



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

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Henley Media Group

COMMONWEALTH

HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING 2018 REPORT



INCLUDES PERSPECTIVES FROM

HRH The Prince of Wales | Theresa May | Joseph Muscat
Amina J Mohammed | Shahid Khaqan Abbasi | Yoweri Museveni | Akinwumi Adesina
Frank Bainimarama | Julia Gillard | Freundel Stuart | Roberto Azevêdo

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The publishers wish to thank all the individuals and organisations that have contributed to the publication, especially Elizabeth van der Valk and Helen Jones at The Royal Commonwealth Society.

Chairman: Nigel Barklem
Publisher: Deep Marwa
Managing Publisher: Alex Halpin
Managing Editor: Jane Nethersole
Sub Editor: Gemma Malone
Commercial Manager: Michael Malcolm
Designer: Daniel Harland Brown
Printed by: Buxton Press

ISBN: 978-1-9996541-0-8

Published by:

hm

Henley Media Group

Two America Square
London, EC3N 2LU
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)20 7871 0123
www.henleymediagroup.com
www.commonwealthministers.com

In association with:



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CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

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Lord Mayor's Message

Sydney ranks as one of the top 10 most connected cities - alongside New York, London, Tokyo, Paris and Hong Kong.

Through our Sustainable Sydney 2030 Program, we are ensuring that Sydney continues to be one of the world's most liveable, sustainable and connected cities, with a key focus on the environment, society, culture and the economy.

Sydney provides the headquarters for nearly 40 per cent of the top 500 Australian corporations. Digital, financial, educational and creative businesses are all thriving in Sydney – supported by our robust economic strategy.

We have significant strengths across a number of sectors, including financial and professional services, tourism, international education, innovation and creative and digital services.

The City's global focus is to promote Sydney and its economy, attract talent, events, tourists and investment; connect local businesses internationally and build capacity through knowledge exchange to boost economic prosperity; create a thriving globally connected community;

and to further Sydney's reputation as a competitive and innovative global city.

These pages outline some of the work we've done to build on Sydney's many strengths and ensure it remains an outstanding global city that continues to welcome the world.

Clover Moore
Lord Mayor of Sydney



Artist Impression: George Street Transformation by City of Sydney and Haycraft Duloy



A Resilient City

Sydney is part of the global 100 Resilient Cities initiative pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Hosted by the City of Sydney, the program is a collaboration between the metropolitan councils of Sydney, the NSW Government, business and community partners.

It is designed to strengthen the ability of Sydney communities to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of impending uncertainty and disruptions we all face.

We are focussed on working as a whole city to address the challenges of a resilient economy, infrastructure and community.

A Sustainable City

Climate change is the most critical issue facing our society and incremental steps are no longer adequate – we need to dramatically increase action if we are to achieve real outcomes. Cities are leading the way on climate action.

At the City of Sydney, our operations became carbon neutral in 2007, we've driven greenhouse emissions down by 25 per cent in our own operations and 19 per cent city-wide (despite the local economy expanding by 37 per cent across the same period), and we're moving toward 50 per cent renewable energy by 2021.

We do this by collaborating with businesses and residents and our Better Buildings partnership is a proud example of this, which has logged a 52 per cent reduction in carbon emissions from the major owners of commercial buildings in our CBD.

We're also investing in stormwater harvesting projects at Sydney Park and Green Square and planting thousands of trees to reduce the heat island effect.

It is critical that we work together and encourage all levels of Government to work seriously towards a sustainable future.

A Cultural City

Sydney's cultural life emerges directly from our residents, workers and visitors – from our First Nations people to those who have more recently arrived in our city.

NSW hosts the nation's largest number of artists, musicians, architects, designers and cultural professionals, as well as the biggest audiences and highest levels of participation. Creative enterprises are often small and we must make room for these initiatives.

We need to ensure the people who drive them can continue to live in Sydney and lead the kind of lives that inspire creativity. This means providing suitable space for creative enterprises and affordable housing for cultural workers.

It also means working across many policy areas, including planning, building, liquor licensing, transport and housing.



A City for Cycling and Walking

Nearly a third of City residents walk or ride to work - more than in any other area across metropolitan Sydney.

When we choose to walk, we also reduce demand for other vehicles and in the long run, reduce congestion on the road network. It's also an opportunity to connect with other people in the community. That is why the City continues to work to ensure that the built environment is designed to encourage residents

and commuters to take short trips on foot. For residents, our target is to ensure that everyone lives within a reasonable walking distance to most local services.

The City is committed to making cycling easier and safer, to make it attractive and feasible as transport as well as for recreation. This commitment includes creating the Liveable Green Network – a complete network of high quality walking and riding routes in the city.

The total number of people riding in and around our local area for work and recreation has doubled since 2010.

To date, **12.5 kilometres of new traffic separated cycle-ways** have been completed, with **a further eight kilometres of shared paths and on road cycleways** over the next four years.



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Credit: UN Women/Gaganjit Singh

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CHOGM 2018 REPORT



Claire Whitaker OBE,
Chair, The Royal Commonwealth
Society

On the occasion of the 25th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), it is my great pleasure as Chair of The Royal Commonwealth Society to bring you the CHOGM 2018 Report. Published by Henley Media Group in partnership with The Royal Commonwealth Society, the report features an inspiring series of thought-leadership pieces from Commonwealth Heads of Government and other highly respected and knowledgeable commentators.

The bi-annual CHOGM, together with the associated forums (Youth, Business, People's and Women's) provides a regular opportunity for Commonwealth leaders to take stock of progress and to set agendas for the succeeding period which will see the United Kingdom succeed Malta as Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth until 2020.

The theme for this year's meeting – Towards a Common Future – focuses on promoting collaboration and delivering solutions to create a more prosperous, secure, sustainable and fair

future for all Commonwealth citizens. Each of these sub-themes is explored through the thought-leadership pieces in this report, with authors providing tangible suggestions as to how the Commonwealth can act as a force for good in the world. The report also addresses the common challenges faced by Commonwealth member states including weak global trade and investment flows; insufficient progress to meet the Sustainable Development Goals; new cross-border security threats; the effects of climate change on small and other vulnerable states; and threats to our shared values of democracy, good governance and inclusivity as set out in the Commonwealth Charter.

I am particularly pleased that there will be a strong youth focus at the 2018 CHOGM and that this is also reflected in the following pages. Young people account for 60 per cent of the Commonwealth's population and the future of the Commonwealth depends on them.

I send my best wishes to all attending the 2018 CHOGM – and associated forums – for successful, progressive and collaborative discussions. And finally, I wish to express my thanks to all the authors and supporters featured in this publication. I hope you find their contributions informative and valuable. By sharing ideas and working together we can create a better future for all Commonwealth citizens. ■

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WELCOME TO CHOGM 2018



Theresa May,
Prime Minister of the United
Kingdom, and incoming
Commonwealth Chair-in-Office



“ I look forward to seizing the opportunities the summit week will offer. ”

This year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) is the largest summit of its kind in the United Kingdom's history. And, as we host this truly global event, we are reminded of the unique relationships we have forged with a diverse and vibrant alliance of Commonwealth nations.

The United Kingdom has an unbreakable commitment to the Commonwealth and to the fundamental values that it upholds – democracy, human rights and the rule of law. And the summit provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm these precious values while, at the same time, reinvigorating the Commonwealth and cementing its relevance to this and future generations. The deep partnerships that we share through a revived 21st century Commonwealth can help us strengthen the prosperity and security of our citizens, and those of our friends and allies spread across its 53 different countries.

As we will see at the many exciting events planned in London and Windsor, the Commonwealth is a living, breathing network. We are 2.4 billion citizens living in some of the world's fastest growing economies.

The Commonwealth already accounts for one-fifth of global trade. And by building on our existing trade links and establishing new ones, we must work together to build further upon this solid foundation. Regardless of which corner of the Commonwealth you are from, we will all benefit from the jobs created by trade agreements between member states. Every one

of those new jobs will mean another family seeing their hard work rewarded, and the spread of greater opportunity.

In building the Commonwealth of the future, we must put youth at its heart. Helping our young people to maximise their potential through work and education opportunities, and to understand the importance of the Commonwealth, is absolutely vital in building momentum for the future. Many British schoolchildren have already benefitted from special packs about the Commonwealth that have been distributed to teachers. And in our Youth Forum, the leaders and thinkers of tomorrow will have the chance to have their voices heard.

Schools are also benefitting from education packs on the oceans, which will be a key theme at this summit. Marine pollution, particularly from plastics, is one of the most significant challenges facing the world today. It is so important that we tackle this scourge, so that future generations can enjoy a natural environment that is cleaner and greener than we currently find it.

The Commonwealth, spread over six continents, is uniquely placed to take transformative action, and I look forward to seeing how this will take shape. If we stand together, we have the opportunity to send not only a powerful message to the world, but also to make a real difference.

Like environmental damage, international security – including cyber security – is also a cross-border issue requiring collective action and will be another central theme this week.

Through sharing information both off- and online, we can and must work together to keep each other safe.

As Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, I am proud to lead a country that has always looked beyond Europe to the wider world – a Global Britain, committed to spending 0.7 per cent of our national income on development, and to the rules-based international system with the Commonwealth at its heart.

At home, the Commonwealth has had a profound impact on modern Britain, making us one of the most diverse and multicultural countries in Europe and our country has been shaped by the people who have made the United Kingdom their home.

It is only through coming together that we can truly understand how much we have in common with each other. From job creation, to leaving the next generation with a cleaner planet, each of the Commonwealth's 2.4 billion citizens has something to gain from their membership of this extraordinary and diverse organisation.

I look forward to seizing the opportunities the summit week will offer and to building on the work begun by the Prime Minister of Malta, Joseph Muscat, in 2015. We are looking outwards and we are looking forwards – towards a brighter, more prosperous, secure, fair and sustainable future for everyone.

Finally, may I pay tribute to Her Majesty The Queen, who has for the past seven decades stood at the head of the Commonwealth family. Her tireless work is truly humbling. ●



GIBRALTAR

“Relationships across the Commonwealth are what are going to make Gibraltar strong and enduring in trade. These trade agreements will be crucial to Gibraltar’s ability to endure Brexit and prosper after it.”

Chief Minister, Fabian Picardo QC MP

Although we are a small community, Gibraltar is outward-looking, modern and cosmopolitan. Like the Commonwealth, the strength of our community is in its diversity. We embrace and share the progressive and democratic values that the Commonwealth represents, and will seek to foster and strengthen ties with Commonwealth nations in the years to come.

Gibraltarians are 30,000 of the 2.5 billion people across 71 nations who maintain a special connection. Together Commonwealth citizens represent about a third of the global population and we share a common language, culture and values and enjoy similar legal, political and accounting systems. And in an increasingly uncertain global political environment, many Commonwealth nations are progressively looking towards each other as natural allies and partners.



Gibraltar is an eager and active participant, and has a lot to offer. We stand ready and able to provide aid in times of disasters, and support whenever it is needed: when in September 2017 members of our Commonwealth family suffered the effects of Hurricane Irma, Gibraltar donated ten 4x4 vehicles, £20,000 worth of general hardware items and £6,500 worth of building materials to aid the emergency relief effort. Gibraltar’s athletes are enthusiastic and passionate participants in the Commonwealth Games, which are widely lauded as the network’s greatest success. In 2017 the University of Gibraltar established the first new Commonwealth scholarship scheme in 20 years and in February 2018 Gibraltar was represented at the Commonwealth Youth Parliament for the first time. Gibraltar is proud to provide these opportunities for young people: we want to be progressive, active members of the Commonwealth, working with our family for a productive, sustainable future for all.

Gibraltar also gains a lot politically through our participation in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the networking that we are able to conduct through its meetings. Indeed, at the height of Spain’s threats to Gibraltar’s sovereignty in 2013, the CPA adopted a resolution stating that the political pressure exerted against Gibraltar by Spain, including the lengthy border queues, was totally unacceptable. In addition to the numerous resolutions of support for Gibraltar and for our right to self-determination, EU members of the CPA also vowed to raise the issue with their respective Members of the European Parliament.



Four years later HM Government of Gibraltar was delighted to host the 2017 CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) conference. Forty Parliamentarians from 11 countries met to establish links and networks that we can use to our mutual benefit post-Brexit. Addressing the Conference, I stressed that the strength of the Commonwealth is in its diversity. Going forward, if we are to continue to be instruments of democracy and prosperity, we must be flexible and understanding in our approach and make the most of our unique experiences and perspectives.

I often describe the Constitutional position of Gibraltar as “devo max”, meaning that we have more self-government than any of the devolved administrations. We are therefore in a strong position to do business with and otherwise work together with Commonwealth countries. As Lord Luce has pointed out, there is plenty of opportunity for Commonwealth nations to work together as equal partners. Economic trade within the network is growing at a very fast pace, around 4%, and Gibraltar must be a part of this in the long term.

Whilst we have to date been concentrating our diplomatic efforts on the European Union and the United Nations, Gibraltar is eager and ready to develop even deeper ties with the Commonwealth. Indeed, the Commonwealth flag will replace the European Union flag after Brexit as a symbolic gesture of the strengthening of economic ties and the establishment of trade agreements between Gibraltar and other Commonwealth states post-Brexit. Of course, Gibraltar will also form part of any trade deals that the United Kingdom does after Brexit, and this will increasingly mean with fellow Commonwealth Members.

Although Gibraltar is not a full member, there is huge potential for Gibraltar to develop its own trade with the Commonwealth outside of those that the United Kingdom does for itself. Indeed, according to the Office for National Statistics, whilst a reduction in UK exports to the Commonwealth is consistent with falling global trade in

recent years, UK services exports to Commonwealth states almost tripled from £8.5 billion in 1999 to £22.3 billion in 2015. This is where Gibraltar might come in: 90% of Gibraltar’s passporting services are conducted through the UK. If the future opportunity for growth is in the exporting of services for the UK, this plays to Gibraltar’s greatest strength. Our geography too, can assist. More than 1/3 of Commonwealth countries are African nations and Gibraltar, as the gatekeeper of the southern Mediterranean, is strategically placed for trade in both goods and services.

It is only natural that even Commonwealth states have, in recent years, been focusing increasingly on regional trade and cooperation. The BIMR region may have an increased role in coming years in ensuring continued access for EU member states to the UK market, and vice versa. This may be particularly true for Malta and Cyprus, the only two countries who will enjoy both Commonwealth and EU membership post-Brexit. Gibraltar enjoys a good bilateral relationship with both, and there may be a role for us here, too. Whilst it is not clear how a post-Brexit UK will advantage Commonwealth trade, Gibraltar may increasingly look towards expanding our services economy to passporting financial services between Commonwealth states and the United Kingdom.

There are, therefore, clear opportunities for increased Commonwealth integration and trade, but there are also limitations on this. Gibraltar is an active and enthusiastic associate member that shares and embraces Commonwealth values, and has both a lot to give and a lot to gain from the network. We engage politically across the Commonwealth, and particularly within the BIMR region, and have been grateful for their support in the face of Spanish aggression in 2013. We have also been willing providers of aid and support in areas where our strengths and expertise have been useful to other members of the family. The majority of Gibraltar’s financial services business is done via the United Kingdom, and we have a unique opportunity to act as a bridge between the UK, the Commonwealth, particularly the BIMR, and the European Union.

TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE

HRH The Prince of Wales calls upon the Commonwealth family of nations to urgently and collectively rise to the challenge of protecting our planet's ecosystems – to ensure a safer, more secure, more prosperous and fairer future.



His Royal Highness
The Prince of Wales

As in most families, there are striking and recognisable features that identify us all as members of the Commonwealth. Our shared values, history and culture define the very essence of our Commonwealth identity and guide and inform all that we seek to achieve together. But it is the fascinating diversity which exists across and within the 53 member countries – from which I have learnt so much on the many visits I have made throughout the Commonwealth during the last 64 years – which is what makes this family of nations quite unlike any other and which, I happen to think, is its greatest strength. Unity in diversity is something to be celebrated and cherished, not just for its own intrinsic value but because, it seems to me, it offers the world the very best hope of addressing the most pressing challenges of our time.

These challenges, while not insurmountable, are urgent and profound. From climate change to rapid urbanisation, economic instability to global security, there is no challenge facing our world to which the Commonwealth is immune. Water, energy and food insecurity stalk our most vulnerable populations and communities. The relentless destruction of our forests and the overfishing and pollution of our oceans are the by-products of a system which seems hell-bent on testing this unique and miraculous planet of ours to destruction.



The Prince of Wales standing inside a hurricane wrecked school on the British Virgin Islands, November 2017.

Credit: Clarence House

“ The urgency and immediacy of the challenge worries me deeply, as so many Commonwealth countries and their people are now on the front line of climate change. ”

It is a planet which – as I fear we sometimes forget – we share. We tend to be preoccupied with the borders that define the nations of the world and which, quite literally, divide us. Less appreciated is the extent to which we are united by the global commons of atmosphere and ocean and how it is the shared global systems that lie between and around our countries that in the end sustain us. These are, quite literally, our Common Wealth.

Covering more than two thirds of the Earth’s surface, the ocean is a vital component in our life support system; so, too, is the thin shell of gases that envelopes our planet, protecting us from harmful radiation, recycling freshwater and mediating the weather and climate we all experience. Yet, for too long, we have taken these fundamental systems, and the inestimable benefits they provide, for granted. There is a desperately urgent need for us to concern ourselves with repairing the self-inflicted damage that we can no longer afford to ignore. It is vital,

therefore, that we rise to the challenge of protecting these ecosystems, and the unique array of life they sustain. A one-size-fits-all approach simply cannot be the answer.

As so many of the religious and cultural traditions of the Commonwealth have understood for millennia, our world – and all the creatures who share it – can only be sustained in the long-term by working in harmony with nature. I cannot help but think that we need to embrace an understanding of development that builds partnerships and establishes an economic model that is regenerative and that creates, uses, recovers, recycles

and restores. This Circular Economy, as it has come to be known, offers us the best chance we have of rising to the challenge before it is too late.

Now is the time to act. We simply do not have the luxury of deferring the necessary action to a future generation. The urgency and immediacy of the challenge worries me deeply, as so many Commonwealth countries and their people are now on the front line of climate change. In this regard it is perhaps worth considering how the Commonwealth may hold the solutions. The extraordinary wealth of ideas and the potent blend of traditional knowledge and cutting-edge ingenuity – so often represented in the under-utilised capacity of the many Commonwealth professional associations, on which the 2.4 billion people of the Commonwealth can draw – offers us unlimited potential to effect change in our world.

I pray, therefore, that the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2018 will not only strengthen the bonds between our nations and the people within them, but will resolve – with real courage and imagination – to address these global challenges and thereby to set the rest of the world an example of the path we need to take.

Like all families, by facing the future together we can achieve so much more than we ever could alone. By working towards a common future, built not only on shared associations and values, but also on an innovative and effective partnership between the public, private and non-governmental sectors, we will ensure a safer, more secure, more prosperous and fairer future for our children and grandchildren. There could scarcely be a more important goal. ●

“ Like all families, by facing the future together we can achieve so much more than we ever could alone. ”

SAFEGUARDING THE FUTURE OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Dr Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta and outgoing Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, proudly describes Malta's commitment to the role and the Commonwealth's tangible achievements during their tenure.



“ At the start of our chairmanship's tenure it was our target to work bottom-up by reviving the Commonwealth group of nations from the grassroots level upwards. ”

Dr Joseph Muscat,
Prime Minister, Malta,
and outgoing Commonwealth
Chair-in-Office

The Commonwealth is unique. Its uniqueness lies not only in its varied composition of members but also in how it transmits its shared values. The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting is a case in point. Fifty-three politically, economically, geographically and socially diverse countries come together as one to positively contribute to the securitisation of our futures, on the basis of our shared values and history.

For the past 30 months (until April, 2018), Malta has had the privilege and honour of acting as Chair-in-Office to the Commonwealth. This is a position which carries a certain degree of responsibility and a wealth of opportunity; that of shaping and determining the road to securing the future of the Commonwealth. In fact, it was by no coincidence that Malta's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2015 – entitled Adding Global Value – focused on how the Commonwealth family could leave an imprint on the future of our planet.

At the start of our chairmanship's tenure it was our target to work bottom-up by reviving the Commonwealth group of nations from the grassroots level upwards: through enhanced people-to-people exchanges, business opportunities, renewed diplomatic relations and the strengthening of already established practices and contacts.

Malta also spearheaded efforts to help the Commonwealth strengthen its role on the world stage and contribute to global issues that affect us all, such as on climate change. One cannot talk of change for a better and different world without taking the first steps at initiating these forces of change. The Commonwealth's collective effort on climate change adaptation and mitigation is necessary, especially when considering that its membership includes 30 small states, 24 of which are small island developing states at risk of disappearing forever. Passivity will not prevent a rise in sea level, water shortages or extreme weather events. Climate change is an uphill struggle that requires collective effort. Malta is proud of the fact that whilst it was Chair-in-Office, we managed to create the much needed momentum that culminated in

the successful outcomes from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP21, more widely known as the historic 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It was then, in April 2016, that Malta alongside other small and vulnerable states in the Commonwealth signed the UNFCCC Treaty.


As a small island state, we can talk from experience. We know how dependent some countries can be on our oceans and seas. Bearing this in mind, and firm in the belief that our future depends on the health of our oceans, we sought to push fellow Commonwealth member states to recognise the importance of conservation and the sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Our geography makes us fully understand that our marine resources, habitats and biodiversity need to be secured and protected. We are proud to have had the opportunity to host the Our Ocean, An Ocean for Life conference in October 2017, which served as a platform to initiate a commitment to change. As a united Commonwealth, we must continue to strive towards ensuring that our future will have healthy, safe and clean oceans. This is reflected in the Commonwealth's creation of its Blue Charter, to reach a level of cooperation between Commonwealth countries to implement their commitments on sustainable development, particularly those related to Sustainable Development Goal 14. Just as forests are the lungs of the earth, the oceans are its blood.

Actions speak louder than words, but where resources are limited, action might be hard to achieve. With this in mind, at CHOGM 2015, Malta launched the Commonwealth Trade Finance Facility to substantially increase trade and investment finance, particularly for small states and developing economies with specific needs. Smaller and poorer economies face increasing difficulty in tapping affordable international trade finance, and in fact, the rationale behind this initiative is to create a Credit Enhancement Fund through donations from Commonwealth member states, with a view to facilitating greater access to trade finance in the Commonwealth small states. It is envisaged that the

facility will play an important role in enhancing trade and investment finance, particularly for small and vulnerable Commonwealth states with limited access to international trade finance, and is estimated that it can potentially support an incremental trade flow of almost US\$ 1 billion over three years.

However, assistance in combatting the effects of climate change, and building resilience and protecting our oceans goes beyond any form of monetary securitisation. We must also focus on capacity-building. The Small States Centre of Excellence, which is currently being set up in Malta, aims to deliver targeted capacity-building programmes and engage in the sharing of best practices in dealing with specific challenges for small states. This project has been discussed and endorsed by Commonwealth leaders at two consecutive Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings. The objectives of the centre are to facilitate targeted and predominantly internet-based capacity-building programmes in areas that benefit small states, as well as to serve as a focal point for sharing of best practices in areas that benefit small states. The centre would target its services at the 30 small states of the Commonwealth but not be restricted to these alone, as it seeks to internationally deliver 'excellence' in its chosen areas of focus.

Malta did its best to work towards tangible results and to lead by example as Chair-in-Office. The years of discussion to renew the Commonwealth's functions culminated in Malta's 2015 CHOGM – a defining moment where we started looking at our present with a forward-looking view, rather than focusing on our past. And now that we have identified what is needed to secure the Commonwealth's relevance to help find solutions to today's global challenges, it is time to reach the next level. CHOGM 2018 will be an opportunity to start working on tangible change.

The Commonwealth must remain committed to its people, continue to look at its future and build towards its longevity. It must evolve with time and use its unique characteristics to be a world leader amongst others. It has a common voice that it can use to project its message to the world – that our future depends on sustainability. 

CHOGM 2018 IS A WATERSHED FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

Dr Timothy S Harris, Prime Minister of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, believes the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is a pivotal summit to catalyse collective action and create opportunities for prosperity, equality, sustainability and security for all Commonwealth citizens.



Dr Timothy S Harris,
Prime Minister, Federation of
St. Kitts and Nevis

For many, the Commonwealth has long been and continues to be a great force for good. It adds value to the lives of countless millions of peoples across four continents. To many of them, the Commonwealth's advantage lies, inter alia, in its ability to support free, fair and representative elections through its valuable observation missions. This is reflected in the support for democracy and good governance. In addition, this Commonwealth advantage and the related tangible value have been demonstrated, over the years, through Commonwealth advocacy on behalf of inherently vulnerable small island states and other vulnerable states. Likewise, it comes from attracting well-deserved, international attention to the issues of these small countries' high-indebtedness; the HIV and AIDS pandemic and the social and economic costs of non-communicable diseases.

These people have seen the Commonwealth advantage when it raises awareness of the existential threat that climate change poses to lives and livelihood. Commonwealth nations – including those in the Caribbean and the

Pacific – are suffering with increasing frequency the effect of catastrophic climactic events. They see and feel the Commonwealth's ability to add value when democracy is entrenched and bolstered by strong institutions and the rule of law. They feel it when their human rights are respected and protected; and when they see their leaders come together in common cause to work for them, whether to fight for gender equality, greater social inclusion, people empowerment or girls' education.

As Commonwealth leaders meet against a backdrop of the historic capital city of London; again, I have an abiding faith that through our collective leadership, solidarity and partnership, this Heads of Government Meeting can be a defining moment - a watershed.

At Malta 2015, I detected a developing consensus among Heads of the need to recommit to the Commonwealth and to steering this beloved institution in the direction – where whilst it could never be all things to all people and address all our individual priorities – it would however, become more focused on adding even greater value. I felt



Commonwealth Heads of Government
at the 2015 CHOGM in Malta.

Credit: Flickr/DIRCO

“ To many the Commonwealth’s advantage lies in its ability to support free, fair and representative elections through its valuable observation missions. ”

colleague Heads were equally eager to transform the way the Commonwealth worked for the better and to do more through effective partnership, exchange of best practices and by strengthening mechanisms to stimulate opportunities for our collective prosperity, equality, sustainability and security.

The Commonwealth has long been a pioneer in the cause of justice through capacity building. It has long been a champion of the marginalised and the downtrodden; and a steadfast advocate for the invisible and voiceless. It has been an architect of opportunity and hope, a facilitator and reliable agent of positive change. The Commonwealth has often been bold and unapologetic in promoting Commonwealth values and principles as outlined in its Charter.

I fear, however, that if we are not watchful and true to the ethos of the Commonwealth, our future history could be dramatically different. It would be a history, where regrettably

the Commonwealth’s legacies of shared commitments risk being set aside.

Change, we all accept, is inevitable and often necessary. But change should not be predicated solely on financial heft nor should it be used to steer the organisation away from its core competence in favour of narrow national priorities. The Commonwealth as an agent of change has always been consensus-focused and demand-driven. It will surely cease to be relevant to the lives of its people if it fails to understand them, their collective needs and to

add value. The Commonwealth’s true competitive advantage lies in its ability to touch real lives in real ways.

London sits at the crossroads of the world in so many ways. It is dynamic and continues to reinvent itself into a leading modern city reflective of the values of the Commonwealth. It would be reassuring should CHOGM London build positively on CHOGM Valetta.

I am hopeful that at this meeting, we can retain the Commonwealth’s pioneering spirit; that it can create collective opportunities for member states to mobilise the wherewithal to act nationally. If we succeed in addressing the global commons that threaten us, commit the necessary support to revitalise the Commonwealth in a way that it is fit to tackle tomorrow’s problems without losing sight of its legacy role, then CHOGM 2018 would indeed have been that important watershed facilitating a far more prosperous, more sustainable, more secure and above all a much fairer future for all. ●

“ I have an abiding faith that through our collective leadership, solidarity and partnership, this Heads of Government Meeting can be a defining moment - a watershed. ”



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

BECOME A 150 FELLOW OF THE
ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
IN THIS OUR 150TH YEAR

150

1894 – 2016

1957 – 2017

1883 – 2018

Champion of Equality

The RCS has long championed the use of dialogue to challenge the most pressing Commonwealth issues and has been at the forefront of debate on gender discrimination, domestic violence and child marriage within the Commonwealth. As far back as 1894, the RCS promoted Gender Equality, inviting a woman to read a paper at a meeting for the first time and admitting women as Fellows to the Society in 1922. Since 2016 we have enabled a youth voice to address the United Nations on gender issues.

Trusted Convenor

Statesmen of newly independent countries, including Ghana's first Prime Minister, Kwame Nkrumah in 1957, sought the platform of the RCS to share their visions for the future. In the 80's Oliver Tambo, Thabo Mbeki, Chief Buthelezi and Desmond Tutu joined us to speak about South Africa's future and Nelson Mandela gave his first UK press conference from the RCS in 1990. This reputation continues and saw us convene a number of former Presidents in 2017 to discuss 'leaving no one behind' in global development.

Promoter of Youth

Each year, since 1883, the RCS has encouraged the creativity and imagination of tens of thousands of young people. With its rich history of empowering young voices and recognising the achievement of aspiring writers, the international schools' writing contest, now The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition, continues to be a vehicle for the development of young people's literacy and critical thinking skills, helping to expand their world view.

Through youth empowerment, education and advocacy, the RCS champions human rights, equality, democracy and sustainable development.

For 150 years The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) has played a leading role in promoting the values that define the Commonwealth.

In this our 150th year, we invite you to donate £150 to The Royal Commonwealth Society, becoming an RCS 150 Fellow and helping us to continue our work of improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens around the world.

RCS 150 Fellows receive:

- An invitation to a prestigious celebration of the RCS' 150 years
- A commemorative gift
- Inclusion on the RCS 150 Fellow Register
- Books and magazines throughout the year

CHAMPIONING THE VALUE AND VALUES OF THE MODERN COMMONWEALTH

Michael Lake, Director of The Royal Commonwealth Society, celebrates the Society's 150 anniversary and considers how the modern Commonwealth can have a vibrant and useful future in our changing world.



Michael Lake CBE,
Director, The Royal
Commonwealth Society

The first home of The Royal Commonwealth Society, founded in 1868 by A. R. Roche, under the name of the 'Colonial Society' consisted of two rooms in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall. In 1869, the prefix 'Royal' was sanctioned by Queen Victoria. The intervening 150 years have flashed by and the ever-present theme has been the agility of the Society to adapt to a changing world and a changing Commonwealth.

The modern Commonwealth is very much more than the assembly of governments and officials. It is a network of peoples, by far the most identifiable grouping on the planet and like all large and thriving networks in the modern age, it behaves and develops in ways that conventional processes find hard to explain or to keep pace with. The Commonwealth has emerged in this technological era in a way that is organic rather than planned. It is woven together by linkages outside of government by the movement and settlement of people,

by culture and sports, by professions and so on. The strong bonds of shared language and in most cases, the application of the common-law, together with a broadly values-driven approach to civil society, are the glue that holds it all together.

There is no doubt that in the last decade or more, the Commonwealth has experienced a decline. Its relevance has been questioned and it has not shown itself to be a material factor in foreign policy, throughout its membership. Meanwhile, Her Majesty, as Head of the Commonwealth, has been an important influence. The unstinting and consistent guidance and endorsement that The Queen has given to its institutions and activities have been inspirational and crucial at difficult times.

The Commonwealth now finds itself at something of a cross-road. As officials and leaders meet at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London and Windsor they have the opportunity to revitalise this very modern network. Imagination will

need to be applied. The Commonwealth should concentrate on what it can do and avoid what it is less well placed to deliver. There needs to be a clear direction of travel in recognising that India represents nearly 60 per cent of the Commonwealth population. There needs to be a focus on prosperity and security, the key attention-grabbers for governments, whilst recognising the capacity that the Commonwealth has to tackle grand challenges, in the fields of health and environment, for example, if it turns its mind to doing so.

There are many examples of the ways in which the Commonwealth works in this manner. The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition is the world's oldest international schools' writing competition, established in 1883. Managed by The Royal Commonwealth Society and the most widely entered by young people from all corners of the world, it offers all Commonwealth youth aged 18 and under the opportunity to express their hopes for the future, opinions on the present, and thoughts on the past, through the written word. The competition is used by individuals and teachers to build confidence, develop writing skills, support creativity and encourage critical thinking, using literacy to empower young people. The competition is widely accepted as a success and is an efficient and inexpensive way of using the influence of the Commonwealth to reach developing young minds and to offer a sense of perspective.

I should also mention The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy (QCC). When launching it at the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta in 2015 Her Majesty The Queen said:

"I have been especially touched by one such project, The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy, which has been proposed by Commonwealth



Launched in 2015, The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy (QCC) is a pan-Commonwealth network of forest conservation projects.

“ The Commonwealth should concentrate on what it can do and avoid what it is less well placed to deliver. ”

countries wanting to harness their collective expertise and resources to protect the world's forests.”

The QCC presents a rare opportunity to unite the whole Commonwealth family and save one of the world's most important natural habitats – our forests. By creating a pan-Commonwealth network of forest conservation projects, the QCC will mark Her Majesty The Queen's service to the Commonwealth while conserving indigenous forests for future generations. The QCC has brought together partners and countries from almost all the Commonwealth's members in an ultra-low cost initiative that demonstrates

the capacity of the Commonwealth to act collectively, to share best practice and to inspire young people.

In a similar vein the Associate Fellowship of The Royal Commonwealth Society serves as a means for the most imaginative, inquiring and energetic young people, from all backgrounds to join a circle of the like-minded, using mainly social media to engage on the issues that will shape their future.

These are but a few examples of the Commonwealth working in practice and they offer tantalising glimpses of the ways in which it could be expanded.

My aspiration is to see the Commonwealth assuming a clearly recognised leadership role; for Commonwealth countries to be explicitly proud of their membership and for neighbouring countries to be seeking engagement by association. The Commonwealth is a substantial asset, but only if it remains vibrant and useful. ●

“ My aspiration is to see the Commonwealth assuming a clearly recognised leadership role. ”



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

Through youth empowerment, education and advocacy, The Royal Commonwealth Society promotes the value and the values of the Commonwealth. We champion human rights, democracy and sustainable development across the 53 member states, working to improve the lives and prospects of individuals.

CAMPAIGNING

In partnership with other organisations, the RCS campaigns on behalf of Commonwealth citizens to promote human rights, to end early and forced marriage, to secure equal rights for marginalised groups and to ensure sustainable development.



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EMPOWERING YOUTH

Recognising the demographic importance and potential of young people in the Commonwealth, the RCS promotes young peoples' voice and leadership, creating opportunities through youth leadership programmes and network building.



CELEBRATING THE COMMONWEALTH

The RCS organises the largest celebration of the Commonwealth and its values each year, the multi-faith Commonwealth Service in Westminster Abbey, along with high profile award ceremonies and receptions.



FACILITATING DEBATE

Convening panels and round tables for strategic discussion and the exchange of ideas, the RCS continues its support of policy development and advocacy campaigns bringing together leaders from business, diplomacy, academia and civil society.



EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

With its resounding success in encouraging over 13,000 school children to submit essays to its competition each year, the RCS works to promote the Commonwealth at the earliest stages of education and to inspire the young to play a part.



RESEARCH AND REPORTING

The RCS partners with other NGOs to produce carefully researched and thought-provoking publications such as 'A Commonwealth Toolkit for Policy Progress on LGBT Rights' and 'A Passage from India – Improving UK visitor visas for Indian nationals'.



THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES: SPORT AS A FORCE FOR GOOD

Louise Martin, President of the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), explains the commitment of the organisation to ensuring that the benefits of the Games are far-reaching and stretch way beyond a thrilling 11 days of sport.



Louise Martin CBE,
President, Commonwealth
Games Federation

Everyone across the Commonwealth sports movement believes in the exceptional power of sport as a force for good. A force that brings us together, reconciles our differences and has the inspiring potential to change lives for the better. A force that drives our commitment to humanity, equality and destiny. A force that encapsulates our passion for and belief in the triumphant, generous spirit of humanity.

