



The Commonwealth

Stakeholder Forum of the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting

Monday 31st July - Tuesday 1st August 2017

Kampala, Uganda

9CYMM (17) (STK)

Application for Attendance

This document is intended to provide information to support those organisations and individuals who wish to submit a paper for presentation at the Stakeholder Forum of the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting.

Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
London
SW1Y 5HX

May 2017

Resourcing and Financing Youth Development: Empowering Young People

Overview

The Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting is held every four years in a designated Commonwealth member state in order to share, celebrate and assess development and progress in youth development practice. The 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (9CYMM) will be held in Kampala, Uganda from 2nd - 4th August 2017. The Stakeholder Forum will be held immediately before this from Monday 31st July - Tuesday 1st August 2017. This year's theme is Resourcing and Financing Youth Development: Empowering Young People.

The Forum is intended to be a space for dialogue and resolutions by non-governmental stakeholders in youth development, in order to propose recommendations to the main ministerial meeting on the key themes. Selected accredited stakeholders are also observers on the 2nd day of the Ministerial meeting.

Stakeholders wishing to attend are expected to bear costs of travel and accommodation. You can submit a request for attendance at [yourcommonwealth.org](http://www.yourcommonwealth.org) (<http://www.yourcommonwealth.org/apply-to-be-part-of-the-stakeholder-forum-at-the-9th-commonwealth-youth-ministers-meeting>) no later than 10th June 2017. The Secretariat will respond with its decision before 20th June 2017 to enable time for visa applications etc.

The required arrival date will be Sunday 30th July and the departure date will be Wednesday 2nd August unless additional days of stay are communicated in your formal invitation letter. Accommodation options will be notified along with the invitation letter.

The Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting and Stakeholder Forum 2017

The Commonwealth Secretariat will convene the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (9CYMM) in Kampala, Uganda from 31st July - 4th August 2017 under the theme *Resourcing and Financing Youth Development: Empowering Youth*. The Stakeholder Forum, which carries recommendations to the main CYMM, will be held immediately before this from Monday 31st July to Tuesday 1st August.

CYMM is the most important Commonwealth conference for deliberation on the Commonwealth youth development agenda and its relationship to other sustainable development priorities. The meeting brings together Youth Ministers, senior government officials, youth representatives, youth workers and youth development stakeholders from all sectors across the Commonwealth.

Who will attend the main meeting?

Youth ministers from the 52 Commonwealth member states, senior Youth Ministry/Youth Department officials from member states, youth leaders and invited Stakeholder Forum participants will attend the main CYMM.

What are the objectives of CYMM?

The objectives of the 9CYMM are to;

- a. assess member state good practice in youth development,
- b. share, celebrate and adopt good practice,
- c. enable ministers to contribute to the global youth agenda,

- d. collaborate with stakeholders, and inspire and enable inter-ministerial cooperation on youth development, empowerment and participation across the Commonwealth.

The deliberations and dialogue at all Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meetings are informed by the rights-based principles of democracy, human rights and equality affirmed in the Commonwealth Charter. The Charter, for the first time since the Singapore (1971) and Harare (1991) Declarations, explicitly asserted the positive role that young people play in promoting development, peace and democracy.¹ These values underpin the Commonwealth's ways of working based on consultation, co-operation and consensus-building across the rich diversities and divergences of its 52 member states.

Why should stakeholders attend? A space for influence

Stakeholders working in youth development, and investing and resourcing youth development, are provided an opportunity for discussion and dialogue at the stakeholder forum. Representatives of the stakeholder forum are also provided the chance of engaging with ministers, senior government officials and young people in both formal and informal interactions.

The Commonwealth holds a unique and respected position in its contributions to youth development beginning from its role in the education and training of youth workers in the 1970s. Through the years, Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meetings have been the centre of significant dialogue, deliberation and actioned resolutions by governments on the implementation of youth policy, youth mainstreaming, establishment of youth participation structures in governance, and on professionalising youth work.

