further disadvantaged by a lack of meaningful chances to participate in the improvement of their health and well-being.

We have focused our discussion at the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2007 around making recommendations that call for lasting change. As representatives of a young Commonwealth, we believe that Governments, Civil Society, the Private Sector and the Media can and must do more to combat ill health and improve the well-being of our populations. We call for greater investment in accessible, youth friendly health care services and sports facilities, as well as the development of a high-level pan-Commonwealth panel to look at reducing the disease burden for young people. We call for further development of the Commonwealth Youth Games, effective communication of information, realignment and enforcement of health policies as well as better education on, and more responsible sale of, alcohol and drugs. On our part, we will take responsibility for raising awareness of health issues in our own countries through advocacy, acting as role models, creating peer support groups and volunteering in health projects.



Full Communiqué Statement

Young People and Development – Breaking Barriers, Unleashing Potential

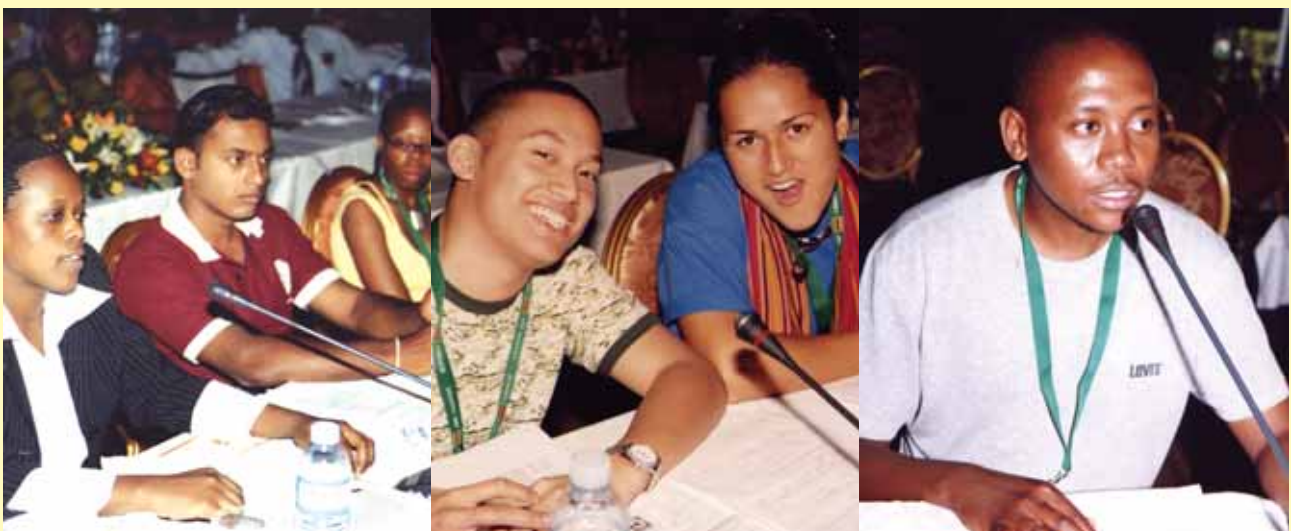
Give young people half a chance and we will astound you, not only with our energy, enthusiasm and idealism, but also with our maturity and willingness to engage constructively in the process of improving our communities and our world. We are often told that as young people we are the leaders of tomorrow. Behind this seemingly simple statement lies a dangerous assumption; namely, that young people have no valuable place in today's world. This should not be the case.

In fact, young people make up 50% of the Commonwealth's population but do not share the same level of economic power, political and social influence as other demographics. Failing to harness young people as a positive resource or invest in their development would be to miss an immense opportunity. Young people's involvement today can ensure advancements for generations to come. Vulnerable young people, especially those marginalised by disability, must be given the same opportunities to participate in the development process. In many instances, they lack the basic rights to a fair work environment and access to infrastructure to support active living.