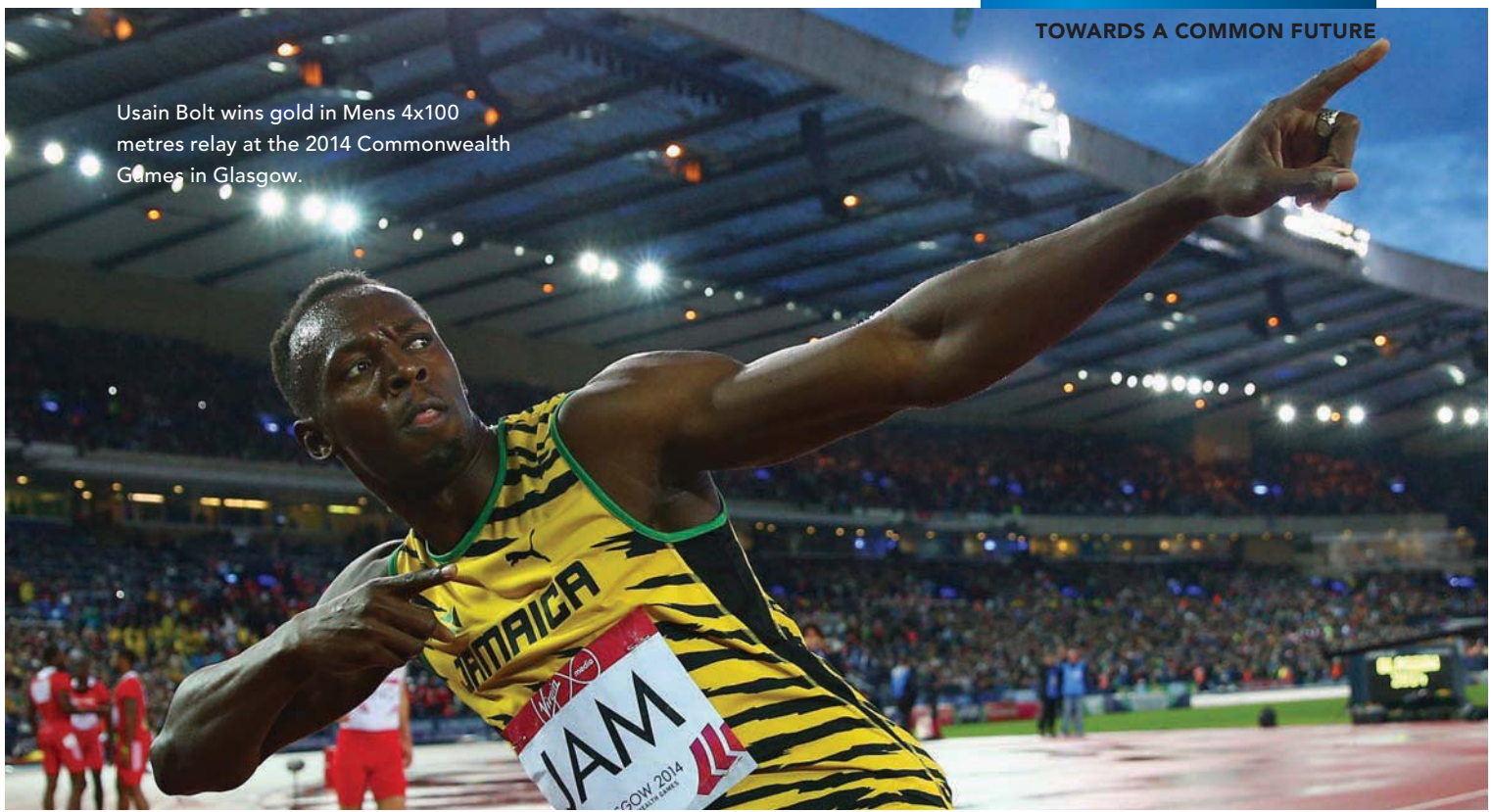
We saw this every day, in action, as the Gold Coast 2018 Queen's Baton Relay visited every terrain and time zone of the Commonwealth. The baton was a powerful, celebratory and tangible symbol of today's Commonwealth Games – carrying Her Majesty's message of peace and unity – and celebrated and showcased today's Modern Commonwealth as it is passed from athletes to citizens, community leaders to school children.

The opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games on Australia's Gold Coast last April – and the spectacular festival of sport, community and culture that followed – demonstrated just how far we have come, and how committed we are to

ensure that the benefits of the Games stretch beyond the thrilling impact of 11 days of sport.

All our efforts were focused on delivering worldwide recognition and respect for the Gold Coast and Queensland, as well as jobs and economic growth and community engagement right across Australia and, above all, the promise of greater reconciliation and social justice. It's why Gold Coast 2018 was the first Mega Sporting Event in Australia with a Reconciliation Action Plan, why Festival 2018 celebrated the diverse and dynamic cultures of the Commonwealth, and why we were proud to be the first multi-sport event in the world to create a truly level playing-field of gender equality – with an exactly equal number of medal opportunities for men and women. These very clear examples of progress are the reason the resurgent Commonwealth Sport Movement is alive and thriving today. These societal-driven causes are the Commonwealth Sport Movement's *raison d'être* in the 21st century, and why we stand apart from any other sporting movement or institution worldwide.

Usain Bolt wins gold in Mens 4x100 metres relay at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.



This vision is indeed brought to life by the Commonwealth itself - a voluntary association of 53 countries (or, as per our Games definition, 71 nations and territories, since the Commonwealth Games offers the unique and thrilling opportunity for home nations, territories and dependencies – such as Scotland, Jersey, Norfolk Island and St Helena – to compete under their own flag). Among our membership are some of the world's largest and smallest countries, from India, with over 1.2 billion people to Nauru with a population of just 10,000. Our combined population of 2.4 billion represents a third of the world's total population. More than 60 per cent of Commonwealth citizens are under the age of 30.

We proudly unite under – and work hard to deliver – the Commonwealth Charter, bringing together the values and aspirations which connect our diverse membership, outlining our joint commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, to promote peace and prosperity and to improve the lives of all peoples of the Commonwealth. No matter the person's race or religion, sexual orientation or gender identification, all people of the Modern Commonwealth should be treated equally.

Since the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, we have worked hard to shift the dial on the relevance, impact and importance of the Commonwealth Games in today's global sporting and social-political environment – reflecting on who and what the Commonwealth Family is and why a Mega Sporting Event of the Commonwealth Games' stature is so important in the modern world.

This has led us to being very explicit about the value we place on host communities and citizens, and the positive impact we seek to achieve in all that we do.

- Protecting, promoting and safeguarding clean athletes
- Publishing pre-Games and post-Games Human Rights reports
- Embracing the fair living wage
- Procuring ethically and sustainably, and implementing community benefit clauses in our tenders and contracts
- Changing the face of accessibility standards and services for events and tourism
- Actively promoting LGBT+ rights and embracing diversity every single step of the way
- Promoting and fundraising for children's rights through a global partnership with UNICEF – where £6m was raised for children during our Opening Ceremony in Glasgow

These are just some examples of how one city, in one nation, with the power of one Games made a difference. And Gold Coast 2018 has capitalised on this momentum – delivering an inspiring and inclusive event that, we believe, redefines the power and potential of major sporting events on a global scale. I've no doubt that the next Games hosts in Birmingham, 2022 – as they ambitiously aspire to stage an inspiring event that showcases the diverse and dynamic cultures of Birmingham and the West Midlands in the UK and the wider Commonwealth – will take the Games movement even further.

Today, the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) is far more than the curator of a great Games. Our strategic blueprint, Transformation 2022, marks a historic change in the movement's focus from the four-year cycle of overseeing Commonwealth Games to a wider, ambitious role of delivering sports leadership within the Commonwealth, based on partnership, engagement and value generation.

We can only do this in partnership – and we thank and look forward to working with all national and local governments across the Commonwealth to drive the impact and ambition of all Commonwealth Citizens through sport. 🏆



ABOUT CAAM-HP

The Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and other Health Professions (CAAM-HP) is the legally constituted body, established in 2003 under the aegis of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), empowered to determine and prescribe standards and to accredit degree level programmes in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine nursing and other health professions offered by schools in participating countries of CARICOM, ensuring that these programmes are recognized nationally, regionally to be of international standard.

On request, CAAM-HP assesses education programmes, for the purpose of accreditation, of schools in Caribbean countries outside the CARICOM framework including the Dutch Caribbean and the Dominican Republic.

“THE MISSION OF CAAM-HP IS UNDERGIRDDED BY THE PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONALISM, INTEGRITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND COLLABORATION.”

Membership of the Authority is multi-disciplinary with representatives from the universities in the region – senior faculty and students, the contracting parties, civil society, professional associations and external professionals with expertise and knowledge in the accreditation and administration of the education programmes.

The Secretariat

The CAAM-HP Secretariat provides advice on matters of accreditation policy and procedure, manages the accreditation cycle for programmes, coordinates evaluation visits, services meetings of the Authority and its committees, conducts research on accreditation and quality assurance and maintains contacts with related bodies to inform the work of the Authority.

Regional and International Recognition

CAAM-HP has received formal recognition from the United Kingdom government as the authority responsible for the accreditation of new and



Mrs Lorna Parkins

Executive Director, CAAM-HP

developing medical schools for the British Overseas Territories located in the Caribbean.

In 2012, following a rigorous assessment of its standards and procedures, CAAM-HP received international recognition for a ten-year term from the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME). Recognition by WFME confers the understanding that CAAM-HP has been assessed and found to be credible in its policies and procedures to assure the quality of medical education in the programmes it accredits. CAAM-HP was the first accrediting body to go through the process.

In addition, CAAM-HP's standards and processes used to accredit medical schools in Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, Grenada, Barbados and St Vincent and the Grenadines have been determined to be comparable to those used to accredit medical schools in the United States by the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA).

REVIEW OF STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

In keeping with its *Procedures for Revision of Standards* the CAAM-HP Secretariat commissioned an ad hoc committee to review its accreditation standards for medicine over the period January 2016 to July 2017.



CAAM-HP Members and Staff at the conclusion of the 2017 AGM

The draft standards had been reviewed by the Authority at its July 2016 meeting and amendments proposed. Following that meeting the standards were further reviewed and amended by the ad hoc committee. The revised *Standards for Medical Education* were approved at the July 2017 meeting of the Authority and became effective August 1, 2017. All applications for accreditation that had already been received or were in the pipeline will be guided by the old standards. Submissions received after August 1, 2017 will be guided by the new standards which have been posted to the CAAM-HP website.

The *Standards for Human Nutrition and Dietetics* were tabled at the July 2017 meeting for approval. The development of the standards arose out of a request from The University of the West Indies, St Augustine campus for their undergraduate programme in Human Nutrition and Dietetics to be accredited by CAAM-HP. This was necessary for graduates to be licensed to practice in Trinidad & Tobago.

Additionally, following the July 2016 annual meeting, the *States of Accreditation* and the *Policy and Procedures for Appeal* were revised and subsequently approved at the July 2017 meeting.

CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

CAAM-HP hosted a very successful and well received Capacity Building Workshop in Barbados, March 19-22, 2017. There were over 100 participants from 24 medical schools in the region. The workshop was designed to provide guidance to schools and strengthen their capacity to prepare for the accreditation process and evaluate themselves against the standards.

The workshop presentations focused on key themes: *Perspectives from International Partners; Professionalising Medical Education; Aspects of the Accreditation Process; Focusing on the (then) draft Standards* and *The Standards in Practice*.



Participants at the CAAM-HP Capacity Building Workshop March 2017, Barbados

One significant objective of the Workshop was to introduce the revised accreditation standards for medicine to the schools, and help them develop a comprehensive understanding of their interpretation, application and assessment. Through presentations and group deliberations using case studies, the workshop provided participants with an interactive forum to engage with CAAM-HP and medical education experts. The programme and presentations can be accessed on the CAAM-HP website at: www.caam-hp.org/workshop

COUNTDOWN TO 2023

The global growth in the number of medical schools has created a market for the provision of accreditation services of varying quality, expertise and level of international recognition.

In order to support a meaningful international system for the accreditation of medical education, in September 2010, the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates announced that "effective in 2023, physicians applying for ECFMG Certification will be required to graduate from a medical school that has been appropriately accredited."

With the upcoming 2023 effective date, medical schools should ensure the future viability of their operations by preparing themselves to undergo the CAAM-HP accreditation process which normally takes 12-18 months.

WE MUST WORK TOGETHER FOR SHARED PEACE AND PROSPERITY

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Prime Minister of Pakistan, urges all Commonwealth Heads of Government to work collaboratively and steadfastly to confront the array of shared global challenges.

The theme of CHOGM 2018 – Towards a Common Future – reflects the true aspirations of the governments and peoples of the Commonwealth family. It also echoes our collective determination, and inspires us to synergise our efforts to address our joint challenges.

The theme is well aligned with Pakistan's Vision 2025, which is structured on inclusive and sustained growth, connectivity, infrastructure development, knowledge, innovation and security as its core elements. To realise this vision, we are focusing on social development, poverty alleviation, education, health, and most importantly, on affirmative action in the case of minorities, women, children and all disadvantaged societal groups.

Regional connectivity is the pivot of our strategy, and we are collaborating with other peoples and nations for shared prosperity. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is an inclusive economic undertaking, open not just to countries in the region, but much beyond. To achieve our objective of interdependent, synergetic and common prosperity, we are not only leveraging geography, but are also endeavouring to build a peaceful

neighbourhood and region.

Today, the global peace and security architecture is facing a multitude of challenges, encompassing political, economic, environmental, cultural and religious discourse. The response to these challenges requires an inclusive dialogue and complete adherence to the basic principles of justice, fair play, tolerance and dignity for all human beings. Change cannot take place overnight; it will require perseverance and a sustained effort to respect difference and celebrate diversity. But the starting point is to seek common ground and encourage reconciliation. It is time for us all to understand that the only future we have is a shared and common future. We can only leave an enduring legacy of peace for our children by rising above our differences and resolving our disputes through dialogue.

Humanity is confronted by serious threats that know no borders or nations. Terrorism is the greatest of these and Pakistan is one of its worst victims. The Pakistani nation has made decades of sacrifices in blood for regional and global security and peace, and continues to fight the war against terrorism alongside the international

community, with unwavering resolve. Tens of thousands of Pakistani civilians and security personnel have lost their lives, our economy continues to suffer, and the pain our people endure after every terrorist attack in backlash is indescribable. We are winning this war and shall fight to its logical conclusion, not just for our people, but also for the whole of humanity. We look towards the Commonwealth for enhanced support in our efforts.

Climate change is another sobering challenge. During this century, the consequences of a changing climate will have a serious impact on the lives of people all across the planet. No nation, large or small, rich or poor, will be immune to it. The only way to overcome the impending natural disasters is for all countries to honour their commitments under the Paris Agreement and to work in tandem with complete sincerity of purpose. For its part, Pakistan stands ready to make its contribution towards the collective effort. We have ratified the Paris Agreement, enacted a National Climate Change Policy along with a framework for its implementation, and adopted a National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy. The parliament of Pakistan

is the first in the world to have gone 'green', by shifting to solar energy. As part of our plans to promote renewable energy, we have established a solar power park spread over 200 hectares, and plan to expand it further.


Migration is a growing phenomenon in a much-globalised world. It presents considerable risks, but simultaneously has the potential to create greater cross-cultural and cross-civilizational harmony. It is important that we create opportunities to encourage legal migration, as envisaged by the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, it is equally critical for us to improve the circumstances that lead to forced migration.

The Commonwealth covers six inhabited continents on the globe, has a population of over 2.4 billion people, offers a vast platform for collective effort, and provides a robust institutional structure to align our development objectives for the progress and advancement of our peoples. To meet the challenges of the globalised world together, we need to enhance the effectiveness of the Commonwealth as well as our commitment to it. I

would, in particular, like to highlight the need to realise our Commonwealth Advantage. Commonality of language and law, as well as a shared past, greatly enhance our potential to work towards a common future.

I am confident that the deliberations and outcomes of CHOGM 2018 will lead to concrete outcomes for the realisation of our common goals, objectives and hopes.

I wish to extend my best wishes to the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of the United Kingdom for a successful meeting. 

// To meet the challenges of the globalised world together, we need to enhance the effectiveness of the Commonwealth as well as our commitment to it. //

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi,
Prime Minister, Pakistan



THE POWER OF YOUTH

Angelique Pouponneau and Leon Ward, Co-Chairs of the International Youth Taskforce which is responsible for delivering and organising the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2018, explain why young people are a powerful force in the Commonwealth and should be at the centre of its decisions and actions.

The statistic that we are used to hearing about young people and the Commonwealth is that 60 per cent of its population is aged under 30. That in itself is an important justification for why young people should be in the spotlight at all Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings. But, that is not the only reason.

The real power of the Commonwealth is not, we believe, at the Heads of Government Meeting, but it is actually the people, and the grassroots organisations of the Member States. Within these grassroots movements,

young people are often the creators, innovators and leaders of wonderful solutions to address the issues faced by their communities. They are the entrepreneurs that are employing other people, the teachers who are educating their peers and they are the campaigners pushing their governments to improve the lives of its citizens.

Across the Commonwealth, we have seen diverse groups of young people leading the way over these key issues. From the Queen's Young Leaders, to the Commonwealth Scholarships and all of the networks that exist to unite people who are



working to resolve these. This is the collective power of the Commonwealth.

Young people are not just the future, they are very much the now. In 2017, we joined the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Rt Honourable Patricia Scotland, and the UK's Prime Minister, Theresa May, in New York to launch the road to the 2018 CHOGM. There, they committed to placing young people at the centre of the Commonwealth, because it was recognised that the organisation is only relevant if it is relevant to young people - not only as the majority stakeholder, but also because of all the contributions of young people.

Every Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting signals a new hope. It also promises the revival of the desire to ensure that the values of the Commonwealth are being upheld in Member States. For young people it is the hope of new beginnings, commitments and real change for the 60 per cent that have often felt marginalised and set apart from the decision-making processes.



Angelique Pouponneau (Seychelles) and Leon Ward (UK), Co-Chairs of the International Youth Taskforce responsible for delivering the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2018, meet with UK Prime Minister Theresa May in New York, September 2017.



// Young people are often the creators, innovators and leaders of wonderful solutions to address the issues faced by their communities. //

Young people have been enlivened with hope and new aspirations. They are now focused on making our Commonwealth fairer, more secure, prosperous and sustainable, but the real question is how? How will meetings like these ensure that young people can access education without fear of violence and sexual harassment? How will meetings like these ensure that islanders have a home in the next 50 years? How will meetings like these ensure that once young people graduate from high school or university, there will be means of generating wealth that safeguards their mental and physical wellbeing? Finally, how does the person who does not subscribe to

either male or female as a gender, ensure their safety in education, work and society in general? These are some of the issues on the agenda.

At CHOGM 2018, the list of needs and desires continues to grow, but something different is taking place across the world and among this new generation of thinkers. Time zones and geographical boundaries are now almost meaningless as young people are increasingly connected through the use of internet and social media. At this CHOGM, there is an expectation among young people that Heads of Government will share their - and make commitments to implement others' - best practices in their countries. Young people hope

that the Blue Charter will be adopted, with a Member State willing to take the lead on a Blue Charter cluster focused on youth and oceans.

The legacy that we want from this CHOGM is not only a call to action, but an actual commitment to action on which young people can collaborate, partner and work with their governments to deliver these commitments. Young people can also play a key role in ensuring that there is accountability for meeting promises made in the longer-term. Although high expectations can often lead to disappointment, we must set the standards and set the agenda so that we move in the right direction.

Rest assured, CHOGM 2018 will not be a missed opportunity for young people, we will continue to advocate, network with each other and others, educate each other, and as outlined in the beginning of the article, continue to be the power of the Commonwealth.

Twitter:
@AngiePops11 and @Leonjward

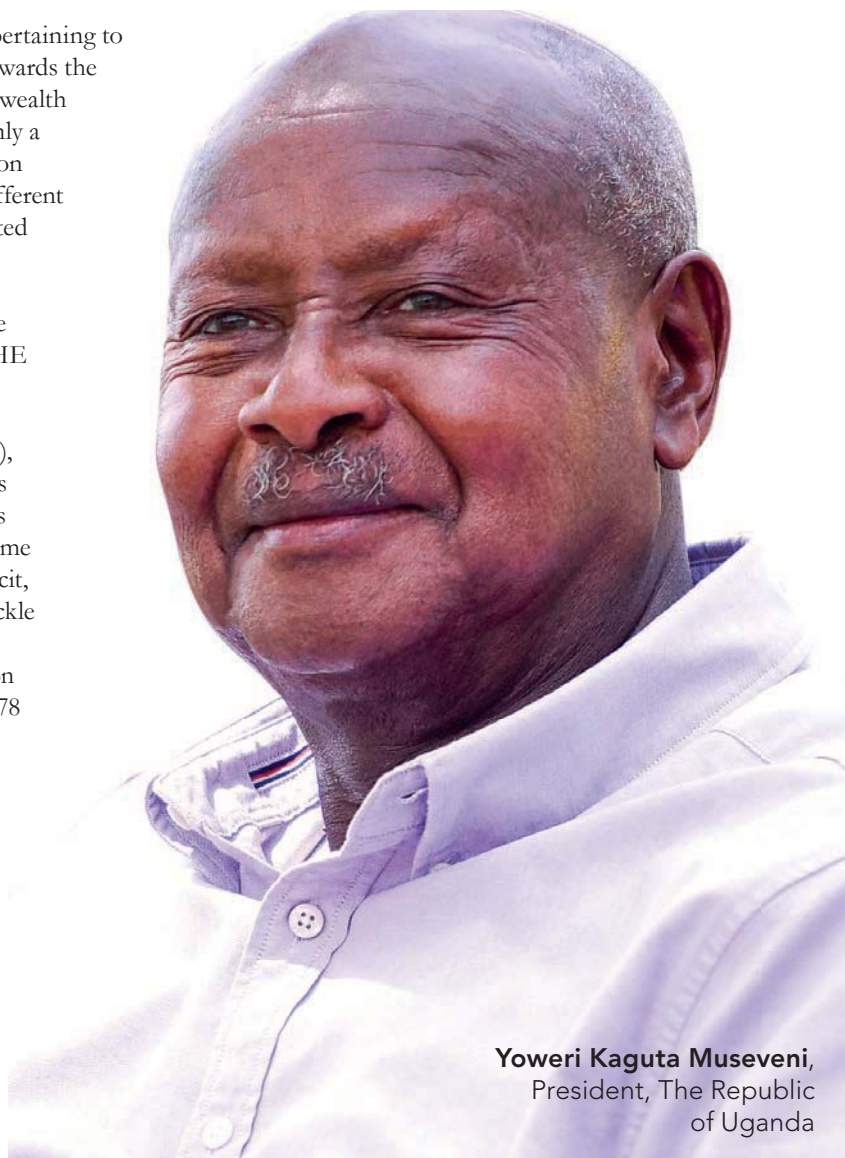
THE CRITICAL CONTRIBUTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Yoweri Museveni, President of The Republic of Uganda, describes how engaging and investing in the Commonwealth's considerable youth population is vitally important to member countries' development.

It is a pleasure for me to discuss issues pertaining to young people and their contribution towards the development of nations. The Commonwealth brings together countries that share not only a common history and language, but common values and aspirations. While we live in different countries and regions of the world, separated by thousands of miles or sharing common borders, we all share a common aspiration of turning our organisation into one where wealth is common and, therefore, truly THE COMMONWEALTH.

As we assemble for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), we are reminded that improving conditions for the majority of Commonwealth citizens is still a major unfinished agenda. In the same way we have addressed the democracy deficit, together as the Commonwealth, we can tackle this development deficit.

Uganda has the highest rate of population growth in the entire Commonwealth, and 78 per cent of Ugandans are below 30 years of age. Uganda also has some of the most enabling youth programming frameworks and initiatives in the Commonwealth fraternity and this is based on my historical attachment to young people, right from my student days. I became convinced that well nurtured, well tutored and well guided young people are not only an asset to their society, community progress and transformation, but also an



Yoweri Kaguta Museveni,
President, The Republic
of Uganda

important link between the past and present – an important umbilical cord.

We need a critical mass of youth who are creators of wealth and not simply the guzzlers of what others produce. The youth must be at the centre of the production conveyor belt and not bystanders. We need a cadre of young people with progressive and analytical mindsets – a youth population with developmental and transformational revolutionary ideas, not simply spectators. Inclusive development is emphasised under the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

We must all be cognisant of the fact that development does not come by accident, but that it is a result of a scientific and progressive well intentioned calculations and strategies. This notion must be inculcated into young people to enable them be thinkers, planners and agents of progressive change.

We must raise a generation that values integrity and hard work. This is because of our cherished belief that while we, the adults, are leaders of today, the youth are leaders of today and tomorrow. This thinking and practice contrasts the belief of many politicians who look at the youth as the leaders of tomorrow only.

It is important for all of us to learn from each other. What are the best practices? What is working elsewhere and how? Who is doing what and where? Whose philosophy is working and not working? We must have evidence-based programmes and interventions that ensure youth development, empowerment and progress. We must have the capacity to measure progress and ensure that at all times we are on course and impacting our society.

In Uganda, we have put in place a number of development interventions, for example; the Youth Livelihood Programme, under which young people have so far accessed over 85 billion Uganda Shillings; and the Green Jobs and Fair Labour Market Programme, which is designed to support youth in the informal sector to increase production and add value to their goods and services.

It is because of the above that our Government has continued

“ We need a critical mass of youth who are creators of wealth and not simply the guzzlers of what others produce. ”

to resource and finance the Youth Livelihood Programme, the Youth Venture Capital Fund, the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme and Operation Wealth Creation. Since coming into power, the NRM (National Resistance Movement) Government has put in place structures that ensure meaningful engagement of young people right from the grassroot through Local Government Youth Council structures to the National Level in Parliament.



Private sector engagement in youth development initiatives is crucial. The private sector is critical in resourcing youth development and at the same time, the private sector is a beneficiary of a strong and consuming youth force.

Investment in Human Resource Development is crucial. Countries all over the world are developed by their own indigenous capital. The foundation for good human capital must start from pre-pregnancy, or when the baby is still in the womb, tracing the entire lifecycle. Immunisation, proper nutrition, hygiene, behaviour change, safe water and good lifestyle are vital. My Government has invested

in Universal Primary Education, Universal Secondary Education and now the Skilling Uganda Programme. Once the youth are empowered with education, training and working capital, they will undergo a dimensional metamorphosis. We, therefore, need to build a youth populous that is patriotic and resilient. It will help them to produce and market together, hence improving their skills and productivity and access to market. There is a need to nurture our youth so that they have families for procreation. This will encourage them to contribute to their country's development.

The health of our young people is a very important factor. A productive mind dwells in a healthy body. It is, therefore, imperative that we resource programmes that will enable our young people to be healthy and productive.

Infrastructural development must be at the top of our development agenda in the Commonwealth, to facilitate the production of goods and services. We need first class infrastructural assets to facilitate the creation of wealth.

Commonwealth societies must metamorphose and make the transition from peasantry to a middle propertied and skilled working class society. We no longer want a 'Commonwealth of beggars and peasants'; it must be a Commonwealth of equitable wealth and prosperity for all.

Finally, all these programmes and initiatives must be 'bedrocked' in an environment that enables free movement of goods, services and labour within the Commonwealth. We need to make the Commonwealth more open and borderless. We must always remember that the problems we face as the Commonwealth are not insurmountable. Like never before, our mission must be to ensure total metamorphosis and transformation of our economies. ●

AGEING IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Andrew Larpent, Chairman of CommonAge, asserts that the contribution of older people to a more sustainable, prosperous, fairer and peaceful age-friendly Commonwealth should not be undervalued.



Andrew Larpent, OBE,
Chairman, CommonAge

Population ageing is a challenge to all Commonwealth countries. Until now, the rights, needs and contributions of older people in too many Commonwealth countries have been neglected or marginalised. This has to change.

The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing – CommonAge – was founded in 2013 in order to promote the interests of older people across the Commonwealth, and to promote the agenda of an all-age-friendly Commonwealth. A Commonwealth that brings together all generations, tackles ageism and ensures that elders in all countries are able to live healthy and fulfilling lives in their senior years, and that their dignity, human rights and capacity to contribute to civil society is recognised and valued.

In its first four years, the organisation attracted support from health and care organisations and service providers in the UK, Australia and Canada, to help fund its activities.

With generous sponsorship support from founding members the Abbeyfield

Society, Anchor Trust, St Monica Trust and Age International, CommonAge commissioned the Oxford Institute for Population Ageing at Oxford University to undertake a research project on ‘Ageing in the Commonwealth’.

This research explores how the demographics and challenges of ageing differ across Commonwealth countries and examines how governments and societies are responding. It is the first study designed to examine ageing across the Commonwealth and provide a baseline against which future progress and development can be measured and then regularly reported on at future Commonwealth summits.

Findings show that even in the poorest and slowest ageing Commonwealth countries, where a majority of deaths are still caused by communicable diseases, poor nutrition or childbirth, a large and growing proportion of the population is surviving to ages where elders are more likely to die from chronic non-communicable conditions than anything else. Thanks to improved healthcare systems, longevity is increasing in the Commonwealth, but many older people are experiencing increasing frailty and loneliness and may not necessarily be enjoying their extra years of life.

Despite the enormous diversity in population dynamics across Commonwealth countries, the older population is set to grow more quickly than the total population (with the exception of Lesotho and Mozambique).

Population ageing changes the social

“ The Commonwealth needs to recognise and value the contribution of older people to resilient communities and stable civil societies. ”



Mrs Ada Straughn, a 91-year-old retired teacher in Barbados, speaks to Kobie Broomes, 18, as part of the CommonAge Life Story project.

world. If Commonwealth countries are to adjust to these changes, governments have to rethink how they provide various public services in response to new pressures on households and families. As the workforce growth slows down, their future economic growth will depend increasingly on improvements in productivity.

In Commonwealth countries where fertility is expected to stay below replacement level, it is no longer possible to assume a growing workforce will be able to underpin increases in the tax base to finance improvements in the provision of public services.

Large increases in the relative size of the older population are not confined to high-income countries. All countries are experiencing increasing longevity but many are unprepared. In those countries that combine a high national income with an already large and growing population share of older people, the sustainability and adequacy of social protection arrangements and publicly subsidised healthcare has become the subject of continuing, close and anxious scrutiny.

However, it's not only governments that need to prepare for an ageing population.

Older people are a potential resource, and in ageing societies, they are an increasing one. Many businesses focus on attracting young employees, but there is a need to keep older workers happy, or risk an oncoming skills and experience shortage.

Community-based programmes that enable or empower older people to

become a resource for themselves, each other and for the wider community, are an important part of the infrastructure that is needed in an ageing Commonwealth.

The CommonAge Life Story project has clearly shown how younger people benefit and change attitudes when they properly engage with the older generation.

The project encouraged young people (aged 15-24) to talk to an older person and write about their life experiences. The resulting essays give privileged insights into those who have personally experienced and endured the complexities and challenges encountered in newly independent countries. Memories of natural disasters and wars show how these events have shaped the personal lives of the storytellers.

These young researchers also wrote about their experiences of speaking with the storyteller and it is clear that the storytellers made a significant impression.

An Australian writer commented on how much she'd learned: "I have gained more knowledge regarding my country, including the names of the many places that June had visited. Throughout writing this story, June and I spoke about each of our lives. It was intriguing to learn about June's generation and how different it was to mine. During this conversation, I realised that there is so much more for me to learn and discover".

In Uganda, a writer noted: "Having listened to the story of Mrs Ddangana, I have learned to be a

hard-working person because there is no gain in simple life".

An Indian writer spoke to an older lady living with dementia. He compassionately explained that, while his storyteller doesn't remember her life events and fails to recall daily information, as a music lover, she spoke about the many varieties of classical, folk and modern music, and the much loved songs of Tagore.

Another benefit of this project is that personal details of historical aspects of the Commonwealth have been recorded for generations to come.

Young people are the future and they certainly need to be encouraged to understand and appreciate the potential of the Commonwealth. In its strategic discourse, the Commonwealth has for many years had an understandable and laudable focus on youth and the need to engage with younger generations. However, there is a danger in this approach – that older generations become marginalised and the wisdom and experience of the older person becomes devalued and ignored.

CommonAge is keen to encourage the Commonwealth to recognise the value of all generations, and to avoid it inadvertently being seen as ageist in its exclusive focus on youth.

As shown by the CommonAge Life Story project, the contributions made by older people to a more sustainable, prosperous, fairer and peaceful Commonwealth should not be underestimated.

The Commonwealth, in turn, needs to recognise and value the contribution of older people, their wisdom and their experience, to resilient communities and stable civil societies. Future Commonwealth summits should avoid the perception that older people have little to contribute, and we ask that the Commonwealth Elders' Forum be brought in from the margins of the 2018 summit and included in the official architecture for the next Commonwealth Summit in Malaysia in 2020.

CommonAge is working for an all-age-friendly Commonwealth in which every citizen is valued, regardless of age. For more details about CommonAge visit www.commage.org 

ASPIRATIONS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

His Majesty Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, expresses his steadfast support of the Commonwealth and outlines examples of how his country and the Commonwealth are addressing issues of common concern.

**His Majesty Sultan
Haji Hassanal
Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin
Waddaulah,**
Sultan and Yang
Di-Pertuan, Brunei
Darussalam



My Government and people join me in expressing our highest respect and appreciation to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for her personal contribution to the Commonwealth for over 60 years. As the Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty's dedication has greatly inspired all of us and represents the strength of our Commonwealth family.

I would also like to thank Prime Minister Theresa May MP and the government of the United Kingdom for hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2018. We welcome the theme for CHOGM 2018, 'Towards a Common Future', as we continue to make collective efforts towards addressing common challenges, such as protecting the environment, achieving economic prosperity and realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As we strive for a more sustainable and prosperous future, CHOGM 2018 is a good opportunity to outline the Commonwealth's priorities and aspirations. Under its current Strategic Plan, we are particularly encouraged by the emphasis on education, health, environment, economy, as well as women and youth empowerment. This is very much in line with our own aspirations, Brunei Vision 2035, that we believe will contribute towards improving the quality of life of our people.

In recognising education as key to a nation's development, we have been offering scholarships to Commonwealth citizens since 1995, benefitting more than 200 Commonwealth students. We have found it very rewarding as it promotes education exchanges, fosters people-to-people contact and deepens cultural understanding. This is one small way that Brunei Darussalam aspires to improve technical assistance for the development of Commonwealth member states.

Further, we have also committed to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation. The establishment of the Brunei Darussalam-Commonwealth Third Country Training Programme in 2015 signifies the importance we attach to enhancing human resources development and capacity-building opportunities for developing states of the Commonwealth.

In the process of achieving highly educated and skilled citizens that would contribute towards the socio-economic development of member states, we believe that it is important to provide a clean and healthy environment for all. We support the Commonwealth's efforts in this arena and greatly appreciate The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy (QCC) initiative.

We are honoured that Her Majesty The Queen has acknowledged our commitment to the QCC, with the dedication of three of our forest reserves. We believe that the QCC is a unique opportunity for networking and facilitating knowledge exchange, sharing best practices and creating new, collaborative initiatives for forest conservation. At the same time, this will indeed create a physical and lasting legacy of Her Majesty to the Commonwealth.

Climate change certainly poses a fundamental threat to all. We have shown our strength by working together in addressing issues of common concern and protecting the interests of small and vulnerable states. This was exemplified by the Commonwealth's successful contribution to the conclusion of the Paris Agreement and the adoption of the Commonwealth Leaders'



Taman Mahkota Jubli Emas

Credit: Banyiah Bakir

“ Brunei Darussalam is fully supportive of all the collective efforts towards advancing the Commonwealth values and principles in global development issues. ”


Statement on Climate Action in 2015. Hence, I am confident that the Commonwealth will continue to be a champion of small states by ensuring our collective voice is heard in the international arena.

We also commend the proposed development of the Commonwealth Blue Charter – an initiative of the Secretary-General to better manage the oceans. This is where the Commonwealth has the potential to add value to its international role in improving the livelihoods of our people, notably small island developing states. In addition, the initiative will allow for member states to seek better economic opportunities through sustaining their ocean resources in the pursuit of a more prosperous future.

We are optimistic about our future cooperation. The Commonwealth has the advantage of common language, institutions and legal systems. Furthermore, with a combined population of 2.4 billion and trade flow

forecasted to reach US\$1 trillion by 2020, the organisation is well-placed to promote development, economic growth and reduce poverty as well as accelerate intra-Commonwealth trade and investment. CHOGM 2018 presents a timely occasion for us to redefine trading relationships, including leveraging the opportunities of digital connectivity to increase trade.

Brunei Darussalam is fully supportive of all the collective efforts towards advancing the Commonwealth values and principles in global development issues. We are confident that the Commonwealth will continue to play an important role in the international arena and contribute towards the wellbeing of all human kind.

Lastly, I wish to express my warmest appreciation to Patricia Scotland QC, Commonwealth Secretary-General, for her leadership, her commitment towards reforming the organisation and her initiatives in ensuring the continued relevance of the Commonwealth. 



THE REBIRTH OF A NATION IN A COMPETITIVE GLOBAL SETTING

The clarion call that “Zimbabwe is Open for Business” signals a profound policy shift in the management of Zimbabwe’s external relationships, with a greater emphasis now being placed on economic links, rather than political platitudes.

ECONOMIC THRUST

Our international relations are to now be characterised by an economic diplomacy thrust. This policy shift is also underpinned by a stable governance framework, which guarantees both a non-discriminatory protection for investors and a transparent dispute settlement mechanism. Furthermore, the government has now provided a legal framework recognising the stability and value of all the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements.

