

Communiqué

Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) 5

Malta, 16-23 November 2005

Vision

- Towards a Commonwealth where young people are involved in all decisions that affect them and play an equal role in society;*
- Towards a Commonwealth where young people have the opportunity to realise their potential and become full and active citizens across the World;*
- Towards a Commonwealth where the rights and responsibilities of future and present generations are realised and protected;*
- Towards a Commonwealth where countries compete fairly and respect diversity.*

Preamble

Delegates expressed their gratitude to their generous hosts, the Government of Malta, its sponsors and Commonwealth partners (Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council; Commonwealth Youth Programme and Commonwealth Secretariat). Delegates also expressed their appreciation to the Prime Minister of Malta, Dr. Lawrence Gonzi, and the Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt. Hon. Don McKinnon, for the high level support they rendered throughout the process.

Delegates also expressed their thanks to the speakers, Mrs Florence Mugasha, Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth; the Honourable Louis Galea, Minister of Education, Youth and Employment; Dr Kumi Naidoo, Secretary-General of CIVICUS and others participating speakers.

The Government of Malta is to be commended for entrusting the planning and implementation of the Forum to the CYF Youth Planning Team with the support of the National Youth Council of Malta.

Young people were responsible for co-ordinating logistics; developing the agenda; writing concept papers; giving presentations; holding training sessions; giving cultural performances and speeches; reaching consensus through dialogue and debate; and communicating that consensus to Heads of Government. This is an achievement which sets new benchmarks for international youth affairs.

As well as appreciating the warm welcome extended by the Maltese Youth Delegation, CYF participants were impressed by their independence, assertiveness, gender balance and social diversity. Delegates resolved to remain linked to each other in informal as well as formal ways, and use their network to sustain international friendships and youth exchanges.

Executive Summary

Good Governance and Active Citizenship

In line with the principles of governance the delegates called for poverty reduction; respect for human rights and for Governments to ensure they are transparent throughout their democratic processes.

Targeted education is imperative in order to ensure that human rights are respected and to shun mechanisms of exclusion, exploitation, prejudice and conflict.

In terms of poverty eradication, a strong stand should be set with regards to halting exploitative labour practices, mainly by the exposing of international companies that perpetuate them.

CYF5 targets governance structures, pushing for more transparency and accountability, so as to ensure credibility of national governments whilst entrusting also the members of civil society to ensure this.

In terms of active citizenship, CYF5 participants accepted the need for education; the promotion of equity and inclusiveness, and the importance of youth pro-action and youth participation in civil society to be essential factors. There is a need to develop an understanding of the importance of active citizenship, through effective education, as this enhances critical and creative thinking.

In terms of equity and inclusiveness, the mechanisms for exclusion, exploitation, prejudices and conflict should be understood as integral to current national, regional and global trends.

Youth should be involved at all levels of decision-making, in local, national and international level. In addition, youth organisations, National Youth Councils and Youth Parliaments should be legitimised and recognised.

Health and Sexuality

The delegates at the Commonwealth Youth Forum were concerned that young people are disproportionately affected by violence and sexually transmitted diseases. Governments must improve legal frameworks to protect those affected by these issues.

Young people have an important role to play in combating sexually transmitted infections. We believe they can be particularly effective as peer educators, role models and agents of positive cultural change in their communities. The media has a role to play in promoting healthy sexuality and should be fully supported by governments.

Education is essential in combating HIV/AIDS. Governments must expand school curricula to include health and sexuality education. Youth-friendly and professional counselling services should be in place in every community. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation should provide assistance to improve health and sexual health service provision.

We have committed ourselves to the establishment of a Commonwealth-wide database intended to share project information and good practice, facilitated by the Commonwealth.

We believe that the Commonwealth is a strong network. We urge the Commonwealth to consolidate its partnership with young people in order to further promote healthy sexuality.

Sustainable Livelihoods, Enterprise and ICTs

The delegates of CYF5 recognise the importance of enterprise development for youth of the Commonwealth. In doing so, we note with concern that little progress has been registered on the recommendations made in the Commonwealth Youth Forum 4 communiqué. We consider it fundamental that young people be included, actively, by governments in the formulation of policies dealing with enterprise and sustainable livelihood throughout the Commonwealth.

In conjunction with this CYF5 calls upon the Commonwealth to ensure that the proposals put forward by this Forum be given due consideration by Heads of Government, be made easily accessible to all and be given proper publicity. We further call upon young persons and representative organisations to act as watchdogs with respect to the implementation of these recommendations in their respective countries. Finally, we call upon the Governments of the Commonwealth to give this Forum's concerns and recommendations utmost consideration and to do all that is in their power to meet the needs of young entrepreneurs as expressed in this document.

The proper networking of young persons and youth organisations within the Commonwealth will help overcome the concerns raised. The spinning of support from the private sector, civil sector, and the government for training, awareness, ICT infrastructure and incentives is seen to be central to the prosperity of enterprise amongst youth.

Introduction: Networking for Development

Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny?

- Mahatma Ghandi

1.1

Meeting in Abuja, Nigeria in 2003, Heads of Government recognised that

“All Commonwealth efforts to achieve the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals] must reflect ... demographic reality by including young people in development and democracy.”