1.1 Recommendations:

We, the delegates of the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2007, recommend:

- 1.1 Structural change in the governance of international organisations, in order to ensure that young people – those who are involved in tackling issues at grass roots level - are those shaping real policy change.
- 1.2 Young people are given legitimate representation in Commonwealth bodies and institutions, including shaping the priorities of the Commonwealth at the highest level.
- 1.3 Governments must have meaningful and constructive mechanisms to engage young people in policy making at all levels, specifically supporting and developing National Youth Councils. This may be achieved through greater support for the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council and their efforts to link Youth Councils to share knowledge, and skills to develop best practice.
- 1.4 Provide life enhancing exchange opportunities for young people to interact today, and play a crucial role in tackling the issues of tomorrow together.
- 1.5 Revise and formulate robust youth policies that enable young people to serve as partners in development.
- 1.6 Positive media reporting of youth initiatives, to challenge current stereotypes and value the contribution of young people in developing a fair, just and progressive Commonwealth.
- 1.7 Tertiary and technical vocational qualifications should be recognised by educational institutions across the Commonwealth to allow labour mobility, consequently fostering development.
- 1.8 That the Commonwealth and member governments integrate youths with disabilities in their action plans. Infrastructure and development should be disability friendly.
- 1.9 Supporting young people to advocate and lobby for change in the issues identified within this communiqué.



Conflict Management and Social Transformation

We, the delegates of the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2007:

- Understand conflict to be a situation where individuals or groups perceive their interests to be different and their power relationships unequal. Conflict is part of change and is inevitable in society: it can be constructive or destructive. We further understand Social Transformation to be a cultural, economic and/or political transition.
- Appreciate that Conflict Management and Resolution is an important part of Social Transformation as it involves all partners (states, governments, private sector and civil society) engaging in sustainable growth and development.
- Believe conflict may arise from miscommunication or misunderstanding of cultural issues, personal choices and lack of mutual respect.
- Recognise that the unequal distribution of services, resources and wealth between generations may contribute to conflict.
- Acknowledge that well-managed conflict can present opportunities for improved communication and the appreciation of diversity, innovation, mutual learning and understanding.
- Recognise the strength of interpersonal and cultural diversity, and believe we can all learn from each others' culture, by breaking down barriers and unleashing young people's full potential.
- Recognise that some Commonwealth countries have inter and intra refugee problems that have impacts on economic and social development and the environment.

2.1 Recommendations to the Commonwealth

We urge the Commonwealth, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, to:

- 2.1.1 Continue to be supportive of its member states; and where relevant, examine issues of latent conflicts in member countries giving these issues the attention required to initiate rapid resolutions.
- 2.1.2 Emphasise the need to reform justice systems to adequately provide restorative facilities to young people.
- 2.1.3 Ensure that its principles are promoted and upheld by strengthening and promoting dialogue between conflicting parties, with the view to resolving conflicts through consensus and reconciliation.
- 2.1.4 Continue to support member states, both technically and financially, with special emphasis on the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP).
- 2.1.5 Encourage Commonwealth members to use media platforms for promoting respect and understanding for the diversity of Commonwealth nations as well as the Commonwealth principles.
- 2.1.6 Adequately inform and train an extended network of young people about the roles and functions of the Commonwealth, relative to Conflict Management and Social Transformation in partnership with member governments.
- 2.1.7 Make a concerted effort to initiate a robust Commonwealth framework that shall address the holistic needs of refugees, while maintaining the political, economic, social and environmental security of host nations.

2.2 Recommendations to Member Governments

We call upon our Governments to:

- 2.2.1 Ensure, through appropriate structures and policies, greater participation of young people in national decision-making and global governance.
- 2.2.2 Formulate policies, which prevent discrimination based on age and gender among young people seeking to own property and capital.
- 2.2.3 Implement education policies in consultation with young people, which cater for all youth.
- 2.2.4 Commit to peace-building initiatives and commit substantial resources to achieve peace.
- 2.2.5 Establish youth-friendly recreational centres, or other such centres for interactive activities, especially in conflict zones, refugee camps and refugee communities where these centres would act as platforms for youth engagement, hence creating a conducive atmosphere for reconciliation.
- 2.2.6 Continue to promote and support the work of National Youth Councils and other youth governance structures where they exist, and to move towards their speedy establishment where they do not exist in the interest of enabling the positive engagement of young people.
- 2.2.7 Continue to support the Commonwealth adequately, especially by providing the financial support required by the initiatives of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP).

- 2.2.8 Continuously monitor and evaluate policies and programmes targeted at young people and aid in their enhancement.
- 2.2.9 Facilitate entrepreneurial development through the execution of the Youth Enterprise Development (YED) and the Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) initiatives.
- 2.2.10 Partner with civil society to design and implement a skills-based Conflict Management and Resolution programme for children and youth across the Commonwealth.
- 2.2.11 Promote the development, and support where existing, of peer-to-peer education programmes in Conflict Management and Social Transformation.
- 2.2.12 Implement alternative dispute resolution programmes in schools at all levels.