The Commonwealth Youth Division's historical expertise in areas of youth development and empowerment, supported by the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) fund and resourced by member states, has been instrumental in supporting the incremental transformation of the youth sector.

Pre-CYMM Meetings

The two pre-CYMM meetings immediately preceding the main ministerial meeting are; the Youth Leaders' Forum and the Stakeholder Forum. They ensure multi-stakeholder collaboration and dialogue to inform the broader outcomes of the main CYMM. The Youth Leaders Forum is a commitment to implementing the Commonwealth principle of youth participation in policy deliberations through the involvement of the Commonwealth Youth Council and other Commonwealth youth networks as key players in the CYMM process. The Stakeholder Forum is a recognition of the valuable and indispensable role of multi-stakeholder planning that ensures the collective and fully-owned realisation of the rights of young people.

Pre-CYMM meeting participants will make formal presentations of the outcomes of the forum to Ministers on day two of the main ministerial meeting on 3rd August.

Status of Youth in Global and National Development

Young people constitute one quarter of the world's population, and one third of the population in developing nations. Of these, as noted in the 2016 Global Youth Development Index (Commonwealth Secretariat 2017), three-quarters of the world's 1.8 billion young people aged 15-29 live in countries where youth development is categorised as 'low' or 'medium.'² This signals a need for change, but also signals a vibrant and hopeful resource for the world that have demonstrated their worth beyond numbers; their struggles for social justice and equality are increasingly visible and articulate. They have demonstrated their progressive and hopeful vision for the world in multiple ways, be it as citizens, voters, or in organised youth movements. They

have the greatest stake in equitable and sustainable development, and are also well-positioned to contribute meaningfully to this.

On the part of decision-makers, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of young people's place in development, and increasing efforts to bring young people to the table in development planning.³

Despite these goals and observations, in the global north, young people today are reported to be poorer at every stage of their life than their parents due to public service restructuring and austerity measures.⁴ In the global south, while abject poverty has decreased, the dividends of economic growth has not reached underprivileged young people, whose actual numbers are increasing.⁵ In employment, young people, especially young women, are the most affected by high unemployment rates, with youth unemployment rates nearly three times higher than those for adults.⁶ Young people are also disadvantaged in terms of access to housing,⁷ credit and finance,⁸ and are differentially impacted by health, justice, migration and other mechanisms and processes by their specific generational location as youth.⁹

The 9CYMM Theme: Resourcing and Financing Youth Development: Empowering Young People

The theme for the 9CYMM is *Resourcing and Financing Youth Development: Empowering Young People*. The theme was selected for the urgency of turning the tide for investment in youth development in order to benefit young people's productivity, wellbeing, self-empowerment, full employment, quality education, good health and an overall life quality; and, in turn, benefit national development.

This is a global priority considering the explicit articulation of national and global equality for all, including **for all ages**, in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through SDG 10 - reducing equality within and between countries. The SDGs also commit to principles of universality and reaching 'the furthest behind first',¹⁰ which further strengthens global commitments to investing in youth, particularly marginalised youth.

Young people are increasingly recognised as a specific age cohort requiring the attention of development planning. The SDGs have recognised the importance of delivering for young people by requirements around age segregation/age groups in goal 1 (poverty), 3 (health), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work), 10 (inequality), 11 (sustainable cities), 16 (peaceful, just and inclusive societies) and 17 (partnership). Additionally, there are explicit references to youth, young men and women, adolescents, girls and women aged 20-24 in the targets or indicators of nine goals. These are Goals 1 (poverty), 2 (hunger), 3 (health), 4 (education), 5 (gender equality), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 8 (decent work), 13 (climate action) and 16 (peaceful, just and inclusive societies).¹¹ However, all SDGs are recognised to influence the realisation of young people's rights in a youth-mainstreamed approach. The SDGs further commit to reaching the furthest behind first, having implications for our work with the most marginalised youth.