Recognising the fact that investors’ confidence requires constant nurturing, Zimbabwe is currently engaged in an exercise to revamp and improve the **“Ease of Doing Business”** conditions that would allow for the free movement of capital, profits and dividends. The priority consideration is to make Zimbabwe an attractive and competitive destination for foreign direct investment. To this end, the Zimbabwe government invites international investors to come and seize the abundant opportunities, which had been relegated to near dormancy by previous policies.

Appropriate economic and structural reforms are being introduced to restore fiscal and debt sustainability, with attention particularly focussed on re-engaging with the international community and to access the much needed lines of credit and financial assistance. Relations with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and the African Development Bank are set to be enhanced, so that the country benefits optimally from cooperative relations with these institutions in order to ensure sustainable economic growth. These results can only be achieved if Zimbabwe reaffirms its status as a dignified and trustworthy partner in business and development. That is also why in this new era, the Government of Zimbabwe has been unequivocal in declaring corruption to be its public enemy number one. Worldwide, corruption has compromised development efforts. It will never be tolerated in our new era and it will be tackled without fear or favour and, ultimately, it will be reduced to insignificance everywhere throughout the country.



The 2018 Budget contained within it the promise by government to address investor concerns in regards to the country's indigenisation law. The Financial Reform Act has subsequently been passed by Parliament, with the 51 per cent - 49 per cent demand for foreign investors to concede advantage to Zimbabwean partners removed. Ownership of economic ventures will henceforth be determined by the investors themselves. The economy has thus been opened to all who desire to invest in Zimbabwe. It is now government's firm policy and determination to attain "middle-income" status by 2030. Real and foreseen impediments to the achievement of that goal will be timeously addressed. At the end of it all, there are very few reserved areas of our economy. However, the direction remains towards a totally open economy. Restrictions in diamond and platinum mining will be removed once a legal framework to protect optimal benefits to the country has been developed.

MULTILATERALISM

Zimbabwe is a voluntary member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the African Union, the G77, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations with its specialised agencies.

It is always instructive to note that arbitrary and unilateral decisions can undermine the mandates and noble objectives of these organisations. The glue that keeps the multilateral systems together is a mutual respect for member states and a tolerance and deference towards divergent views amongst member states. **In this regard, Zimbabwe is ready to play its part.** To illustrate its stance in these matters, its desire to re-join the Commonwealth will be influenced by those values which emphasise respect and equality of the members of those organisations.

The management of the global environment is a collective responsibility and sustainable solutions to global challenges require an equitable distribution of decision making powers and responsibilities. Zimbabwe stands ready to contribute to the resolution of all topical global challenges as these are addressed in the established regional and international organisations.

All considered, we humbly submit that:

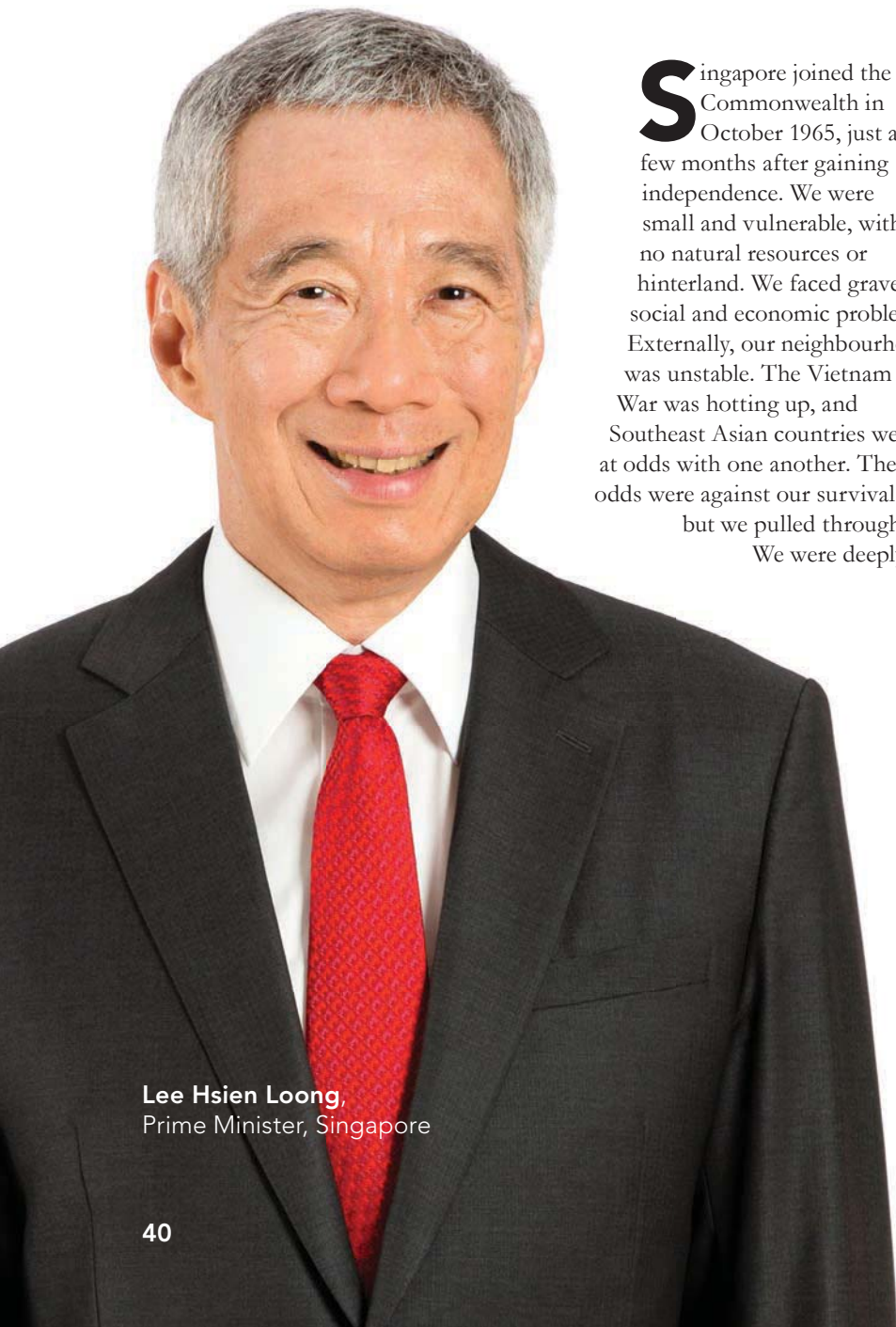
ZIMBABWE IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS!

Hon. Dr. Lt. Gen (Rtd) Sibusiso B. Moyo
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & INTERNATIONAL TRADE



COLLABORATION IS KEY FOR OUR COMMON FUTURE

Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore, shares his country's developmental experiences and highlights that collaboration is essential for the creation of a common future that is prosperous, secure, fair and sustainable.



Lee Hsien Loong,
Prime Minister, Singapore

Singapore joined the Commonwealth in October 1965, just a few months after gaining independence. We were small and vulnerable, with no natural resources or hinterland. We faced grave social and economic problems. Externally, our neighbourhood was unstable. The Vietnam War was hotting up, and Southeast Asian countries were at odds with one another. The odds were against our survival, but we pulled through. We were deeply

grateful to the friends who came to our help in times of need, many of whom were in the Commonwealth.

Having benefited from the Commonwealth community, we are happy that we can now pay it forward and share our developmental experiences with our fellow Commonwealth friends, to help create a common future that is prosperous, secure, fair and sustainable.

Like all Commonwealth countries, Singapore is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We will undertake our first Voluntary National Review at the 2018 UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Singapore has always designed our policies with long-term sustainability in mind. Today, Singaporeans enjoy clean air, water and sanitation, quality healthcare and education, lush greenery and safe common spaces for residents young and old, because of these policies.

We are sharing our sustainable development approaches and expertise with our Commonwealth friends through technical assistance programmes. Over the years, we have conducted capacity building courses for many Commonwealth officials in areas such as disaster management, enhancing infrastructure for national development, and public sector

Singapore is keen to promote dialogue and collaboration on sustainability issues, including sustainable urbanisation.



management. We hope this sharing of experiences and exchange of ideas will continue to benefit future generations in the Commonwealth.


At a broader level, we are collaborating with the UN Development Programme to develop leadership courses on good governance and public sector leadership, which are integral to fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals. We are also partnering UN agencies such as UNICEF and UN-Habitat to provide capacity building courses in specific sectors such as water-related issues and sustainable urbanisation. In addition, we

host many international forums including the World Cities Summit, the Singapore International Water Week and the CleanEnviro Summit Singapore to promote dialogue and collaboration on sustainability issues amongst policy-makers and experts from the government, business and international organisations.

As the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year, Singapore is working with our ASEAN colleagues and external partners on multiple initiatives under our Chairmanship themes of 'resilience' and 'innovation'. This includes projects to strengthen our collective resilience against

common threats such as terrorism, cybercrime, and climate change, as well as schemes to help ASEAN economies innovate and use technology to make ASEAN a vibrant and sustainable place to live and work. These aspirations are in line with CHOGM 2018's themes of security, prosperity, fairness and sustainability.

The Commonwealth and ASEAN have much in common. Both share core values such as tolerance, respect and understanding. Both organisations seek to uplift the lives of their citizens through promoting good governance and sustainable practices. Both uphold an open, rules-based multilateral system which allows every country to prosper. There is therefore much we can do together to create a better world for ourselves and future generations.

I look forward to participating in the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London. Singapore will continue to do its part to contribute 'Towards a Common Future' of a resilient, innovative and sustainable Commonwealth. 

// Singapore will continue to do its part to contribute 'Towards a Common Future' of a resilient, innovative and sustainable Commonwealth. //

TRADE AND INVESTMENT FOR A PROSPEROUS FUTURE

Roberto Azevêdo, Director-General of the World Trade Organization, urges Commonwealth member states to create a more enabling environment for trade and investment in order to promote growth and sustainable economic development.



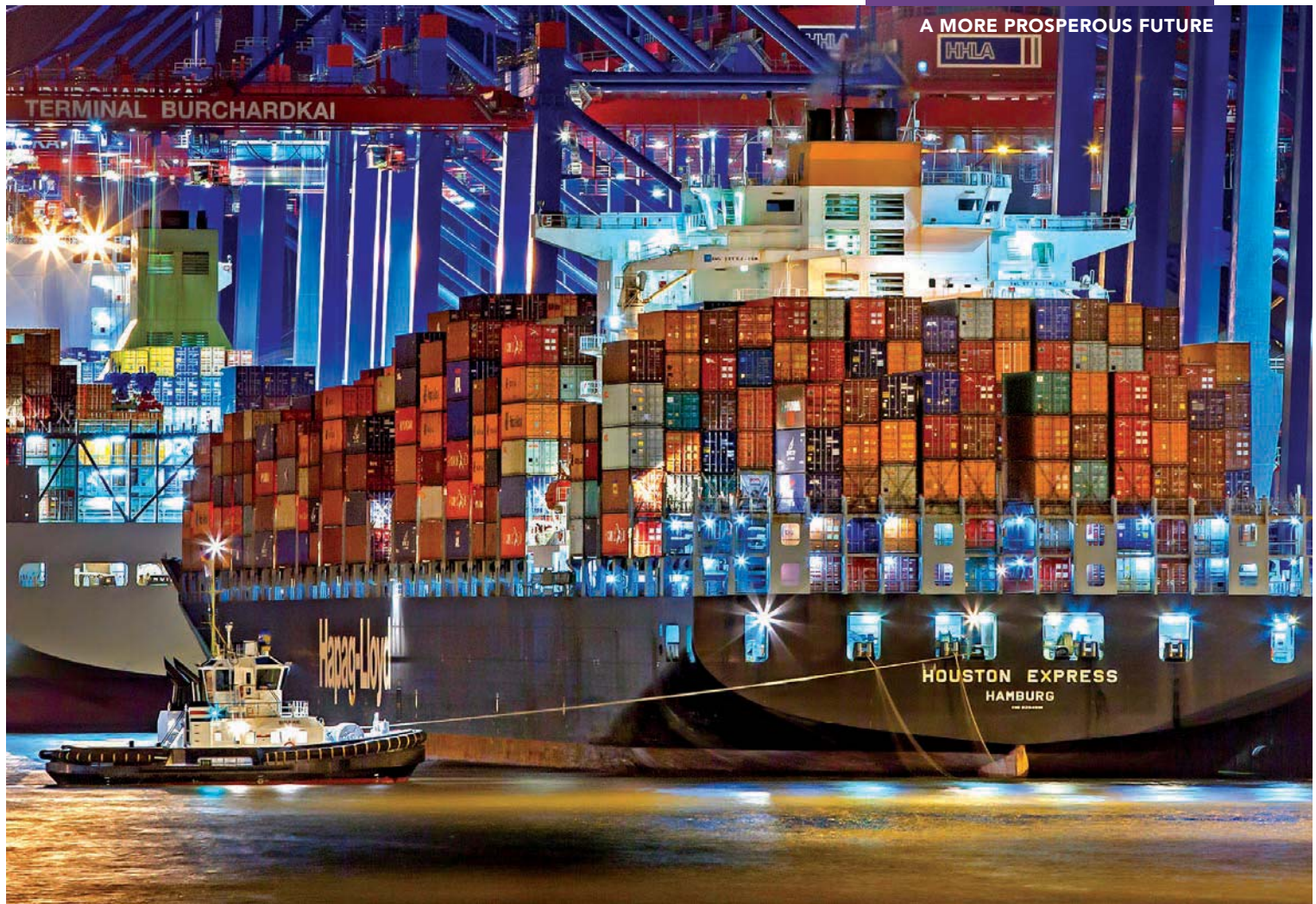
Roberto Azevêdo,
Director-General,
World Trade Organization

Ensuring that future generations can fully participate in and benefit from the global economy is an immediate challenge for us all. Facilitating trade and investment can make an important contribution to sustainable economic development – and I am confident that the Commonwealth will rise to the challenge.

Throughout history, trade has proven to be one of the most effective anti-poverty and pro-development tools. In fact, trade already plays an important role in the Commonwealth, with member states exporting over \$3 trillion in goods and services each year. However, for trade to play its full part, it is important to have the right conditions, and many elements are involved in this mix. If you're selling goods, you need the hard infrastructure to allow you to ship them to your buyer. You also need the appropriate soft infrastructure to support this, and that means, for example, a regulatory environment which facilitates trade. We must work together to ensure that the essential building blocks are in place to help countries do business with one another.

This requires investment. For example, Africa's infrastructure investment needs are estimated at about \$120-150 billion annually – with a financing gap of about \$60-80 billion per year. In the Asia and Pacific region, infrastructure needs to the year 2030 are estimated to exceed \$22.6 trillion. This situation deserves our attention. Tackling these obstacles could help reduce the Commonwealth's trade costs, boost its competitiveness, diversification, industrialisation, and participation in global trade. Also, investment could improve access to more advanced technologies, production techniques and managerial methods, which can help countries to leapfrog forward, towards a more modern economy. All this can help to spread the benefits of trade more widely, reaching more people and leveraging trade to promote growth and development.

Steps to create a more enabling environment for investment could make these countries attract productive and sustainable foreign direct investment, both in infrastructure and in productive assets. This is important because often governments simply do not



have the public resources to build the infrastructure they need. Therefore a significant part of infrastructure investment will need to come from other partners. We need to share ideas, exchange insights, and learn from one another's experiences to ensure that trade and investment can work together to create more opportunities, particularly for developing countries.

This discussion is currently underway at the World Trade Organization (WTO). A number of WTO members have been holding an open and informal dialogue to consider whether, and how, the WTO might better contribute to facilitating investment flows. This debate advanced considerably in 2017, including at a high level seminar held in Abuja, Nigeria, in November and at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference, held in Buenos Aires in December. At the latter meeting, a group of 70 WTO members agreed to begin more structured discussions with the aim of developing a multilateral framework on investment facilitation.

“ Throughout history, trade has proven to be one of the most effective anti-poverty and pro-development tools. ”

This initiative is very diverse. It includes least developed countries, developing and developed members, including many Commonwealth countries. It is open for all WTO members to join, and the focus is on discussing how to facilitate investment by strengthening transparency, administrative efficiency, and international cooperation – an approach inspired by the success of the WTO’s 2013 Trade Facilitation Agreement. Development is very much at the centre of the debate, searching for ways to facilitate and enable investment, and to support the development of national policies.

The dynamism on this front, and on

many others at the WTO, shows that members are using the organisation as a platform to discuss issues that are of pressing interest for their citizens and their economies. But, of course, the interest here does not mean abandoning issues that are already on the table and that need to see progress – issues that are very dear to many members, such as agriculture or food security. We need to keep making progress on all of these fronts. Looking ahead, I encourage Commonwealth countries to stay engaged in this work. Together, we can support better livelihoods now and in the future for the people of the Commonwealth, and around the world. 

BARBADOS

A WELCOMING

Barbados has distinguished itself as a premier international business domicile. The achievements of our International Banking and Financial Services sector over the last five decades have been significant, characterized by growth, consolidation and resilience. Looking ahead, government and its strategic partners are focused on realizing the vision of Barbados becoming the international financial and wealth management centre of choice in the Western Hemisphere.

Regarded as one of the best places in the world to live, work and play, Barbados prides itself on attracting business of substance and providing a welcoming environment for their growth and global expansion. More and more investors are attracted to Barbados because of the country's proven record of being an efficiently regulated, modern, transparent, treaty-based, stable and cost-effective jurisdiction. Added to these, its responsiveness to attaining



ever evolving international standards, a sound legislative framework, world-class infrastructure, excellent educational system, intelligent workforce, as well as its outstanding quality of life, all combine to provide a unique appeal.

Barbados has an expanding roster of international investors. Currently over 4,000 international business entities conduct successful operations in the country, providing a range of

services including international sales and marketing, wealth management, international insurance, niche manufacturing, financial services, FinTech, ICT and medical schools, among others. These businesses, primarily from Canada, the USA, United Kingdom and Latin America, enjoy several benefits and rights under Barbados' expanding treaty network, which currently stand at 40 Double Taxation Agreements, nine Bilateral Investment Treaties and five Tax Information Exchange Agreements.

Additionally, Barbados' Non-Domicile Programme is an attractive option for high-net-worth individuals desirous of residing in Barbados or managing their international business operations from the country. Such persons may benefit from attractive tax incentives on income earned in, or remitted to, Barbados.

In keeping with its tradition of adherence to international standards, Barbados is



"Sunset, Barbados (6885760644)" by Bert from Reethill/Surrey, UK - Sunset, Barbados uploaded by rossava, Licensed Under CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons

JURISDICTION

a signatory to the OECD's Multilateral Convention to implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (the MLI). Barbados has also signed the OECD's Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement and the USA's Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act.

Government is committed to building a vibrant, sustainable and resilient economy. This will depend in large measure on the success of the international business sector, which will continue to be integral to the growth and development of the Barbados economy. Government is therefore purposefully seeking to broaden the scope of the sector while positioning Barbados to be more globally competitive. While remaining committed to transparency and compliance, Barbados will strive to retain its place as a jurisdiction of choice for international business.



Invest Barbados, the economic development agency for the government of Barbados, continues to focus on attracting, winning and sustaining international business of substance, particularly in the areas of niche manufacturing, ICT, financial services and wealth management. Invest Barbados has a team of professional staff who work assiduously to meet the needs of prospective and existing investors.

We also work collaboratively with our strategic partners to enhance our local business environment. Guided by the principles of pride and industry, we envisage a bright and vibrant future for our International Banking and Financial Services sector, and our country.

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BRITAIN, BREXIT AND THE COMMONWEALTH

David Howell, President of The Royal Commonwealth Society, looks at why Britain is re-prioritising the Commonwealth, and considers how the organisation's unique networks can reap economic and social dividends for its member nations.



David Howell
(Lord Howell of Guildford),
President, The Royal
Commonwealth Society

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting London 2018 is a Summit with a difference. There has been nothing quite like it in recent years. Exceptional care has been taken to spread its links right across the UK, involving not only business but also universities, cities and regions, civil society bodies, young people and professional groups of all kinds.

This is a sharp change from past decades, certainly so far as Britain is concerned. Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings – or CHOGMs – have previously been a fairly low priority for both British Government and media.

But this time it is all quite different. The British Government's aim, in the words of the head of a greatly expanded Commonwealth Summit Unit in the Cabinet Office, Tim Hitchens, (Britain's former Ambassador to Japan) is: "to run the best Summit that London and the Commonwealth has ever seen".

The immediate reason for this remarkable change of gear is obvious. Brexit has swung Government attention onto the search for the consumer markets and fast-growing economies of the future and the Commonwealth network, among others, offers both these as well as gateways to even bigger ones.

The search is on for new trade and investment opportunities, especially in the broad services sector, which now accounts for no less than 80 per cent of the UK's national output.

But there is an even deeper reason why the Commonwealth connection has moved up the priority ladder, and one which well pre-dates the Brexit issue. The cyber age has drained and dispersed the power of governments, strengthened grassroots influence and given rise to forces, good and bad, which largely lie beyond the traditional interstate system of global affairs.

It is a supreme irony of our era that the modern Commonwealth of Nations – with its voluntary adherence, its loose coordination and its people-driven networks, orchestrated by no central agency or plan – is fast emerging as better equipped to adjust to these conditions than some of the international and multinational institutions of the past.

The very diversity which used to be seen as a weakness, a bar to collective action and lack of the alleged clout of bloc solidarity, now emerges in the digital age as a strength and means of resilience that more centralised systems lack.

The international framework that allows this new world of intense connectivity to flourish is not the



traditional one of formal diplomacy and government-to-government agreements, treaties and alliances. The information revolution has changed all that. Progress now comes much more from common values, common legal systems, common business procedures, common standards and above all, from a common working language.

At a time when regimes around the world are flouting the liberal rules-based order, and turning the United Nations forum into a cockpit of disagreement and dispute, these are the binding qualities that work the other way, to pull nations and societies together when other forces are pulling them apart.

Thus, with quiet effectiveness, institutions like the Commonwealth of Learning or the Association of

“ Brexit has swung Government attention onto the search for the consumer markets and fast-growing economies of the future. ”

Commonwealth Universities, touch, and often change the lives of millions of young people, as do the many youth network programmes promoted by The Royal Commonwealth Society. Young entrepreneurs and established firms, large and small, find doing business within the Commonwealth framework markedly easier than trying to invest and trade in less familiar and trustworthy markets. Professions of every sort – from the law to

medicine, or from creative industries to sports, scientific research work to environmentalists, accountancy to education at all levels – find common cause and close exchange within the Commonwealth network. Parliamentarians gather on an unprecedented scale. Administrators, policing experts and military specialists coordinate practices and develop joint training programmes.

In the midst of this swirl of



“ Taking the role as Commonwealth Chair-in-Office for the two years following the London CHOGM, the British find themselves in what amounts to a new role in international affairs. ”

networking, Britain acquires a particular responsibility and particular opportunities in 2018. Taking the role as Commonwealth Chair-in-Office for the two years following the London CHOGM, the British find themselves in what amounts to a new role in international affairs – and one that a few years ago could hardly have been envisaged, indeed was scarcely acknowledged until quite recently.

The task for the Commonwealth Chair-in-Office now falls into four connected compartments:

1. To strengthen the existing intensive connectivity between peoples and interests, at all levels throughout the whole Commonwealth network. The stronger the links and affinities between all parts of civil society, the more this unity will influence governments to find ways of closer cooperation and maximum encouragement to flows of trade, capital and people between member states. This could be seen as a kind of 'trickle up' process, with the grassroots networks driving governments increasingly together.
2. To be both the champion of small states – of which two thirds of the Commonwealth membership consists – and the architect of closer alliances with the large ones, with India by far the largest of all.
3. To open as wide as possible, the opportunities for intra-Commonwealth trade and investment. The big added-value benefits of operating in a common business culture, backed by similar legal and commercial patterns, similar accounting procedures and above all, similar working language, ensure that these opportunities maximise the Commonwealth advantage in an

age of expanding trade in data transmissions and knowledge, and information products.

4. To encourage by example, although not by haranguing, the ever wider adoption of values and freedoms supporting human rights, gender-equality, strict adherence to the rule of law and tolerance of minorities, as embodied in the Commonwealth Charter.

Progress on all these fronts promises big dividends for all members of the Commonwealth and indeed for Britain itself, as it finds a new role outside the European Union structure and new outlets for its soft power deployment. From shared values comes trust, and from trust comes good business and sound investment – and from this comes prosperity. This is the Commonwealth continuum and an increasingly precious asset in a dangerous and uncertain world.

The hope must be that the London CHOGM takes all these aims forward with renewed momentum. With some 1.4 billion of its 2.4 billion citizens aged under 30, the Commonwealth will then truly fulfil its role as, in the prescient words of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth: “the face of the future”. ■

“ From shared values comes trust, and from trust comes good business and sound investment – and from this comes prosperity. ”

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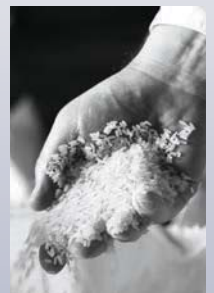
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DEALING WITH THE DEFICIT AND RESTORING GROWTH

Dr Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, asserts that the key to safeguarding the Caribbean's future is people-centred economic growth, and outlines his government's efforts to create a more prosperous future for Trinidad and Tobago.



Dr Keith Rowley,
Prime Minister, The Republic
of Trinidad and Tobago

The 2017 hurricane season saw the development of six powerful storms in the Atlantic Basin, three of which battered and decimated parts of the Caribbean. They left widespread human suffering, untold environmental damage, destruction of infrastructure and financial loss – all of which the region is still grappling to resolve. While tourism in South America increased by 6.5 per cent in 2017, it rose by only 1.3 per cent in the Caribbean. The impact of natural disasters, in addition to the current economic situation, resulted in hotel occupancy decreasing to just 70 per cent.

The key lesson emerging from this season of destitution and devastation – in one word – is resilience. Hardship, distress and vulnerability are apolitical. Sea levels rising, habitats lost and coral bleaching are not partisan issues, they are of universal importance and consequence. In the midst of this ominous situation facing the entire Caribbean, sustainable and people-centred economic growth that enables capacity-building and resilience is a priority as well as a challenge for the region and for all.

Unmitigated climate change brings substantial economic and social costs, posing a universal and intractable threat to international development. However, the distribution of these impacts is not equal. For Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Trinidad and Tobago, which have special recognition for their comparatively acute vulnerability to the impacts of climate change—due to, *inter alia*, their low-lying coasts, susceptibility to natural disasters, and fragile environments—the impacts of climate change are already being experienced.

The Trinidad and Tobago Government believes that, particularly for SIDS, unmitigated climate change warrants urgent, consistent and ambitious universal action. As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, we are committed to and will continue to play our part in, the advancement of its objectives.

The people of Trinidad and Tobago are valiantly confronting these challenges, adopting necessary adjustments and taking the best options under the current circumstances, to give the best chance of overcoming the economic constraints and difficulties that challenge us as a nation.

Despite the decline in national revenues since 2015, and the observed downward trend in economic growth for the past ten years, our government has stabilised public sector employment levels, despite the necessary curtailment of expenditure. We have always been cognisant of the fact that a healthy and sustained revenue position will depend on the level of growth generated. Over the past two years, in an effort to keep expenditure stable, the government has sought to plug gaps in its revenue, as well as curb spending, with the support of enhanced monitoring and procurement systems.

While the current financial situation facing Trinidad and Tobago remains a very challenging one, and the government is implementing necessary measures to tighten revenue collection mechanisms, our country remains open for business and open to all opportunities to bolster commerce and investment, in particular intra-Commonwealth trade. We have avoided drastic expenditure cuts, focusing



“ Our country remains open to all opportunities to bolster commerce and investment, in particular intra-Commonwealth trade. ”

instead on development programme initiatives and more critically, the mobilisation of significant private capital to stimulate the economy towards sustainable accelerated growth.

Trinidad and Tobago has also prioritised the judicious use of limited inflows of foreign exchange. We have favoured incremental economic adjustments, such as the reduction of subsidies and the collection of property and gaming taxes, in addition to the establishment of a centralised revenue authority to maximise compliance. Of equal significance are the aggressive measures aimed at curbing corruption and waste at every level.

Once the economic growth process is restarted, we recognise the need to adopt measures to sustain growth within a core strategy of targeted private sector investment in export manufacturing, tourism, housing, maritime services, agriculture, financial services, the creative industries and others. Over the next three years, the government intends to focus on a number of sectors to lead economic revival, and will work with the private sector to bolster activity in these areas. The fiscal regime is being configured to encourage new businesses, and support existing businesses to adopt new modes and lines of activity.

As a part of our diversification drive, the government is exploring ways to modernise domestic legislation on trade, competition, industry and investment, and to align domestic legislation with international best practice. Trinidad and Tobago understands that international

trade is the driver of economic growth and poverty reduction, and contributes to the promotion of sustainable development, as reflected in the 2016-2030 National Development Strategy.

Trinidad and Tobago stands in support of the Commonwealth's efforts to encourage free trade and reduce protectionism in the multilateral trading system, through the expertise and resources of the Commonwealth Trade Facilitation Hub. The organisation reviews existing free trade agreements with the intention of building future standardisation, as well as improving awareness and development of necessary legal and institutional frameworks, analysing barriers to trade and investment, and building e-commerce capacity.

However, there is light at the end of the tunnel. The Trinidad and Tobago Government aims to set the economy on a path to gradually reduce its deficit and sustain a moderate, but steady growth rate in the near future. Analysts forecast that the deficit will significantly shrink from the 9 per cent of GDP seen in 2017, to 5.6 per cent in 2018.

Going forward, Trinidad and Tobago will continue to collaborate and partner with its Commonwealth family to ensure that the future is indeed fairer, more prosperous, more sustainable and more secure for us all, as this alliance learns, shares and grows from one another. The peoples of the Caribbean have a unique and enduring capacity to overcome, and out of recession will emerge resilience. ◆

GAMBIA IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

So much has changed in The Gambia in just more than a year and the country is back in the Commonwealth, amongst many other world organisations. More especially, tremendous opportunities exist as the “Smiling Coast” is opening up to the world of business again for this small gem on the west coast of Africa. The spirit of readiness demonstrated by the Gambian business community can be felt through private sector participation in new and more diverse sectors, an increase in the number of formal registered businesses for 2018, the high level of business participation in the formulation of new policies and business-related reforms and, particularly, in the government’s reduction of both PAYE and corporate tax, as well as the elimination of VAT on the staple rice commodity.

In anticipation of economic growth and investments, The Gambia is leaning towards an era of economic integration and even greater market liberalisation for the key drivers of the economy. The Gambia was part of more than 40 African countries to sign up to an historic trade agreement at the recent summit held in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, which was aimed at paving the way for a liberalised market for goods and services across the continent. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) aims to deepen the integration process, by allowing Africans to trade and move freely across the continent which, according to UNCTAD, “could bring \$3.6 billion in welfare gains to the continent through a boost in production and cheaper goods.” Many Commonwealth countries have long since practiced visa-free arrangements, which now need to be adopted across the board with a new interest to open up and trade amongst ourselves to create further opportunities, ensure that the private sector builds capacities in terms of standardisation, market share, quality, financing and economic inclusiveness to improve livelihoods and reduce poverty levels.

The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry is working assiduously on economic improvements with the Office of the President through Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment, and with other Ministries, on initiatives with the objective of enhancing local and foreign investment confidence in the business sphere. The Gambia Ports Authority and Bollore Logistics are amongst the many institutions championing Public-Private Partnerships. A ‘Doing Business’ initiative also aims to ensure the country’s ranking is improved by championing reforms in the various economic indicators.

The Gambia is open, with a strong invitation to public and private investment within energy, maritime, agriculture, tourism, health services and light industries.



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Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CEO Secka



TOWARDS AFRICAN ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Dr Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank, discusses the organisation's 'High 5s' strategy and why the five priorities are crucial for accelerating Africa's economic development.

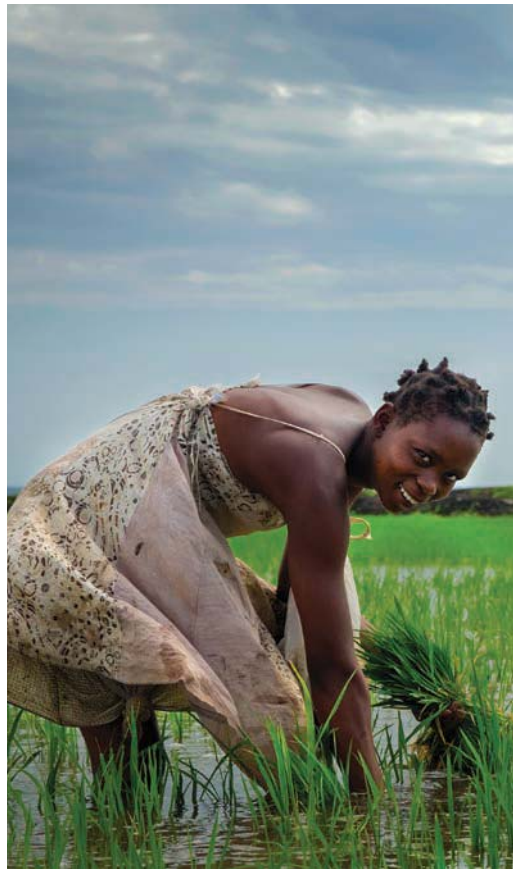
Dr Akinwumi Adesina,
President, African
Development Bank

Over the next seven to 12 years, Africa will be in full-blown economic transformation. This is the period of implementation for the African Development Bank's High 5s strategy – Light up and Power Africa, Feed Africa, Industrialise Africa, Integrate Africa and Improve the Quality of Life of Africans – each element with its own ongoing programme of actions.

The impact of these actions is already being felt where it is needed, with a majority of the benefits reaching Africa's rural areas. By the end of the first year (2016), the direct benefits were: 3.1 million Africans gained access to electricity; 3.7 million Africans gained access to water and sanitation; 5.7 million Africans had improved access to agriculture; 9.1 million Africans gained access to health services; and 7 million Africans had access to improved transport.

The African Development Bank has already been connecting the productive win-win relationships through major investments in power generation, energy, agro-aligned industrialisation and food processing, and by leveraging the productive synergies that exist between the key





“ The African Development Bank will be investing \$24 billion in agriculture under its Feed Africa programme. ”

pillars of the High 5s to stimulate job creation, especially for young people and women.

Independent analysis shows that the High 5s cover 90 per cent of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Implementation of the High 5s will therefore allow Africa to attain most of the agreed global objectives, and accelerate our economic transformation.

Some 645 million Africans still have no access to electricity. Nothing productive can happen in the dark, let alone any sort of economic development. And in terms of politics, darkness is an unpopular policy. African politicians know that to stay in power, they have to give their people

access to power so that all can benefit from a brighter future.

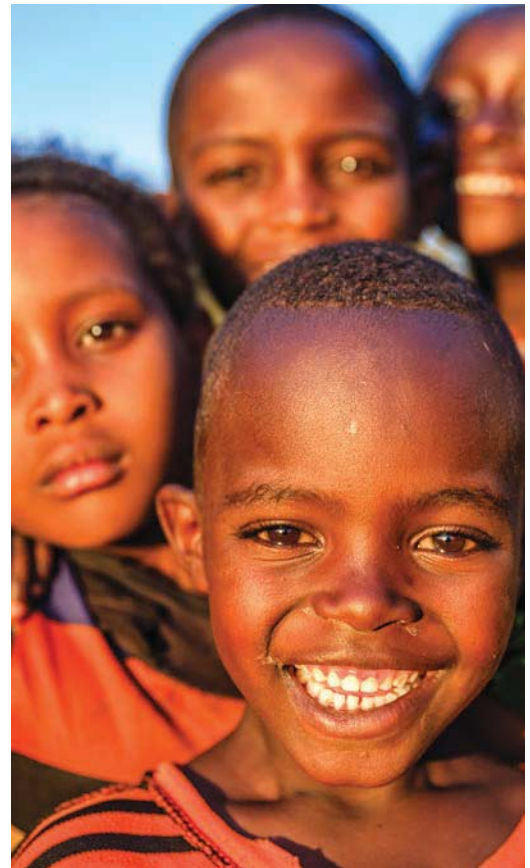
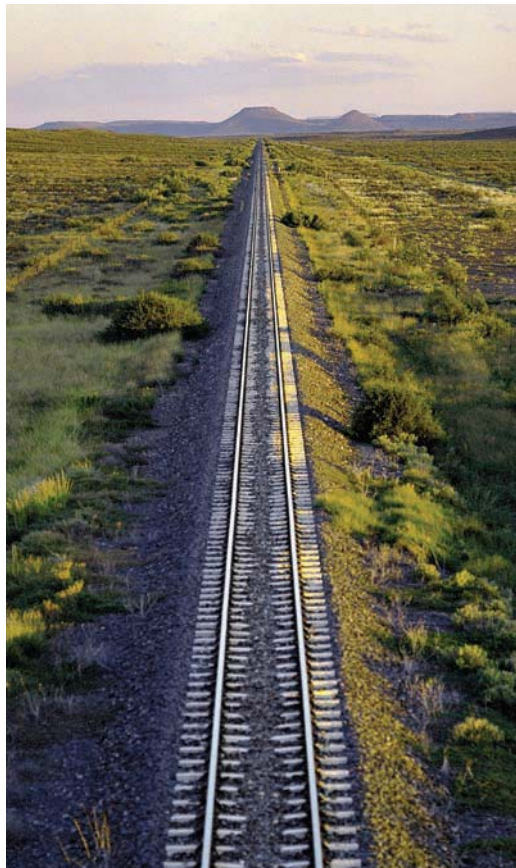
The African Development Bank launched a New Deal on Energy for Africa in early 2016. Our goal is to support governments and the private sector to accelerate the achievement of universal access to electricity over the next 10 years. The Bank will be investing \$12 billion in the energy sector over the next five years and leverage an extra \$45-50 billion in project co-financing.