Heads of Government’s attention was drawn to the Commonwealth Youth Ministers’ Meeting 2003, and its emphasis on young people as partners in the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS.

No specific and measurable targets were set in respect of youth participation in strengthening development and democracy in the Commonwealth.

1.2

Young people meeting in Abuja for CYF4 did set such targets. Progress on these targets has been unacceptably slow and many have been missed, demonstrating weaknesses at a number of levels.

Nevertheless, we, the delegates of CYF5, affirm the broad directions set in Abuja and preceding Commonwealth youth fora. We remain deeply concerned about:

- meeting universal basic needs such as access to healthcare and education;
- confronting the continuing emergency of HIV/AIDS, its effects on individuals, societies, cultures and economies.
- achieving trade justice and debt relief, good governance and respect for human rights;
- strengthening young people’s platforms within the Commonwealth, particularly the strengthening of independent National Youth Councils;
- fully grasping the opportunities for wealth creation and poverty reduction offered by ICTs and enterprise;

1.3

A strong determination to make positive changes to the current state of inter-regional and international affairs inspired and motivated the participants at Commonwealth Youth Forum 5.

The final aim of this document is to push for action in a down-to-earth way amenable to measuring progress.

Delegates brought to their discussions a great diversity of cultural, practical and professional knowledge. National Youth Council representatives, youth NGO workers, students, social workers, teachers, entrepreneurs and business consultants, trade unionists, lawyers, doctors, designers and technicians were present - from thirty-five countries in five continents.

There were frank exchanges of views about the political restrictions on young Commonwealth citizens who are working for the development of their communities and countries. Delegates determined to work in ways that reduce and do not reinforce outmoded paradigms of youth development.

A network is any group of individuals or organisations who, on a voluntary basis, exchange information or undertake joint activities and who organise themselves in such a way that their individual autonomy remains intact. (Starkey, 1992)

1.4

The Government of Malta chose Networking for Development as the guiding theme for CHOGM 2005. This theme was highly suitable and productive for CYF5.

Delegates welcomed the opportunity to interrogate what it is to form and sustain networks for national and international development – and how governments, civil society organisations and individual citizens in the Commonwealth can make better use of their networks.

1.5

Delegates recognised that CYF, as an evolving platform, can make a practical difference to development and democracy only if

- its relationship to other structures is recognised, explored and, where necessary, reformed;
- members and partners commit themselves to working practices appropriate to a network structure.

1.6

A genuine network structure will not obstruct the efforts of its component units, but will allow each to take initiatives in accordance with their particular strengths, and form connections of a duration appropriate to the tasks in hand.

1.7

The technologies associated with international networks – ICTs – offer practical avenues for information disclosure and information sharing. The transparency and responsiveness of human networks is readily apparent in their style of usage (or non-usage) of ICTs.

Our cultures and polities are at varying, early stages of encounter with ICTs. Making a success of that encounter demands attention to human communication and social structure, as well as physical infrastructure. A

platform spanning over fifty countries is in a position to undertake valuable experiments.

Good Governance and Active Citizenship

Recommendations on Good Governance

2.1.1 Poverty Eradication

We call on CHOGM to pursue poverty eradication by:

- Urging developed countries to issue commitments on debt relief for highly indebted poor countries by 2007, on condition of good governance;
- Revamping the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation and lobbying Governments to increase their support;
- Pressing for proper auditing of international monetary institutions to eradicate corruption and mismanagement;
- Taking action for the proper patenting of intellectual property in view of the TRIPS agreement;
- Identifying and exposing international companies that perpetuate child labour, slave labour and other exploitative labour practices.

We call on National Governments to:

- Ensure a fair distribution of natural, human and financial resources by cutting down on bureaucracy, unnecessary regulation and the encouragement of a level playing field within society;
- Provide resources necessary for training and credit schemes, and educational opportunities, both formal and informal, which can lift families out of poverty;
- Push for wealth creation through production by decreasing the influence of stock markets on the international market scene.

We call on civil society to:

- Encourage equal access to markets by promoting the idea of fair trade through campaigns initiated by NGOs.

2.1.2 Human Rights

We call on CHOGM to:

- Push for equal treatment of countries by the United Nations system so as to increase the credibility of the world's largest organisation, specifically in regard to its human rights activities;
- Create opportunities which will empower civil society when campaigning for respect of fundamental human rights;

We call on National Governments to:

- Maintain human rights on the international level by ratifying, domesticating and implementing international human rights conventions;
- Include human rights education in national curricula in ways that children and young people find relevant;
- Encourage closer relations between countries which would contribute towards maintaining human rights. This would help disseminate information and put further pressure for human rights' respect.

We call on civil society to:

- Play its part in human rights and citizenship education, recognising the importance of local context;
- Explore the use of all possible media in raising local and international awareness of human rights breaches;
- Recognise the importance of participating in electoral campaigns on a national level to put pressure on governments.

