

LGCW Event Summary Report

Policy Event

The first of the two London Global Cancer Week events was focused on the review and development of policy around prevention and treatment of the disease. The Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland opened the meeting then handed the reins to Dr Osahon Enabulule, president of the Commonwealth Medical Association, who acted as chair.

The event attracted eminent people such as HRH Princess Dina Mired of Jordan whose powerful keynote speech focused on how cervical cancer elimination in the Commonwealth could pave the way for more efficient health systems, and solutions to the challenges posed by other cancers and non-communicable diseases. She also highlighted the opportunities to strengthen implementation of Universal Health Coverage.

In her presentation, Dr Miriam Mutebi, chair of the board for the Union of International Cancer Control (UICC), focused on the implementation of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) global strategy and the life course approach for cervical cancer elimination.

Dr Freddy Bray, head of Cancer Surveillance Section at the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), gave an overview of cancer prevalence and trends in the Commonwealth, and discussed the importance of predominant cancer surveillance mechanisms in Africa. Mark Lodge, Convenor of London Global Cancer Week (LGCW) and director of International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research, provided the audience with the vision and holistic overview of LGCW 2020.

Rwandan minister of health, Hon. Daniel Ngamije, Guyanese minister of health Hon Dr Anthony Frank and Zambia's permanent secretary, Dr Kennedy Malama outlined their countries' efforts toward cervical cancer elimination and the management and control of other types of cancers. While the Permanent Secretary for Zambia presented the country's path to cervical cancer elimination.

Dr Natalia Largaespada Beer, technical adviser of Belize's Maternal and Child Health Unit, also shared her country's experience with cervical cancer elimination, including how it navigated the current challenges of the pandemic. And Professor Karen Canfell outlined the

strategies that put Australia on track to being the first country to actively eliminate cervical cancer. While the academic and research perspectives on women's health, equity and cancer control were provided by Professor Richard Sullivan of Kings College London.

Professor Isaac Folorunso Adewole closed the event with a call to collective action on cervical cancer, outlining the key strategic steps that the Commonwealth should consider. His recommendations were based on political commitments and action, costed cancer control plans, vaccination access and affordable pricing, research and centres of excellence and regional collaboration.

The event ended with the unveiling of the Secretariat's awareness campaign, delivered in collaboration LGCW - a key contributor to the fight against cancer. One of the highlights of LGCW's 2020 campaign, it also featured former Nigerian Health Minister Isaac Adewole, Bangladeshi actor, teacher and child protection work Jaya Ahsan, England's National Health Services Cancer Director Cally Palmer, New Zealand's National Cancer Control Director Diana Sarfati and many others.

At the event, The Secretary-General shared that *"Commonwealth members including Australia and Rwanda have shown us that prevention is not only possible but achievable when we prioritise and invest in pioneering technologies and prevention strategies.*

She said: "I believe if we draw on the expertise and best practices and approaches, inside and outside the Commonwealth, and work collaboratively, we can eliminate this disease."

Advocacy Event

The Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Foundation, and the LGCW delivered the advocacy event. Chaired by Anne Therese Gallagher AO, Director-General of The Commonwealth Foundation, it featured the moving experiences of cancer survivors and the perspective of civil society and the private sector on what is needed in the Commonwealth to eliminate cervical cancer by 2030.

The event was sectioned into panels, with Jamaican Yvonne Dunkley, Dr Pintos Egesimba from Nigeria and Nadia Jamil from Pakistan leading the testimonies and perspectives of cancer survivors, who had become advocates.

Panel two explored the contributions of grassroots organisations working with rural communities, in hospitals and with young people and people living with HIV. It was led by Allan Maleche, executive director of The Kenya Legal & Ethical Issues Network on HIV and AIDS (KELIN); Maud Mwakasungula, executive director of Women Coalition Against Cancer Malawi; Dr Monika Arora, executive director of Health Related Information Dissemination amongst Youth (HRIDAY), and Dr Owen Gabriel Oncologist representative of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition.

In Panel three, Nirmali Samaratunga, chairperson of National Cancer Prevention & Early Detection Project at Rotary Club of Colombo, Sri Lanka; Greg Perry, assistant director-general of International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufactures and Associations and Anil Arusha, medical director of Merck Sharpe and Dohme, shared messages about partnership, the need to address vaccine hesitancy and the major milestones in research and innovation.

Three key messages were prominent in the advocacy event:

- A call for a commitment to investment and financing to increase rates of health literacy and improve access to health services;
- A commitment to step-up advocacy to remove barriers to health such as stigma, shame and destructive gender norms; and
- Action to boost vaccine confidence at every level of society.

The event also tackled cancer-related concerns, with HIV specialists from organisations such as KELIN stressing that understanding the needs of people living with HIV is essential to cervical cancer elimination.

The keynote speech from Julie Torode, deputy CEO and director of Advocacy and Networks at UICC pointed to three early steps the Commonwealth should consider:

- A strong commitment from Commonwealth governments to eliminate cervical cancer;
- Collaboration between governments and the World Health Organisation on feasible models and specific timelines for national action; and
- Government coordination to conduct an early update of national cancer control plans with a clear strategy for cervical cancer elimination.

Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, Secretary General of the Commonwealth closed the event with a powerful call for action and continued collaboration across all sectors of society on the elimination of cervical cancer in the Commonwealth.

At the end of the session, Director General of The Commonwealth Foundation summarised discussions, focusing on the need for a holistic, people-centred approach to all cancers, special attention to populations at risk of being left behind, including women, rural populations, those living with HIV and young people; and strong investment in public health.

The full event can be accessed [here](#):