



The Commonwealth

Youth Leaders Forum

(Monday 31 July - Tuesday 01 August 2017)

9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (9CYMM)

(Wednesday 02 August - Friday 04 August)

Kampala, Uganda

Resourcing and Financing Youth Development: Empowering Young People

Draft Concept Note for discussion

May 2017

The youth forum is intended to be a platform where youth leaders from across the Commonwealth with other global youth development stakeholders and practitioners will convene and have dialogue and to develop recommendations to the main ministerial meeting on the key themes of the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (9CYMM) to be held in Kampala, Uganda; 02-04th August 2017 immediately following the stakeholder forum and the youth forum. Youth leaders through the Commonwealth Youth Council and the National Youth council of Uganda and official youth delegates will have a space within the main ministerial meeting to share the outcomes of the youth leaders' forum.

Youth leaders and partners planning to attend are required to register on the link provided to receive an invitation letter to facilitate their visa applications and are required to bear costs of their travel and accommodation.

Commonwealth Secretariat Marlborough House
London
SW1Y 5HX
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The Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting 2017

The Commonwealth Secretariat will convene the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (9CYMM) in Kampala, Uganda on 31st July - 4th August 2017 under the theme *Resourcing and Financing Youth Development: Empowering Youth*.

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

Youth ministers from the 52 Commonwealth member states and senior Youth Ministry/Youth Department officials from member states and 2 official youth leaders are expected to attend the main CYMM.

Objectives of CYMM

The objectives of the 9CYMM are to;

- Review and assess progress in national youth development; share, celebrate and adopt good practice strategies, solutions and models; and identify new priorities for action to advance youth development in the Commonwealth and to achieve the SDGs;
- Comprehend the holistic potential of their role for the broader youth sector, consider emerging youth themes, and contribute to the global youth development agenda.
- Engage with international organisations and the private sector on strategies for technical and financial support for national and regional youth development.

Pre-CYMM Meetings

The Youth Leaders' Forum and the Stakeholder Forum are convened immediately prior to the main Ministers' meeting as a means of ensuring multi-stakeholder collaboration and dialogue to inform the broader outcomes of the main CYMM.

The youth forum is a commitment to implementing the Commonwealth principle of meaningful youth participation in policy deliberations through the involvement of the Commonwealth Youth Council as a key player 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.

Representatives from both side meetings are provided a space in the main ministerial meeting to take forward the conclusions and recommendations of the respective meetings directly to Commonwealth Ministers.

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 identified for the importance of investment in youth development to ensure an enabling environment to support and sustain empowerment of young people to harness their full potential and benefit national development.

There is ample evidence that the role and value of young people in policy making and national development is now widely recognised. However, there has not been a corresponding uplift in the commitment of resources and effective means of implementation to translate these ideals, policies and strategies into genuine impact for young people.

Therefore, building on the rich deliberations, policy recommendations and progress made over the last four years, **9CYMM will focus on the critical resources and building blocks necessary to achieve tangible results for young people through until 2030.**

The new universal Global Agenda will require an integrated approach to sustainable development, and collective action, at all levels, to address the challenges facing young people. The overarching imperatives of ‘leaving no one behind’ and addressing inequalities and discrimination will be a defining feature.

At the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Abba (July 2015), Heads of State and Government and High Representatives recognised that *‘investing in children and youth was critical to achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development for present and future generations, and recognised the need to support countries that faced particular challenges to make the requisite investments in this area. The meeting reaffirmed the vital importance of promoting and protecting the rights of all children and ensuring that no child was left behind.’*¹

Some national governments, institutions and organisations have already started to embed the new global agenda into their national development plans, strategies and visions. 9CYMM will contribute to those efforts by exploring innovative, cost effective ideas and solutions that could make a significant difference to the lives of young people; and the enabling environment, resources and means of implementation to achieve that.

Policy discussions and side events may include the following subjects:

- Cost / Benefit analysis of investing in young people; making the case and incentives
- Assessing the legal and regulatory environment for youth development to thrive
- Youth Mainstreaming and the effective use of public finances
- The role of the Private Sector, and opportunities in Overseas Development Assistance
- Examining Human Resource planning and management in Youth Development
- Closing the Data Gap: strengthening statistical / research capability in youth development
- Facilitating/enhancing south-south cooperation: celebrating models of good practice
- Harnessing the potential of science, technology and innovation in Youth development

¹General Assembly resolution 69/313, Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda), A/RES/69/313 3/3, (27 July 2015).

The Youth Leaders Forum: Introduction

Prior to the CYMM meeting a Youth Leaders' Forum is convened bringing together youth leaders from the various thematic commonwealth youth networks, National Youth Councils and/or National Youth delegates. The Forum aims to create the platform for youth leaders to reflect on the Ministerial theme from a youth led perspective and consolidate recommendations to the Ministers.

As a key input into this Ministerial Meeting, a **Youth Leaders Forum** (31st July - 1st August) will be hosted as a space for dialogue by youth leaders and youth development stakeholders to consolidate key outcomes to the (9CYMM).