Over the same time, the African Development Bank will be investing \$24 billion in agriculture under its Feed Africa programme. There are several significant initiatives leading the way, with a fund to transform the savannah areas into productive

farming land and another to scale up available agricultural technologies to benefit millions of African farmers over the next decade. Another will establish a fund to assist women-owned enterprises to improve inclusive growth. Based on a partnership model, the Affirmative Finance Action for Women (AFAWA) aims to raise \$300 million, and leverage \$3 billion by 2025 to help women in business enterprises.

The African continent also has plenty of land for more food production, with over 65 per cent of all the uncultivated arable land left in the world. And Africa cannot keep paying \$35 billion net a year, rising fast to \$110 billion a year by 2025, for the crippling luxury of importing food that Africans could and should be growing, processing, and consuming themselves.

As Africa resolves its power problem and modernises its agriculture, large scale industrialisation will surely follow. Africa has to add more value to the commodities and the food that it produces or digs up. So it needs to industrialise quickly from the basis of its agricultural modernisation and compete better in global value chains.



Over the next 10 years, the African Development Bank will facilitate a cumulative investment of \$56 billion in six flagship industrialisation programmes throughout Africa. The Bank's objective is to help double the industrial GDP of African economies to \$1.72 trillion by 2025, and by over 30 per cent of overall GDP. The Bank has also launched the 'Jobs for Youths in Africa' initiative, which will mobilise \$3 billion in support of young entrepreneurs in Africa to address youth unemployment. The goal is to create 25 million jobs for young people within the next decade. This should also serve to stem or stop the emigration of our youth to Europe and elsewhere.

Africa's population has doubled since 1985 and will double again to 2.5 billion by 2050. We will then have the same population as China and India together do now, with a rising consumer demand, a growing middle class, and 840 million young people looking for jobs. With population growth and rapid urbanisation, the food and agribusiness industry in Africa is projected to grow to over \$1 trillion by 2030, with new and impatient African customers demanding a greater choice and higher quality products, as they have every right to do. Can we harness this demographic potential by aligning supply with demand? Markets with customers? Skills with jobs? And can we keep most of these elements within Africa?

If we can, Africa will be an unstoppable economic force by 2030, able to feed itself and the world. The decisions and actions of the world's investors, especially from the private sector, remain vital for the employment of Africa's young and growing workforce, providing an opportunity to reap a demographic dividend that will boost Africa's growth and lift millions out of poverty. There are precedents in India and South East Asia, which show it can certainly be done in Africa, where many of the conditions are even more favourable.

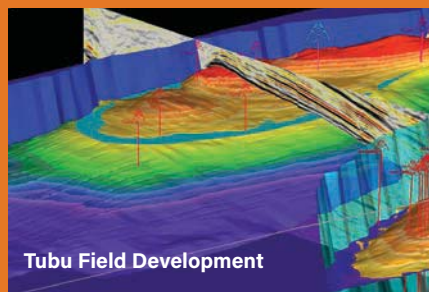
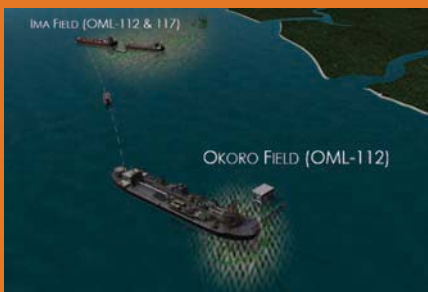
It all presents the glorious possibility of an Africa unleashing its full potential as a major economic power, an industrial powerhouse and a global consumer market, while undergoing sustainable financial growth and enjoying a high standard of living. Africa will have millions of jobs available over the next 20 years. It will be the international workshop, the processing centre, and the foreign investment focus of the world, with plenty of land for factories and offices, and a young, skilled labour force. So here's to Africa's bright future with the High 5s! 🎯

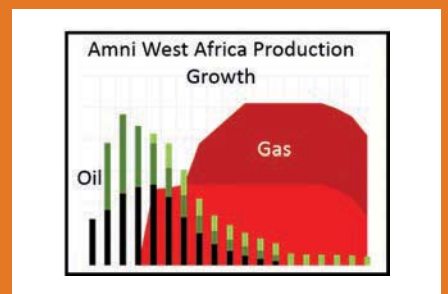
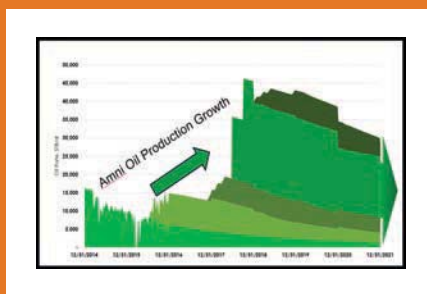
“ Some 645 million Africans still have no access to electricity. Nothing productive can happen in the dark. ”



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AFRICA'S CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA

The Commissioner for Trade and Industry of the African Union, Ambassador Albert Muchanga, outlines the African Continental Free Trade Area and the transformative effect that this historic agreement will have on the continent.



Albert Muchanga,
Commissioner for Trade and
Industry, African Union

Africa has taken a bold and historic decision to create the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), spanning from South Africa to the North African countries of Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt. Nineteen of the 55 member states of the African Union - which is driving the process of creating it - are also members of the Commonwealth.

In December 2017 the African Union Ministers of Trade collectively decided to recommend to the January 2018 Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union the draft agreement establishing the AfCFTA for approval and signature. The African leaders endorsed the decisions of the ministers and the agreement and related protocols were signed at an Extraordinary Summit on 21 March 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda. The Protocols on Free Movement of

Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment were also adopted, in addition to the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market.

All these are flagship projects for the African Union Agenda 2063, and with their delivery, Africa is now on the verge of a historic structural transformation in its markets and economy.

As a result of these initiatives, the people of Africa will move more freely and cheaply across the continent, as investors, traders and tourists. In this large and harmonised market of about 1.2 billion consumers, investors from both within Africa and outside the continent will also be attracted to take advantage of the economies of scale created.

Mining, agriculture and industrialisation are the critical base for production of goods in the AfCFTA. Current statistics show that 42 per cent of intra-African trade is accounted for by manufacturing. From this base, value addition through industrialisation will accelerate as investors decide to take advantage of the emerging market with its huge growth potential. The development of regional value chains will also promote specialisation and win-win outcomes from the AfCFTA.

It is a paradox that while Africa

“ Our current status as a collection of small, fragmented and isolated markets has run its course because it cannot give us the future we want. ”



“ The people of Africa will move more freely and cheaply across the continent, as investors, traders and tourists. ”

has the world's largest reserves of untapped agricultural lands, in addition to fresh water and a good climate, it annually imports food worth US\$35 billion, which is projected to increase to US\$110 billion by 2025. With policy harmonisation and consistency to be embedded in the AfCFTA, along with effective trade facilitation measures, there is now a huge opportunity to promote large scale investments in agriculture and

agro-processing to reverse the trend. When this potential is exploited, we shall not only achieve food self-sufficiency, but also transform Africa into a net food exporter to the rest of the world.

The outcome of the January 2018 African Union Summit sent out a clear message that we are committed to integration. Our current status as a collection of small, fragmented and isolated markets has run its course

because it cannot give us the future we want. We can no longer continue to compete among ourselves to export commodities to the rest of the world. With declining terms of trade, growing populations and low rates of economic growth, which this commodity dependence entails, Africa will instead continue to reap high rates of emigration by our young people in search of opportunities for employment in other parts of the world. This pursuit can be a dangerous act of desperation. Much too often, our young men and women become victims of human trafficking and modern day slavery. Furthermore, our high levels of population increase in an environment of weak economic growth and poor economic prospects are a recipe for social and political instability. In this status quo, Africa will also remain



Wambui Michael / Inter-Press Service

weak and marginalised in the global councils of diplomacy and commerce. This is not the Africa we want.

What we want is ‘an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international system’ - a vision articulated in the African Union Agenda 2063. The AfCFTA will create new and better opportunities to realise this vision.

We are keenly aware that the AfCFTA is not an easy undertaking. But we are ready and resolved to make it work. We have the energy and will. Studies have clearly demonstrated that the AfCFTA is a commercially viable undertaking, and our primary task is to deliver on this promise.

The AfCFTA belongs to the ordinary African people. They are the consumers, workers and the small scale cross-border traders. With respect to the latter, Africa can feed itself and reduce the current high levels of annual food imports by making it easier for Africans to sell duty-free food products across our borders, without harassment from customs, immigration, freight and forwarding agents and other

officials working at our border crossings. In this respect, we will, with resolve, combat corruption in cross-border trade in line with the 2018 theme on winning the fight against corruption.

Equally important is that we are in the process of establishing a Pan-African Trade Observatory, which will (alongside other organisations) capture intra-African trade statistics. The result will be the availability of timely and comprehensive information about African goods, as well as a resource base for production of trade directories.

The AfCFTA also belongs to the African private sector which, according to the International Chamber of Commerce and Industry, accounts for only 12 per cent of Africa’s total private sector investments. We have asked the African private sector to increase this share. We will be working with African governments and the African private sector to come up with the incentives required to grow African investments in Africa.

As we move towards a digital economy, the African services sector will also become a strategic contributor to developing manufacturing in Africa.

The AfCFTA also belongs to the young and future generations. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa is working with the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) in Dakar, Senegal to design and run a course on the AfCFTA. This will greatly broaden the knowledge base of the scheme.

In order to create a level playing field and deepen policy harmonisation, we shall, during the course of this year, begin negotiating protocols on competition, intellectual property rights and investment.

Against this background, the Commonwealth is encouraged to explore ways and means of developing a strategic partnership with the AfCFTA.

The final message is to the private sector and tourists in both Africa and the rest of the world: the AfCFTA has opened exciting opportunities for business and travel. We invite you to come in to invest, produce, trade and explore. Our guarantee is that you will thrive if you are an entrepreneur, and leave with a treasured experience if you are a tourist. ■

“ We shall not only achieve food self-sufficiency, but also transform Africa into a net food exporter to the rest of the world. ”





THE PEARL OF AFRICA

The Commonwealth brings together countries that share not only a common history and language but common values and aspirations. While we live in different countries and regions of the world, separated by thousands of miles and at times share common borders – as we do in East Africa - we share a common aspiration of turning our organization into one where wealth is common and therefore truly THE COMMONWEALTH.

As we assemble for our bi-annual Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting we are reminded in many of our countries that improving the condition of the majority of the Commonwealth citizens is still a major unfinished agenda. In the same way we have addressed the democracy deficit, together as the Commonwealth, we can tackle the development deficit.

The Commonwealth nations have the potential to work and achieve global affluence among themselves and between themselves, and other blocs of the global community, through shared prosperity. In the colonial and post-colonial times, there were only islands of prosperity in the world: North America, Western Europe and Japan. This was a defective arrangement.

With the onset of affluence in China, some of the ASEAN countries, India, Brazil and some of the Arab countries, global prosperity has improved. If only North America (the USA and Canada), Western Europe and Japan monopolized affluence, as they did by 1978, the total purchasing power of the world would be US\$ 40 trillion. With the present spread of affluence, however, the total purchasing power of the world is now US\$ 127 trillion. The purchasing power of North America, Western Europe and Japan is now US\$ 43 trillion. That of Africa is still US\$ 8.1 trillion, in spite of having a population and even land area that is four times bigger than that of the United States.

Therefore, the full potential is far from being realized and we have identified 10 strategic bottlenecks why this is so. These are:

1. Ideological disorientation. The main manifestation of ideological disorientation is the opportunistic misuse of identity at the expense of genuine interests of the people. Such genuine interests should answer the question: “Who will guarantee my prosperity?” “Is it the members of my tribe or my religious sect that will do so, or is it members of the other communities?” “Who will buy my milk, my beef, my coffee, my bananas or my tea?” Ideological disorientation only emphasizes identity and eclipses interests or even acts against the interests of the people. This generates the sectarianism of tribe or religion you have seen causing so much damage.
2. As a consequence of the above, many African countries end-up with weak states – with weak armies and civil services - because they are not based on merit or are not ideologically oriented with the right attitude.
3. The under-development of the human resource, including the lack of education, lack of skills and poor health of the African populations.
4. Under-developed infrastructure, with no electricity, no modern roads, no modern railways, no ICT backbone and no piped water. This makes the costs of production in the economy go up and cannot, therefore, attract investments so as to expand production and create jobs.
5. As a consequence of the above there is no industrialization and, therefore, Africa has continued to suffer a haemorrhage through the loss of money and jobs, and being a donor to other continents by continuing to export raw-materials where we only get 10 per cent of the value of our products (for instance coffee, cotton, minerals and timber).



6. The problem of a fragmented African market on account of colonialism. The 53 former colonies, the modern African states are, individually, too small as markets to attract, retain investments and cause them to thrive. China, which started liberalizing and opening up in 1978, (China also started participating in the UN system in 1982) has since attracted a total of enterprises worth US\$ 2.6 trillion. The whole of Africa in that same period has only attracted enterprises worth US\$ 0.65 trillion. (Source: UNCTAD Website). Yet China is still a communist country, while most of Africa is now 'democratic' and operating really market-led economies. What is the problem? One of them is a fragmented market. The other bottlenecks also play a role in discouraging and stifling investments. The other good examples are poor infrastructure and a non-skilled workforce. Fortunately, we have done a good job on this by creating ECOWAS, EAC, COMESA and SADC. We are aiming at the common market of the whole of Africa. Unfortunately, some actors continue to allow non-tariff barriers. Yet the growing purchasing power of Africa would have attracted investments if the African market was really integrated.
7. The under-developed services sector, including tourism, hotels, banking (both financial services and expensive money), insurance and professional services (hence medical tourism to India).
8. The under-development of agriculture. There is no complete commercialization of agriculture and still a lot of subsistence agriculture (68 per cent in the case of Uganda), no irrigation, a low use of fertilizers, poor disease control, poor soil conservation, poor seeds and breeding stock. The population in the agricultural sector has, therefore, no money and their purchasing power is low.
9. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was the mistake on our part of nationalizing private sector assets, such as banks, shops and farms. This interference with the private sector, by policy or by corruption, has also been another bottleneck. The private sector is the most efficient engine of growth.
10. Suppression of democracy in the past.

In the case of Uganda, we are solving these bottlenecks, by ourselves mainly, one by one. Some of the other African countries are similarly addressing these bottlenecks. If the international community shared our perspective on these and assisted where necessary and relevant in a win-win way, these bottlenecks would be expeditiously resolved and Africa would fully join the phenomenon of global affluence.

The Commonwealth, where conferences are held without the inconvenience of ear-phones for translation, where we can communicate in one language, is uniquely positioned to play this stimulus role in the metamorphosis of Africa, starting with the Commonwealth members, so that their latent strength comes out.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Yoweri Kaguta Museveni".

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



INVESTING IN THE PEARL OF AFRICA

Anyone looking to do business in Uganda will find the most liberalised economy, in which there is free movement of capital, the free repatriation of dividends after all tax obligations have been met and an economy that has grown steadily in the last five years at an average of five percent. Inflation has also averaged 4.9 per cent for the same period. The tax incentives are non-discriminatory, because they are enshrined in the tax laws and can be accessed by both domestic and foreign investors. The priority sectors for investment enjoying high returns include mineral beneficiation, agro-processing and Uganda's nascent oil and gas sector.

Kampala city view, skyline of Uganda's capital



There are over 50 mineral types found throughout Uganda, virtually all of which are under- or fully unexploited. These include large deposits of gold, oil, high-grade tin, tungsten, wolfram, salt, beryllium, cobalt, kaolin, iron ore, glass, sand, vermiculite, phosphates, uranium and rare earth elements. Gold can be mined in many areas of the country, including Busia in the east, Bushenyi and Kigezi in the west, Mubende and Kiboga in the Central Region and Karamoja in the north-east.



Uganda has been considered the food basket for the East African Community and has the potential to feed the whole of Africa. Uganda is the eight largest producer of coffee globally, for instance. The main agricultural crops include grains, sugar cane, cotton, tea and coffee, which accounts for a fifth of total export earnings and a third of foreign exchange earnings. Investment opportunities abound within food and dairy processing, cold storage, agricultural inputs and irrigation systems, amongst others.



Overview of Lake Bunyonyi, Kabale

Tourism is one of the fastest growing service sectors in the Ugandan economy and the single largest export earner. A quarter of the country's territory is under protection, with areas such as national parks, species management zones and wilderness, game and marine reserves. Uganda has also recently unveiled 10 conservation sites seeking sustainable investment.



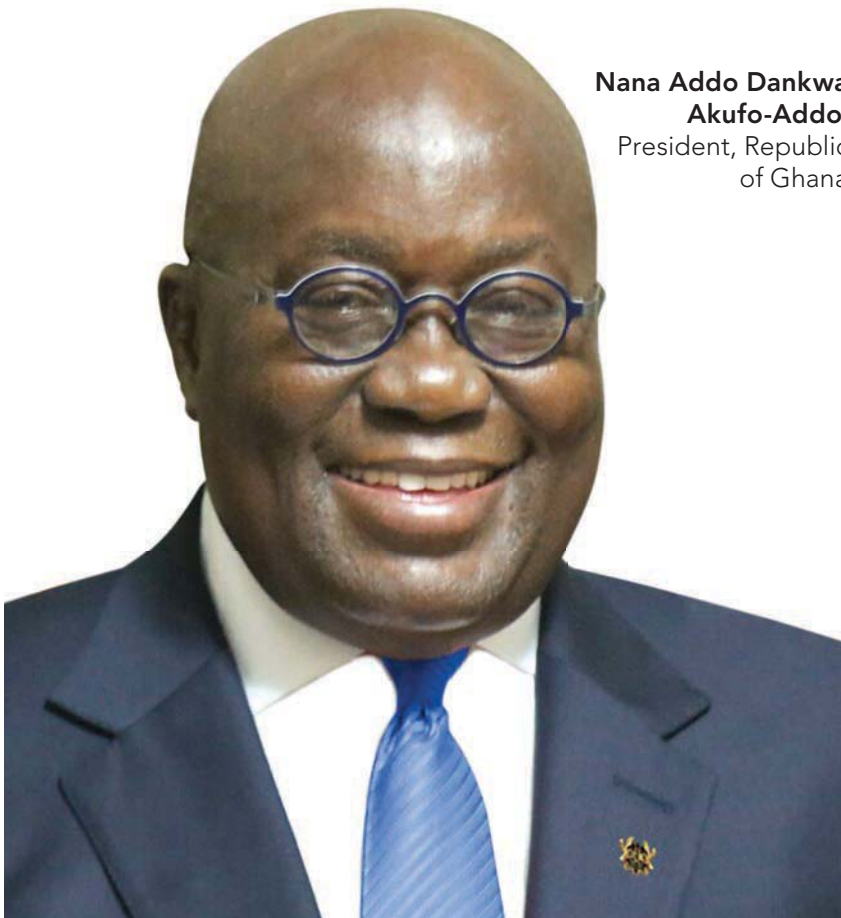
Another fast growing sector is within information technology. The packaging industry's viability is also in demand for increasingly export-oriented businesses. Abundant opportunities are similarly found in Uganda's nascent sector for oil pipelines, the petrochemical industry - manufacturing fertilizers, amongst other products – and in logistics and waste management.

Setting up a business in Uganda has been simplified through the transformation of the Uganda Investment Authority into a 'One Stop Centre' for investors, offering free services for investors to register their businesses and obtain all the relevant licenses under one roof. This has been paired with the digital 'One Stop Centre', which can be accessed online. Potential investors can therefore now apply to register their business and secure an investment license without even visiting the Authority.

**www.ugandainvest.go.ug
www.ebiz.go.ug**

CREATING A PROSPEROUS FUTURE THAT LEAVES NO ONE BEHIND

Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, highlights the need for collective efforts to create prosperity for all, and expresses his determination to transform Ghana into a prosperous and proud nation that leaves no one behind.



**Nana Addo Dankwa
Akufo-Addo,**
President, Republic
of Ghana

With the high level of co-operation amongst nations in the 21st century, no country remains an island, as we live in a virtually borderless world with shared interests and their attendant challenges. What happens in one part of the world can have as much impact on our lives as the actions of our immediate neighbours.

As members of the Commonwealth family, it is, therefore, important to recognise that the Commonwealth's continuous relevance and survival depends on the safety and wellbeing of all member states and their citizens. The Commonwealth will remain relevant, not only because of our shared values and principles, but also because of our ability to use our collective strengths and resources to meet the aspirations of our citizens; create prosperity to improve living standards, promote the rule of law and respect for human rights; and protect the environment.

The 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) is a unique opportunity to give practical meaning to the objectives of the Commonwealth Charter, which are similar to the UN 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the goals of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

As Co-chair of the Group of Advocates of Eminent Persons of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, it is my strong conviction that the SDGs are a worthwhile set of goals for mankind. The Commonwealth should strive to achieve these goals to make the world a better place, by supporting its members to build capacities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, where no one is left behind in the efforts to create prosperity for all.

The SDGs challenge us, collectively, to adopt inclusive and integrated approaches to development, and to forge viable multi-stakeholder partnerships that can effectively tackle the multi-dimensional problems of our world today. In the midst of the challenging global environment, the success of our efforts will depend on the effective mobilisation of resources for SDG implementation. If the noble goal of the SDGs is to ensure that no one is left behind, we should commit ourselves, amongst others, to building a world where every child has the opportunity to better him or herself, and, by so doing, better the global community.

It is for this reason that my Government, in September 2017, implemented the Free Senior High School programme to ensure that every Ghanaian child, boy or girl, irrespective of the circumstances of their birth, has access to a minimum of Senior High School education. This programme has ensured that 90,000



We should build a world where every child has the opportunity to better him or herself. By doing so, we will build a better global community.

more students gained access to Senior High School in 2017, than in 2016.

I hesitate to prescribe policy initiatives for other countries, but, on the matter of education, I have no hesitation whatsoever in recommending that all countries of the Commonwealth, not just in Africa, adopt the policy of free compulsory education from kindergarten to senior high school. This is one of the most important things we have to do if we are to guarantee prosperity for all.

For us, in Africa, we need to end the spectre of the dependence of our economies on the production and export of raw materials. These economies cannot produce wealth and prosperity for the masses on our continent. They drive the determination of African youth to seek much better living standards of living out of Africa, thereby, fuelling the refugee crises and the numerous counts of illegal immigrants. We cannot continue travelling this worn path of limited success of being exporters of raw materials. The only way to ensuring prosperity in Africa is through value addition activities, in a transformed and diversified, modern

economy. In other words, the industrial development of our continent and this can be accelerated and achieved with an educated workforce, taking full advantage of the digital revolution.

We must also encourage each other, in the Commonwealth, to strengthen and protect the institutions and culture of accountable governments; respect human rights, religious freedoms, and the rights of the individual and minorities; and build strong market economies. We do not have to look far into history to see that stable constitutional government and intelligent management of the economy can lead to general prosperity.

For us in Ghana, we want to build a Ghana Beyond Aid because it is time to pursue a path to prosperity and self-respect for our nation. A Ghana Beyond Aid is a prosperous and self-confident Ghana that is in charge of her economic destiny; a transformed Ghana that is prosperous enough to be beyond needing aid, and that engages competitively with the rest of the world through trade and investment.

We are determined to build a new Ghanaian and African civilisation, where the rule of law works, where individual liberties and human rights are respected, and where the principles of democratic accountability are the foundation of public policy. We are determined to forge a new Ghanaian and African, who is neither a victim nor a pawn of the world order, but who will be a dignified member of a successful, thriving, prosperous society. ■

“ The SDGs challenge us, collectively, to adopt inclusive and integrated approaches to development. ”

GREEN GROWTH FOR THE COMMONWEALTH: READY FOR PHASE THREE

Dr Andrew Steer, President and CEO of World Resources Institute, asserts that sustained economic growth can only be achieved by investing in environmentally friendly technology and infrastructure.



Dr Andrew Steer,
President and CEO,
World Resources Institute

A few short years ago, the idea of sustainability drew praise as something that ought to be encouraged for its environmental benefits, despite what was then seen as its inevitable trade-off with economic growth. That was Phase One.

Phase Two emerged from a number of empirical studies that found that the trade-offs weren't so great after all, and that sustainable development and economic growth could go hand in hand.

More recent research and technological innovation, articulated in the New Climate Economy project and other smart initiatives, has brought us to Phase Three, which recognises that sustained economic growth can only be achieved by investing in low carbon and less polluting models of development.

This is especially important for the Commonwealth countries – the majority of which are at risk from the heatwaves, fires, floods and other phenomena exacerbated by a changing climate. Across the Commonwealth's

53 member states, natural disasters affect 28 million people and cause economic losses of \$8 billion each year.

One key way to start addressing this challenge is by investing in sustainable infrastructure, which is fundamental to reigniting growth, delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and reducing climate risk in line with the Paris Agreement. Between now and 2030, the world needs to invest US\$90 trillion in infrastructure. Developing countries – including many in the Commonwealth, and especially those with fast-growing cities – will require 70 per cent of that investment. The global south will account for roughly two-thirds of all infrastructure investment (about US\$4 trillion a year) over the next 15 years.

This new infrastructure need not cost more than conventional infrastructure over its lifecycle, since the additional upfront costs can be offset by rapid gains in efficiency and fuel savings. In fact, addressing sustainability issues as set out in the SDGs offers a huge business opportunity in parts of the

“ Investing in sustainable infrastructure is fundamental to reigniting growth, delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and reducing climate risk. ”

The new Discovery global headquarters in Sandton, South Africa, is a good example of resource-efficient, cost-effective and environmentally-innovative infrastructure.



world where the need is greatest.

The Business & Sustainable Development Commission showed how sustainable business models could unlock more than \$US12 trillion in new market value in food and agriculture, energy and materials, health and wellbeing and cities; creating up to 380 million jobs by 2030. As the Commission's *Better Business Better World* report noted, what's needed is an economic model which is not only low-carbon and environmentally sustainable, but also turns poverty, inequality and lack of financial access into new market opportunities for smart, progressive, profit-oriented companies.

“ Addressing sustainability issues as set out in the SDGs offers a huge business opportunity in parts of the world where the need is greatest. ”

Two examples are of particular relevance for Commonwealth countries: cities, and coastal development and the marine economy.

First, cities. The projected growth of cities, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America, offers some of the biggest opportunities for low-

carbon development and increased prosperity. The integration of new mobility services into existing urban transportation systems is one such golden opportunity, with the prospect of more affordable, convenient and environmentally friendly transport for all.

“ It’s deeply encouraging to see leadership embedded in the Commonwealth strategy, which aims to fundamentally change how the world’s oceans, seas and coastal areas are managed. ”

The case for better urban transport could not be clearer. Transport is now responsible for 23 per cent of global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions. Congestion costs range from one per cent of GDP in cities in the developed world, to over five per cent in Beijing, Sao Paulo and Bangkok. The health costs associated with road crashes range from one to five per cent of GDP in developing countries. Transport costs disproportionately impact the urban poor, who spend 25 to 30 per cent of household income on transport.

All Commonwealth countries have great opportunities for sustainable urban development. Consider India and Tanzania, for example.

In India, where the urban population is expected to nearly double to 800 million by 2050, the decisions taken by Indian policymakers over the next

few years will determine its course for decades. Staying with the current sprawling, unconnected pattern of urbanisation could cost an estimated US\$330 billion to \$US1.8 trillion by mid-century. In contrast, designing more coordinated, connected cities could bring lower costs for public infrastructure and transportation, while cutting down on traffic casualties, congestion, air pollution and health risks. Nationally, India is on track to exceed its goal of having 175 gigawatts of operational renewable energy capacity by March 2022, while it aims to sell only electric vehicles by 2030 and to stop approving new coalmines beyond those already in the pipeline.

In Tanzania, where the urban population is projected to exceed 60 million by 2050 (four times the number in 2012), most of the growth is expected to take place in Dar es

Salaam. Until now, urban development has evolved without clear spatial planning and essential infrastructure to meet basic human needs. At the same time, the country’s poor and marginalised city-dwellers are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, as temperatures rise and unpredictable rainfall and intense droughts lead to food shortages, water scarcity, floods and power outages. Tanzania’s National Urban Development Strategy can help deliver the sustainable growth that its cities need, coordinating policies across government sectors and aligning with the activities of sub-national governments, the private sector and civil society.

Second, coastal development and the marine economy. A majority of Commonwealth countries are small island states or countries with significant coastlines, and thus are especially vulnerable to rising seas, coastal storms and erosion, mangrove and coral reef loss, and associated food and energy insecurity. They face economic threats from loss of fishing and tourism revenues, from flooding and loss of infrastructure. Commonwealth countries are at the forefront of efforts to find investment and policy options that will solve environmental problems, while promoting jobs and growth. This isn’t easy for individual countries, and a Commonwealth-wide coalition of leaders could make a major difference. It’s deeply encouraging to see leadership embedded in the Commonwealth strategy, which aims to fundamentally change how the world’s oceans, seas and coastal areas are managed. This can protect its members while fostering sustainable economic growth based on new sectors such as aquaculture, biotechnology, ocean-based renewable energy and tourism – all of which will require innovative approaches to infrastructure.

The astonishing innovations in green growth technology and policy that have characterised recent years have been driven by necessity. Just as Commonwealth countries are deeply vulnerable to climate change, so they are the natural innovators and testing grounds for new paths forward. ■



Tanzania’s urban population is projected to exceed 60 million by 2050. Most of the growth is expected to take place in Dar es Salaam.

Here for visionaries

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Here for good

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: FROM PROMISE TO PRACTISE

Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, calls on the Commonwealth to take action in five key areas to realise the transformative vision of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Amina J. Mohammed,
Deputy Secretary-General,
United Nations

The United Nations attaches great importance to its partnership with the Commonwealth of Nations. These ties are rooted in a shared commitment to peace, sustainable development and human rights, and to the values of equality, tolerance and dignity for all. Like the United Nations, the Commonwealth draws strength from the cultural, geographical and linguistic diversity of its membership. Today, the Commonwealth has moved well beyond its colonial origins to become a dynamic multilateral presence across the world. The United Nations looks to the Commonwealth to bring its full capacities to bear as we work to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In this third year of global efforts to implement that Agenda, there are encouraging signs of momentum. The hope that accompanied its adoption in 2015 is still with us. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have captured the

imagination of leaders and general public alike. Member States are showing strong ownership - including through strong personal engagement by Heads of State and Government - and are aligning their plans and strategies accordingly. We are seeing new champions stepping up, seeking to set the world on a path towards a more inclusive globalisation. Local authorities and responsible businesses are seizing the opportunities of climate action. Young people are taking on more and more responsibilities in the sustainability movement. The scientific and academic communities are contributing solutions and ideas.

At the same time, we know the clock is ticking and the pace of progress is insufficient to fully meet our ambition. The global context is one in which we are still suffering from many protracted conflicts, with new ones arising, along with complex humanitarian crises and mass movements of refugees and displaced persons. Inequality



UN Women/Gaganjit Singh

The SDGs will only be realised if we ensure women's equality and the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of life.

“ The clock is ticking and the pace of progress is insufficient to fully meet our ambition. ”

remains alarmingly high, including between women and men, where disparities have grown wider in many key respects. The impacts of climate change are spreading, and environmental degradation and pollution are worsening, threatening our long-term sustainability. Taken together, these obstacles risk throwing us off-course in our efforts to meet the targets by the deadline of 2030.

The SDGs are a beacon of hope for people around the world - an agreed set of priorities for the global common good. Looking ahead, it is clear that realising this transformative vision will require concerted action and changes in five key areas.

First, to achieve the SDGs, we must be guided by the principle of leaving no one behind.

This commitment to inclusiveness and equality is at the heart of the

2030 Agenda. It is also our best long-term strategy to prevent conflict and maintain peace and security. Marginalisation and discrimination can lead to social fissures and political unrest. Fair distribution of wealth and special attention to the vulnerable, on the other hand, contribute to social cohesion and political stability.

We must strive to end poverty in its multidimensional reality and ensure access to quality basic services and human rights for all.

We must also unleash the potential of half our populations, by ensuring women's full equality and protection from violence. We know that through women's meaningful participation in all aspects of life, we can increase food security, better address climate



change, see greater resources flow to social protection, unlock trillions for the global economy and ensure more sustainable peace and security.

Young people, for their part, continue to face alarmingly high rates of unemployment and exclusion, and their voices are yet to be sufficiently included in the deliberations affecting their lives and futures.

Those furthest behind must be our top priority.

Second, we must shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns.

According to NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States), 2017 was likely to have been the second warmest year on record, behind only 2016. Last year also ties with 2011 for the highest number of billion-dollar disasters in a single year.

Climate change is an undeniable threat. There is no doubt that we must raise our ambition in implementing the Paris Agreement and putting the world on a safe trajectory of keeping global temperature increase below two degrees Celsius. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has decided to convene a Climate Summit in 2019 to accelerate momentum. We must also invest in science and technology to find more effective solutions to decouple growth from emissions and environmental degradation; develop incentives to guide the practises of businesses and communities, especially among young people; and address the tensions between needs and wants in a world of 7.5 billion people.

Third, we must learn to think in an integrated way and work collaboratively with all sectors.

The SDGs are interconnected. They are a network of interdependent, indivisible, mutually reinforcing targets - the DNA of our sustainable development agenda. In taking these interactions into account, we must strengthen collaboration among all relevant sectors and partners when making plans and strategies, allocating budgets or evaluating performance. Cohesive, joined-up decision-making is a must for the SDGs era.

Fourth, we must mobilise resources through all possible channels - public and private, domestic and international.

Official Development Assistance is a commitment and still plays an indispensable role, but increasingly it

// The United Nations looks forward to working with the Commonwealth and all partners to enable all humankind to enjoy a future of peace and prosperity on a healthy planet. //

Guterres has set out a vision for transformation that encompasses the strengthening of UN country teams and the Resident Coordinator system, and the sharpening of critical capacities. Our aim is to build a UN system that is accountable, results-driven, responsive and cohesive in supporting Member States as they take the lead in building a better future for their citizens.

With concerted action across these five imperatives, we can move the



Participants from Liberia and Malawi at the end of their six-month solar engineering course.

Credit: UN Women/Gaganjit Singh

is complemented by innovative ways of resource mobilisation, as well as South-South Cooperation.

The financing requirements for realising the SDGs and the Paris Agreement are considerable. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides the framework and blueprint for global cooperation. Development banks have significant potential to upscale their contributions.

But public finance alone is not sufficient. Financial systems will need to become more responsive and innovative, and aligned with the 2030 Agenda. Digital finance will play a major role in connecting the world.

Fifth, we must adapt our institutions to meet the greater demands of a new paradigm in international development.

The interconnected nature of the Agenda, and its ambition to take care of the furthest behind, require us to go beyond institutional barriers and intellectual silos. Many countries have established inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms within their governments, as well as various channels for meaningful engagement with stakeholders.

The United Nations development system must also adapt. Guided by the 2030 Agenda, Secretary-General

SDGs from promise to practise.

Not long ago, speaking at the United Nations, Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland stressed the importance of pressing governments to take concerted steps towards the SDGs. “You keep on talking and you don’t shut up”, she said; “Put a pin on governments’ chairs until they are held accountable”.

In that spirit, the United Nations looks forward to working with the Commonwealth and all partners to enable all humankind to enjoy a future of peace and prosperity on a healthy planet. ●

PLACING LOCAL GOVERNMENT AT THE HEART OF DEVELOPMENT

Dr Greg Munro, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum looks at the crucial role of local governments and communities in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.



Dr Greg Munro,
Secretary-General,
Commonwealth Local
Government Forum

“ We need to put communities at the centre of what we do. ”

One of the reasons put forward for a number of countries failing to achieve many of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals was that, in some cases, the planning was too ‘top down’ and did not sufficiently involve local governments and communities in its implementation. The more recent 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have over 160 targets, of which almost two-thirds cannot be achieved without the engagement of local government.

