

Commonwealth Human Rights Forum 2005

20 – 21 November 2005,

St James Cavalier, Valletta, Malta

Organised by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

PROGRAMME: Networking for Human Rights

Day 1: 20th November 2005

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| 9.00am – 9.30 am | - | Registration |
| 9.30 am - 10.00 am | - | Opening Ceremony |
| Opening of Forum | - | Maja Daruwala (Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, India) |
| Keynote Address | - | Prof. Guido De Marco (Chair of the Commonwealth Foundation - Malta) |
| Closing Remarks & Thanks | - | Jean-Pierre Gauci (President, Amnesty International Malta Group - Malta) |
| 10.00 am - 10.30 am | - | Tea/Coffee Break |
| 10.30 am – 12.30 pm | - | First Working Session |

The Rights Framework

This session looks at the rights that enable free and efficient networking for human rights. It is designed to be the broadest in nature and sets the scene for the following more detailed and technical session, to ensure that all participants at the meeting have a common understanding from which to start discussions. The session focuses on the specific human rights that have the most direct relevance to the issue of civil society space: namely, freedom of association, assembly, expression and information. Speakers will look at how such rights impact on civil society and its ability to function effectively and on some of the relevant violations of these rights in different regions of the Commonwealth

Chairperson: Ms. Clare Doube (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative - Australia)

Speakers:

- Mr. Siosuia Po'oi Pohiva (Tonga Human Rights and Democracy Movement)
- Mr. Michael Ellman (Federation Internationale de Droits de l'Homme - UK)

➤ Response from the Floor

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| 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm | - | Lunch Break |
| 1:30 pm – 3.00 pm | - | Second Working Session |

Laws, Rules and Regulations:

This session looks at some of the laws, rules and regulations that affect civil society in the Commonwealth. In particular, it deals with problems which limit the activities of NGOs / NHRIs such as legislation prohibiting the establishment of NGOs or limiting their scope and also the issue of registration which could limit NGOs. A selection of case studies - both positive and negative – will be presented.

Chairperson: Ms. Maja Daruwala (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative -India)

Speakers:

- Mr. Pooran Pandey (Voluntary Action Network India - India)
- Ms. Marnie Latheef (Detainee Network - Maldives)
- Ms. Patricia Camilleri (Chair of NGO Law Working Group - Malta)
- Ms. Nokthula Moyo (Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights - Zimbabwe)

➤ Response from the Floor

3.00 am – 3.30 am - Tea/Coffee Break

3.30 pm - 5.00 pm - **Third Working Session**

Security and Civil Society

This session explores the difficult area of finding a balance between dealing with security concerns and respecting the rights and freedoms of civil society. To what extent should we limit the rights of civil society in the name of security? How can we be sure that the security concerns of the state are not far-fetched and therefore the state's extreme actions not justified? How can the police be regulated so as not to fall into extreme attitudes caused by situations of real or perceived tension?

Chairperson: Mr. Murray Burt (Advisory Committee - Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative Canada)

Speakers:

- Mr. Chris Bloomfield (Jamaicans for Justice)
- Ms. Seema Naidu (Regional Rights Resources Team, Fiji)
- Ms. Katrine Camilleri (Jesuit Refugee Service - Malta)

➤ Response from the Floor

5.00 pm - 5.30 pm - Summary of Key Issues on Day

Day 2: 21st November, 2005

9.00 am – 9.30 am - Summary of Day 1 and housekeeping

9.30 am - 11.00 am - **Fourth Working Session**

Using the Commonwealth for Human Rights Advocacy

This is designed as a more practical session to build capacity of participants and share experiences on using the Commonwealth for human rights advocacy. It will include how to target the Commonwealth for human rights issues; increasing awareness amongst local civil society of the possibilities of the official commonwealth as a tool in the struggle to achieve and advocating human rights.

Chair: Ms. Anna Bossman (Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice - Ghana)

Speakers:

- Mr. Jarvis Matiya (Human Rights Unit, Commonwealth Secretariat)
- Mr. Richard Bourne (Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit - UK)

➤ Response from the Floor

11.00 am - 11.30 am - Tea/Coffee Break

11.30 am – 1.00 pm - **Small Group Sessions**
In small groups, participants will discuss issues related to: a) how civil soc can improve its advocacy efforts in the Commonwealth for human rights; and b) what the official Commonwealth can do to ensure better engagement with civil soc on human rights issues. This will include time to report back to plenary.

1.00pm – 2.00pm - Lunch

2.00 pm – 3.00pm - **Fifth Working Session**

Commonwealth Human Rights Network

This session will discuss the CHRN and strategies for expanding the Network and increasing its effectiveness. This includes what people want achieve from successful networking; which systems of networking are seen as the most practical, efficient and desirable; and discussion on the results of a survey of CHRN members.

Discussion Leaders:

Mr. Richard Bourne (Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit - UK)

Ms. Clare Doube (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative - Australia)

3.00pm – 4.00pm - Adoption of Communiqué

Chairperson: Maja Daruwala (Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative - India)

4.30 pm - 5.30 pm - Final Session

Welcome and overview of CHRF 2005	-	Ms. Maja Daruwala (Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative - India)
Closing Address	-	Rt. Hon. Donald C. McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary-General
Closing and vote of thanks	-	Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauci (President, Amnesty International Malta Group - Malta)