2.3 Recommendations to Civil Society

We encourage Civil Society to:

- 2.3.1 Be vigilant in exposing the latent conflicts in their respective countries and give these issues the attention required for rapid resolution.
- 2.3.2 Encourage positive values amongst young people as they play a pivotal role in today's Commonwealth and that of the future.
- 2.3.3 Promote, support and increase access to opportunities for intercultural experience.

2.4 Recommendations to the Private Sector and the Media

We ask the private sector and the media to support our efforts by:

- 2.4.1 Embracing local cultures, and increasing local programming and broadcasting with the aim of being more influential in developing positive behavioural traits in young people.
- 2.4.2 Ensuring a balanced and impartial portrayal of young people in the media in order to improve public perception of young people.
- 2.4.3 Playing an active role in partnership with civil society to identify and promote positive role models, achievers, mentors, and influencers in order to motivate young people to become agents of positive change.

2.5 Recommendations to Young People

We commit ourselves and encourage our counterparts throughout the Commonwealth to:

- 2.5.1 Engage in new and existing opportunities for intercultural experiences to foster greater understanding and appreciation for diversity.
- 2.5.2 Be sensitive to the negative impacts of unresolved conflicts and to embrace our roles as constructive citizens of our nations and the Commonwealth.
- 2.5.3 Use positive peer influence to combat crime, violence, and substance abuse.
- 2.5.4 Encourage active participation of young people in identifying and solving young people's conflict issues.
- 2.5.5 Empower each other through education, both formal and informal, in order to be catalysts for positive change.



Sustainable Development and Rapid Climate Change

We the delegates of the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2007:

- Recognise that the present and rapidly changing climatic conditions are a direct result of the lifestyles, actions and decisions of the human race. The climate is constantly changing but we are particularly concerned by recent acceleration in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Note, with regret, that some governments continue to fail to react adequately to warnings about climate change.
- Are aware that some of the biggest polluters are Commonwealth members and thus Commonwealth agreements on solutions can be rapidly converted into global solutions.
- Recognise that development and prosperity in the industrialised countries of the Commonwealth should not be at the expense of developing countries. Developed countries should act on existing policies that recognise the principles of their differentiated responsibility.
- Hold that aid and foreign direct investment should be directed at infrastructure projects that promote sustainable development, reflecting the needs of recipient countries as defined by recipient countries themselves.
- Strongly believe that international policy development structures and governments currently do not sufficiently involve young people. Yet it is young people, and especially those who are marginalised, who will bear the brunt of climatic impacts in the future.
- Strongly believe that education should be sufficient and appropriate to local needs and emphasise sustainable development alternatives.
- Note that the mass migration of refugees has adverse environmental impacts.
- Strongly believe that sustainable development should address the issues of poverty eradication, employment creation and livelihood transformation in Commonwealth societies.
- Believe there is a need to minimise the wealth disparity between developed and developing nations.
- Are of the opinion that industrialisation with attempts to mitigate effects on the environment is an alternative means for sustainable development.

3.1 Recommendations to the Commonwealth

We urge the Commonwealth, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, to:

- 3.1.1 Work towards the establishment of a separate Commonwealth Environmental Body to oversee Commonwealth programmes and initiatives related to Sustainable Development and Climate Change. The programme of work of this body should include:
 - Assisting countries to develop without jeopardising future generations' livelihoods.
 - Migration and improved city management.
 - Implementing a policy of carbon neutrality and waste minimization across all of its programmes and initiatives.
 - Facilitate the development of enhanced legislative frameworks to regulate sustainable natural resource management.
- 3.1.2 Expand existing programmes, which provide financial and technical expertise to sustainable enterprises and those making use of appropriate technology.
- 3.1.3 Work together within international bodies to promote trade policies, which are fair, equitable and provide a level playing field for all countries.
- 3.1.4 Invite young people to participate fully in the meetings of the Commonwealth Ministers, noting especially the importance of youth participation in the Commonwealth Environment Ministers' Meetings in the lead-up to CHOGM 2009.
- 3.1.5 Encourage the establishment of strong international links to cater for the surplus of human resources.
- 3.1.6 Promote and support developing countries to develop the necessary technology, energy production and infrastructure for processing and manufacturing so that their products fetch better returns in the world market.