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), together with other international local government stakeholders, actively participates in a Global Task Force on local and regional governments; to advocate for and ensure the inclusion of local governments and the communities they serve, in planning, implementing and monitoring the SDGs. There are already best practice examples in the Commonwealth. Rwanda, for instance, has integrated the goals and targets across national policies and programmes and partnered with local governments on implementation plans.

If we are to create a more prosperous, secure, sustainable and fair future for Commonwealth citizens,

national and local governments need to commit to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. However in doing so, we need to be cognisant of a number of issues.

Firstly, there needs to be considerable political will and commitment. As in Rwanda, SDGs need to be widely integrated into governmental policy. Given the dependence on local government for the achievement of so many targets, we need to ‘rethink’ our approach to multi-level governance, instilling greater trust between different spheres of government, and between local government and its citizens. As trust in local government grows, so should the enabling legislative framework for progressive and effective decentralisation processes.

Secondly, we need to engage our youth. The Commonwealth’s 53 member countries have a combined population of more than two billion, of which more than 60 per cent are under 30 years of age. The more the young citizens of the Commonwealth respond to, and participate in the global development agenda, the more sustainable the achievements will be. Participation in local decision-making, local leadership around the SDGs



Rwanda has successfully integrated national planning with local government implementation to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

and youth-led developmental action at a community level are required for lasting change.

Thirdly, the world faces continued migration into cities. More than half of the world's population lives in cities and by 2050 this will rise to 70 per cent. A young, rapidly urbanising population will create the greatest challenges - or opportunities - for the Commonwealth in the future. There are two different visual representations of rapid urbanisation. One is of a densely populated, voiceless people living in peri-urban squalor, with limited economic opportunities and grinding poverty. The other is of a community that is socially and economically integrated across the city, with inward investment and job creation, and where citizens have meaningful engagement on decisions which affect their daily lives. We need to commit to making this second option a reality.

Fourthly, communities and citizens across the Commonwealth must be at the centre of all we do. Local government is the point of meaningful contact between government and communities, and is where democracy and development is most keenly experienced - or missed! As our populations and their needs grow, greater innovation and effort are required to keep that interface real and tangible between local government and its citizens. Numerous good practice examples exist: from being

able to contact the mayor or councillor through smartphone applications or IT; to community budgeting initiatives, advisory ward committees, multi-stakeholder integrated development plans, community forums and mayoral 'listening' campaigns.

Fifthly, we need to prioritise innovative financial and technological mechanisms to realise our goals. Achieving the SDGs will require considerable resources, talent and commitment. New ways for raising capital must be investigated: options for community development around new infrastructure nodes must be implemented; and access to green financing, municipal bonds; and attracting inward investment and trade are all key areas to explore. The use of new and disruptive technology for efficiency and innovation is essential and CLGF has a global partnership with Microsoft to expand our understanding of this for our Commonwealth members. Many of these issues were incorporated into the theme of the recent CLGF biennial conference hosted by the Government of Malta in November 2017.

Finally, and essentially, we need to collaborate. We cannot achieve our developmental aims unless we collaborate and partner at country and community level with our citizens, the private sector, civil society, social enterprises, developmental agencies and other stakeholders. We also

cannot achieve our developmental aims unless we collaborate and partner at a Commonwealth level. Each member state can lay claim to a number of good practice examples. There is a need to create opportunities that enable us to learn from these examples, and the Commonwealth is a wonderful mechanism for such learning. Some years ago, CLGF developed the Aberdeen Agenda, a set of principles on good practice for local democracy and good governance, which was endorsed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government. CLGF has also established a Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network. Finding best practice examples on implementing these principles in large city contexts, and sharing these across Commonwealth cities and local governments remains as one of our key tasks.

Across the Commonwealth, we need to commit to improving the lives of all of our citizens. Aligning democracy and development at the local government level creates the foundation for powerful action in this regard. If we truly believe in the role of local government across the Commonwealth, we also need to put communities at the centre of what we do. It is their future, it's a common future and as the theme of CHOGM 2018 reminds us, we need to move 'Towards a Common Future'. 🟡

PATHWAY TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka, advocates that a country's sustainable future must be built on the foundation of self-discipline and equity, and outlines his pathway for a sustainable future in Sri Lanka and the Commonwealth.



Maithripala Sirisena,
President, Sri Lanka

My vision for the Commonwealth of Nations and our collective future includes prosperous economies, green environments, and inclusive, harmonious and just societies – leaving no one behind.

By the middle of the century, the planet will withstand a population of 9-10 billion people, who will need adequate natural resources, sustainable livelihoods and economic progress. Issues like overexploitation of scarce resources, pollution, declining biodiversity and climate change require practical and sustainable solutions.

Learning from the Buddhist traditions prevalent in Sri Lanka, there are three types of human conflicts.

First, the conflict between human beings and nature – where modern humanity seeks to enjoy material comforts in life, by overexploiting natural resources and harming the environment.

Second, the conflict between humans – which occurs among individuals, communities and nations. The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that conflicts occur when human rights are not protected by rule of law.

Third, the conflict between good and bad pulses within each human

being. This is the root cause of conflict, because the two types above arise when we lose this battle within us, as human beings.

Extremism, overconsumption, environmental harm, human rights violations and income inequality are all results of our inability to contain overindulgence. This, in turn, can cause insecurity, conflict, rights violations and exploitation.

The edifice of sustainable development should therefore be built upon the foundation of self-discipline and equity. If this could be practised at a personal, community, national and global level, it would mark a giant leap forward for humankind.

Sri Lanka has already embarked on the Sustainable Sri Lanka 2030 Vision – our own strategic plan to harmonise the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the Sustainable Development Triangle. By 2030, our national goal is to achieve high middle-income status, and become a prosperous, green, inclusive and harmonious Indian Ocean hub. Our practical strategy for achieving sustainable development follows a Balanced Inclusive Green Growth (BIGG) path, which resonates with the teaching of the Lord Buddha and the tradition of the middle path.

The BIGG path takes us towards a people-orientated and open socioeconomic system, based on democratic and pluralistic institutions, that protect our ethical values, heritage and environment; and built on respect for freedom, justice, equal opportunities and human rights. It will provide a framework for all stakeholders – in government, the private sector and civil society – to cooperate effectively in achieving our sustainable development vision.

Our focus is to provide a decent quality of life for all, especially the poor and disadvantaged, and meet basic needs, in line with the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals and UN 2030 Agenda – ‘leaving no one behind’. Beyond these fundamental goals, we also support a vision in which the latest knowledge and technologies can help Sri Lanka aspire to more advanced levels of sustainable development.

“ Extremism, overconsumption, environmental harm, human rights violations and income inequality are all results of our inability to contain overindulgence. ”

Sri Lanka is the oldest modern democracy in Asia, and the values we aspire to are very much in line with the Commonwealth: to build a just, peaceful and prosperous world. We have resolutely protected democracy in our country despite pressing challenges. We have succeeded in retaining state social welfare policies that have existed since Independence, including universal free education, free healthcare and eradication of poverty, enabling a high score in the Human Development Index.

Sri Lanka has already embarked on a drive to integrate closely with the global economy, to strengthen trade and financial relations. In our quest to work towards the prospect of realising US \$2 trillion intra-Commonwealth trade by 2030, we should resolve to ensure inclusive growth for the poor and vulnerable through a transparent, inclusive, free and open rules-based multilateral trading system.

We will work with emerging economies to transform Sri Lanka into a centre of excellence in maritime affairs and the Blue Economy. The latest budget presented by our Government, entitled Blue-Green Enterprise, encourages low emission economic development. Oceanic and marine resources will be used in a sustainable manner, and organic farming and clean renewable energy will be promoted. We will take steps to encourage research in this area with other Commonwealth member states. In a bid to find a sustainable solution to ocean pollution and solid waste management, I announced a ban on the use of polythene products including oxo-biodegradable plastic and extended polystyrene last year.

As an island nation, Sri Lanka is deeply conscious of the impact of

climate change. We are already facing its adverse impacts in the form of droughts, unprecedented and rising temperature, floods, unseasonable rain and coastal erosion. Collective action is required to arrest vulnerabilities and increase resilience, with strategies in place for innovative funding. Specific policies and efforts are needed to ensure that green growth is inclusive and environmental sustainability is not at the expense of greater equity and poverty alleviation.

Development should result in empowerment of women and youth and assure security for children. Youth is the driving force for economic advancement and its marginalisation will be a cause for conflict. National policies must be geared towards transforming young people into a totally skilled workforce, to ensure success in the 21st century knowledge-based world. Similarly, programmes to empower women and thereby enhance their contribution in development should be implemented. The sustainability of a cohesive, ethical society, as well as greater economic productivity, rests on equal opportunities for all.

The modern Commonwealth is a driving force for positive change. I believe that it is the duty of each generation to leave a better country and a world to our children. I view the 2030 Development Agenda not merely as a document agreed to by all world leaders but as a sacred covenant between our generation and the next.

Commonwealth member states must rise to this clarion call to urgently address sustainable development issues that threaten life on this one planet that all countries – rich, poor; small and large – have to share and call home. ●

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE THROUGH EDUCATION

Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, explains how inclusive and equitable access to quality education is essential for our new global citizens and the creation of a sustainable future for all.



Audrey Azoulay,
Director-General, UNESCO

The benefits of education are unequivocal; from eradicating poverty and hunger, improving health, protecting the planet and building peaceful societies. Promoting inclusive and equitable access to quality education for all is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and essential for facing the challenges ahead.

Cyclone Winston, the most powerful on record, had a devastating impact in Fiji when it made landfall in 2016. It is emblematic of one of the major challenges we currently face – climate change – and why we need

to rethink our education systems to make them more sustainable and resilient. This is why it was fitting that participants at the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM) gathered for the first time in the Pacific region in early 2018, to discuss a frank question: ‘Sustainability and Resilience: Can Education Deliver?’

The subsequent Declaration produced by the ministers made it clear: ‘Education Can Deliver’. However, the question is how.

The role of education in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goes far beyond the provision of basic skills. It is about ensuring that individuals are empowered with the competencies, values and mindsets to live together in solidarity with one other, and in harmony with our planet, to craft solutions for a more sustainable future.

This is not a utopic vision but a game plan for our future, which must garner the efforts of all – governments, multilaterals, civil society, academia, the private sector and more. The blueprint for creating resilient societies is to reorient our education systems to nurture the global citizens of

// Education is the most transformational force for eradicating poverty, mitigating climate change and coping with the profound shifts driven by accelerating globalisation and the fourth industrial revolution. //



Women from Nkhata Bay in Northern Malawi participate in a bursary programme to become certified solar panel technicians.

Credit: ©Gail Swithenbank (Zayed Solar Academy, Partner of UNESCO Skills and Technical Education Programme)

“ Despite the steady rise in literacy rates over the past 50 years, there are still 750 million illiterate adults around the world, most of whom are women. ”

the future. The Commonwealth – representing a third of humanity in all its diversity – is a microcosm of the challenges we face on a global scale. Nearly 60 per cent of its population is aged under 30, and these young people shoulder the heaviest burden of change, whether in terms of vulnerability to climate change or unemployment. They should be on the frontlines of positive transformation in their societies.

This demands quality education. While the mantra of the 2030 Agenda is to ‘leave no one behind’, gaping inequalities are depriving 236 million out-of-school children and youths of an education. Schools are failing too many students, with six out of 10 not gaining proficient skills in such basic subjects as reading and mathematics. Despite the steady rise in literacy rates over the past 50 years, especially among young people, there are still 750 million illiterate adults around the world, most of whom are women.

As the United Nations agency responsible for coordinating the implementation of Sustainable

Development Goal 4 on education, UNESCO’s starting point is clear. Education is the most transformational force for eradicating poverty, mitigating climate change and coping with the profound shifts driven by accelerating globalisation and the fourth industrial revolution.

This transformation calls not only for concerted action – to reach the most marginalised, tackle gender inequalities, ensure that teachers are adequately trained and school environments are safe and secure – but a rethinking of the very practice of education.

It is estimated that more than five million jobs will be lost as a result of labour market changes over the next five years. Beyond addressing the mismatch between skills and labour markets, education systems need to prepare their students for jobs that do not yet exist. They need new strategies to ensure the acquisition of digital skills, through the formal and non-formal pathways, but also the competencies that are increasingly

required to evaluate information and craft new solutions – critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, problem-solving skills – and skills for understanding and living with diversity.

Significantly, by adopting the 2030 Agenda, these countries committed not only to ensuring a full cycle of primary and secondary education and to promoting lifelong learning opportunities. They placed a new and fresh focus on the relevance of learning, and on the skills needed to live in a plural, interdependent and interconnected world. This marks a turning point for global education policy and practice.

This vision goes to the heart of UNESCO’s actions to build more resilient and rights-based education systems that promote humanistic values, peace-building skills and knowledge to shape more sustainable societies.

Education for sustainable development plays a vital role here, whether in the small island developing states – the least polluting but among the most vulnerable to climate change – or the mega-cities with over 10 million inhabitants.

Propelled by the momentum of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) led by UNESCO, the focus now is to mainstream this practice in schools and universities, with the aim of empowering learners with the attitudes, knowledge and values to shape a sustainable future. For this, UNESCO has supported countries in integrating sustainable development concepts into curricula, and developed practical tools, learning objectives and courses to teach climate change in the classroom. This is an exercise in pedagogical innovation, giving students the space to find solutions, and to make their schools ‘green’, with ripple effects in their communities.

Fostering this sense of responsibility and agency in an increasingly interdependent world is the mission of global citizenship education, which is also a target in the 2030 Agenda. This promotes an ethos of shared responsibility and the capacity to understand different



Credit: ©UNESCO/Rob. Kamhoot

Children are being educated to create a more sustainable future in this Mountain Sea Project in Morocco.

“ The blueprint for creating resilient societies is to reorient our education systems to nurture the global citizens of the future. ”

perspectives, identities and world views, as well as to communicate across cultural boundaries and act collaboratively to find solutions to global challenges. UNESCO has been at the forefront of advancing the understanding and practice of global citizenship, developing guidance for policy makers, teachers

and educators, and building networks and sharing best practices.

The spread of violent extremism has further highlighted the urgent need to invest in education as the most effective form of prevention, by equipping youth with the skills to critically question, and to counter narratives of hatred and distorted

visions of religion and history.

From guidance for decision-makers and educators, to the flagship #Unite4Heritage campaign to promote respect for the diversity of cultures and their contributions to our shared humanity, UNESCO is working to empower young people to be more resilient and to prosper in a globalising world.

The planet is under pressure, societies are transforming and multilateralism is under strain. It is our responsibility to future generations to pool our collective intelligence, to innovate and to integrate education into the heart of public policy: our shared future depends on it. ●



THE QUEEN'S COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION 2018

Since 1883, The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition has encouraged, empowered and inspired young writers to share their thoughts on significant issues of the day. Through this highly-regarded education programme, young voices are amplified to a global level and celebrated for their insight and innovation.



The 2017 Winners from Australia, Canada, India and England at the Award Ceremony with HRH The Duchess of Cornwall.

Recognising Achievement

As the only pan-Commonwealth competition for under-18s, the Competition recognises the hard work and talent of young people by awarding every entrant with a Certificate. Since 2010, 75,000 aspiring young writers have received this acknowledgement, sending a clear, positive message to young people of the power of their writing and importance of their voice.

Celebrating young writers

With over 60% of Commonwealth citizens under 30, it is important to celebrate young ideas and contributions. The Competition applauds young writers, as expressed at the 2017 Awards Ceremony at Buckingham Palace when HRH The Duchess of Cornwall praised the Winners for 'the way you have crafted words so beautifully to create wonderful pieces of writing', while presenting certificates on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen.

Developing key skills

The Competition supports young people in developing skills invaluable to future endeavours. Through careful consideration of the topic, critical thinking and analysis abilities grow. Writing inspires imagination and the ability to craft an argument. English language skills are developed by enhancing vocabulary, becoming more familiar with grammar and encouraging the use of language to express a point to the fullest.

Inspiring creative thinking

For many students across the Commonwealth, English is taught as a formal, academic endeavour. This Competition is an opportunity for young people and teachers to be more creative with language and explore different mediums. The 2018 theme of the Competition, 'Towards a Common Future', calls for imaginative, forward-thinking pieces and is the perfect starting-point for developing new perspectives.

The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition welcomes entries on 'Towards a Common Future' until 1st June 2018.
www.thercs.org/competition



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

A NEW ERA FOR EDUCATION FINANCING

Julia Gillard, Chair of the Global Partnership for Education and former Prime Minister of Australia, implores wealthier nations to prioritise global education funding, to put all countries on a path to economic prosperity, social stability and security.



Julia Gillard,
Chair, Global Partnership
for Education

Inequality and joblessness, especially for young people, have been cited by the World Economic Forum as among the top global risk factors, for several consecutive years.

Many nations are on the brink of one of two potential futures. Every nation can reap the demographic dividends from the energy and talent of their young people. Or, if they fail to educate them, see significant economic losses, armed conflict, brain-drain and social and political unrest.

The relationship between higher levels of education and economic growth is proven and clear. We know that in low income countries, every dollar invested in a child's education generates more than \$5 in additional annual gross earnings, even after taking costs into account and allowing for the variable quality of education.

In lower-middle income countries, the rate of return is \$2.50 for every dollar invested. If the quality of that education improves, the returns are even higher.

Individual earnings rise by about 10 per cent for each additional year of schooling received by a child; and if every child in low income countries were able to complete secondary school by 2030, income per capita would increase by 75 per cent.

On these numbers alone, education is obviously a good investment and

the clearest pathway for low income nations to outpace poverty and dependence on aid.

But as we know, while education matters for economic growth, it matters for so much more. It is a significant determinant of the peace and stability of societies, for example, and it is now crystal clear that education also improves health outcomes.

Better educated populations make healthier choices for themselves and their families. Should an epidemic strike, higher education facilitates better understanding about what is happening, as well as better compliance with health warnings.

We know that education is a preventive factor in the spread of HIV – especially for girls. Every additional year of secondary school significantly reduces a girl's risk of contracting the virus.

An educated mother is also much more likely to marry and have children later in life, to vaccinate her children and to have them sleep under mosquito nets to prevent malaria.

There are, of course, huge economic benefits to be gained from more women entering the workforce, so using the talents and potential of the whole population. Indeed, education is the bedrock of women's economic empowerment.



Given the many and varied benefits of education, it was saddening and galling to see that aid to education from the world's richest nations dropped from 13 per cent of total aid in 2002, to 10 per cent in 2014. By contrast, the share of aid for health rose from 15 to 18 per cent.

Fortunately, there is now a growing momentum for change. This was clearly demonstrated at the Financing Conference of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – which I Chair – in Dakar, Senegal in early 2018.

GPE urges its 60+ developing country partners to increase their share of education spending to 20 per cent of their overall domestic budgets.

At our Financing Conference, more than 50 nations heeded this call, pledging to further increase their

“ Individual earnings rise by about 10 per cent for each additional year of schooling received by a child. ”

education spending to a total of US\$110 billion during 2018-2020, representing an increase of US\$80 billion compared to the previous three years.

Although impressive, it is still not enough to boost progress toward educating all the world's children by 2030 – the target established in the Sustainable Development Goals. Low income countries need the help of external partners, through

bilateral aid and multilateral funding. Wealthier donor countries are essential to filling that gap.

In Dakar, we saw a global focus on doing just that, with unprecedented political support and encouraging financing commitments for educating every child in the world, including the poorest and most marginalised.

The conference was co-convened by Presidents Macky Sall of Senegal and Emmanuel Macron of France. This was the first time that the leaders of a donor government and a developing country have jointly hosted such a financing event.

For GPE, this co-hosting symbolised the spirit of partnership that is at the core of everything

“ While education matters for economic growth, it matters for so much more. ”

we do, as the only multilateral organisation solely devoted to ensuring every child gets a quality school education.

Our work with Commonwealth countries is substantial. The United Kingdom and Canada announced major funding increases to GPE in Dakar, and importantly, GPE funding reaches many developing Commonwealth countries, including: Bangladesh, Cameroon, Dominica, Grenada, The Gambia, Ghana, Guyana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia.

A growing number of civil society organisations have joined advocacy efforts to ensure that decision makers around the world recognise that #FundEducation is key. The singer and songwriter Rihanna, and GPE’s global ambassador, tweeted global leaders in support of the campaign.

Donor countries have substantially increased their financing to GPE for 2018-2020 to US\$2.3 billion, compared to the US\$1.3 billion contributed over the past three years. In addition, several donor countries have indicated their intention to pledge further funds.

The United Kingdom increased its contribution by more than 50 per cent to a record GBP 252 million. The European Union, with a pledge of EUR 337.5 million, became GPE’s biggest donor over the 2018 to 2020 financing period. France increased its contribution by more than tenfold from EUR 17 million to EUR 200 million. Canada and Ireland both doubled their annual contributions. Denmark, Sweden, and Norway all



pledged major new support in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Also, the United Arab Emirates joined GPE, became the first Arab and Middle East donor country, with a significant initial pledge of US\$100 million. The Netherlands and Spain announced they were renewing their partnerships with GPE after a three-year absence.

We were pleased to welcome, for the first time at a GPE replenishment conference, a senior representative of the government of China, who pledged collaboration with GPE in the future.

Private sector companies joined GPE’s new data solutions initiative, and our host Senegal demonstrated its leadership in global education with an extraordinary announcement by President Sall that his country would become GPE’s first developing country donor with a contribution of US\$2 million.

In September 2017, the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, spoke the following words:

“Investing in education is the most cost-effective way to drive economic development, improve skills and opportunities for young women and men, to unlock progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals and to prevent conflict and sustain peace.

We must work with governments and donors to increase education funding around the world ...

The Global Partnership for Education’s Financing Conference is our first opportunity to turn political commitment into tangible support.”

Whether GPE’s Financing Conference really prompts the start of a new, invigorated global movement in support of education, depends on what leaders do now.

International meetings like the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) provide opportunities to advance the cause of education, which is fundamental to putting countries, regions and indeed the entire world, on a path to economic prosperity, social stability and security.

As a former Chair in Office of CHOGM, I know that the extensive leaders-only meeting provides a key opportunity to talk through the most pressing and important issues. I trust that participant nations at CHOGM 2018 are frank about what they are doing to achieve education for all and what more they need to do in the future, and that their discussions add further energy and momentum to the global campaign for education for all. ●

“ Low income countries need the help of external partners, through bilateral aid and multilateral funding. Wealthier donor countries are essential. ”



University of Nigeria

to restore the dignity of man



Office of the Vice-Chancellor

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka is a Federal University located in Enugu State. It was founded in 1955 and formally opened on 7th October 1960, operating from three campuses in Nsukka, Enugu and Ituku Ozalla. The University of Nigeria prides itself as being the first university in Nigeria modelled on the American education system. It was also the first land-grant university throughout Africa and continues to rank among the five elite universities within Nigeria. Classes began at the Nsukka Campus on 17th October 1960, with an enrolment of 220 students and 13 academic staff.



With its motto: **“to Restore the Dignity of Man”**, the University today has grown to 17 Faculties and over one hundred Departments. The main campus of the University is located on nearly 900 hectares of hilly savannah in Nsukka, some 80km north of Enugu, the State capital. The Nsukka campus enjoys a pleasant and healthy climate. An additional 200 hectares of arable land is available for agriculture, while another 200 hectares is set aside for the staff housing project.

The University of Nigeria is renowned for having produced first class academics and administrators. Notable amongst these is the author, Chinua Achebe, who held a research and teaching appointment at the University in the early 1970s and the astrophysicist, Sam Okoye, who founded the Space Research Centre in 1972. The Centre remains one of the few institutions in Africa which researches and offers courses in astronomy, at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The Medical School performs most of its activities in the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), where doctors and other health workers are trained to exceptionally high standards and have proven over the years that they can effect a significant positive change in Africa, and for the entire healthcare system globally. Doctors and nurses trained in the institution have also contributed significantly to the advancement of medicine. The first open-heart surgery in sub-Saharan Africa was performed at the UNTH in 1974. The team of surgeons were led by the visiting Professor Yacoub from the United Kingdom, assisted by the Nigerian Professors Adikwu and Anyanwu. With the siting of the Nigerian National Cardiothoracic Centre at UNTH Enugu, the College of Medicine has since developed into the centre of excellence for cardiothoracic surgery and tropical cardiology for the entire West African region.

Today, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka has a particular focus on science and innovation. Through its iconic and visionary Vice-Chancellor, **Professor Benjamin Chukwuma Ozumba**, the University has added to its record of innovations by launching a fully-fledged, university-embedded science and technology incubator called the “Roar Nigeria Hub”, which provides professional support to start-ups, researchers, entrepreneurs and SMEs. The Hub is the first of its kind in any university in West Africa.

Adding to this, the University has set up its own fully functional laptop assembly plant, which produces the ‘Lion’ brand laptop and, aiming even higher in an effort to produce IT-skilled graduates, the Vice-Chancellor has designated nearly 50 hectares of land for the construction of a new Science Park in collaboration with the Swedish Government.

The University of Nigeria remains the centre for academic excellence.

www.unn.edu.ng

ACHIEVING LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL

Asha Kanwar, President and CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning, urges us to harness the potential of open, distance and technology-based approaches to learning to bring us closer to our goal of achieving lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.



Asha S. Kanwar,
President and CEO,
Commonwealth of Learning

Seven decades ago, the UN declared that education is a basic human right. In spite of key global interventions towards achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE), there were still 264 million primary and secondary age children and youths out of school in 2015 (UNESCO, 2017). Of the 1.2 billion young people between the ages of 15-24, more than 100 million still cannot read, most of them in developing countries (UNESCO, 2017). While access to educational opportunities has increased, it has not necessarily resulted in learning (World Bank, 2018). Completion rates are growing, but learning proficiency is not.

In the previous decade, we have witnessed an unprecedented demand for higher education. In 2007, there were 150 million tertiary students globally (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009) and the numbers increased to 165 million in 2012 with an estimate that this is expected to rise to 262 million in 2025 (Maslen, 2012) and 522 million by 2035 (Calderon, 2012). In real terms it means that if we are to accommodate



the children who will reach enrolment age between now and 2025, we will need to build four new universities every single week with a capacity of 30,000!

Sustainable Development Goal 4 aspires to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' by 2030. On current trends, universal primary education will only be achieved in 2042; universal lower secondary by 2059 and universal upper secondary by 2084 (UNESCO, 2016). What are the options for improving this picture? One approach would be to harness the potential of open distance and technology-based learning to achieve both speed and scale.

Open and distance learning has been adopted by various governments as it allows them to address issues of access and equity, improve quality and cut costs. Today, the 31 open universities in the Commonwealth alone provide flexible learning opportunities for approximately five million learners. For example, Indira Gandhi National Open University in India enrolls over



Women farmers in Garu-Tempene District of Ghana displaying their passbooks after a financial literacy session.

half a million students every year at approximately one third of the cost of campus education. Technology and media play a significant role in bridging the communication gap between teacher and learner in these universities. Research comparing distance education, online learning and face-to-face education has indicated that there is 'no significant difference' in learning outcomes. However, a major difference is in the ability of open and distance learning to reach a far greater number of learners.

Commonwealth of Learning (COL) believes that open and distance learning has the potential not only to address the challenges of increasing access

to quality education, but can also be deployed to promote lifelong learning, which includes non-formal and informal learning. As an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to promote the development and sharing of open and distance learning knowledge, resources and technologies, COL has demonstrated the impact of open and distance learning in transforming lives and communities. Through innovative open and distance learning approaches, COL works with partner organisations in the Commonwealth to achieve developmental impact: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental conservation.

“ Of the 1.2 billion young people between the ages of 15-24, more than 100 million still cannot read. ”

One example of the impact on economic growth is COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers initiative, which uses ICT-based open and distance learning to link financial capital, human capital and social capital to lift thousands of farmers, without prior access to learning opportunities, out of poverty. Research shows that for every dollar invested, income and assets worth \$9 have been generated among farming communities in India (Naveen Kumar, & Kulkarni, 2013). Another study indicates that a one per cent increase in empowerment induced by learning among women entrepreneurs at the bottom of the pyramid can increase profits of the enterprise by 2.3 per cent (Yindok, 2016).

Whereas in remote regions of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Mozambique and Tanzania, distance learning and technology has improved social inclusion for 45,000 girls and women, training them in skills for employment or entrepreneurship over a period of three years. A COL study indicates that skilling the girls and women has increased their chances of employment by 50 per cent and has had an impact on preventing early and forced marriage (Cohn, 2018).

Finally, an example of how open and distance learning can enhance environmental conservation is the Green Teacher programme. COL has supported the development of a Green Teacher programme for teacher training at The Centre for Environmental Education, India, with the aim of improving environmental awareness among school children from the early stages. The Centre is now sharing its expertise and experience with the National Teachers Institute, Kaduna, Nigeria, to develop this course.

These are just a few highlights to demonstrate how learning can lead to sustainable development. Open and distance learning is a tried and tested approach in formal education. The global community now needs to adopt open and distance learning and technology-enabled learning in the informal sector of learning as well. This will bring us closer to our goal of achieving lifelong learning for all by 2030. ●

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE SHOULD BE EVERYONE'S RIGHT

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization firmly believes that no one should have to choose between death and poverty, and calls on Commonwealth countries to commit to universal health coverage and invest in a healthier, safer and fairer world.



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,
Director-General,
World Health Organization

A few years ago a friend of mine was diagnosed with cancer. He lived in a high-income country, with access to some of the best treatment in the world. He had two options. He could have been treated, but it would have cost him most or all of the money he had put aside for his family's future. Or he could forego treatment, allow the disease to run its course and die knowing his family would have a more comfortable life, even if he was not there to enjoy it with them. He chose the latter.

This is an outrage. No one should have to choose between death and financial hardship.

But the shocking truth is that this is a reality for millions of people every year. At least half the world's population is still missing out on essential health services, and almost 100 million people are pushed into extreme poverty every year because of out-of-pocket health spending.

Seventy years ago, WHO was founded on the conviction that health is a human right, not a privilege. No one should get sick and die just because they are poor, or because they cannot access or afford the health services they need.

Universal health coverage (UHC) is the practical expression of the right to health. It means that all people, including the most disadvantaged, can access the quality health services they need, when and where they need them, without facing financial hardship.

WHO's new 5-year strategic plan sets an ambitious target for seeing 1 billion more people enjoying the benefits of health coverage by 2023. This is just five years away, but I believe it is truly achievable.

I was tremendously encouraged that last year's Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting ended with agreements to mobilise political commitment for UHC. This is vital because ultimately, UHC is a political choice.

All over the world there are great examples of countries already demonstrating their commitment to UHC. Many are in Commonwealth countries. High-income countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Singapore boast advanced health systems that deliver world-class services and some of the best health outcomes in the world.



By a happy coincidence, 2018 also marks the 70th anniversary of the United Kingdom's National Health Service. In many ways the NHS is the embodiment of WHO's vision for a world in which all people can access the health services they need, when and where they need them, without facing financial hardship.

But UHC is not just a luxury for wealthy countries. Many other Commonwealth nations are demonstrating that UHC can be a reality for all countries, at all income levels.

Earlier this year I was in Kenya, where President Uhuru Kenyatta recently announced that affordable health care will be one of four pillars of the Kenyan economy for his second term in office. He has asked WHO for support in selecting the best health financing model to make this vision a reality.

Just recently, India announced a major increase in its health budget, which will benefit 500 million people and establish 150,000 new health and wellness centres. And the Solomon Islands has embarked on a bold plan to define packages of services to be delivered at all levels of the health

“ At least half the world's population is still missing out on essential health services. ”

system throughout the nation's 600 islands, from small rural clinics to the National Referral Hospital.

Similar stories can be told about Botswana, Ghana, Malaysia, Rwanda and others.

The experience of all of these countries attests to the fact that the benefits of UHC go far beyond better health. It also reduces poverty by eliminating one of its causes; it creates jobs for health and care workers; it drives inclusive economic growth by ensuring people are healthy and able to work; and it promotes gender equality, because it is often women who miss out on health services.

Crucially, UHC is also an investment in a safer world. Countries with strong health systems are better able to prevent, detect and respond to outbreaks. The painful lesson of the 2014 Ebola epidemic is that a weak health system in

one country can pose a risk to the entire world. UHC and health security are two sides of the same coin.

Seventy years since our founding, WHO is more committed than ever to realising the vision of UHC.

For that reason, we have made UHC the theme of World Health Day, which we will celebrate on 7 April in Sri Lanka, another Commonwealth country that is also marking a 70th birthday - of independence - and which is a celebrated UHC success story.

Earlier this year, I issued a challenge to all countries to take three concrete steps towards UHC, and at this year's World Health Assembly we are asking that as many countries as possible come to Geneva ready to make commitments about the actions they will take.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for UHC. Every country is different and must find its own way in the context of its own political, economic and social circumstances. But countries that commit to the destination make a vital investment in a healthier, safer and fairer world. ●

“ There is no one-size-fits-all solution for UHC. ”

GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY AND THE IMPACT OF POLIO ERADICATION

Ian Riseley, President of Rotary International, discusses how we can apply polio eradication learnings and assets to help tackle other serious health issues across the Commonwealth.



Ian Riseley,
President, Rotary International

When the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) was launched in 1988, the endeavour was met with a great deal of scepticism. Despite the many voices saying that it could never be done, the GPEI's partners - Rotary, the WHO, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and UNICEF - were convinced that polio could be eliminated, and set an ambitious target date for eradication.

Within a few years of steady progress, it became clear that while eradication was possible, it would be a far more complicated matter than originally anticipated. Reaching every child on earth with two drops of vaccine was a simple goal, but the sheer scale of the exercise gave rise to immensely complex logistical challenges. Nevertheless, the GPEI persisted, answering each of these challenges with astonishing determination, creativity and tenacity. Every setback was met with renewed resolve: to find new ways around each obstacle, and keep moving forward towards the end.

Polio eradication ultimately became the work of more than three decades, and an investment

of over US\$15 billion to date. It has united Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries, governments and non-governmental agencies, philanthropists and individual donors, and a vast network of staff and volunteers, to become the largest public-private health initiative in history. The magnitude of the effort has been breathtaking, and the results have been historic.

In 2017, wild poliovirus paralysed only 22 children: the lowest number in history, and a 99.99 per cent reduction on the thousand children paralysed every day in 1988. Thanks in large part to longstanding support by the Commonwealth - collectively and on the part of individual countries - we are closer than we have ever been to stopping transmission of the wild poliovirus.

As we look ahead to that success, it is essential that we also look forward, not only towards the goal we will soon achieve, but beyond it. When we first undertook to eradicate polio, we underestimated the time it would take, simply because we did not realise how much else we would have to do, build, create and learn, to reach that primary goal. Today, as a result of that work,



A child receives polio vaccine during a National Immunization Day.

Credit: Rotary International

we have achieved much more than the task we initially set out to do. Indeed, the accrued and ongoing benefits of the work of the GPEI, beyond its reduction of polio, are staggering in their scope and breadth.

In every part of the world where the GPEI is active, well-coordinated global health partnerships are supporting the existing health systems, strengthening capacity for social mobilisation, disease surveillance and rapid response. Because of the experience gained over many years of mass vaccination campaigns and outbreak response, global capacity for pandemic response is far greater than it would otherwise have been. Health education carried out in tandem with polio-related activities has increased awareness and understanding of health issues - from childhood diseases to basic hygiene. Advocates for polio eradication have improved levels of immunisation against other communicable diseases, such as mumps, measles, hepatitis and Rotavirus. And the involvement of community-based volunteers, increasingly including women, has strengthened local support for public health initiatives, even in areas where such initiatives have traditionally been met with mistrust.

“ The infrastructure to support the work of polio eradication has proven invaluable in addressing many other crises of public health. ”

The infrastructure that has been created to support the work of polio eradication has, over time, proven invaluable in addressing many other crises of public health. When Ebola threatened West Africa in 2014, one of the worst-case scenarios to be modelled was the disease reaching Lagos - one of the largest and most densely populated urban areas in Africa, with a highly mobile population. When Ebola did arrive in Lagos, on a flight from Liberia, it travelled no further, because the emergency operations centre, the response procedures and the surveillance infrastructure of polio were there and ready, able to stop its spread. Two years later, when yellow fever threatened the Democratic Republic of Congo, it was the experience of past polio vaccination campaigns that allowed the government, with support from the WHO and partners, to launch a prompt

reactive and preemptive vaccination campaign - interrupting transmission, and saving untold lives.