There is a significant acknowledgement in international resolutions and in development research of the critical need of adequate financing and resourcing in advancing the rights of young people. In recent history, the Finance for Development conference held in Addis Ababa in 2015 recognised young people as a specific social category whose needs should be reflected in financial investment. It committed to promote investment in specified areas of youth development including in access to credit and micro credit, small and medium enterprises, adequate skill training, promoting national youth strategies, and promoting a global strategy for youth employment and access to youth of technology and science.

As the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) of the United Kingdom has observed,

Investments for the [youth] age cohort is an effective development strategy because it generates changes that will last throughout their life-time, with higher absolute returns than investment in older adults.

The benefits to countries in terms of human, social and economic development include increased productivity, lower health costs, enhanced social capital, and greater individual and community resilience to cope with shocks. Investments in mechanisms for youth participation at every level can improve policy and programming, promote civic engagement and encourage good governance. Investment in young people is, in short, an effective way to meet development priorities amid the global contraction of development assistance¹².

But public sector rationalisation has often meant that the youth sector and youth-specific strategies and processes (along with other strategies and processes for marginalised groups) in other sectors are the first casualties of resource cuts across Commonwealth member states. An upcoming Commonwealth baseline of youth work demonstrates that youth work and youth development implementation bodies are regularly facing funding cuts or complete dissolution¹³. In other sectors too, youth-specific initiatives and initiatives for other marginalised groups, as well as youth/other social safety nets are the first to be defunded. Examples from some countries include cutbacks on housing benefits for young people and the exclusion of youth under 21/24 from minimum wage cap protection (both based on assumptions of a “responsibility-free” youth, a misconception considering many young people’s realities).

Already, however, governments are acting to overturn these trends. In Uganda for example, the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs¹⁴ has issued an evidence-based budget analysis paper that outlines why a youth budget needs to be prioritised including laying down key areas of investment in universal secondary education, student loan schemes, social development sector schemes such as livelihood and entrepreneurship funds etc. It also recognises the need to invest in youth-specific initiatives within health, agriculture, and other sectors. Investment in youth empowerment strategies within the youth sector are also clearly articulated through recommendations for financing the National Youth Service Scheme. Other countries are also following through.

The purpose of the 9CYMM, the Stakeholder Forum and the Youth Leaders Forum, is to learn from good practice and propose systemic Commonwealth-wide ways for ethical and transparent strategies and partnerships for investment, to ensure equitable outcomes for all youth, particularly the furthest behind.

Opportunities at CYMM

9CYMM will focus on the critical resources and building blocks necessary to achieve tangible results for young people through to 2030.

New and dynamic approaches and partnerships for investments in youth development and empowerment is possible. In a global community of multiple players, comprising public and private sectors, youth organisations, civil society, media, academia and an informed donor community, current challenges can be assessed and addressed with robust and focused collaboration, particular in order to realise the rights of the furthest behind first.

In this context, youth ministers and youth stakeholders have the opportunity of making the CYMM forum and side meetings a means of working together to build a consensus in advancing the

interests of young people in global and national resourcing and investment, and in initiating dialogue around priorities for young people.

To achieve the objects of this ministerial meeting, the Commonwealth calls participants in the Stakeholder Forum to focus on priorities for resourcing and investment for youth empowerment based on:

- a. **Innovative financing options** for youth development policy, programming and capacity, including the role of the private sector and other emerging players in development, in order to effect equitable and just development outcomes for all young people, particularly the furthest behind,
- b. Exploring and identifying key areas for resourcing and investing in the core functions of the youth sector itself in terms of
 - i. Enhancing **human resource development and management capacities** within youth sector bodies, specially within youth ministries and departments, including the integration of ethics into youth development practice,
 - ii. Investing in **regulatory and legislative frameworks** in the sector that establishes youth participation structures, and recognises youth work as a profession, and attending to other relevant areas of enabling regulation,
 - iii. **Professionalising youth work**, the core youth contact profession in the youth sector, which brings in skills and capacities required for professional youth engagement.
- c. Exploring and identifying areas for resourcing and investment for a **youth-mainstreamed approach** to national/regional development planning across sectors¹⁵ that recognises the importance of integrating young people's rights and interests in areas of employment, entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, health, housing, environment, education provision, peace and reconciliation, migration, sports for development and peace and so on as they apply to member states and Commonwealth regions,
- d. Investing in an **evidence base**¹⁶ for **youth development** to demonstrate the impact of youth development approaches on young people and society, including putting in place monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and enhanced accountability to all stakeholders including young people,
- e. Harnessing the power of ICT, media and innovation to stretch resources and enhance youth development and participation.