3.2 Recommendations to Member Governments

We call upon our Governments to:

- 3.2.1 Make a concerted effort to implement existing agreements and protocols, including those that focus on reducing carbon emissions.
- 3.2.2 Designate a significant portion of the budget to renewable energy resources.
- 3.2.3 Make efforts to limit deforestation and promote reforestation.

- 3.2.4 Develop and enforce a robust legal framework that incentivises compliance with environmental protocols, conventions and treaties, sustainable industries and entrepreneurs.
- 3.2.5 Support research to generate ideas to reduce the environmental impact of refugee movements and migration.
- 3.2.6 Develop housing and sanitary policies that respond to the issue of rural-urban migration.
- 3.2.7 Adopt free education for all at primary and secondary levels, as illiteracy and ignorance pose barriers to the process of sustainable development. Formal and informal education curricula should include sustainable development principles and encourage young people to recognise their moral and social responsibilities in order to create a society that values its environment.
- 3.2.8 Address the issue of child-headed households that depend on remittances and are caused by the movement, relocation and migration of labour.
- 3.2.9 Invest and include ICT in education systems to address the digital divide in the Commonwealth.

3.3 Recommendations to Civil Society

We encourage civil society to:

- 3.3.1 Assist in upholding the cultural traditions and preserving the natural environments of their countries as they experience socio-economic development.
- 3.3.1 Encourage eco-tourism to promote and financially support socio-economic development.
- 3.3.1 Collaborate with young people in raising awareness on issues of climate change and sustainable development.
- 3.3.1 Encourage local consumption in order to support local producers and reduce food miles.

3.4 Recommendations to the Private Sector and the Media

We ask the private sector and the media to support our efforts by:

- 3.4.1 Improving working environments and conditions for young people especially in times of fast economic growth.
- 3.4.2 Promoting the positive programmes and initiatives that are being driven by young people in the pursuit of sustainable development and in combating climate change.
- 3.4.3 Taking responsibility for adopting environmentally friendly practices, by earmarking financial and human resources for the development of more environmentally friendly technology and practices.

3.5 Recommendations to Young People

We have committed ourselves and encourage our counterparts throughout the Commonwealth to:

- 3.5.1 Be active, responsible and moral citizens who make individual lifestyle choices that are consistent with the principles of sustainable development.
- 3.5.2 Vigorously advocate changes in environmental policies and programmes of governments. Where such policies already exist young people should advocate for their implementation.

Young People and Health

The delegates of the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2007 recognise that:

- Nurturing a healthy Commonwealth where everyone has equal access to health care provision is of utmost importance.
- Health disparities across the Commonwealth are continually widening, fuelling poverty and hindering development.
- In most Commonwealth countries, young people are disproportionately affected by rising health inequalities, where widespread disease has created millions of child-headed households and decimated entire communities.
- Young people's involvement in shaping global health care policy and intergovernmental funding priorities is minimal and insufficiently supported.
- Levels of unplanned teenage pregnancy across Commonwealth countries are growing.
- HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, STIs and other infectious diseases are having a devastating impact on the peoples of the Commonwealth.
- Climate change is having distorting effects on the health of young people, accelerating the spread of water born diseases and other illnesses.

- Poor mental health and its associated stigma, substance abuse and unhealthy lifestyles are issues of growing concern in the Commonwealth, which are often overlooked and misunderstood.
- Young people with disabilities face particular challenges in accessing health care services and leisure facilities.
- Access to information is limited due to poor systems of communication.
- Health care services are insufficiently sensitised to the needs of young people.
- There are many counterfeit drugs in the market which affect the health of young people. Also, in some Commonwealth countries, the resources are not enough to cater for youth programmes, including sexual and reproductive health services.