By definition, eradication, once reached, will be permanent. While itself a monumental achievement, polio eradication should not be the only enduring benefit of the GPEI's work, or the only return on the world's collective investment. The Commonwealth is now faced with an unprecedented and unique opportunity to leverage its past investment, and build on its continuing leadership, by transitioning the assets, infrastructure and lessons of polio eradication, to benefit the goals of Universal Health Coverage and Global Health Security. As we plan together Towards a Common Future - one free of polio - it is also time to plan for that transition, to provide for that investment, and to take to heart all the lessons that this bold initiative has taught us. ●

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION MUST BE A PRIORITY

Pravind Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, calls for commonwealth governments to prioritise the preservation of the global environment and stresses the need for concrete climate change mitigation measures.



Pravind Kumar Jugnauth,
Prime Minister, Republic of
Mauritius

The theme for the 2018 Summit ‘Towards a Common Future’ constitutes a pledge to shape a new destiny for the peoples of the Commonwealth. The task ahead is highly ambitious, but we owe it to both the present and future generations who deserve a better future. To enable us rise to the challenges of a such gigantic ambition, a clear and thoughtful assessment of our current environment is needed.

The wrath of nature which seriously affected the livelihood of our brothers and sisters in the Caribbean in 2017 and recently the Pacific, reminds us of the necessity to place climate change and the inherent vulnerabilities of small island states high on the agenda of the Commonwealth. Such climatic phenomena are not only a menace to human life and security but are also increasingly threatening the very existence of small island states.

While adaptation will help in moderating the effects of climate change, without adequate mitigation measures little can be achieved as the threat will always loom over us.

We must, therefore, strive to address the issue of global climate change by concretely focusing on the reduction of emissions. And, this can only happen if the global community works together and keeps to its commitments. The Commonwealth has a responsibility to fast forward this message in the global arena.

The setting up of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub underscores the intent and determination of the Commonwealth and Mauritius, as host of the Hub, to provide tangible solutions to the difficulties faced by small states and least developed countries in accessing climate finance. We need to continue with such strategic engagements through sharing of expertise and experience as well as seeking innovative solutions.

While we combine our efforts to prevent global warming, initiatives leading to the development and dissemination of energy conservation technologies, the development of innovative energy and environmental technologies as well as preservation of our forests should to be strongly supported.

For small island states like Mauritius, the need to accelerate greater use of renewable energy is becoming more and more pressing for the reinforcement of energy security, the protection of the environment and the reduction of greenhouse gases. In this regard, Mauritius is determined to facilitate the implementation of renewable energy projects and has recently set up the Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency with the core objective of creating an enabling environment for the development of renewable energy. We are further investing into a future that will improve the quality of life of our citizens by combining innovative financial tools and strategies.



“ For small island states like Mauritius, the need to accelerate greater use of renewable energy is becoming more and more pressing. ”

Moreover, cognisant of the importance of developing our human resource in support of our strong belief that women and the youth will be instrumental in shaping the shared future that we aspire for, Mauritius has always allocated the required resources for education, gender equality, and women and youth empowerment.

I am pleased to note that, so far, Mauritius has benefitted from assistance from the Commonwealth and we see potential of replicating models of success in other countries. As we celebrate our 50 years of independence, we look forward to further enhancing collaboration with the organisation with a view to unlocking the potential of an innovation driven digital economy that would take us to the next level of socio-economic development.

With a vast exclusive economic zone, Mauritius recognises the massive potential of the ocean. We, therefore, support the related initiatives of the Commonwealth including the Blue Charter Initiative and call on the Secretariat to develop a comprehensive programme aimed at mobilising international cooperation for the sustainable exploration and use of the ocean resources, including fisheries.

Over the decades, the Commonwealth has played a major role in promoting the rule of law, good governance and human rights as well as the shared values of peace, freedom, democracy, equality, and respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty. Enunciating these values is not enough. Mauritius firmly stands for a strong commitment to these values.

As Heads of Government meet in London in April 2018, we have an obligation to renew our determination towards the preservation of the global environment and the creation of a more prosperous world but also to stress to future generations on our responsibility in developing a world that is fair and safe as well. Increased commitment to the fight against radicalism, extremism, cybercrime, drug related crimes and human trafficking must be promoted through the Commonwealth agenda.

These issues are very much at the fore today and reflect the growing awareness among the youth of their eventual impact on the future we want. The youth of the Commonwealth and beyond is making its voice heard on such matters and rightly so. Their idealism must fuel greater inspiration in building a future that mirrors their aspirations.

As leaders of the Commonwealth family determined to shoulder our responsibilities, we must develop a strong consensus around all these issues. We have all it takes to succeed, and we cannot afford to leave anyone behind! 🍌

“ Without adequate mitigation measures little can be achieved as the threat will always loom over us. ”

ADVANCING THE CLIMATE ACTION AGENDA

Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji and President of COP23, appeals to Commonwealth leaders to step up collective efforts to meet challenging but vital climate targets.



Frank Bainimarama,
Prime Minister of Fiji and
President of COP23

Fiji has the honour of being the first Small Island Developing State to preside over the continuing UN climate negotiations to implement the Paris Agreement of 2015. The UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) held in Bonn, Germany last November under Fiji's stewardship, was a notable success in moving the climate action agenda forward. As Fiji's Prime Minister, I come to CHOGM seeking the support of our fellow Commonwealth members for maximum ambition and momentum in the months ahead. I keep stressing that all 7.5 billion people on earth are in the same canoe in confronting the climate challenge. We are all vulnerable and we must all act. And we must step up our collective effort to limit global warming and tackle the resulting extreme weather, rising seas, damage to oceans and changes to agriculture that threaten our food security.

Many of the 2.4 billion citizens of the 53

Commonwealth countries around the world face a particular threat. This includes two of our number - Kiribati and Tuvalu - which are destined to sink beneath the waves altogether unless immediate and decisive action is taken to arrest global warming. Whether it is floods in Bangladesh, drought in Africa, strengthening cyclones in the Pacific and Caribbean or damage to coral reefs in Australia and elsewhere, we are all affected to a greater or lesser extent. And we must all band together under our unique umbrella - the Commonwealth - to continue to assist one other, as well as to work individually and as a bloc, to achieve maximum climate ambition in global forums.



One of the winning images from the COP23 Pacific Photo Competition, courtesy of Humans of Kiribati.

I am convinced as President of COP (Conference of the Parties – those that have signed up to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) that only by achieving the most ambitious target of the Paris Agreement can we avert catastrophe. This is to limit the average global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above that of the pre-industrial age. The scientific evidence tells us there is no time to waste. We must reduce net emissions of carbon dioxide to zero as soon as possible. And we simply cannot afford any challenge to the multilateral consensus for decisive climate action, with all nations now signatories to the Paris Agreement and only the United States publicly indicating that it may break with that consensus. Fortunately, a great many American states, cities and corporations have committed themselves through ‘America’s Pledge’ to decisive action. I very much look forward to participating in the Global Climate Action Summit to be held in California this September.

We must all act in unison to persuade any waverers to stay the course. I appeal to my fellow Commonwealth leaders to use their considerable influence to attain the maximum ambition the world so desperately needs. As our Secretary-General, Baroness Patricia Scotland,

has so aptly put it: “to use our common wealth for our common earth”.

In Bonn at COP23, we chalked up a range of achievements under Fiji’s leadership, that we look to Poland to consolidate and expand when it assumes the presidency of COP24 in Katowice in December.

- We advanced the Paris Agreement implementation programme and those negotiations continue.
- We established a process called the Talanoa Dialogue – a Pacific concept of consensus building devoid of finger pointing – that Poland and Fiji will co-chair in 2018 with the aim of achieving greater ambition by all nations in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for carbon reduction.
- We reached historic agreements on agriculture, gender and the acknowledgement of the special expertise of indigenous people and local communities in climate resilience building.
- We established an Ocean Pathway that recognises the inextricable link between climate change and the health of our oceans.
- And Fiji’s concept of a Grand Coalition for decisive climate action brought together, for the first time, governments at every level, civil society, the private sector and ordinary men and women to accelerate the process.

Fiji is also proud to be among the members of the Powering Past Coal Alliance that was launched by Britain, Canada and the Marshall Islands at COP23, and aims to phase out coal as the source of 40 per cent of the world’s carbon emissions by 2030. Commonwealth countries are at the forefront of the move from dirty energy such as coal to clean, renewable energy such as hydro, solar and wind power, just as they are at the forefront of the struggle to improve the health of our oceans and reverse the destruction of our coral reefs. I am pleased that so many nations, including Fiji, have joined one of the centerpieces of this CHOGM gathering – the Blue Charter initiative of principles for sustainable ocean development.

The theme of CHOGM 2018 – ‘Towards a Common Future’ – underlines the journey we must all make together towards a more sustainable future, of living in harmony with our planet and working together to replace the present culture of abuse with a culture of preservation and care. We must continually accentuate the positives that will flow when we make the change from dirty to clean economies. And we must step up our investment in the emerging clean technologies - such as battery storage - that can meet our energy needs while creating net zero emissions, and make that technology available throughout the world. The Commonwealth Business Forum alongside CHOGM is an excellent opportunity to bring technology, capital and management to the task of implementing the Paris Agreement and increasing prosperity.

One of the joys of us gathering in London is the opportunity to again honour the unparalleled reign of the Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty the Queen. As we celebrate her extraordinary service to us all, we also celebrate the seven decades of service of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh to the preservation and care of our planet. In addition, we celebrate the leadership that is being shown in the climate action struggle by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Their dedication is an inspiration to us all. 🍓

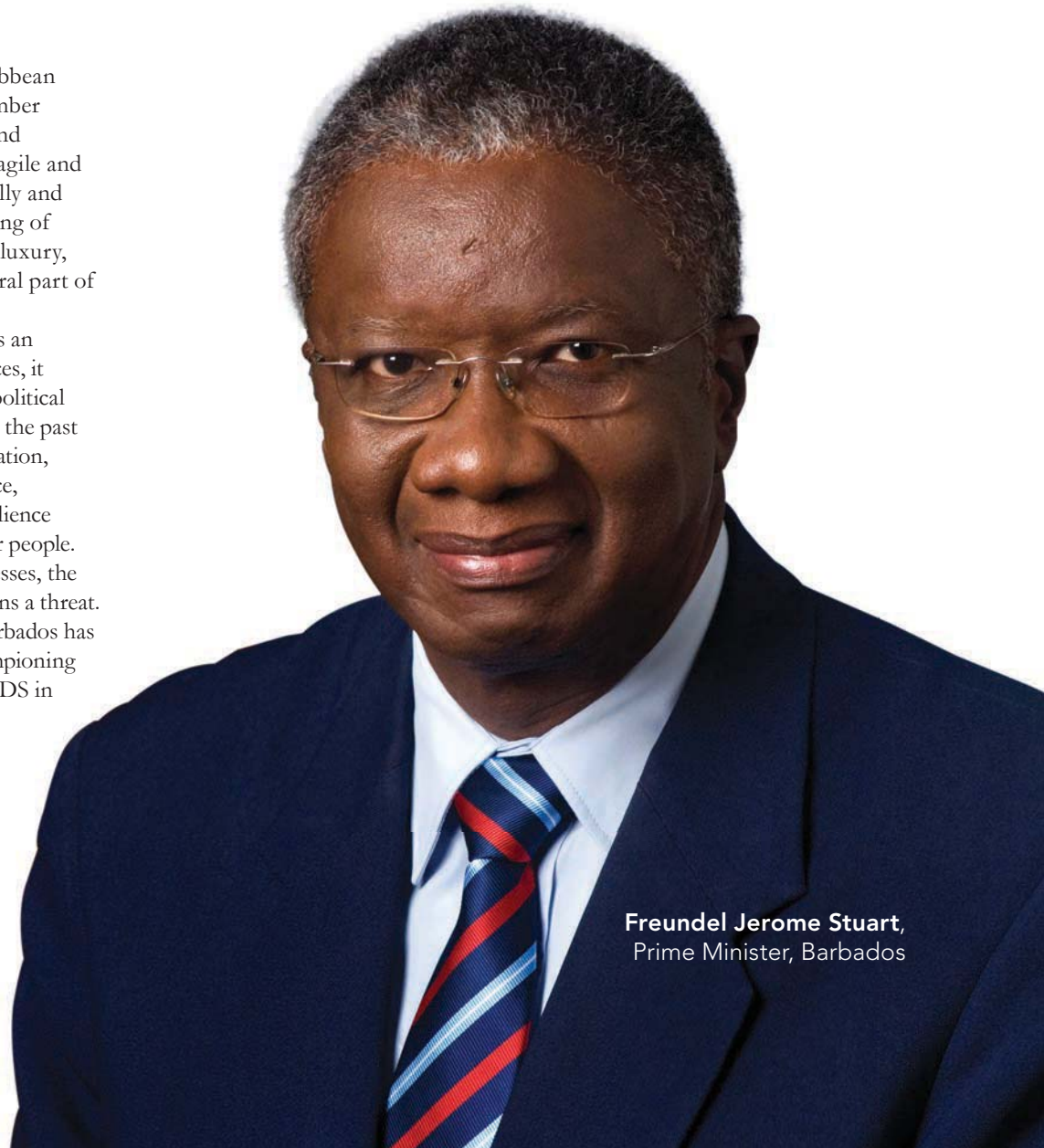
BUILDING RESILIENCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

Freundel Jerome Stuart, Prime Minister of Barbados, highlights the pressing issues facing Commonwealth Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and shares examples of best practice from Barbados to encourage fellow SIDS to minimise their vulnerabilities and build resilience.

Barbados, like all Caribbean Commonwealth member states, is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS); fragile and vulnerable, both economically and environmentally. The building of resilience, is therefore not a luxury, but a necessity, and an integral part of our survival.

Although the country lacks an abundance of natural resources, it has had a number of social, political and economic successes over the past 51 years as an independent nation, attributed to good governance, political stability and the resilience and industrious nature of our people. However, despite these successes, the country's vulnerability remains a threat.

Over the past 20 years, Barbados has been at the forefront of championing the concerns and needs of SIDS in the Caribbean. Cognisant of the negative impact that climate change can have on these countries' survivability, we support 'SIDS Collectivity' as a strategy



Freundel Jerome Stuart,
Prime Minister, Barbados

for confronting the economic and environmental challenges faced by these vulnerable nations. We believe that a sustained effort in building SIDS' inter-and intra-regional cooperation is the answer, and call on The Commonwealth to join in making this effort a reality.

The devastation of many Caribbean countries during the recent hurricane season is a grim reminder of the region's weaknesses, and the damage these systems bring to its fragile economies. It is vital that we all redouble our endeavours to enable Caribbean countries and Commonwealth Small States in general, to build resilience against the adverse impacts of climate change.

The protracted economic malaise and low growth seen in several Commonwealth member states continue to challenge investment in critical social infrastructure, in areas such as health and education. Together, these issues impact our pursuit of Agenda 2030 and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Barbados welcomes the theme of this year's CHOGM, Towards a Common Future, as it brings into focus the need for shared visioning and deepened collaboration. We wish to take this opportunity to formally share home-grown examples of best practice in areas that address key structural vulnerabilities among Commonwealth states, including:

- The application of integrated climate-resilient coastal infrastructure protection systems for small states.
- Integrated rural/urban development planning.
- Land conservation and protection, which has ensured that our National Park and System of Open Spaces remain viable and can provide our citizens with an acceptable quality of life.
- Demonstrated leadership in solar thermal technology development and deployment in Barbados and the Caribbean.
- The recent development of a comprehensive policy, fiscal and financial framework to support the attainment of our 2030 renewable energy targets.



“ The devastation of many Caribbean countries during the recent hurricane season is a grim reminder of the region's weaknesses. ”

The lingering economic turbulence has given rise to the creation of innovative economic models, and Barbados is working assiduously to become the most environmentally friendly country in the Latin America and Caribbean region, through a commitment to building a resource-efficient green economy. We are establishing a SIDS Green Economy Knowledge Transfer Hub, with the support of the United Nations, to facilitate south-south cooperation and capacity building efforts of like-minded small states. This endeavour is well aligned with the Commonwealth's drive towards building sustainable ocean-based, or 'blue', economies.

As we reflect further on the theme for 2018, Towards a Common Future, we are mindful that the Commonwealth is well placed to continue to play a key role in promoting partnerships and building capacity within small states to mitigate risks and other structural vulnerabilities. The 'Hub and Spokes' approach to trade,

education and climate finance should be lauded in this regard. The model presents an opportunity to consider a new 'Commonwealth Small States Macroeconomic Policy and Resilience Building Hub and Spokes Support initiative'.

The continued interaction between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the G20 to highlight the vulnerabilities and needs of developing states also reflects the Commonwealth's commitment to inclusiveness in global decision-making bodies. Similarly, the Commonwealth should also establish an ongoing dialogue with the OECD on the issues faced by countries designated as offshore financial centres.

Let me take this opportunity on behalf of my government and the people of Barbados, to wish the Commonwealth a successful Heads of Government Meeting. I eagerly look forward to robust discussion, the formulation of strategic initiatives and concrete outcomes towards building our common future. 🍷

EXPANDING ENERGY ACCESS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

Martin Hiller, Director General of REEEP (Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership) promotes the use of off-grid energy solutions to provide cost-effective and sustainable energy access in low- and middle-income countries of the Commonwealth.



Martin Hiller,
Director General, REEEP

Energy access is one of the main preconditions for prosperity and economic growth. According to World Bank data, 635 million people in the Commonwealth currently do not have access to modern energy. So how can we ensure that every citizen of the Commonwealth has access to modern energy by 2030?

The classical solution put forward by large-scale electric utilities is to build more power stations and extend power lines. Yet in many countries, the grid has grown as large as it can cost-effectively grow. Grid expansion projects certainly make sense in areas with high population density and much energy-intensive industrial activity, such as cities. But the lower the population density, the longer the power lines and the higher the investment per new customer. Extending the grid to remote rural areas is therefore costly both in terms of initial investment and maintenance costs.

Thankfully, there is another way. Solar photovoltaics is rapidly becoming the most prevalent technology powering off-grid electricity installations (though other technologies are also used). In many African and

Asian countries, a rapidly expanding sector of so-called off-grid companies provides solar home systems. These can be very small – two LED lamps and a phone charging point – but some can power radios, TVs and refrigerators. In many African countries, the developments are moving especially fast thanks to new, leapfrogging ICT technologies such as mobile payment solutions. These allow people to pay for their power as they go, and only when they need it.

The next step up from small individual systems is a so-called mini-grid, consisting of a generation facility (powered by solar or otherwise) and a distribution network typically covering one village. Due to their large number, households form the main client base, but an ideal mini-grid setup also includes shops, which have more predictable demand and better cash flow and hence are more reliable clients, at least in theory.

A recent REEEP report, produced with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, used the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh as case studies to show that clean energy mini-grids can provide energy access cost-effectively

“ Renewable energy technology can enhance resilience as well as further climate change mitigation. ”

A school in Mugurameno village, Zambia, receives electricity from a solar microgrid.



Credit: Solar Microgrid

and sustainably in areas out of reach for the central grid. They are deployed much more quickly and cheaply than grid extension projects, and in the right configuration, they can provide a reliable source of energy not just for households but also for productive use.

In order for any market to thrive, consumer trust as well as business and investor confidence are of paramount importance. Consumers need to trust that the technology they purchase will do its job, and businesses and their investors need to be confident that their business models will not be undermined. How can we guarantee this?

For most consumers in low- and middle-income countries, purchasing off-grid technology requires a major investment, often made more difficult by the absence of convenient financing products. When the technology is of poor quality or the provider does not offer adequate aftersales service, customers risk a major setback, and in their wider communities trust in the entire sector is quickly eroded. Gaining consumer trust is a challenge for any start-up, but in this sector especially, consumers are right to be wary. A survey in 2016 by ESI Africa of solar panels for sale in Malawi - the Commonwealth country with the lowest rate of energy access - found that markets were ‘flooded’ with solar panels of ‘extraordinarily poor quality’ including many containing fake cells. The resulting erosion in consumer trust is likely to slow down electrification

and prevent people from escaping the scenario UNCTAD has called the ‘energy-poverty trap’.


REEEP currently manages the Beyond the Grid Fund for Zambia (BGFZ), which is generously financed by the Government of Sweden. It aims to provide off-grid clean energy access to one million Zambians by 2021, by building up a self-sustaining market for off-grid solutions. BGFZ tackles the product quality issue in two distinct ways. Firstly, all products supported through the fund undergo detailed technical reviews. Secondly, BGFZ-supported companies must offer a three-year warranty on their products as well as a first-rate after-sales service. This quality assurance is crucial for the viability of the market for renewable energy products in Zambia.

Though mini-grids and smaller solar installations have thus far been deployed mainly beyond the grid, a growing market for these products also exists in grid-connected areas. They are widely used as backup where the main grid is unreliable and in areas prone to natural disasters. In the Caribbean, off-grid energy installations withstood the hurricanes in 2017 remarkably well; whereas four months after Hurricane Maria, a third of Puerto Ricans were still waiting for their grid connections to be restored (solar installations suffered only minor damage). What is more, unlike diesel generators, they cause no pollution, nor are they dependent on clear roads and functioning ports for

a supply of fuel. This example, along with many others like it from around the world, demonstrates that renewable energy technology can enhance resilience as well as further climate change mitigation.

In order to provide long-term market security to off-grid businesses and allow the sector to thrive, governments and central utilities need to do three things. First, provide clarity on when and where grid extension projects are planned, so that developers can prepare and adjust their business models to the arrival of the grid. Second, ensure grid electricity is sold at market rate and not capped at a lower price, so that off-grid electricity can compete. And finally, guarantee feed-in tariffs so that larger installations such as mini-grids can also continue to operate after the grid arrives, and provide backup to the grid itself.

Off-grid renewable energy solutions are already affordable and powerful enough to make a real difference in people’s lives, and to complement and even strengthen the central grid. As I have shown, the sector can stand on its own two feet – and with government backing, it can help bring the Sustainable Development Goals within reach.

REEEP has 15 years’ experience of working with clean energy businesses in low- and middle-income countries. For more information about our work in Zambia and elsewhere, see www.reeep.org or contact us at info@reeep.org. 

CALM IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

AFFORDABLE ENERGY BECOMES A REALITY

Gazing out at the blue waves of the Indian Ocean, as they come gently gliding over the coral reef towards the shoreline of warm, soft, white sand along the virgin shores of Gazi beach, on Kenya's South Coast, one's view of the endless expanse of water is interrupted very rarely as the hazy image of a distant container ship comes into view, steaming slowly towards the port of Mombasa in the north.

The eastern seaboard of Africa is protected by a large, rich coral reef and rarely experiences the turmoil caused globally by typhoons and other types of storms. It is more accustomed to the gentle trade winds, which shift at different times of the year, allowing traditional dhows to carry out their centuries-old migration between Africa and the Middle East in search of business and opportunity.

Slightly further south, at the port of Shimoni, local fishermen compete with the Dhows for space at one of Kenya's oldest natural ports. Originally one of the oldest slave ports on the African continent, where slaves would be held in caves stretching back as far as eight or nine miles, that British colonialism began in Shimoni with the arrival of the British Imperial East Africa Company's headquarters in the 1880s. The BIEAC choose Shimoni because it was virtually uninhabited at the time. Many buildings in modern day Shimoni were built by the very first British colonists of Kenya, including the now ruins of Kenya's first colonial prison.

It is at these sites, and at others nearby, that a Kenyan private company - Shelter Solutions Limited - has decided to take a stand with by far the most ambitious integrated project ever seen on the African continent. What is more surprising is that this initiative is being led by the private sector. **The Shimoni Integrated Development Project** (SIDEP), a \$90bn enterprise over a 25 year time frame, intends to bring development to the entire southern region of Kenya through massive scale components, spanning from purely organic agriculture to the irrigation of an entire County area using up to five MCM of desalinated water, reversing the greenhouse effect and desertification in the area. Residents, who have for too long suffered during the dry season, will now have the opportunity to access free water as a direct benefit of the Project. The economic engine driving the activity is modern, eco-friendly desalination that has, as a byproduct, the capacity to generate 10,000MW of much needed electrical energy, which will be used to power the green-themed industrial park, airport and port, as the dream becomes a reality.







Kenya, which sits on some of the world's largest unexploited stores of natural resources, finally has a solution to supplying the world's needy markets with processed steel, industrial items, manufactured goods and healthy agricultural products, without destroying the environment. Due to the scale of the project, Shelter Solutions has been able to outline an 'All Green' approach and by use of technology, including Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things applications and machine learning, will be able to constantly measure minute items, such as the turbidity of the water in and around the port and industrial park. And it's not limited to that. The Kenyan continental shelf stretches 350 nautical miles offshore and is rich in species of fish which have previously been exploited by large foreign vessels. These have often trawled with the wrong nets, affecting the fish population and providing little or no benefit to Kenya. The value of the fishing industry annually is calculated at over \$2bn annually. Under SIDEP, Kenya will now benefit from three large and modern fish processing plants, each employing nearly 5,000 staff, which will attract the nearby fishing fleets to dock and release their catch. Local fishermen will be issued with steel hulled boats, enabling them to venture further out into sea. Trawlers are also to be donated to the local fishing cooperative. This is just one of the ways that the socio-economic impact of the SIDEP project will be positively affecting lives in the long run.

The directors of Shelter Solutions comprise engineers, business architects and experts across several fields, who came together over six years ago and who, after many months of research and working with the community on the ground, began to chart the backbone of what is now truly a landmark project and which will positively impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of residents within the southern coastal region. The community has not been left behind in the process and Shelter Solutions have granted a 10 per cent stake in the project to be held in trust for the indigenous residents of Kwale, which is at the epicentre of the project. Research and development, spanning the next 25 years, is also planned for three different major institutions being established. Residents will have the opportunity to own homes over that period, as eight different satellite cities emerge with the growth of the Project's components. Around 4,000km of new highway will replace the existing rocky dirt roads and will be built using eco-friendly bitumen emulsion and polymer. These will also act as conduits for power, water and communications. In the long term, an extensive electric standard gauge train network will provide an additional transport layer to the intensive development of the area.

The secret to accomplishing all of this is, of course, the generation of affordable electrical energy. The use of breakthrough technology from the USA will enable the project to generate up to 10GW of clean, stable electricity as captive power. For this, the project will be working closely with the Kenyan Ministry of Energy. Current power costs in Kenya range from 12¢ to 15¢ per kWh. The project intends to supply the entire area with clean, stable power at a rate of 4¢ to 5¢ per kWh, thus immediately easing the burden of production costs, whilst lowering all costs across a broad spectrum of interdependent commercial activities. It is clear what comes next – a massive export opportunity presents itself and the SIDEP team, and its eco-system partners, are geared towards engaging in this.

SIDEP is not alone in its energy driven and rapid deployment development model, and realizes that it needs to call upon a greater pool of experience and knowledge. To this end, it has harnessed the services of The Stevenson Group, a Washington-based consulting firm, as project managers and advisers, to enable a broader frame of global management to be layered and interlaced into the Project's activities.

It seems that the rest of the world has taken note of the developments in this sleepy corner of the African seaboard and engineering, procurement, and construction contractors from China, South Africa, South Korea, Netherlands, the US and the Middle East have expressed interest and, in many cases, signed up for contracts to execute a number of the 14 components that make up the SIDEP project.

SHELTER SOLUTIONS - PROJECT OUTLINE

Kenya has a unique opportunity to stand as a leader in our global community for sustainable economy-building solutions. Ordinary economic activity in terms of the energy sector, agribusiness, farming or oil refining in are not currently fully developed in Kenya. Because supply is largely in deficit, Shelter Solutions and its international partners intend to invest heavily in Kenya and in Africa more widely.

Shelter Solutions' main focus is in setting up integrated projects, like SIDEP and the similar Bungoma Integrated Development Project with the aim of achieving the following:

- The creation of job opportunities
- Access to cheap power (under 5¢ per kWh) and water (less than 20¢/m³)
- Exploiting natural resources to create wealth and new industries



- Infrastructure improvements for easier access to goods and services
- To increase Kenya's power generation capacity, from the current 2,750MW to more than 10,000MW over the next ten years
- Improved food security, with an increase in farm land acreage due to power and water harnessing technologies, such as desalination and waste water management
- The introduction of a new ultra large scale funding model, tailored to meet Africa's current and future growth needs
- To convert Kenya into a net exporter
- To improve the mental health care system in building of more level five hospitals
- The use of modern, breakthrough technologies through international partners.

FOCUS ACTIVITIES OF SHELTER SOLUTIONS' PROJECTS

1. Produce captive power and water using sea water desalination generation, including the network distribution infrastructure carrying 10,200MW of power and five MCM of water daily.
2. Natural gas power generation using combined heat technologies, including distribution Infrastructure for over 5,000MW of power.
3. Solar factories and LED lighting on roads.
4. Heavy duty road infrastructure - concrete/polymer roads with eco-friendly bitumen - embedded with ducts for power, water and communications.
5. Passenger and cargo airports are proposed in all projects.
6. Hubs for ICT and other related industries.
7. Construction of new port facilities and export equipment proposed.
8. Fishing ports, storage facilities and processing plants.
9. Industrial parks development, creation of factories and raw material supplies.
10. Railway lines to all Shelter Solutions components, including to mining sites and inter-County connections.
11. Oil and gas refineries, pipelines and storage tanks for 5 million tonnes of Petrol/LPG.
12. Development of agriculture, farming, fishing and food processing industries.
13. Water supply pipelines and irrigation systems.
14. Satellite cities, affordable housing schemes, hospitals, colleges, malls, stadia and hotels.
15. Waste management for sewerage, solid waste, water and biomass production.
16. Mining of coal, iron ore, manganese, gypsum, limestone, bauxite ore, copper ore, nickel ore, titanium, niobium, calcium and silica.

TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS

Shelter Solutions and its partners and contractors intend to use breakthrough technologies in all the sectors to be developed. The projects are earmarked as 'Green Projects' and all components shall incorporate waste management systems.

OVERALL BENEFITS

- Revenue from power and water sales
- Green energy carbon credits to the Counties and Kenya
- Excess water can be sold to other Counties experiencing drought conditions for agricultural and industrial use;
- Capability of County governments to run tram or rail systems because of ample and stable power and water supplies
- Sufficient water and power within the industrial parks for their industries
- Coastal Counties need no longer import oxygen gas for medical and industrial use, providing huge savings. (Oxygen is a by-product of the desalination process)
- Plentiful fertilisers, reducing import levels
- Compared to traditional desalination processes, the cost of power and water produced is lower
- The output of both power and water generation are higher than other energy production systems, such as hydro, geothermal, solar or wind
- Water quality and environmental discharge to the ocean exceeds World Health Organization drinking water standards, with a low level brine discharge
- Discharge diffusers designed to optimise jet velocity, leading to improved near-field mixing and dilution, resulting in a lower environmental impact;
- Direct injection of capital into Kenya
- Creation of direct and indirect employment opportunities for the local citizens, with priority given to youth, women and disadvantaged people
- The technology to spur industrial growth and manufacturing due to greater power and water capacity – in turn leading to the creation of new cities
- Increased agricultural output expected because of more of water for irrigation, alongside greater power for value adding processing plants for their products
- The infrastructure development associated to the Project, including water storage facilities, power lines and roads.



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BETTER LIVES AT OUR FINGERTIPS: ICT AND THE SDGs

Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), examines the enormous potential of information and communication technologies to fast-forward progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.



Houlin Zhao,
Secretary-General, International
Telecommunication Union

In this digital era, new technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, blockchain, 5G, and cloud computing promise to improve the lives of people across the world. At the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN specialised agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs), we are at the forefront of this digital revolution, harnessing the power of ICTs to help accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and each one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

But, this progress won't happen automatically. In fact, if the wave of technological change is not managed properly, it might deepen the divide between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'.

Today, 3.9 billion people are still not connected to the Internet, many of them in Commonwealth countries.

To achieve the SDGs, we will need to bring the power of ICTs to all nations, all people and all segments of society. In particular we need to focus on the following 4 Is:

- *Infrastructure:* In the 21st century, broadband networks are critical infrastructure. They are as important as roads, railways, water and power networks. I am pleased to report that by the end of 2017, the number of mobile-cellular subscriptions in the least developed countries had increased to about 700 million, with a penetration of 70 per cent. The next generation of ICT infrastructure will power a range of digital solutions, from smart cities and climate monitoring, to public and financial services. And no one should be left behind.
- *Investment:* Partnerships are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. To create a better environment for investment, particularly in hard-to-reach areas with no Internet access, we need to develop innovative financing mechanisms and creative public-private partnerships that cut across industries and sectors. We also need to help policymakers strengthen their digital development strategies and adopt an enabling environment. A recent survey by ITU and the United Nations Conference on Trade

// To achieve the SDGs, we will need to bring the power of ICTs to all nations, all people and all segments of society. //



and Development (UNCTAD) found that less than 25 per cent of national strategies include details on investment requirements for infrastructure.

- **Innovation:** In emerging markets, ICTs are helping farmers to monitor prices, health workers respond to emergencies, and borrowers to connect with potential lenders. At the forefront of both industry disruption and economic growth - in developed and developing markets alike - entrepreneurs and tech micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are critical in this new ecosystem. Every year, at ITU Telecom World, we focus on supporting the success of these innovators, who drive socio-economic growth and job creation throughout the world.
- **Inclusivity:** The digital divide takes many forms, and one example is access to the digital economies. More than two billion adults still don't have a formal bank account, but 1.6 billion of these do have access to a mobile phone. Digital financial inclusion can act as a multiplier for poverty eradication, job creation, gender equality and women's empowerment. ITU has teamed up with several partners to launch a new global programme to accelerate digital

// Digital financial inclusion can act as a multiplier for poverty eradication, job creation, gender equality and women's empowerment. //

financial inclusion, and we welcome the participation of the Commonwealth. Digital inclusion also requires the development of locally relevant content, and user interfaces that feature text-to-speech and voice-recognition capabilities to enhance accessibility for people with specific needs, including indigenous peoples and those with disabilities. Ensuring equal access to the information society is as much a moral imperative as it is an economic imperative.

I am pleased to say that all Commonwealth countries are members of ITU, and so ITU can assist the Commonwealth in this effort. With our 193 Member States and over 800 private sector and academia members, ITU rallies stakeholders from around the world

to develop global standards on communication technologies and services, manage spectrum and satellite orbits, and assist developing countries in infrastructure and policy development on ICTs.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution aptly demonstrates that 'information is power'. Digital technologies can lift people out of poverty, improve public services and food security, mitigate the effects of climate change, make cities safer and more sustainable, and the world greener. I hope that all governments now acknowledge the power of digital solutions to create better lives for their citizens, and I look forward to working together with the Commonwealth to transition the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda from vision to action, and transform the digital revolution into a development revolution! 🍎

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE BAHAMAS

Dr Hubert Minnis, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, applauds the Commonwealth's efforts to create a sustainable future for all, and highlights his government's commitment to providing a bright economic, social and environmental future for The Bahamas.

Dr Hubert A Minnis,
Prime Minister,
Commonwealth of
The Bahamas



The Commonwealth of Nations comprises a diverse group of member states, with distinct cultures, economies, geographical configurations, historical backgrounds, and educational and political systems. Although we possess unique characteristics and face different threats, we are united in our efforts to secure a sustainable future for all.

The promotion and achievement of a sustainable future requires an even greater unification among member states, through the sharing of information and best practices to build more resilient communities that are capable of mitigating, *inter alia*, the impacts of economic, social and environmental crises.

Also essential for a sustainable future is the commitment by governments to facilitate good governance through the honest and transparent management of public resources. Good governance limits abuse by public officials who seek to use national resources for personal gain. Similarly, it maximises the ability of the government to allocate funding for requisite public services, such as healthcare, education and public infrastructure. In addition to transparency and accountability, it focuses on public sector co-ordination and effectiveness, which provide

significant value to citizens, investors and visitors, and enhance the standing of a member state's reputation in the international arena.

In the case of The Bahamas, a vital step in securing a sustainable future is the promotion of economic diversification. The government aims to expand the economy by allocating capital resources to small- and medium-sized enterprises, encouraging new enterprises under the Commercial Enterprises Act, developing greater links between the dominant sectors of our economy, and aggressively expanding skills training and development programmes.

Additionally, The Bahamian government is engaged in a number of initiatives to reform and streamline processes, thereby enhancing the ease-of-doing-business climate, creating employment opportunities, stimulating the economy and reducing the cost of doing business. Increasing emphasis is also being placed on public-private sector partnerships, as a vital part of our national strategy to deliver services to our people and achieve our development objectives.

The government further believes that building a sustainable future for all requires a commitment to improve healthcare for its citizens. The Bahamas is committed to reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases and chronic diseases by one-third, by 2030, through preventive measures and successful treatment; by providing easy, modern and affordable access to all forms of universal healthcare, ensuring the implementation and sustainability of funding to the National Health Insurance programme; upgrading public hospitals with new and improved modernised rooms to provide appropriate medical attention; expanding and optimising the efficiency of mini-hospitals located in the Family Islands; and improving working environment conditions.

