

ANNEX I

Commonwealth Youth Forum 2015 Thematic Descriptions - summary

The overall theme of the CYF is “Adding Global Value...#WhatNext?”

Adding Global Value - This CYF will discuss practical solutions and strategies focusing on how young people can contribute and add value to upholding and promoting the Commonwealth Charter, achieving the goals of the post 2015 development agenda to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development in Commonwealth. #WhatNext? serves as a youth response to the CHOGM theme.

The youth leaders will explore the role of young people of the Commonwealth through four main agendas. Each agenda is then subdivided into different themes. Under the respective themes, the young people will examine the following key questions¹ and develop practical proposals:

Economic Agenda

(1) Innovation and Technology: *Closing The Gap - the role and contribution of science and technology in promoting economic growth in Commonwealth countries*

- a) What can CW countries do to close the innovation and technology gap?
- b) What is the role of innovation and technology in promoting economic growth?
- c) How to enhance the contribution of youth towards science and technology?

(2) Decent Employment: *Re-examining the pathways to sustainable employment*

- a) Is the concept of regular and rewarding employment still relevant for today’s young people? What is considered to be both regular and rewarding employment?
- b) Where is employment to come from in the future? How are countries preparing young people for employment in these sectors?
- c) What is the role of education and training in the transition of young people to the world of work?

(3) Youth Entrepreneurship: *Investing in youth entrepreneurship for economic growth*

- a) What policy changes are necessary to enhance youth entrepreneurship?
- b) What practical steps can governments take to promote a culture of entrepreneurship among young people?
- c) Which areas of strategic focus should be prioritised for enterprise investment and why?
- d) How to create a structure for youth to get involved in social business?

Environmental Agenda

(4) Disaster Risk Reduction, Resilience & Recovery: *Addressing disaster risk reduction and management.*

- a) How can we ensure that we communicate DRR, resilience and recovery to young people in a more effective way, and what tools and skills could be developed to educate young people about these issues?
- b) What mechanisms could be used to ensure that youth people can play a significant role in addressing DRR, resilience and recovery, with support from Commonwealth member states and the UN Office for DRR under the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction?

¹ Draft Commonwealth Youth Forum Thematic description (September, 2015)

- c) How do gender issues and specific vulnerabilities (i.e. inequalities in accessing resources, social security, emergency responses, etc.) impact on perceptions and responses to disasters across the Commonwealth, especially in SIDS?

(5) Protection of Natural Resources: *Balancing production and consumption patterns with sustainable development*

- a) What approaches could help reconnect natural resource ownership, protection to human life and living in harmony with nature with effect use of available natural resources?
- b) Should developing countries bear the burden of protecting their environment and biodiversity, or should that responsibility be shared with more developed countries? How can poor countries develop their infrastructures and economies while protecting the environment and natural habitat?
- c) How can social and economic entrepreneurship initiatives that support environmental conservation be promoted among young people? How can the employment and income generated by such initiatives be balanced against the need to protect the environment and natural resources?

(6) Climate Change: *Transforming climate change into relevant opportunity for the youth.*

- a) What innovative approaches could be developed to ensure that climate change offers more opportunities for youth development and empowerment, such as job creation, employment, reducing youth migration from affected zones, etc.?
- b) Young people are not the only stakeholders engaged in climate change responses and policy processes. What could be done to enhance collaboration between young people and other constituencies such as women, business, indigenous groups, etc., to ensure that the voice of young people is clearly articulated in such collaborations?
- c) How can young people cooperated with and support marginalised groups (i.e. women and girls, old people, indigenous people, people not in education or employment etc.) to play an active role in climate change responses?

Social Agenda

(7) Quality and Inclusive Education: *Re-assessing access to quality education for youth.*

- a) Are existing education systems satisfying the needs of young people? What interventions, if any, are needed to ease the transition from education and employment?
- b) What practical steps can governments employ for inclusive approaches in education to ensure equal opportunity for all?
- c) What is the role of non-formal education in enhancing young people's employability?
- d) What policy level changes are required to recognize informal skill development education?

(8) Health: *Creating alternate pathways for accessing medical and health services.*

- a) What are the challenges faced by young people in accessing medical and health information, facilities and services?
- b) Using the Commonwealth as a platform, what policy changes are required to ensure the health and safety of young people?

(9) Youth Policy and Work: *Acknowledging responsibility*

- a) How to bridge the traversal gap between youth policy with other policies pertinent to youth?
- b) How to integrate youth work with youth policy?
- c) What are the supportive mechanisms required in order to strengthen youth work in member countries?
- d) How can we equip youth workers with the necessary skills and competences to work across sectorial boundaries?



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Political Agenda

(10) Peace and Security: *Countering the rise of global extremism*

- a) How can the Commonwealth support youth organizations in defeating extremism?
- b) What are the challenges faced by young people when it comes to peace and security?
- c) How is crime and violence linked to the global security crisis?

(11) Social cohesion: *A shared common history*

- a) How can the Commonwealth help to instil a sense of togetherness among young people?
- b) What role can young people play in understanding and promoting cultural and religious diversity?
- c) How to enhance civic citizenship among the youth?

(12) Human rights: *A Pillar of the Commonwealth*

- a) What policy changes are necessary to enhance human rights in the Commonwealth?
- b) How can the fundamentals of human rights be integrated into elementary school curricula?
- c) How can the Commonwealth facilitate the protection and promotion of human rights as outlined by the UDHR?

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