4.1 Recommendations to the Commonwealth

We call on the Commonwealth, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, to:

- 4.1.1 Develop a high-level panel on health issues for young people in the Commonwealth, to consider issues of mental and physical health, HIV/AIDS, malaria, substance abuse, malnutrition, obesity, sexual health and the monitoring of rehabilitation facilities.
- 4.1.2 Conduct a pan-Commonwealth evaluation on alcohol and tobacco abuse for submission to the next CHOGM, which aims to reduce consumption by:
 - Implementing tax incentives for private companies to support community health initiatives.
 - Review, and if necessary, adjust alcohol and tobacco pricing to combat binge drinking and smoking.
- 4.1.3 Develop a global campaign for better health on 'Commonwealth Day', which aims to tackle the stigma associated with mental health and infectious disease, create opportunities for stakeholders, including UN agencies, civil society and private sector groups to develop a joined up approach to health issues and raise awareness of health issues throughout the Commonwealth.
- 4.1.4 Include health awareness raising workshops and campaigns at the Commonwealth Youth Games.
- 4.1.5 Celebrate and share best practices on health services annually with regular country reports and an award for health projects run by young people.
- 4.1.6 Improve communication with young people and report on progress on health improvement via the use of websites, interactive DVDs and other materials.
- 4.1.7 Promote the importance of universal health care provision for all citizens regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, nationality or ability.
- 4.1.8 Strengthen the comprehensive malaria preventative and mitigation programmes for the most affected Commonwealth countries.

4.2 Recommendations to Member Governments

We call upon our Governments to:

- 4.2.1 Increase investment in formal and informal education, ensuring all young people learn about health issues from a young age, specifically considering:
 - Healthy eating, sexual health, infection, drug and alcohol abuse, stigma, discrimination and mental health.
 - Use of participatory methods and youth friendly voluntary counselling and testing to increase engagement.
- 4.2.2 Provide free, healthy, nutritious school meals to all school children.
- 4.2.3 Improve the accessibility and sensitivity of health care services, particularly considering needs on the basis of gender, physical and mental fitness, sexual orientation, race and geography.
- 4.2.4 Provide greater resources to support and strengthen the ability of civil society organisations and local groups to tackle health issues at a community level, using peer-led approaches and volunteering.
- 4.2.5 Provide greater support and training for parents and employers to nurture safe, violence-free and healthy home and work environments.
- 4.2.6 Review, raise awareness of, and enforce current legislation and policy protecting those affected by infectious diseases, specifically considering the needs of young people.
- 4.2.7 Implement restorative justice, with rehabilitation programmes to support drug users, and consideration of schemes such as needle exchanges to limit the spread of infection.
- 4.2.8 Substantially increase investment in recreational and sporting facilities to provide young people with useful activities to further promote well-being and improve fitness. The needs of young people with disabilities and those not in education, employment or training should be given a high priority.

- 4.2.9 Recognise and support the diverse medicinal approaches across the Commonwealth through funding of research and further profiling of indigenous medicine and healthcare.
- 4.2.10 Increase the number of training centres which provide skills development, livelihood training and enterprise programmes, particularly in rural areas, to empower young people economically.
- 4.2.11 Limit the contribution and sponsorship of youth programmes from alcohol and tobacco companies.
- 4.2.12 Introduce stiffer penalties for drug barons who lead young people to drug taking in and out of correctional facilities.
- 4.2.13 Develop specially targeted programmes to provide education about HIV & AIDS for marginalised/vulnerable groups and those at greater risk of infection.
- 4.2.14 Provide greater support to strengthen the ability of civil society organisations and local groups to tackle health issues at a community level, especially using peer-led approaches to combat stigma and discrimination.
- 4.2.15 Ensure media adhere to advertising standards and convey positive health messages whilst ensuring freedom of speech, transparency and space for public criticism.
- 4.2.16 Increase and make available resources for youth programmes including sexual and reproductive health.
- 4.2.17 Monitor the nature of HIV/AIDS message delivery so that it promotes prevention of further infections.
- 4.2.18 Monitor the availability and access to quality drugs.
- 4.2.19 Ensure protection of their citizens denied employment and scholarship opportunities on the basis of their HIV/AIDS status.

4.3 Recommendations to Civil Society

We encourage civil society to act upon the following recommendations:

- 4.3.1 Raise awareness of health disparities across the Commonwealth.
- 4.3.2 Provide opportunities for young people to take action in tackling health inequalities within communities and support groups.