The Stakeholder Forum

Who will be involved?

The Stakeholder Forum will bring together a diverse range of credible and respected international and regional stakeholders in youth development and resourcing/financing.

Stakeholders will include representatives from the youth sector and all other sectors delivering for and working with young people, including but not limited to:

- a. Civil society organisations including youth-led organisations
- b. United Nations bodies
- c. Youth workers' associations
- d. Bi-lateral and multi-lateral development partners
- e. Human rights and social development coalitions and networks including youth-led networks
- f. The private sector
- g. Universities and research institutions

The stakeholder forum will be convened in Uganda by the **Uganda Parliamentary Forum for Youth Affairs** (UPFYA). The other key stakeholders of the steering committee are Commonwealth

Secretariat, the **Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers' Associations (CAYWA)**, and the **Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS)**.

The UPFYA is an advocacy platform in the Ugandan Parliament formed in 2008 by a group of young parliamentarians in the eighth Parliament with a shared purpose of using collective energies to effectively and meaningfully represent youth issues through legislation, budget appropriations and oversight.

CAYWA is an emerging global association of regional/national/subnational professional associations representing the professional category of youth work. CAYWA represents a global identity for the youth work profession, and represents the setting of, and advocacy for, international practice standards and investments in the profession. It emerged through decisions made at the **2016 Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work** held in Pretoria, South Africa, and comprises around 17 members (at the time of this note) from across the Commonwealth and beyond, working towards fully-registered status as a global professional body.

The RCS is the oldest and largest civil society organisation devoted to the modern Commonwealth. With a global reach through our extensive network we operate at the forefront of Commonwealth affairs to improve the lives and prospects of all Commonwealth citizens.

Stakeholders invited to the meeting will demonstrate:

- a. Policy and strategic commitments to youth development
- b. High quality research and advocacy processes for financing equitable and just social development including youth development,
- c. Strong collaboration with governments in advancing resourcing and financing for youth development,
- d. An understanding and approaches in youth budgeting and financing.

All efforts will be made to make the forum representative to the fullest extent possible. Ten percent of attendees at the Stakeholder Forum will be national youth stakeholders of Uganda in consideration of the host country.

Objectives

Proposed objectives of the stakeholder meeting include:

- a. Dialogue and sharing good practice, evidence, research and priorities for resourcing and investment in youth empowerment and development,
- b. proposing recommendations from stakeholders to ministers around priorities for resourcing and investment in youth empowerment and development,
- c. developing a medium-term stakeholder working group for taking forward the commitments and resolutions of the 9CYMM in *Resourcing and Investing in Youth Development*.

Outcomes

Proposed outcomes of the stakeholder meeting include

- a. A general set of recommendations for presentation to ministers,
- b. an outcomes report.

Format of the Stakeholder Forum

The Stakeholder Forum will be held on Monday 31st July and Tuesday 1st August, immediately prior to the main 9CYMM. As much opportunity as possible will be provided for dialogue and small group deliberations for multiple stakeholder groups to ensure that all voices and perspectives are heard. Interactions with youth forum participants will also be ensured.

Representatives from the Stakeholder Forum will be provided an opportunity to present their resolutions at the main ministerial meeting on the morning of Thursday 3rd August as scheduled by the CYMM Conference Chair. This is a privilege accorded to the Commonwealth Youth Council, the Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers' Associations, and selected stakeholder forum representatives.