The Youth Leaders Forum is being planned and delivered by a joint task force made up of the Commonwealth Youth Council in partnership with the Uganda National Youth Council, and the thematic Commonwealth Youth Networks supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The 9CYMM will focus on the critical resources and building blocks necessary to achieve tangible results for young people through to 2030, and the Youth Leaders Forum will focus on discussing issues and solutions through a youth lens. For youth leaders, the Forum and the opportunity to engage with Ministers at 9CYMM provide a pathway to influence critical decision-makers in the youth development sector. The Youth Leaders' Forum will bring together a diverse range of youth led organisations, stakeholders and development partners in youth development and resourcing/financing.

The Forum aligns with the Commonwealth's principle of meaningful youth participation in policy deliberations. To this effect, the invitation letter to 9CYMM, distributed recently to all Commonwealth Ministers of Youth, includes a request for two youth delegates to be included in their official delegations. As well as participating in the Youth Leaders' Forum, the youth delegates will participate in the Ministerial meeting and their representative (from the Commonwealth Youth Council and Uganda National Youth Council) will have a seat at the table with Ministers with full speaking rights.

The Youth Forum will review outcomes of the regional Youth Leaders' Forums held prior to regional CYMMs in 2015; review outcomes of the Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) held prior to the 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) meeting; and propose critical areas of focus for the Commonwealth Youth Council and thematic Commonwealth Youth Networks in the lead up to the 2018 CYF.

Opportunities for Youth Leaders at CYMM

The intergenerational platform created ensuring that youth are part of national delegations and have a seat at the table offers a key opportunity to influence the ministerial agenda and meaningfully contribute to the agenda and the outcome.

In a multi-stakeholder setting with innovative and dynamic partners in both the public and private sectors, vibrant youth organisations and networks, a committed civil society and media, academia dedicated to youth research, and an informed donor community, current challenges can be met with robust and focused collaboration.

In this context, youth ministers, youth stakeholders and youth leaders 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 youth leaders' forum to focus on priorities for resourcing and investment for youth empowerment based on:

- a) Exploring and identifying key areas for resourcing and investing in the core functions of the youth sector itself in terms of
 - a. enhancing human resource development and management capacities within youth sector bodies, specially within youth ministries and departments,
 - b. Investing in regulatory and legislative frameworks in the sector that establishes institutionalised youth participation structures, and recognises youth work as a profession

- b) Innovative financing options to optimise on new and emerging solutions and financial inclusion strategies to enhance an enabling environment for a well-financed youth development sector,
 - a. Investment in mainstreaming of youth priorities in national budget development and planning; building and strengthening partnerships and support for the performance monitoring and progress tracking on domestic spending in development investments and linkages to youth development;
 - b. Role of the private sector - The case for non-state actors' investment in youth development, public private partnerships, south - south corporation

- c) Closing the data gap and investing in an evidence base 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.

- d) Harnessing the power of ICT, media and innovation

Who will be at the Youth Leaders Forum

Commonwealth Youth Council and Commonwealth Youth Networks	UN bodies and intergovernmental organisations	National Youth Councils and Youth-led organisations
Bi-lateral and multi-lateral development partners	Regional Youth organisations and networks	The private sector
Universities and student leaders		

Context

With over 60% of the Commonwealth's population of over 2 billion people being under 30 years, a holistic and inclusive approach is critical to ensure youth led development is a key component of decision making processes that address issues affecting young people. It is not enough to have youth as part of the decision making processes but a paradigm shift is needed to enhance the enabling environment to better resource and support youth led actions and harness their capabilities; address the institutional role young people have in shaping policy and engage in their implementation; and thereby secure their role as agents and partners in driving national development.

In 2015, the Commonwealth celebrated the theme 'A Young Commonwealth', which highlighted Article 13 of the Commonwealth Charter, which recognises the importance of young people. It acknowledged the positive and active role and contributions of young people in promoting development, peace and democracy, and in protecting and promoting other Commonwealth values such as respect and understanding, including for other cultures. Article 13 of the Charter recognises the current demography of the Commonwealth and provides a strong argument for continued investments in young people. It says unequivocally, '*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*'.

Despite the socio-economic, political and cultural challenges, there is also much positive news:

- Heightened interest from Heads of Government and leaders of industry to commit to young people;
- A growing realisation that young people have the potential, skills and motivation to add value and credible solutions to achieving development outcomes;
- An increasing willingness of new, and in many cases well-resourced, players to become involved in youth development;
- Energised and informed youth leaders, and the emergence of new youth networks, platforms and youth led organisations, ready to partner with governments and stakeholders to deliver development outcomes.

Demographic trends and projections make it clear that the next few decades present an unprecedented window of opportunity for Commonwealth member states, and developing countries in particular, to harness the promise of this 'demographic dividend'.

This year's 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.

The meeting will take place in the context of the recent adoption of the SDGs that 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).¹ 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.