The Commonwealth has been a strong advocate for global reform on climate change since the signing of the Langkawi Declaration on the Environment in 1989, and is primarily made up of Small Island States like The Bahamas, which are most vulnerable



“ Concrete measures must be implemented to assist our youth in realising their full potential. ”

to the impacts of climate change, particularly natural disasters and coastal erosion due to rising sea-levels.

In this regard, the government of The Bahamas fully supports the position of the Commonwealth in recognising the plight of Small Island States and providing them with a voice, by pledging to increase its compliance to the Paris Climate Change Agreement. This commitment led The Bahamas to establish the Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology (BEST) Commission several decades ago, to serve as the national focal point for multilateral environmental agreements, tasked with responsibility for the protection and management of the environment.

The Bahamas is dedicated to researching and implementing measures that will mitigate the impacts of climate change, particularly the promotion and greater utilisation of green technologies, and implementing legislation that focuses on the maintenance of wildlife conservation, expansion and development of national parks, wetlands, mangroves, beaches, green spaces and protected areas.

In accordance with the dedication of the Commonwealth to ensuring global food security, The Bahamas has focused its attention on strategies to promote self-sufficiency and decrease

dependence on foreign imports, so helping to reduce food prices in the future. To do this, the Government has established The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI), which currently generates around five per cent of produce grown in-country. BAMSI intends to create opportunities for all Bahamian citizens, by stimulating the interest of the people in investing in agricultural and marine science.

A most valuable asset for achieving a sustainable future is the Commonwealth's 1.2 billion young people. Governments must see real youth empowerment as an indispensable asset to development. Concrete measures must be implemented in a consistent and ongoing way to assist our youth in realising their full potential. To this end, Commonwealth programmes that promote and support youth activities deserve our full support.

The Government of The Bahamas supports the ongoing commitment of the Commonwealth to increasing the resolve of its members to work towards a sustainable future that requires the strategic integration of economic, social, and environmental considerations in the national and collective decision-making processes.

The Commonwealth leadership is indispensable to our success. ●

FORGING A FAIRER FUTURE FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

Edgar Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, looks at the Commonwealth's past, present and future as a catalyst for creating a fairer future for all of its citizens.

We, as a Commonwealth of Nations, have seen numerous changes throughout the years, as the organisation has continued to evolve at a steady pace since the first Summit, hosted by Singapore in 1971. I recall the 1979 Summit, when Zambia hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Lusaka. It was a

truly proud moment given the impressionable youths we were at the time. Many of us are aging now, but we continue to cherish the significance of this organisation.

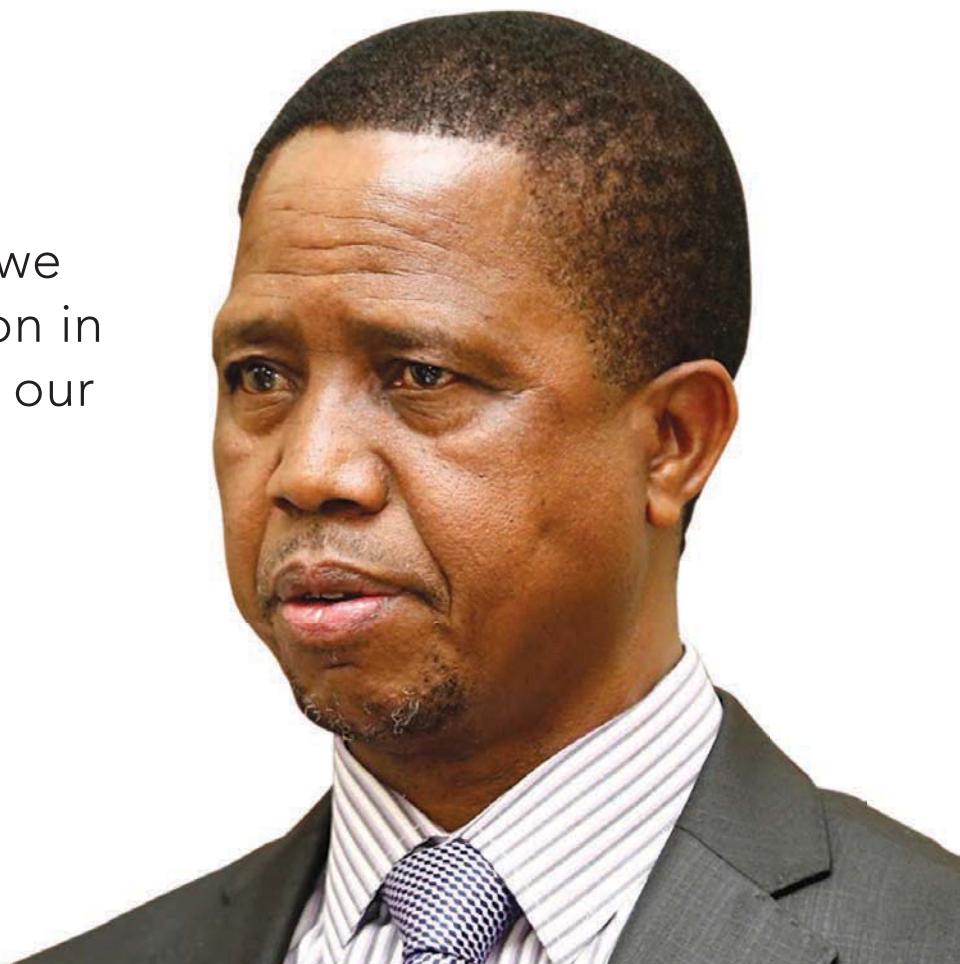
We have now progressed beyond the main original objective of the organisation, which was the political liberation of African countries: the Lusaka CHOGM was focused on the impending independence

of Zimbabwe. Since then, the Commonwealth has registered many successes, but equally, we have together weathered the storm through many difficult challenges.

In recent times, the organisation has not only maintained its influence, but is increasingly projecting the aspirations of its 2.4 billion people. We defined our shared values through the Commonwealth Charter, as adopted

// With so much change around us, we need an organisation in which we can place our confidence. //

Edgar Chagwa Lungu,
President, Republic of Zambia



at the 2013 Summit in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In 2015 at the Valletta Summit, the Rt. Hon. Baroness Patricia Scotland was elected as the first female Secretary-General of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is indeed getting closer to its people and its roots.

The theme of CHOGM 2018 – Towards a Common Future – could not be more appropriate. It calls for, inter alia, better allocation and distribution of resources to ensure a fairer, more prosperous, sustainable and secure environment for all Commonwealth citizens, and the rest of the global community.

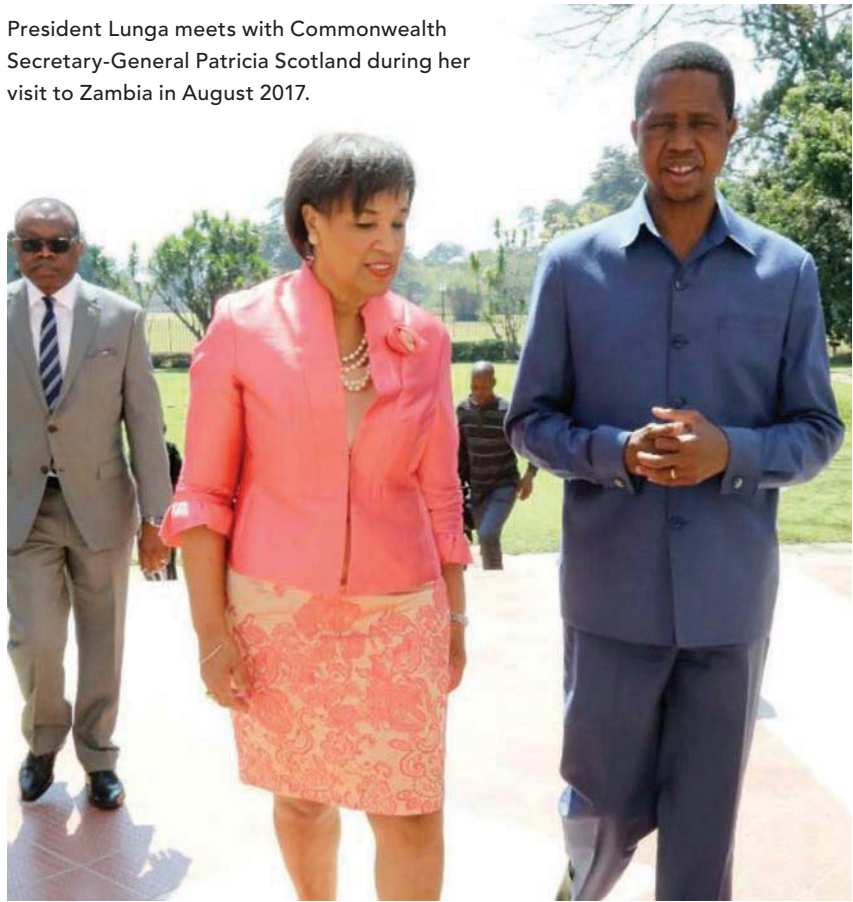
With so much change around us, we need an organisation in which we can place our confidence. All member states – including their youth, women, business and civil society can unite under one umbrella – to speak on development, peace, human rights, trade and other important matters affecting our people across the Commonwealth.

We desire good health, peace and prosperity and the freedom to make our own choices in life without undue influence. To exchange new ideas and achieve progress on these issues, we look forward to meeting in London, a city that is synonymous with the Commonwealth – and the two have continued to influence each other. It is this atmosphere that we hope will inspire us further.

The Commonwealth has been key in articulating global governance issues and I am hopeful that its influence will continue to have great impact on member states and beyond. I am confident that our aspirations for an organisation that is firmly focused on a better future for all, will be realised.

As a member of the Commonwealth, I am particularly proud that at our last Summit, the first Women's Forum was held alongside the others, notably the Youth, Business and Civil Society Forums. In the past year, I was honoured to be chosen by fellow heads of state to serve as the African Union (AU) champion on ending child, early and forced marriages, and its related challenges in fighting gender inequality. The Commonwealth took

President Lungu meets with Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland during her visit to Zambia in August 2017.



“ The Commonwealth has been key in articulating global governance issues and I am hopeful that its influence will continue to have great impact on member states and beyond. ”

this agenda to the United Nations, resulting in the first resolution on the subject in 2013, and again, Zambia was a proud co-sponsor of the resolution.

The fight against child, early and forced marriages can only be won if our youth take up leadership roles to ensure that gender discrimination is truly relegated to the annals. I see a vibrant generation in our youth, which will take up the challenge to spearhead economic growth through their inherent drive and sense of innovation. I see a generation that

will finally come to terms with the negative consequences of neglecting our environment, and that will rise to the occasion to reverse the trend.

For all the above to happen, we must ensure that peace prevails, be it at a personal or societal level. For meaningful development to occur, no one should be left behind.

I am excited and looking forward to participating in the deliberations, which I believe will spur the Commonwealth's true strengths and potential to reach greater heights, and for humanity in general. ●

ANTI-CORRUPTION ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, explains why anti-corruption action is a keystone to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and urges Commonwealth Heads of Government to progress efforts to prevent and combat corruption.



Yury Fedotov,
Executive Director, United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime

A fair, prosperous, secure, sustainable future. This worthy aim of the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting shares much in common with the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by world leaders at the 2015 United Nations summit.

Tackling climate change and increasing resilience; promoting the rule of law and human rights; countering threats of terrorism, organised crime, cyber crime and human trafficking; fostering economic growth: as the Commonwealth recognises, these challenges are interrelated, and addressing all these areas is necessary to foster sustainable development. I would also argue that in order to make progress towards these goals, the Commonwealth – and the whole of the international community – need to do much more to prevent and fight corruption.

Reducing corruption and bribery, as well as tackling illicit financial flows and recovering stolen assets, are specific targets under SDG 16 on promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies. But we must also recognise how corruption contributes to so many of the other problems that threaten our common future, and how combatting corruption and promoting accountability can advance progress towards all of the SDGs.

Corruption steals resources from those who need it most. Instead of hospitals, schools and roads built, pockets are lined and nests feathered. Corruption rigs the game, entices responsible officials to turn a blind eye and breeds cynicism in citizenry. Aided and abetted by corruption, natural resources are squandered, poached and trafficked. Illicit drugs, firearms and other contraband are driven past borders and unloaded at ports unchecked. Corruption facilitates migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and other crimes and threats to health, wellbeing and safety.

The African Development Bank estimates that Africa loses the

“ Corruption steals resources from those who need it most. ”



same amount it receives in official development assistance every year. According to the African Union's Mbeki report, illicit financial flows are siphoning away as much as US\$50 billion annually.

As we have seen the world over, systemic corruption represents a threat not only to development but to peace and security – fuelling instability and conflict, and contributing to terrorism and violent extremism. No country remains untouched, and no government can afford to ignore the costs of corruption.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called on the international community to engage together “to make globalization a fair globalization”. Anti-corruption action is absolutely central to this endeavour, to attaining the SDGs and restoring trust – between governments and their citizens, and between countries.

We already have the tools to accomplish this. In fact in 2018, we are marking the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

“ I urge you to ensure that anti-corruption is an essential part of your plan of action to create a better future for all Commonwealth citizens. ”

This Convention represents the sole global instrument to fight corruption. With 183 Parties, it brings together 49 Commonwealth countries, who participate in a peer review mechanism that promotes implementation by assessing progress, identifying gaps and supporting next steps. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has worked with the Commonwealth Secretariat to establish the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre, as well as implement follow-up initiatives on training and knowledge sharing. We are now in the second review cycle for the Convention, focusing on the key challenges of corruption

prevention and asset recovery, both priorities for many Commonwealth countries.

This Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting represents a critical opportunity to further advance our common efforts to prevent and combat corruption, foster trust and promote prosperity. As a leading intergovernmental body encompassing one third of the world's population, the Commonwealth has been an important force for change.

As you meet to discuss and agree joint responses to global challenges, I urge you to ensure that anti-corruption is an essential part of your plan of action to create a better future for all Commonwealth citizens. ●

THE INDEPENDENT CORRUPT PRACTICES AND OTHER RELATED OFFENCES COMMISSION OF NIGERIA



Established in September 2000, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) is Nigeria's focal agency for tackling the scourge of public and private sector corruption and several of its ramifications and nuances.

Specifically, the mandate of the Commission is to carry out enforcement, prevention and public education, as well as mobilization. Its mission is to use all lawful prevention and enforcement measures against corruption and to rid the nation of this scourge.

ENFORCEMENT: In performing its enforcement duties, the Commission carries out investigations through petitions and intelligence and prosecutes offenders across the social spectrum. These have included clerks, policemen, senior public servants, judges, magistrates, chief executives of public organisations, legislators, former State Governors and former Senate Presidents. Many of the cases have resulted in convictions against the offenders, while many more are ongoing in various courts across Nigeria.

In its enforcement work, the ICPC also tracks and recovers assets suspected to be the proceeds of corruption. These include buildings, land and numerous vehicles appropriated by retiring public officers, in whose custody the vehicles were placed for administrative and operational duties.

The Commission has recovered money for governments and individuals through its interventions in pension matters and unpaid entitlements that have been the result of corruption or administrative bottlenecks, thereby directly impacting on the lives of ordinary citizens and generating confidence in the ability of the system to redress procedural wrongdoings.

ICPC performs the tax-profiling of individual and corporate entities that are mired in corruption issues, and has been instrumental in checking visa racketeering, a feat which has earned the country the commendation of the British, Indian and US embassies in Nigeria, among others.

PREVENTION: The nature of corruption in Nigeria is systemic as internal controls in government agencies have been largely ineffective, while regulatory oversight has remained too weak to ensure proper accountability in governance, thereby making public organisations short on providing service delivery.

The Commission exploits its unique power of prevention through 'System Study and Review' in order to improve integrity systems in the public sector. A host of institutions have benefitted from this and have had their governance systems strengthened for improved delivery.

Complementing the above is the 'Corruption Risk Assessment' which the Commission conducts in various sectors of the economy. The purpose is to eliminate the identified corruption risks through a prescription of integrity plans of action. Nigeria's aviation and maritime sectors, as well as the tertiary education subsector, have been its prime beneficiaries to date. Other beneficiaries include the health and water sectors, and the e-government platforms, namely: the Integrated Personnel Payroll Information System, the Treasury Single Account and the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System.

To further strengthen its prevention mechanism, ICPC has installed Anti-Corruption and Transparency Units (ACTU) within government ministries and institutions. Members of these Units serve as Compliance Officers.

ACTUs are mandated by the Commission to undertake all ICPC functions under the law, except criminal investigation and prosecution. They report on corrupt practices in their organisations and the Commission takes action on the reported cases.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND MOBILIZATION: ICPC utilizes several mass mobilization strategies to sue for values re-orientation in line with the stipulations of its enabling law. These strategies include:

- A television programme “Corruption Must Go!” which airs on national network and international satellite TV.
- Radio programmes and jingles that reach millions of listeners across the country.
- The production of video documentaries on the activities of the Commission.
- Frequent and regular communications with mass media practitioners on its activities and achievements.
- A social media presence that is robust and engaging with the populace.
- Toll-free telephone lines for the easy reporting of corruption by whistle blowers and enquiries by citizens.

Another strategy geared towards capturing virtually all sectors of society for the campaign against corruption is the National Anti-Corruption Coalition - a vibrant coalition of NGOs which have anti-corruption as their focus. The Commission coordinates their various efforts in the campaign, such as public sensitization, reporting corruption, tracking government budgets and monitoring government projects. For all citizens who are gainfully employed, there is also the National Anti-Corruption Volunteers Corps, which provides the opportunity for a critical mass of corruption fighters to complement the work of the ICPC. Members come from all walks of life and are situated across all states of the Federation.

Recognising the important role the youth play as the link between the present and the future of the country, the Commission took a proactive step of institutionalising a values-based education for Nigeria's young by developing the ‘National Values Curriculum’ and a guide on teaching it. Elements

of the curriculum have been infused into subjects across the various education levels. There are also Anti-Corruption Clubs and Vanguarders for secondary schools and tertiary institutions, established as platforms to put the anti-corruption ethos into practice.

The Commission also engages with the grassroots through its ‘Citizens Engagement Forum’, which provides an opportunity for the physical interaction between its officials and ordinary people in local communities, while religious and traditional leaders are also engaged on anti-corruption advocacy on a regular basis.

CHALLENGES: In spite of various successes, the ICPC is not without obstacles that have limited its capacity to fully achieve its mandate. Chief amongst these is funding, which is the lifeblood of every venture. Its major source has been from government, with modest support from international donor agencies. This has proven inadequate, especially to undertake the resource intensive activities of criminal investigation and prosecution, as well as robust corruption prevention initiatives.

Further, in its years of existence, the Commission's bid to have the gaps in its enabling law addressed by the legislature is yet to yield the hoped-for outcome.

Also, there is a certain lack of understanding of the work of the Commission by members of the Nigerian public, who often expect it to act ultra vires, or who sometimes rise in support of an indicted individual on account of a religious or ethnic affinity.

All in all though, ICPC remains focused on its mandate as a key Nigerian agency for the achievement of the country's dream of good governance for a more prosperous and corruption-free future.



*The government of Nigeria is in the process of appointing a new Chairman and Board. In the interim the Secretary to the Commission, **Dr. Musa Usman Abubakar**, is running the affairs of the organisation.*

www.icpc.gov.ng

STANDING UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

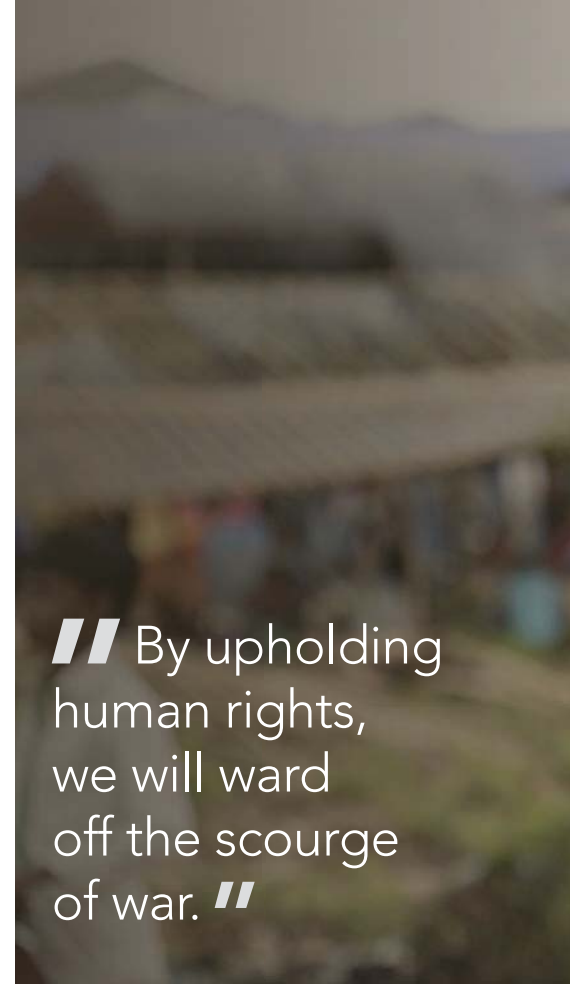
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, calls on the Commonwealth to create a collective future centred on human rights.



Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein,
United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights

Seventy years ago, out of the devastation of the two most horrific wars our planet has known, states took a step towards a new kind of world. They did so in the knowledge of what global destruction and massive suffering can mean on this planet we share. They built the United Nations, because the search for common solutions and agreements is essential to our survival. And they drew up the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a guide to how to do it. It begins with human equality and dignity, the expression of values which draws from every culture, from every geography. It tells us that by upholding human rights, we will ward off the scourge of war.

Human rights is one of the core principles of the Commonwealth. Member states are committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Commonwealth Charter declares: "We, the people of the Commonwealth...are committed to equality and respect for the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, for all without discrimination on any



// By upholding human rights, we will ward off the scourge of war. **//**

grounds as the foundations of peaceful, just and stable societies".

Our search for collective solutions has warded off the spectre of global, nuclear warfare. Many conflicts have been resolved or prevented by mediation, intervention or adjudication. National independence has been assisted and promoted.

Unprecedented advances in health, wealth, education, and in the ability to make decisive personal choices have immensely improved the lives of vast numbers of people who previously suffered discrimination.

'Leaving no one behind' underpins the Sustainable Development Agenda because including everyone in policy creates better outcomes. Economies and societies that are inclusive and participative, and where government is accountable, are stronger. I want to emphasise this point: human rights are not destructive of security; they build stronger societies, that are more resilient and better able to withstand shocks.

This is as true for social outcomes as it is for climate-related disasters. This CHOGM is taking place in London because extreme weather related to climate change cancelled the planned



Challenges threaten the rights of our fellow human beings in every region.

rendezvous in Vanuatu last year. At a time when science offers us powerful forms of clean energy, entire countries and coastal cities face destruction by flooding. However, effective common action to diminish the damage and loss of life brought by extreme weather events is being slowed by a nearsighted failure to ensure climate justice.

Both internationally, and in terms of its impact on communities, human rights-based action in this regard makes better policy. Nationally, informing policy through a human rights lens can reduce the vulnerability to extreme weather events of marginalised and poor communities living in inadequate conditions. Internationally, upholding international law and international human rights law – especially for small states, and developing states – is a bedrock, an existential necessity, just as respect for human rights is essential to human well-being.

Recently the United Nations Secretary General issued a ‘red alert’ about the state of the world. He warned of the increasing polarisation of societies, the destructive power of nationalism, racism and xenophobia. Walls are going up, and the essential

laws, institutions and principles set up to maintain global order are being eroded. These challenges threaten the rights of our fellow human beings in every region. They damage our hopes of achieving peace, a safe environment and sustainable development.

If rights are not universal – where some people possess more rights than others, by accident of skin color, gender or geography – that is the road to grievance, violence and scarred societies. Humanity has travelled that road often, in national and international history, and it leads to conflict so deep that nobody wins.

Conversely, human rights measures build sound societies. They constitute commitments that every government has made to its people, by treaty and by law. These are principles that the Commonwealth, with its diversity of systems and cultures, has at its core.

The Commonwealth exists to promote the common weal – the well-being of all its peoples. In seeking a common future, upholding human rights is at its heart. By building justice, and therefore peace and development, human rights underpin sound societies, that are stable and resilient, and bound together in the common good. ◆

“ By building justice, and therefore peace and development, human rights underpin sound societies, that are stable and resilient, and bound together in the common good. ”

CITIZEN VOICES FOR A FAIRER FUTURE

Director-General of the Commonwealth Foundation, Vijay Krishnarayan, considers a fairer future for the Commonwealth and the essential role of people's participation to ensure no one is left behind.



Vijay Krishnarayan,
Director-General,
Commonwealth Foundation

“Rule number one: life’s not fair”, I said. Having repeated this often enough at home my children started to ask about the other rules, which only encouraged me to make up some more arbitrary household by-laws. The exchange made me realise how unfair a discussion on fairness can be.

For the Commonwealth, fairness is a powerful concept. It is mentioned twice in the Commonwealth Charter – in relation to the conduct of elections and the pursuit of a global rules-based trading system. But fairness also evokes other words that are keystones for the Commonwealth, like equity and justice. Through this lens, fairness also means sustainable development and universal human rights.

The development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) saw the global community agree that we



should ‘leave no one behind’. This acknowledges that fairness stems from our understanding that each of us has a responsibility to each of us. Significantly, this also has a temporal dimension – we have responsibilities to generations to come.

But who gets to say what is fair? In the Commonwealth, we aspire to plural democracies where all can expect equal treatment. We want to see fairness delivered, but also know that it needs to be demanded if it is going to meet people’s needs, regardless of their status. Fairness is culturally situated and negotiated.

“ The architecture of the SDGs acknowledges that fairness doesn’t just happen. ”



Civil society delegates from the Southern African Alliance for Youth Employment (SAAYE) meet for a learning exchange with Citizens UK in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Civil society is an essential part of this mix. It is these voices that can bring the interests and concerns – particularly from those that aren't usually heard – into the public arena, where institutions and policies can respond. The Southern African Alliance for Youth Employment (SAAYE) is bringing together organisations from seven countries, including trade unions, churches and wider civil society, to develop ideas for policies that get young people working. The Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI) is monitoring the commitments of East African governments on gender equality and had been advocating for a regional Gender and Development Bill.

The Commonwealth Foundation supports these initiatives but also recognises that not all voices get heard through established and

institutionalised ways and means. An environment that encourages creative expression also has a part to play in enabling citizen voice and establishing a climate for fairness. Anthologies of writing on small states or the experience of indentured labour encourages each of us to see through the eyes of others. Short films from new directors from Pacific Islands reveal issues of concern to new audiences.

The architecture of the SDGs acknowledges that fairness doesn't just happen – that it requires foundations. SDG 16 calls for peace, justice and strong institutions. These are the essential building blocks for sustainable development. Policies can signal the intent of institutions to encourage this kind of environment. At their best, these policies are driven by or engage with civil society. The Commonwealth Human Rights

Initiative from India and the Katiba Institute from Kenya are learning from one other to establish and strengthen Right to Information legislation. Transparency International Sri Lanka is doing the same, while the Network for Non-Governmental Organisations is informing the regulatory environment for civil society in Nigeria.

These examples illustrate the ways in which civic voices help to determine what fairness looks like. They deepen our understanding of what fairness needs to deliver and shape the policies that will make it happen. Most importantly, they help us to be true to the commitment to leave no one behind, by amplifying those that are less heard. Without this, fairness only works for those who get to say what it means for them, leaving others with a sense of grievance and injustice. ●

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN POLITICS

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Under Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, calls on Commonwealth countries to make democracy more democratic by ensuring that women can participate freely, fairly and safely in elections and politics.



Credit: Marco Grob

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka,
UN Under Secretary-General and
Executive Director of UN Women

Equality between women and men, and opportunities for women's voices and leadership at all levels of decision-making have been globally acknowledged as vital contributors to more prosperous and stable societies in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With increased agency and representation in society and in public life, women are better able to raise the profile of key issues including reproductive rights, childcare, equal pay, parental leave and pensions; and broader development issues such as the alleviation of poverty and delivery of services. But while we are seeing more women than ever holding public office and engaging in political processes, there is still a gaping gender gap for women in politics. Globally, just 23.5 per cent of national parliamentarians are women, six per cent of heads of state and six per cent of heads of government. Currently, just six Commonwealth member states have a woman as head of state or government.

Violence against women remains one of the most serious obstacles to the realisation of women's political, social and economic rights today. One aspect of this is the scale of prevailing discriminatory legislation and policies. More than 150 countries still have laws that discriminate against women. These include family laws, penal codes, nationality laws and laws relating to inheritance, ownership and control over land and other resources. In fighting for policies that empower women and prevent and eliminate violence against women, we have worked to ensure that more women have access to policymaking positions, political leadership and other seats of power. But the path towards election and holding office is far from easy in Commonwealth countries, as elsewhere, and championing women's leadership in politics can bring severe repercussions for both women voters and candidates.

In many countries, women candidates face intimidation, violence and harassment when contesting elections.

// Currently, just six Commonwealth member states have a woman as head of state or government. //

Despite family opposition and cultural norms, Vandana Bahadur Maida was elected head of the village council in Khankhandvi, Madhya Pradesh, India.



Credit: UN Women/Gaganjit Singh

Is this because their participation in elections threatens the dominance of male power, or is it a form of punishment for not conforming to the gender roles assigned to women?

The women who are elected know that violence and harassment do not end at the ballot box. Far from it. Online abuse of female politicians is rife, and opens to public gaze the broader picture of toxic targeting through social media, increasing where gender as a trigger is compounded by other intersectionalities like race or sexuality. The UK Member of Parliament (MP), Diane Abbott, who received half of the 25,000 abusive tweets sent to female MPs in a six-month period in 2017, has highlighted the chilling effect this abuse has on women – and especially young black women – taking part in public life. Excluding Diane Abbott, black and Asian women MPs in Westminster received 35 per cent more abusive tweets than white women MPs. Similarly, the former Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, has spoken out about women in public life facing “nearly daily” threats of violence or rape. New social media and communication technologies present opportunities for attacking women, with one report finding that women are 27 times more likely to be abused online than men. Their stories must be taken seriously and come with repercussions for the perpetrators.

Women who seek to exercise their right to vote can also find themselves the target of violence, and intimidation can result in drastically reducing the number of women casting their ballots. In Kenya’s 2017 elections, women across the political spectrum reported harassment. During the 2015 parliamentary by-elections in Pakistan’s Lower Dir District, none of the 53,000 eligible women voters turned out to vote. It was reported that they were prevented from doing so by male family members, religious communities and by armed men at polling stations. In countries with already low rates of women in politics, violence – or the threat of it – can severely discourage women



Executive elections for the Northern Islands Market Vendor Association in Luganville, Vanuatu, saw an historic 90 per cent voter turn out rate, June 2016.

Credit: UN Women/Murray Wong

“ Women must be free to vote, campaign, hold political office and speak out on behalf of their constituents, free from violent or toxic retribution. ”

from entering politics or taking part in elections. The consequences and the causes are both of deep concern, each indicating a cycle of persistent discrimination.

Thanks to movements such as #MeToo and #Timesup, more and more women across the world have been able to share their experiences of violence and harassment – from film sets to political chambers. They exemplify the positive power of the media to expose abuses, build solidarity and ignite global conversations. It is a shared experience that has

important potential for building longer-term change, together with women’s marches around the world. The United Nations also faces these issues, and Secretary-General António Guterres has announced a five-point plan to ensure zero tolerance for sexual harassment across the UN system.

Democracy is not democratic without equality, and while women in politics experience violence and intimidation. Women must be free to vote, campaign, hold political office and speak out on behalf of their constituents, free from violent

or toxic retribution. Innovative prevention and response measures to counter violence against women in elections are needed globally, along with continued research to quantify the scale of the issue. By recognising violence against women in politics as a serious barrier to closing the gender gap in other aspects of our societies, we can resolve to find ways to ensure that women can participate freely, fairly and safely in elections and politics in all Commonwealth countries. And with more balanced societies, we are better able to gain peace and prosperity. ●

TIME FOR BOLD ACTION ON FEMALE EXPLOITATION

Tanya Barron calls for urgent action to end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and the daily exploitation of women and girls throughout the Commonwealth.



Tanya Barron,
UK CEO, Plan International UK

The momentum behind Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.7 is growing, and now is the time for the Commonwealth to really lead the way in meeting it. This target commits states to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking and, while this is a global target, more than half of all enslaved individuals are estimated to live in the Commonwealth. Taking bold action to eradicate these human rights violations is not only essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but also for promoting a secure, prosperous and fair Commonwealth.

Forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking are highly complex and context specific phenomena. Whilst anyone can be forced, coerced or deceived into exploitative conditions, women and adolescent girls are disproportionately affected, accounting for 71 per cent of people estimated to be forced into labour and marriage.

The sectors where exploitation occurs are highly gendered. Women and girls are much more likely to be exploited sexually and in domestic work than men and boys. Men and boys are more likely to be exploited in construction, manufacturing and agriculture.

Startlingly, 99 per cent of people sexually exploited for commercial gain are female, and one in five are girls. Half of all trafficked persons are children. Nearly 70 per cent of domestic workers are girls, and over one fifth of them work in hazardous conditions.

Most of those women and girls are the poorest and most marginalised, and refugees and migrants are at increased risk. Emergencies appear to intensify existing patterns of exploitation, and forced marriage, sexual exploitation and human trafficking can peak in times of crisis.

The exploitation of girls exacerbates the marginalisation and lack of access to justice they experience. It can be devastating to their health and wellbeing, halt their education and economic opportunities, and curtail their freedom.

These girls are not only denied their childhood, they are also socially isolated. Their future is bleak. But what if we created a different future?

On an economic level, it makes sense to prioritise this issue. Violence, abuse and exploitation of children neutralises development gains that, when measured indirectly as losses in future productivity, could be between 2-5 per cent of global gross domestic product.

“ Whilst anyone can be forced, coerced or deceived into exploitative conditions, women and adolescent girls are disproportionately affected. ”



Plan International's 'Better Opportunities for Girls' (AMOR) programme is supporting girls so they can finish school and aims to change harmful traditional practices and social norms. Cledia, 17 and Ricardina, 15, are part of the programme in Jangamo district in Mozambique. They have received scholarships to continue their education and stay at Plan International's boarding school during term time.

“ When we support girls to realise their rights, challenge the barriers they experience and achieve their dreams, they go on to do incredible things. ”

But more importantly, we know that when we support girls to realise their rights, challenge the barriers they experience and achieve their dreams, they go on to do incredible things. This is why we must step up our efforts to prevent exploitation and harness the potential of all girls in the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth is uniquely placed to drive forward both collective and individual action to address sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and forced marriage. Eliminating the forced exploitation of women and girls must become a priority of the Commonwealth.

And we know it can be done. Over the last decade, the Commonwealth's commitment to promote gender equality and address child, early and forced marriage has been expressed at the highest political level, from the Commonwealth Charter through to the Heads of Government, Women's Ministers and Law Ministers' Meetings. Progress on meeting these commitments has been supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat and National Human Rights Institutions - including through the adoption of the Kigali Declaration - and we have seen remarkable progress in many Commonwealth countries.

Aligning national laws governing the minimum age of marriage with international human rights standards is an important first step in the process of eliminating child, early and forced marriage. We have witnessed positive developments in this area with several countries having improved their laws and removed exceptions over the past few years.

In 2015, the Government of Uganda launched the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage and its first ever National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy. In 2016, Mozambique launched its comprehensive National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Child Marriage. In the same year, the government of Zambia adopted a five-year national action plan to end child marriage. In Bangladesh, the rates of child marriage have dropped by 1.37 per cent per year.

Plan International Uganda, Zambia and Bangladesh continue to work at a grassroots level to support the implementation of these strategies. The challenge is to bring rates of child marriage down rapidly. Business as usual is not an option.

This is why Plan International, under its global programme *18+: Ending Child, Early, and Forced Marriage*, also works at the system level to influence structures and lawmakers to create an enabling environment to protect girls from exploitation. Legislation not only provides a structure for legal protection but also the normative framework, leadership, guidance and legitimacy for policy-makers and civil society to take action.

Knowing this, Plan International UK launched a petition asking people around the world to stand with young activists in their campaign to close a loophole in Malawi's constitution that enabled child marriage to continue. More than 42,000 people from around the world stood with Malawian youth activists, who, with the support of Plan International Malawi, had campaigned on this issue for several years.

In February 2017, we were delighted when the Malawi government approved a bill to make child marriage illegal. Furthermore, the success of


this campaign was an inspiration for Plan International Tanzania, who we continue to work with in their youth-led campaign asking the government to address legal loopholes in the Law of the Marriage Act that allow marriage of girls below the age of 18.

While the recent amendment is a victory for gender and child-rights advocates, more work remains to be done to ensure that the change is fully implemented and enforced, including through appropriate by-laws. Yet, I truly hope that the leadership that has been shown on this issue can act as a springboard for more concerted action to address other forms of exploitation in the Commonwealth.