4.4 Recommendations to the Private Sector and the Media

We ask the Private Sector and the Media to:

- 4.4.1 Invest in community health initiatives that promote well-being and improve local facilities, particularly using trust funds as part of their corporate social responsibility obligations.
- 4.4.2 Invest in healthy labour practices, improved employment conditions and employee well-being.
- 4.4.3 Support enterprise development programmes for young people to encourage social enterprises, which aim to improve health.
- 4.4.4 Use media to raise awareness of health disparities and tackle stigma associated with mental health, HIV/AIDS, infectious disease and other health issues. This can be achieved through employee training and advertising campaigns.
- 4.4.5 Adhere to advertising standards and ethical responsibilities by ensuring that messages are factual.

4.5 Recommendations to Young People

We have committed ourselves and encourage our counterparts throughout the Commonwealth to:

- 4.5.1 Raise awareness of issues, and the laws and policies associated with them, among peers through campaigning, profiling role models and support groups.
- 4.5.2 Hold governments accountable through mobilisation on health issues and scrutinising commitments with evidence based research and evaluation.
- 4.5.3 Participate in governance of health organisations and high-level panels.
- 4.5.4 Take responsibility and find out about peer support programmes within our individual countries and regions.

Towards CYF7 – Trinidad and Tobago 2009

5.1 Recommendations to All Stakeholders

We ask all stakeholders to:

- 5.1.1 Take steps to ensure that all Commonwealth countries and dependent territories send representatives to participate.
- 5.1.2 Ensure that CYF7 is a youth-driven event, planned, managed and organised by an international planning team made up of youth from civil society and Youth Caucus representatives.
- 5.1.3 Create an online space for young people to share resources, practice and ideas.
- 5.1.4 Adopt a waste minimisation policy for the CYF.

5.2 Recommendations to the Commonwealth Youth Programme

We urge the Commonwealth Youth Programme to:

- 5.2.1 Increase awareness of their programmes and the Commonwealth Youth Forum throughout the Commonwealth.
- 5.2.2 Guarantee that all Regional Youth Caucus Chairs are represented on the international planning team and that they attend all meetings.
- 5.2.3 Ensure that civil society and regional youth caucus delegates from CYF6 are members of the next youth planning team to guarantee organisational learning.
- 5.2.4 Establish a CYP alumni network with its own Chairperson to encourage continuity and allow for the exchange of ideas and experiences.
- 5.2.5 Allow young people to have an input into a transparent process for the selection of the young people presenting to CHOGM.

5.3 Recommendations to the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council

We call upon the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council to:

- 5.3.1 Provide an annual progress report on the CYF, which is made available on the internet.
- 5.3.2 Guarantee that all regions have one civil society youth representative on the international planning team and that they attend all meetings.
- 5.3.3 Develop an alumni network to maintain links with and between participants of the Forum.

5.4 Recommendations to our Hosts in Trinidad and Tobago

We suggest our hosts in Trinidad and Tobago:

- 5.4.1 Build on the experience, recommendations and feedback arising from CYF6, paying particular attention to environmental considerations and evaluation processes.
- 5.4.2 Emphasise organisational learning by establishing contact with CYF alumni, CYF6 planning team members as well as the partner agencies, the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council and the Commonwealth Youth Programme.
- 5.4.3 Consider the island of Tobago as the venue for CYF7.

5.5 Recommendations to the Planning Team

We ask the International Planning Team for the CYF7 to:

- 5.5.1 Emphasise co-ordination with the Commonwealth People's and Business Fora.
- 5.5.2 Ensure that the Commonwealth Youth Forum has as much interaction with the Heads of Government Meeting as possible.
- 5.5.3 Involve at least one young person in each plenary session who works, or is connected to, the relevant fields.
- 5.5.4 Ensure the Chairs make an effort to ensure that each delegate gets an equal opportunity to ask questions and that sufficient time is allocated to the question and answer period during the plenary sessions.
- 5.5.5 Ensure that the structure of the Forum allows open communication of ideas on themes prior to plenary sessions.
- 5.5.6 Ensure that time be allotted for regional meetings.
- 5.5.7 Emphasise the orientation session for delegates to clarify objectives and outputs of all proceedings of the Forum. As a part of the orientation process, each delegate should be given a hard copy of the previous document delivered to CHOGM to use as reference.
- 5.5.8 Encourage transparency within the Communiqué drafting process by allowing the opportunity for all delegates to observe the Communiqué drafting process.
- 5.5.9 Increase the number of skill-building sessions and their variety.
- 5.5.10 Ensure that the flags of all countries, including overseas, associated and external territories, are represented.
- 5.5.11 Ensure additional representation from Commonwealth member countries with regard to the need for formal mainstreaming of youth with disabilities.
- 5.5.12 Provide meaningful opportunities for CYF7 delegates to interact with host country youth.