With the establishment of the Commonwealth Youth Council in 2013 and their engagement within the Commonwealth Youth Forums preceding the CHOGM, young people have got the space to engage with leaders and involve the voices and aspirations of greater numbers of young people in the intergenerational space, in more meaningful ways. The establishment and active engagement of commonwealth youth networks have added the skills and expertise needed to mainstream a youth led perspective in critical issues affecting young people including peacebuilding, preventing violent extremism; climate change; promoting human rights and democracy; strengthening students voices; championing sport for development and peace and have opened the space to see young people making an even greater contribution to the ideals and objectives of the Commonwealth as partners and stakeholders in the development process.

Objectives

The meeting will have the following main objectives:

- To provide a platform for young people to set and manage their agenda and agree on evidence based policy recommendations in relation to the theme “resourcing and financing youth development” to be shared at the 9th CYMM
- To showcase and demonstrate innovative youth led projects, innovative solutions and models that have raised resources to tackle development challenges
- To take stock of the progress the CYC and the thematic youth networks have made in the implementation of the CYF outcomes and forge partnerships in enhancing in the lead up to CHOGM 2018;
- To provide an opportunity for young people to contribute and influence Commonwealth wide agendas and priorities including contributions to the CHOGMs.
- To promote meaningful cultural exchange and cooperation among youth across the Commonwealth;

Outputs

The meeting will identify key policy recommendations to be shared with the Ministers at the 9th CYMM; agree on a framework to enhance the ongoing implementation of the CYF outcomes led by the Commonwealth Youth Council and the thematic youth networks in collaboration with national youth councils/bodies, Governments, Commonwealth partner agencies and other regional or international bodies.

The youth leaders and networks will be expected to take back key information and action plans to share with and mobilise the young people of their countries at a national level and members of their networks.

Content & Format

A Youth-led Taskforce (made up of the local hosting National Youth Council, the Commonwealth Youth Council and local host country members/country representatives of the youth led networks) has responsibility for shaping the content and format to ensure that meeting is innovative, relevant and productive for young people as possible. The Commonwealth Secretariat will provide guidance on both the content and proposed format, liaise closely with the host country government on all matters pertaining to the meeting.

Prior to arrival at the meeting, the coordinators with support of their focal points at the Commonwealth Secretariat will: -

- Consult widely across membership of their networks to consolidate emerging issues affecting young people, consolidate ongoing initiatives the networks are undertaking to address these issues and prepare a sessional plan to discuss these outcomes during the Youth leaders' forum.
- Send out invitations to youth leaders, youth led organisations and networks and other partners inviting them to register for the event ([link here](#))
- Brainstorm on an interactive way to present key initiatives on the issues they have identified, including providing solutions on practical ways to enhance already ongoing network initiatives in relation to the 9th CYMM theme after the forum.
- Identify key partners, stakeholders working on their specific theme to be invited to the forum and including identifying possible opportunities to engage them as speakers, observers at the actual youth leaders' forum.

Expected Outcomes from the Youth Leaders Forum

- The Youth Leaders Forum will identify priorities on the theme resourcing and financing youth development; and agree on evidence based policy recommendations to be presented to the Minister of Youth at the 9th CYMM
- The Forum will assess the progress and identify an effective framework for collaboration in jointly delivering the outcomes of the November 2015 Commonwealth Youth Forum; led by the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) and Commonwealth youth-led thematic Networks in collaboration with national youth councils/bodies, Governments, and youth-serving civil society organisations, and other regional or international bodies;
- The priorities and recommendations of the Youth Leaders Forum will feed into: -
 - CYMM, predominantly through engagement by the CYC Chair and the NYC Uganda Chair in the ministerial meeting and the official youth delegates and including invited youth networks coordinators/representatives in the Ministerial meeting
 - Various subsequent Commonwealth Ministers' Meetings (Education, Health, Trade, Women's Affairs, etc.);
 - Strategic planning of the Commonwealth Youth Council and their action plan for 2017-2018 and the strategic planning of Commonwealth Youth forum prior to the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM), April 2018.
 - Strategic Plan of the Youth Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the youth mainstreaming agenda of the whole Commonwealth Secretariat;

Participation and Delegations

The Youth Leaders Forum will be held at the Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort in Kampala, Uganda. Attendance will be on a self-funded basis.

Ministers of Youth have been encouraged to bring along two official National Youth Delegates to attend the Commonwealth Youth Leaders Forum and the Commonwealth Youth Ministers meeting.

Invitations will be made to coordinators of the commonwealth youth networks, who will have the responsibility to propose members of their networks to attend who are also able to raise their own funds to cover the costs of travel and accommodation.

Observers

Bilateral partners, regional and Intergovernmental Organisations and International Organizations focusing on youth are invited as observers/speakers to the Youth Leaders Forum. Other international or regional youth bodies will be invited to engage in the meeting with the view to build partnerships and collaboration between the commonwealth youth led networks. observe the meeting. Invitations may also be extended to Civil Society Organisations and Associated Organisations - as well as non-governmental organisations working in areas of direct relevance to the Commonwealth youth.

31st July - 01st August 2017, Kampala, Uganda

¹ YDI 2016.