General Format of 9CYMM

The 9CYMM will be organised over five days as indicated in the timetable below:

Monday 31 st July	Tuesday 1 st August	Wednesday 2 nd August	Thursday 3 rd August	Friday 4 th August
Youth Leaders Forum	Youth Leaders Forum			
Stakeholders' Forum	Stakeholders' Forum			
	Senior Officials Meeting			
		Ministerial Meeting	Ministerial Meeting	Ministerial Meeting

The agenda for both meetings will be shared on acceptance.

Logistics

Stakeholder forum participants are expected to self-fund attendance for the meeting unless otherwise notified. The initial statement of interest for attendance should be lodged at the yourcommonwealth.org website at <http://www.yourcommonwealth.org/apply-to-be-part-of-the-stakeholder-forum-at-the-9th-commonwealth-youth-ministers-meeting/>, including provision of the required information no later than 10th June 2017. A formal invitation letter will be sent to all participants by 20th June whose attendance applications are accepted. Individuals who are expected to stay beyond the forum will be notified individually of this decision.

Costs for participants will include visa where relevant, return flight to Kampala Uganda, accommodation, including food outside meeting times. The required arrival date will be Sunday 30th July and the departure date will be Wednesday 2nd August unless otherwise communicated in your formal invitation letter. Accommodation options will be notified along with the invitation letter.

If you have questions, please contact Dharshini Seneviratne, Programme Manager, Youth Division (email d.seneviratne@commonwelath.int), or Tiffany Daniels, Assistant Programme Officer, Youth Division (email t.daniels@commonwealth.int).

References

- ¹ Article xiii of the Commonwealth Charter states: “We recognise the positive and active role and contributions of young people in promoting development, peace, democracy and in protecting and promoting other Commonwealth values, such as tolerance and understanding, including respect for other cultures. The future success of the Commonwealth rests with the continued commitment and contributions of young people in promoting and sustaining the Commonwealth and its values and principles, and we commit to investing in and promoting their development, particularly through the creation of opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship.”
- ² ‘YDI Quick Facts’, page 2.
- ³ Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, 2016
- ⁴ See, for example, Rowena Crawford, David Innes and Cormac O’Dea 2016. *The Evolution of Wealth in Great Britain*. London, Institute of Fiscal Studies and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2014. available at: <https://www.oecd.org/social/OECD2014-Income-Inequality-Update.pdf>. Accessed February 2017.
- ⁵ World Bank (2016). “While poverty in Africa has declined, the number of poor has increased.” <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/publication/poverty-rising-africa-poverty-report>. Accessed April 22 2017
- ⁶ International Labour Organization (ILO) (2015) ‘World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2015’.
- ⁷ See, for example, Clapham D et al 2012. *Housing Options for Young People 2020*, available at: https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/young-people-housing-options-full_0.pdf (accessed April 2017).
- ⁸ See, for example, Clapham et al. 2012. Also United Nations Capital Development Fund and MasterCard Foundation (nd).
- ⁹ See full case studies in Part 3 of this publication.
- ¹⁰ United Nations, 2015c, 1 and 3.
- ¹¹ YDI 2016.
- ¹² ODI, *Investing in Youth*
- ¹³ Commonwealth Secretariat, *A Growth Profession: Youth Work in the Commonwealth* (upcoming – July 2017).
- ¹⁴ Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs, Budget Analysis Paper No. 1/June 2016.
- ¹⁵ See Commonwealth Secretariat *Transforming Young Lives: Youth Mainstreaming in Development Planning* (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2017). (upcoming 0 Jybe 2017).
- ¹⁶ A study in the United Kingdom relating to youth services which assessed youth work projects (NOT social work projects, or justice measures) with gangs found an over 70% success rate “in terms of diverting young people from criminal activity and reintegrating them with effective education and employment. No other intervention has been as effective.”¹⁶ This, and other evidence emerging from the Commonwealth’s 2017 youth work baseline¹⁶ is a distinct indicator for policy makers around the benefits of investing in the profession of youth work across the Commonwealth.