To do so, we need to hear, understand and learn from many girls who have been forced to live and work in exploitative conditions. We need to involve these girls to help us design the strategies to end exploitation once and for all. We need to engage fathers and brothers so that they can become champions in the fight against exploitation and to educate their peers that it is not okay for their sisters and daughters to live in fear of violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Most of all, we need real leadership from governments right across the Commonwealth. I invite all governments and leaders in the Commonwealth to commit to tackling this issue, to work together with partners and communities to address discriminatory gender norms and eliminate the demand for forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking of women and girls.

Building on the precedent set on child, early and forced marriage, governments should take immediate action to develop and publish national strategies and legislation to prevent and respond to the exploitation of women and girls, in line with Sustainable Development Goals 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2.

It is time to turn commitment into action to truly move the needle on ending the daily exploitation of girls throughout the Commonwealth. It is my hope that governments commit to do so at this Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. We, at Plan International UK, stand ready to support them. 

LGBTI EQUALITY FOR A FAIRER FUTURE

Justice Dingake, Co-Chair of the African Think Tank on HIV, Health and Social Justice, highlights the ongoing prejudice against the LGBTI community across Africa, and calls on the Commonwealth to accelerate action for LGBTI equality and equitable access to services.



Oagile Bethuel Key Dingake,
Justice of the Supreme and
National Courts of Papua New
Guinea, and Co-Chair of the
African Think Tank on HIV, Health
and Social Justice

In the African continent, there has been a very mixed record of achievement on human rights and social justice for vulnerable and key populations, including LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) persons. It is correct to assert that the broad orientation of the legal frameworks in Africa regarding the rights of LGBTI persons can be described as hostile and anti-human rights.

It is a sad reality that in Africa, the lives of LGBTI persons, vulnerable groups and key populations remain both compromised and threatened in environments where they are criminalised and face ongoing stigma, discrimination, physical and sexual violence, victimisation, abuse and denial of their rights, including their right to health. Moreover, social and economic inequality across the region places many other individuals and groups at risk of HIV, including women and girls, young people, people with disabilities, migrants, and mobile populations.

In recent years, some African countries have moved to adopt punitive laws regarding homosexuality and same sex-relationships. Aside from the legal aspects of these developments, these countries have issued populist and incorrect messages that homosexuality is ‘un-African’ and

that this is a ‘western concept’. Yet homosexuality exists in every society across the world, and Africa is not an exception. In fact, Africans embrace that reality. The issue, I believe, is that Africans have challenges in dealing with the manifestation of homosexuality. All that this uninformed stance has achieved is the unwarranted violation of the rights of LGBTI persons. This includes the outright denial of basic rights and dignity for LGBTI persons, including their access to HIV and health services. There is increasing evidence that lesbians, and transgender men and women are being targeted with sexual violence because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

The serious nature of this reality was reflected in Resolution 275, passed by the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights in April 2014. The Resolution draws attention to the deplorable situation across the continent of ongoing violence and human rights abuses against individuals based on real or perceived sexual orientation. State-sanctioned persecution is specifically condemned.

Despite this groundbreaking resolution, the human rights of LGBTI persons across the African continent continue to be violated and undermined by repressive legal

frameworks, hate speech and violence. Out of the 55 countries in Africa, 34 criminalise same-sex relationships. In many cases these laws were introduced under the British Empire, making this a uniquely Commonwealth problem.

In March 2015, under the leadership of the UNAIDS Regional office in Johannesburg, a diverse regional group of experts and advocates on HIV, human rights and social justice, including justices, lawyers, doctors, LGBTI persons and their networks, academics, faith-based organisations and policymakers, convened in South Africa, to form the African Think-Tank on Health and Social Justice. Our bold purpose is to function as a dynamic and engaged platform for strategic thinking, leadership and collaboration to support, expand and accelerate action on human rights and social justice for LGBTI persons, vulnerable groups and key populations across the African continent.

The African Think-Tank on Health and Social Justice is an innovative platform, the first of its kind, with a clear objective to address the institutionalised stigma and discrimination against LGBTI persons as well as the notion that homosexuality is ‘un-African’. The fact that the think-tank is composed by Africans means it is in a unique position to lead the debate regarding sexual orientation and gender identity in the continent. Our perspective comes not only from a human rights and social justice angle, but also through African contextual realities and lenses.

As such, there is an urgent need not only to debunk the myth that homosexuality is ‘un-African’, but also to engage in transformational dialogue with all stakeholders. Our aim is to assert the universality of human rights and the centrality of the dignity of all human beings without exception. African societies already subscribe to this notion through the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, at the heart of which is the idea that all persons are equally dignified.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting provides an important platform for African advocates to appeal to their governments for the right to equality for LGBTI people. Already important



Access to healthcare is a human right that should be enjoyed by all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

“ There’s a huge amount of work left to do, but slowly the walls of prejudice against the LGBTI community are crumbling. ”

progress has been made on the African continent. Botswana and Malawi are slowly proceeding with removing their sodomy laws, while Mozambique and Seychelles have recently decriminalised homosexuality. The courts in other African Commonwealth member countries, particularly in Kenya, Malawi, and Botswana, have been at the forefront of affecting the promise of equality of all people entrenched in these countries’ constitutions.

Part of my work at The African Think-Tank on Health and Social Justice is to use transformative roundtable dialogues, information sharing and best practices, and to work with key stakeholders and communities to bring down the walls of stigma, discrimination and prejudice. Through structured dialogues with key actors, it is possible to intercept and avert actions that could fuel further homophobia and violence against LGBTI persons.

There’s a huge amount of work left to do, but slowly the walls of prejudice against the LGBTI community

are crumbling. There is significant momentum and a critical mass emerging for resolving human rights and social justice challenges for LGBTI persons and other key populations across the African continent, led by trailblazing Africans themselves. What we now need is to leverage the positive changes alluded to above, and the opportunities provided by platforms such as the African Think-Tank and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. It’s critical that we act on these opportunities to enhance collective impact regarding human rights and social justice for all in Africa.

I’m heartened by the progress made by some African governments on advancing equality for all in their countries. Through the positive presence of African LGBTI civil society leaders at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, we can forward the vision of Africa that is free from discrimination and homophobia. I am confident we can keep this momentum going. 🍷

SECURING A RESILIENT FUTURE IN THE AGE OF CLIMATE WARS

Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, warns of the increasingly catastrophic financial impact of climate change, and considers strategies to build resilience and protect vulnerable nations against damage and loss.



Roosevelt Skerrit,
Prime Minister,
Commonwealth
of Dominica

226 is the number that marks humanity's crash into the Anthropocene – the geological age during which human activity became the dominant influence on climate and the environment. Six weeks after Hurricane Maria made landfall in Dominica on 18 September 2017, the experts completed their preliminary assessment of the damage and loss. They pronounced that it amounted to 226 per cent of GDP. That is not a misprint. It was not 2.26 per cent or 22.6 per cent, or even 100 per cent, but 226 per cent of GDP. The battlefield was devastated. The climate wars had begun.

The 2017 hurricane season was the most costly on record. Harvey, Irma and Maria, together with 14 other named storms, caused damage and loss worth approximately \$300bn to Anguilla, Antigua, Barbuda, Cuba, Florida, Texas and the British and US Virgin Islands. It is invidious to compare disasters, especially ones involving loss of life. However, to put losses of 226 per cent of GDP into some perspective, it is worth recalling the physical damage and loss from one of humanity's greatest tragedies



The catastrophic Hurricane Maria made landfall in Dominica on 18 September 2017 causing devastation to the island.

– the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, and the earthquake that followed. Aceh Province in Indonesia bore the full force when the tsunami struck. The loss of life was unspeakable. The physical damage was 90 per cent of GDP in Aceh, and one per cent in Indonesia as a whole. This was a huge figure but it was not 226 per cent. We have entered a new epoch where disaster is monumental and sanctuary impossible.

The evidence is that warmer seas are leading to more intense hurricanes and cyclones, and ones that cause greater devastation, especially from flooding. Warmer seas may also be accelerating the speed with which hurricanes intensify, making preparations harder and timely alerts less likely. Maria escalated the most rapidly of any storm in history. Dominicans went home to prepare for a potential Category 3 hurricane. Hours later they were pummeled by winds of up to 281km per hour. On the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale of 1

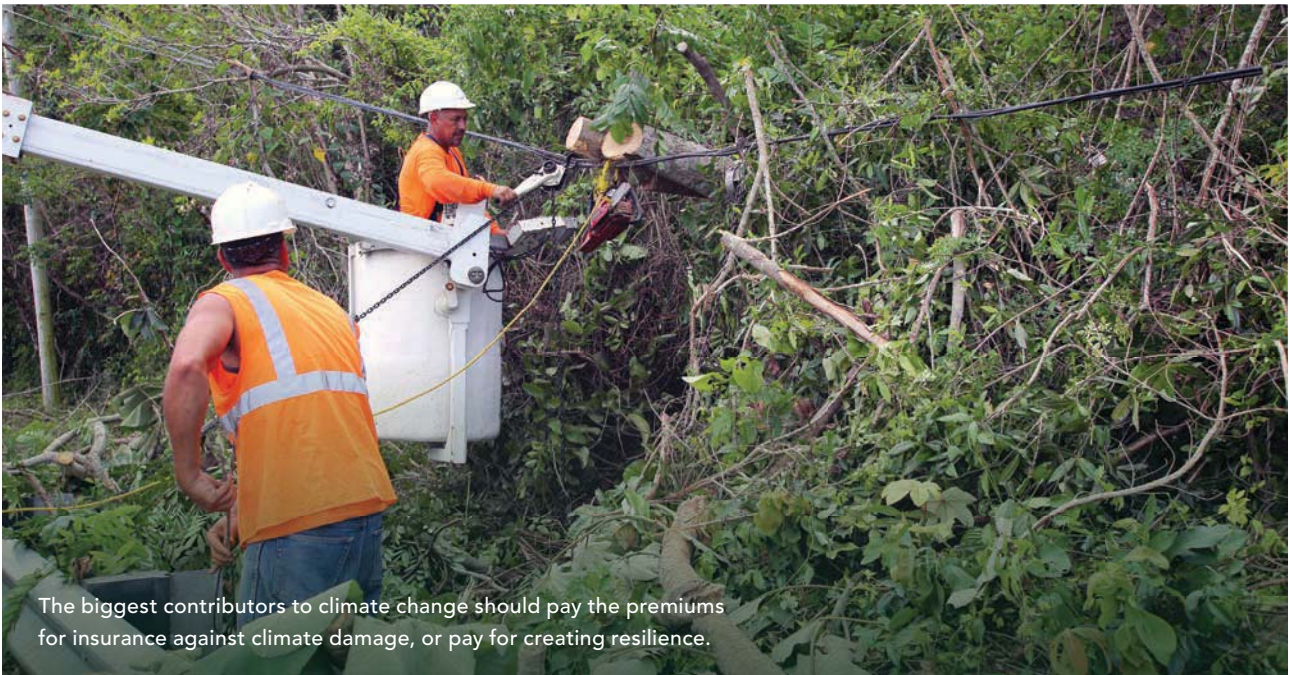
“ We have entered a new epoch where disaster is monumental and sanctuary impossible. ”

to 5, some have suggested that it was a Category 6 hurricane.

Insurance is a useful mechanism for quickly securing financial relief. Within 14 days of Maria, Dominica received a payment of \$19.3m from the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Fund (CCRIF). But commercial insurance cannot protect us from the challenge of climate change; it cannot be sized to the scale of the damage and incidence of climate change. That CCRIF payout, while gratefully received, represented a mere 1.5 per cent of the damage and loss caused by Maria. A sum one hundred times greater wouldn't have been enough. There is simply no affordable premium to protect against a 226

per cent of GDP loss, and one that may occur with increasing frequency and correlation with other disasters. Insurance works well when the risks are random and unconnected, and the cumulative scale of disaster is commensurate with affordable annual premiums. That is not the reality of climate change. Just two years before Maria, Tropical Storm Erika inflicted loss and damage of 90 per cent of GDP, and four years before that was the wreckage of Ophelia.

The only solution is to become resilient to climate change. That is why five days after Maria, on the floor of the UN General Assembly, we solemnly resolved to be the first climate resilient nation in the world;



The biggest contributors to climate change should pay the premiums for insurance against climate damage, or pay for creating resilience.

“ What is unjust, of course, is that those of us on the frontline of the war on climate change, paying with our lives and livelihoods, did not cause climate change or contribute to it. ”

to be the example for others to follow so that together, we can forge a more secure future for all.

In developing our strategy for becoming a climate resilient nation, we have concluded that the task comprises far more than better construction and higher standards. Resiliency requires the integration of things previously considered separate. If all our buildings and roads were left standing, but we had no food; or if we had food but no water, water but no power, power but no security; if our men were safe, but our women not, we could not claim to be resilient. A resilient nation is also one with absorptive capacity. It is those on the edge that fall over in a disaster, so we need to lift them up. And a resilient nation is one that harnesses the regenerative power of

all of our natural environment. Our task is to build a resilient nation made up of resilient livelihoods, resilient communities, resilient forests and resilient oceans.

Implementation is as important as strategy. We believe that the regular structures of government do not lend themselves to the development of an integrated plan, nor cross-cutting action or the accumulation of new climate-related knowledge and skills. Consequently, in March 2018, we established a dedicated agency, CREAD (the Climate Resilience Execution Agency of Dominica), to be our implementation arm. Others may establish or use different implementing structures, but the point is that organisational structure is crucial.

All of this will cost money, and many within this Commonwealth

of Nations have been generous. What is unjust, of course, is that those of us on the frontline of the war on climate change, paying with our lives and livelihoods, did not cause climate change or contribute to it. Worse, those that did, grew rich from doing so. From our perspective, it is the inaction of those who scoff at President Trump’s retreat on climate change, that empower him. The time for fancy talk is over and the time for plain action is now.

The problem of climate change is that many of us need protection against the substantial damage caused by the behaviour of others. Insurance is particularly suited to those situations where the premiums serve to reduce risky behaviours. It is those whose risky behaviours contributed to climate change who should be paying the premiums for insurance against climate damage, or paying for creating resilience. Perhaps the premiums could be raised through a levy on the production of fossil fuels, which would be put into a global climate damages fund for quick payout when disaster strikes. The mechanisms are there. If the fund runs low, we could raise the levy and if the fund exceeds a certain threshold, we could lower it. We can refine the details, but we can’t postpone action any longer. ●



Toward a climate-resilient Caribbean

Some thoughts from Isaac Anthony, CEO, CCRIF SPC

CCRIF SPC was the first multi-country risk pool in the world, and was the first insurance instrument to successfully develop parametric policies backed by both traditional and capital markets. It provides parametric catastrophe insurance coverage for earthquakes, hurricanes and excess rainfall to Caribbean and Central American governments. CCRIF provides quick financial liquidity to a government when a policy is triggered, thus helping to mitigate the short-term cash flow problems small developing economies suffer after a major natural disaster.

CCRIF CEO, Mr. Isaac Anthony shares some thoughts on CCRIF and its role in disaster risk financing and climate change adaptation.



CCRIF has been providing parametric catastrophe insurance coverage since 2007 for hurricanes and earthquakes and – since 2013 – for excess rainfall in the Caribbean, extending into Central America in 2014. Since the inception of the Facility, CCRIF has made payouts totalling US\$130.5 million to 13 member governments – all made within 14 days of the event. These monies usually represent the first injection of liquidity to countries and is a source of quick financing for immediate repair and rehabilitation activities. CCRIF represents a cost-effective way to pre-finance short-term liquidity for an individual government to begin recovery efforts after a catastrophic event, thereby filling the gap between immediate response aid and long-term redevelopment.



The year 2017 was a defining moment for the Caribbean after suffering the devastation caused by two category 5 hurricanes – Irma and Maria – within 14 days of each other. CCRIF made payouts totalling US\$55 million to 9 of our 16 Caribbean member countries following these hurricanes. These catastrophic events resulted in CARICOM declaring its ambition to make the Caribbean the first climate-resilient zone in the world. We support CARICOM in this bold ambition and will play our part in helping our region realize this vision. The CCRIF Story is a powerful way to demonstrate the linkages among disaster risk management, risk transfer, poverty reduction, resilience and economic growth.



CCRIF acknowledges the vulnerabilities of its member countries to natural hazards and understands that these vulnerabilities will be exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. In recognition of this challenge, CCRIF intends to develop new insurance products for drought, agriculture, fisheries and utilities (including for energy, water and wastewater, and telecommunications) to meet the needs of the region and to enable member governments to advance their own sustainability agendas and further utilize insurance as an efficient strategy for financial protection and resilience.



CCRIF's success would not be possible without the support from our bilateral and multilateral partners. We acknowledge the support from: the World Bank Group; the governments of Japan, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Ireland, Bermuda, Germany, the United States and Mexico; the European Union and the Caribbean Development Bank as well as our participating governments.

CCRIF SNAPSHOT

CCRIF SPC
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The world's first multi-country risk pool based on parametric insurance



16
CARIBBEAN
1
CENTRAL AMERICA

PRODUCTS

Parametric catastrophe insurance for:
Tropical Cyclones
Earthquakes
Excess Rainfall



36
PAYOUTS
TOTALLING OVER
\$ US 130
MILLION
to 13 member governments

PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, welcomes the Commonwealth's efforts to prioritise the prevention of violent extremism and considers the way forward for the Commonwealth to counter this increasingly complex and transnational threat.



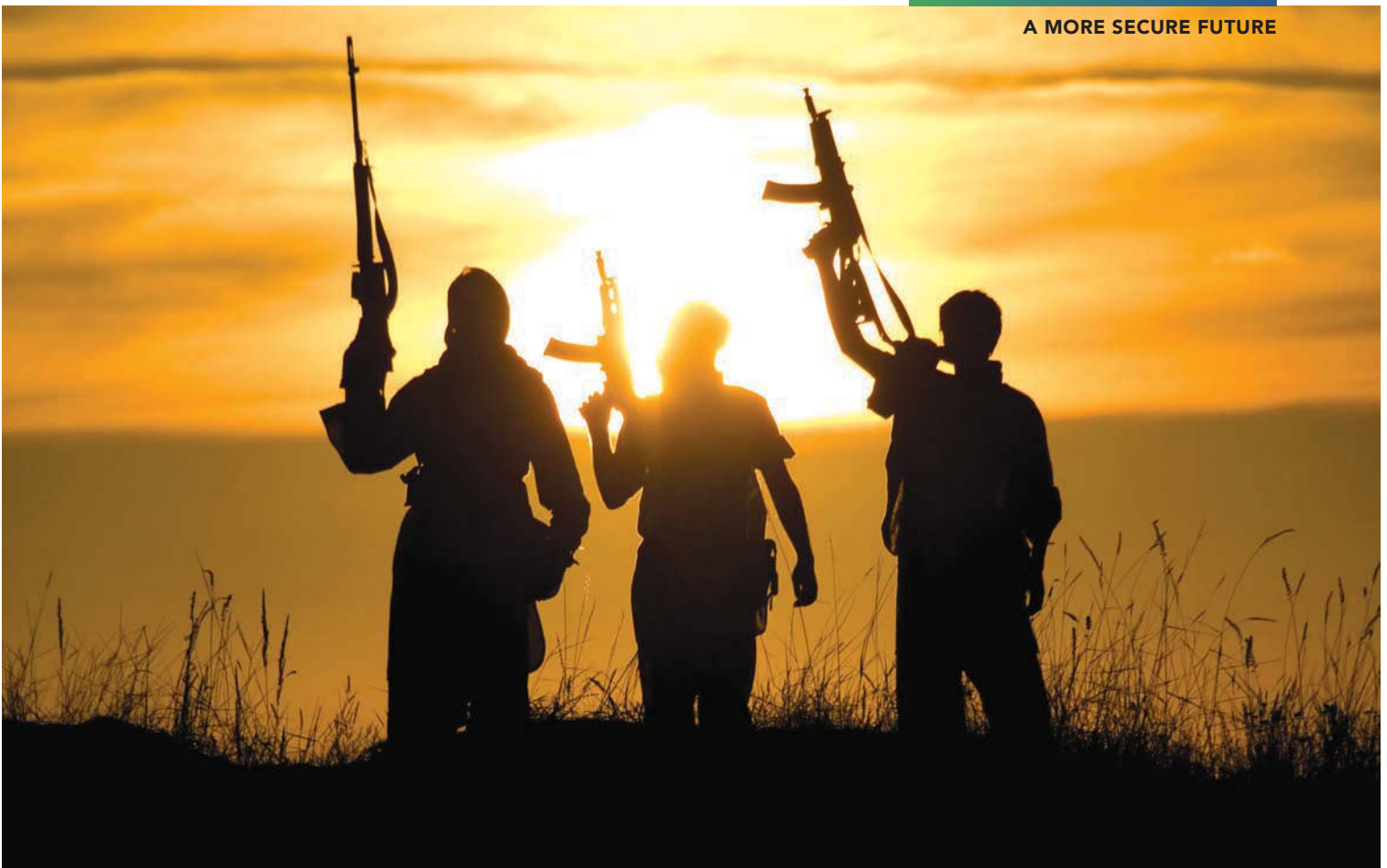
Vladimir Voronkov,
Under-Secretary-General,
United Nations Office of
Counter-Terrorism

Violent extremism is a direct challenge to the shared values and principles of the Commonwealth and the United Nations. It hinders our efforts to maintain peace and security, promote and protect human rights and foster sustainable development. It drives a wedge between and within societies, exacerbates conflicts and destabilises entire countries and regions. Violent extremism takes many different shapes and forms and should not be associated with any particular religion, race, nationality or ethnic group.

Preventing violent extremism is rightly one of the top priorities of both the Commonwealth and the United Nations. The last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Malta in November 2015 concluded that violent extremism represented a clear threat to the security of member countries. However, there is no quick fix to tackle this complex and multifaceted threat. Over the past two decades, the international community has often sought to address violent extremism through security measures, which

are essential in certain situations but are rarely sufficient on their own. Experience has shown that harsh crackdowns and heavy-handed approaches that do not respect human rights and international law can be counterproductive.

While military and security measures are important, we also need to focus our efforts on the underlying conditions that are conducive to young men and women being lured by violent extremists. Investing in upstream and early prevention is the first line of defence against radicalisation. Most new recruits to terrorist organisations are between 17 and 27 years old. This is clearly a major concern when almost 60 per cent of the Commonwealth's population is aged under 30. Violent extremist groups often exploit feelings of disillusionment and alienation, offering a twisted sense of purpose to disaffected young people, including women and girls. No one is born a violent extremist, but we know that factors such as prolonged unresolved conflicts, lack of the rule of law and socioeconomic marginalisation can all play a role in transforming ideas and grievances into violent extremist action.



“ There is no quick fix to tackle this complex and multifaceted threat. ”

Young people are an overwhelmingly positive asset to our societies with their idealism, creativity and dynamism. We need to harness the energy of the 1.8 billion young people around the world by investing in their futures through increased education and employment opportunities. We also need to empower them by giving them the tools they need to combat oppressive extremist narratives, xenophobia and hate speech. I am delighted that there is a strong focus on youth at this CHOGM in London. The United Nations Secretary-General will be convening a High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States in New York on 28-29 June 2018, which will include a session on engaging youth to prevent violent extremism.

I welcome the growing emphasis of members of the Commonwealth on preventing rather than dealing with the

consequences of violent extremism. One of the key recommendations of the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in 2015 was the need to implement national and regional plans of action to prevent violent extremism. Some of the 60 member states that the United Nations is supporting on developing these national action plans are members of the Commonwealth. It is vital that we continue to work closely together to ensure that efforts to prevent violent extremism involve all sections of society and are tailored to meet the specific needs and circumstances of each member of the Commonwealth. We

also need to have national institutions strengthened so they have the capacity and expertise to prevent violent extremism and respond effectively in the event of a terrorist attack.

No country or region is immune from the increasingly complex and transnational threat of violent extremism. There is therefore an urgent need to improve cooperation and share good practices to address the drivers of radicalisation at the global, regional, national and local levels. As an association of 53 diverse sovereign nations with 2.4 billion citizens spanning six continents, the Commonwealth family has a key role to play in uniting communities against violent extremism. The United Nations stands ready to support you in this task to help build a more secure and prosperous future for all our citizens, especially young people. ●

“ Investing in upstream and early prevention is the first line of defence against radicalisation. ”

COUNTERING EXTREMISM: MODERATION IN DIVERSITY

Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia, encourages Commonwealth nations to celebrate diversity, and promote tolerance, mutual respect and moderation, to stem the rise of extremism.

Since its establishment in 1949, almost seven decades ago, the Commonwealth has witnessed a remarkable period of social, economic and political change. Indeed, the organisation itself has come a long way. Having started life as an exclusive club for former colonies of Great Britain, it is now a collective family of nations bound together not just by shared history but also a shared sense of values, aspirations and goals. This is best represented by the fact that two of its most recent members, Rwanda and Mozambique, had no historical ties to the British Empire. Now, home to 2.4 billion citizens – two-thirds of whom are under the age of 30 – the Commonwealth represents the past as well as the future in a manner few organisations or associations can.

As leaders from across the world congregate in London for the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of



Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak,
Prime Minister, Malaysia



Malaysia embraces and celebrates multiculturalism

Government Meeting (CHOGM 2018), we should acknowledge that the Commonwealth has endured its share of challenges and struggles. Already, the 21st century has witnessed extraordinary events, with nations and citizens around the world having to endure a period of tremendous upheaval, driven by events such as the global financial crisis, the undermining of international political systems, and growing environmental issues. However, what is most alarming is that peace and security – which preceding generations fought so hard to achieve following the barbarity of the great world wars – has been greatly tested and compromised by the threats of terrorism and violent extremism. Nations in the Commonwealth have not been spared the effects of this violence. Indeed, in the case of many member nations, they are at the frontline of this battle.

History has shown us, time and again, that extremism in any form or manifestation will ignite conflict, resulting in war and untold sufferings. The spread of mistrust and intolerance based on differences that fuel extremism is a cause for grave concern.

Unfortunately, in far too many instances, the international community has taken far too long to respond to these threats. And, as has been made evident by the rise of Daesh, this has serious consequences for global security.

While some countries have been more affected than others, the pain and suffering of those who have found themselves caught in this firestorm will not be assuaged if we continue to approach these challenges in the same manner as before.

“ As a multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural and democratic society, we believe we benefit from our diversity. ”

Malaysia has long promoted tolerance, mutual respect and moderation as important elements for peaceful co-existence. We do not merely tolerate each other but we also embrace and celebrate each other's differences. As a multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural and democratic society, we believe we benefit from our diversity. It strengthens our communities, enhances our creativity, and ensures inclusivity – all of which are vital ingredients in ensuring the balance of social harmony in Malaysia.

Our nation taught me that acceptance and respect for diversity, tolerance and understanding among peoples of different cultures, religions and beliefs are important elements in countering extremism.

It is this realisation that led me to call for a Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) at the United Nations General Assembly in 2010. My vision was for governments, intellectuals, scholars and business leaders across the world to take a united stand in choosing moderation over extremism. I am pleased to say that this call has since received widespread support from many world leaders, and been recognised by the international community at various forums, including endorsements at

the Perth CHOGM in 2011 and again when the same gathering took place in Colombo in 2013.

A major testament to Malaysia's success in our nation's endeavour of promoting moderation was the adoption of the Resolution on Moderation at the United Nations General Assembly in December 2017, which included the observance of the International Year of Moderation in 2019, an event that will shortly be upon us. This has reinforced our commitment to strengthening the spread of moderation and ensuring that it is used to stem the rise of all forms of extremism through dialogue, mutual respect, cooperation and understanding.

The theme for this year's CHOGM – Towards a Common Future – could not be more fitting for a world where some are increasingly looking to divide us. The Commonwealth, more than any other organisation, has the ability to bring people and nations together.

Malaysia looks forward to working with the other member nations of the Commonwealth to further this cause, as well as address the critical issues and challenges affecting our citizens, to ensure that they have the peace and prosperity we all know they deserve. ●

COLLABORATING ON CRIME FOR A SAFER FUTURE

Jürgen Stock, Secretary General of INTERPOL, describes how individual countries must work collaboratively to fight increasingly sophisticated crime.



Jürgen Stock,
Secretary General, INTERPOL

// Cyberattacks should not be viewed simply as a cost of doing business, but as a direct threat to the health and safety of citizens. //

INTERPOL's global span across 192 countries enables a unique and unparalleled overview of what law enforcement is dealing with on the ground in every corner of the world. Of the 53 Commonwealth countries, all but three (Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu) are also members of INTERPOL, with the Solomon Islands having joined the world police body in 2017.

As we look at the evolving security threat landscape both today and tomorrow, the issue of globalisation vs nationalism is one that prompts significant debate. There are overlaps in security concerns, but also gaps in cooperation which provide openings for criminals and terrorists who will always exploit the smallest weakness. We are all too well aware of the threats that face us, and that for the foreseeable future, these threats are increasing rather than diminishing.

The progressive liberation of Da'esh-held territories in the Middle East means that we are no longer dealing with a centralised threat. The group's current efforts to build on established networks across Southeast Asia, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, aligned with an increased risk of foreign fighters returning to their countries of origin presents an increased and multi-layered challenge to global security.

Being aware of the threats enables us to better face them, and to make maximum use of the global capabilities already in existence to build on regional

alliances or associations such as the Commonwealth.

At INTERPOL we see on a daily basis the results achieved when countries work together, and more importantly, when all of law enforcement is engaged.

INTERPOL currently has more than 43,200 foreign terrorist profiles in its databases, accessible by national police and border services in its 192 member countries. We are processing tens of thousands of additional profiles, connecting pieces of information from different sources.

Every second, more than 100 searches are conducted against INTERPOL's global databases which contain more than 74 million lost and stolen travel documents and nearly 7.2 million stolen vehicles in addition to nominal data, DNA profiles, fingerprints and facial images from around the world.

Last year alone, 4.6 billion searches were carried out against our databases by the world's police, leading to one million positive hits, or matches. In addition, more than 12,000 child sexual abuse victims have so far been identified through images shared via INTERPOL's International Child Sexual Exploitation database.

Unless, and until this and other vital policing information is readily available to law enforcement on the frontline, it remains numbers in a table. When information is shared, and more importantly accessed, we see significant results.

Current threats are stretching and straining police resources as never before, and considerable thought needs to be given by governments as to law enforcement funding and maximising the use of existing global networks.

Organised crime is not reducing as terrorism grows – we are seeing criminals using their profits to exploit regional instability, purchase weapons and poach endangered animals, as well as traffic drugs and exploit human misery to smuggle people from one region to another.

The Internet of Things presents a limitless range of opportunities for criminals, with the ‘cybercrime as a service’ concept creating thousands of digital mercenaries. In the era of smart cities, we are more interconnected and interdependent than ever, but if our global relations, societies and economics are not cohesive, then safety and security will not follow through smart law enforcement solutions. This is especially the case with the type of technologies we are seeing today, which could become weapons of destruction instead of tools for advancing humankind.

2017 saw a number of cyberattacks, such as the Wannacry ransomware, affecting more than 100 countries. We as global players must act collectively to prepare for and prevent other such attacks in 2018 and beyond, which

“ We see on a daily basis the results achieved when countries work together, and more importantly, when all of law enforcement is engaged. ”

could be even more destructive.

It is here we need to see increased cooperation between the public and private sectors. This is one of the central pillars of INTERPOL’s Global Complex for Innovation, which leads global research and development to ensure that the world’s police is always able to effectively detect, prevent, tackle and investigate cyber and cyber-enabled crime.

We must ensure that with regional and national partners, an effective global early-warning system is built to ensure there is rapid information-sharing during an attack, followed by concrete cooperation during follow-up investigations. For this to work, countries must start seriously investing in these platforms or risk continued global fragmentation. This requires political will, resources and know-how.

Cyberattacks should not be viewed simply as a cost of doing business, but as a direct threat to the health and safety of citizens. The private sector must be prepared to move beyond a prevention model towards collaboration with countries and entities like INTERPOL, during and after an attack.

If we intend to be effective and stand stronger, the way forward needs to be collaborative and coordinated, so that police on the frontlines have the right information at the right time. It must also be innovative, so that we stay ahead of the criminals.

It is up to us, now, to determine how our individual endeavours must come together. How they must be aligned to support the same goal. How they will best serve the men and women in uniform on the frontlines to fight transnational crime for our common future security. ■



CYBERSECURITY IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Shola Taylor, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation, recognises the key role of ICTs in enabling development, but highlights the risks of cybercrime and calls on Commonwealth member countries to work collectively to ensure the safety and security of cyberspace.



Shola Taylor, Secretary-General,
Commonwealth
Telecommunications
Organisation

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are now a key driver of social and economic development across the Commonwealth. However, alongside the benefits and opportunities offered by technology, there are also risks and challenges to the use of cyberspace. For ICTs and the Internet to realise their full developmental impact, the safety and security of cyberspace must be ensured through effective, cross-border cybersecurity policies throughout the Commonwealth.

ICTs and cyberspace play a key role in enabling the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They also feature prominently in this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) as a means to contribute to a more sustainable future, a more secure future, a more prosperous future and a fairer future. ICTs and cyberspace can be used to mitigate climate change, increase resilience and protect the environment. ICTs and cyberspace can be used to combat the threats posed by terrorism and crime. ICTs and cyberspace are a means for economic growth. And ICTs and cyberspace are also a means for social development through education, increased access to health care and better government services.

But despite the benefits and opportunities offered by ICTs, cyberspace presents many risks and challenges. All the threats outlined in the CHOGM secure future thread can be perpetrated online. Cybercrime continues to be an obvious threat to government and private businesses, personal conversations and data, shopping, government business, etc. A number of cases have been reported about computer viruses destroying personal information, or shutting down large networks. A number of individuals within the Commonwealth have fallen victim to cyber fraud. Offline crimes such as theft, child abuse, stalking and harassment have also been perpetuated online.

And of course terrorism, serious organised crime, violent extremism and human trafficking can all be facilitated and carried out online.

These threats impact the Commonwealth to a high degree given the comparatively high scale of internet penetration and adoption in Commonwealth countries. This makes it essential for Commonwealth member countries to work collectively to protect cyberspace, especially their infrastructure and data that is stored on it or flows through it in order to keep these safe, secure and resilient.

As a group of countries spread over six continents that subscribe to the values of democracy, good governance, human rights, international peace and security, tolerance, respect and understanding, freedom of expression, rule of law and sustainable development, the Commonwealth is well placed to take on the challenge of protecting cyberspace. And by working individually and together on cybersecurity, the Commonwealth is well-placed to become a leading international voice on this issue.

For ICTs and cyberspace to deliver on their potential for socio-economic development, nations must adopt and implement national cybersecurity strategies. These will provide the framework to protect the cyberspace infrastructure, its content and users.

In 2014 the Commonwealth ICT ministers adopted the Commonwealth Approach for Developing National Cybersecurity Strategies, developed by the CTO. This is based on four key principles steeped in the values of the Commonwealth: we contribute to a safe and an effective global cyberspace; our actions in cyberspace support broader economic and social development; we act individually and collectively to tackle cybercrime; and we each exercise our rights and meet our responsibilities in cyberspace

Bearing in mind these principles, the approach offers guidance to countries in the development, deployment and revision of their national cybersecurity strategies, emphasising the need for each country to take into account its culture, its national priorities, the risks it faces and the impact of this strategy, both regionally and globally. The approach shows key aspects of what should be contained within a national strategy and how these can be captured, while also



“ Despite the benefits and opportunities offered by ICTs, cyberspace presents many risks and challenges. ”

maintaining that the strategy should reflect the conscious and continuous balance of the achievement of security goals, while respecting privacy and protection of civil liberties.

The guide was created as a tool to assist countries in developing their national cybersecurity strategies and has led to the CTO providing assistance to countries from across the Commonwealth, including Botswana, Cameroon, Fiji, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda.

The CTO approach is also guided by principles that reflect each country's culture and the Commonwealth cyber governance principles. Design and delivery of the strategy also includes a wide range of stakeholders from across the public and private sectors, academia and civil society.

With cybersecurity having such a major role to play in the ambitions of CHOGM, and indeed in ensuring that ICTs make their full contribution to the SDGs, the CTO is calling on Commonwealth Heads of Government to pay particular attention to cybersecurity at this year's meeting, and to initiate a programme of practical action aimed at ensuring the safety, security and resilience of cyberspace. As an organisation mandated to lead on shared ICT efforts in the Commonwealth, we stand ready to assist this process. ●

“ The CTO is calling on Commonwealth Heads of Government to pay particular attention to cybersecurity at this year's CHOGM. ”



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THE COMMONWEALTH
REPRESENTING 53 NATIONS
ACROSS SIX CONTINENTS,
ONE-FIFTH OF GLOBAL TRADE
AND ONE-THIRD OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION.