2007 was the tenth anniversary of the Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF). It was established by the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (CYEC), working with Scottish partners, in 1997 as a contribution to the People's Commonwealth at the time of the Edinburgh Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The CYF has met at each subsequent CHOGM and provides an independent platform for Commonwealth young people to voice their views and make recommendations on behalf of their peers. The CYF is planned and delivered by an international planning team of host nation and Commonwealth young people. The Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council and Commonwealth Youth Programme provide technical assistance.

CYF6 was held on the shores of Lake Victoria near Entebbe, Uganda from 14th – 21st November 2007. The theme was *Young People and Development: Breaking Barriers, Unleashing Potential*, with particular reference to Health, Conflict Transformation and Sustainable Development and Climate Change. 47 Commonwealth countries sent youth representatives, recruited via representative youth structures. CYF6 was generously hosted by the Republic of Uganda through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in collaboration with the National Youth Council of Uganda. The Forum was honoured to be officially opened by HE President Yoweri Museveni. HE Rt Hon Donald McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary General, received this Final Communiqué Statement on behalf of Heads of Government. An exciting and prestigious development was a post-Forum Youth Dialogue held between Commonwealth young people and Heads. This communiqué document comprises young people's recommendations.

Thank You

The success of the 2007 Uganda Commonwealth Youth Forum is due to a great many people and organisations:

Speakers: HE Y K Museveni, President, Republic of Uganda • HE Donald McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary-General • Dr Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT • Mrs Florence Mugasha, Deputy Commonwealth Secretary-General • HE Prof Gilbert Bukeny, Vice President Republic of Uganda • Hon Maj. James William Kinobe, Minister of State for Youth and Children's Affairs • Hon Syda Bbumba, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development • Dr Deborah Landey, Deputy Director General, UNAIDS, Geneva • Dr Kihumuri Apuuli, Uganda AIDS Commission • Dr Mark Collins, Commonwealth Foundation • Vic Craggs OBE, Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council • Dr Fatiha Serour, Commonwealth Youth Programme • Maybin Chilufya, Infotainment Movement • Isa Matovu, Uganda Youth Network • Johnah Josiah, Kenya Youth Network • Mobafa Baker, Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus • Hon Dan Fred Kidega MP, East African Legislative Assembly • Dr Wijaya Jayatilaka, FLICT, Sri Lanka • Emilia Arthur, British Council InterAction Programme, Ghana • Former child soldier • Andrew Fiddaman, Youth Business International • David Ssegawa, BBC Youth Entrepreneur winner, Uganda • James Battison, Eternal Optimist • Nadia Roumani, UNOPS • Guy Hovey, UMCOR • Elaine Howard (Tonga)

Working Group Facilitators: Modupe Adefeso (Nigeria/Team Leader) • Mahloof Ahmed (Maldives) • Matthew Albert (Australia) • Mobafa Baker (Trinidad & Tobago) • Becky Booth (Wales/UK) • Norman Gilbert (Grenada) • Elaine Howard (Tonga) • Johnah Josiah (Kenya) • Isa Matovu (Uganda) • Diane Mensah-Bonsu (Ghana/UK) • Kamal Powell (Jamaica) • Barbara Soetan (UK) • Connie Wessels (South Africa/UK)

Communiqué Facilitators: Alexandra Lowe (UK/Team Leader) • Deborah Carrington (Barbados) • Rajiv Joshi (Scotland/UK) • James Okwi (Uganda)

Skills Workshop Leaders: Emilia Arthur Ghana, British Council • Becky Booth Wales, Institute for Complete Economics • Deborah Carrington (Barbados) • Grace Ekudu UNICEF • Robert Odedo UNICEF • Adebayo Fayoyin UNICEF • Brian Kironde UNFPA • Mobafa Baker (Trinidad) • Elaine Howard (Tonga)

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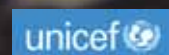
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For further information, please contact:

Commonwealth Youth Forum, c/o CYEC, 7 Lion Yard, Tremadoc Road, London SW4 7NQ

T: +44 (0)207 498 6151 • E: mail@cyec.org.uk • W: www.cyec.org.uk

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