2.1.3 Transparency

We call on CHOGM to:

- Work for greater accountability of the World Bank to member countries especially when imposing structural adjustment (policies and conditions);

We call on National Governments to:

- Increase transparency in democratic systems, for example through the creation of a public accounts committee;

We call on civil society to:

- Hold governments accountable through lobbying and democracy audits and being active citizens;

We call on the corporate sector to:

- Make its governance and operations as accountable and transparent as government and civil society.

Recommendations on Active Citizenship

2.1.4 Formal Citizenship Education

- Citizenship education should be strengthened in the education curricula of all Commonwealth member countries in ways that enhance critical, creative thinking and prepare young people for participation in decision-making.

2.1.5 Equity and Inclusiveness

- Greater efforts should be made to mainstream education and employment opportunities for disabled people, to facilitate the realisation of truly inclusive institutions in society and government. An essential part of this is facilitating mobility.

2.1.6 Creation of a Commonwealth Youth Network

- CYF5 has resolved to establish a Commonwealth Youth Network which will be facilitated through a database of local, regional and national youth organisations across the Commonwealth and will operate through e-networking and the sharing of resources, best practices and using peer pressure to provide the necessary motivation. These organisations will work towards:
 - Being more businesslike;
 - Funding initiatives to reduce poverty, starting off by initiating projects in different countries to meet the basic needs of certain communities;
 - Sharing and improving access to resources via the network;
 - Lobbying for more political support for policy frameworks that meet citizens' needs and rights, including youth policies;
 - Supporting each other in all the above in order to make the voice on a particular issue stronger.
- This network would be administered by the CYF committee, falling under the auspices of the CYP and CYEC. A committee which, together with CYF, would have a permanent status and would work towards supporting youth organisations in the network, ensuring the implementation of the CYF recommendations.
- The needs of different countries must be taken into account, when joining the network. These organisations will have the same objectives but implementation is left in the hands of the organisation in question. An organisation may only form part of this Commonwealth Network if it subscribes to a set of core criteria that the Committee will draw up.

2.1.7 Youth Pact

- We call for a Commonwealth Youth Pact to be set up, whereby an agreement among Commonwealth countries with young people is undertaken in order to institutionalise participatory citizenship education and involve them in decision-making at all levels. Hence, the following timeline must be enabled:
 - At the next Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Meeting (CYMM) Youth Ministers must work towards a Youth Pact;
 - This will be developed by the Youth Caucus and across the Commonwealth in time for CYF6;
 - Then presented to CHOGM 2007;
 - To be ratified at CYMM and CHOGM by 2009;
 - And implemented in 2010.

2.1.8 Increasing Youth Participation

- Young people should be involved in community planning at local, national and international levels. This can best be achieved through:
 - A quota system on local decision making bodies.
 - Youth sitting, and discussing freely, on civil society boards, NGOs, and governing bodies, thus increasing the efficiency of democratic governance through youth participation.
 - A framework for informal and frequent consultation between young people, government and civil society should be set up, by CYF 6.
- Youth organisations should be legitimised and recognised, and in keeping with the principle of good governance, youth organisations should be transparent and to this end should endeavour to make their statutes and accounts, etc public. Youth organisations should be empowered through:
 - Statutes
 - The Youth Pact
 - Capacity building (exchange of best practices through CYP and networking through youth councils). Organisations like CYP and CYEC must be involved in capacity building as well as peer organisation capacity building.
- The role of youth organisations, national youth councils and parliaments, as well as trade unions should be increased and recognised at national and international levels.

Health and Sexuality

3.1 Lines of Discussion

3.1.1

Representatives of young people at the Commonwealth Youth Forum Abuja expressed their concern about the lack of awareness of HIV and AIDS amongst their peers. The delegates hoped to see a reduction in the stigmatisation of people living with HIV and AIDS as well as those indirectly affected. This should have been achieved by an extension of the Young Ambassadors for Positive Living Programme, the inclusion of sexual health in school curricula and a focus on HIV and AIDS in informal education.

3.1.2

The Commonwealth Youth Forum 5 is supportive of the recommendations made in Abuja and commits itself to strengthening awareness raising campaigns and educational programmes which deal with HIV and AIDS. We note the commendable efforts made by governments, civil society organisations and individual young people, to raise awareness, particularly among young people. We are disappointed that targets set in Abuja have not been met.

3.1.3

Women and young people are still disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. Gender issues have not been sufficiently addressed by all stakeholders in tackling these issues.

3.1.4

HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases are more than just health problems. They are problems, fuelled by underdevelopment. Poverty and unemployment are important factors, which influence the general wellbeing of Commonwealth citizens. Therefore, the recommendations outlined in the "Sustainable Livelihoods, Enterprise and ICTs" section are essential if progress is to be made on health issues.

3.1.5

A healthy society is one in which is free from violence and whose citizens enjoy physical, intellectual, social, sexual, moral, spiritual and economic wellbeing. Health and sexuality are intrinsically linked and must be addressed together.

3.1.6

There are a number of areas which are of particular concern to the Commonwealth Youth Forum's delegates. These are:

- Sexual violence
- The role of the media in shaping perceptions of sexual health and sexual behaviour, particularly among young people
- The interplay of culture, religion and sexual behaviour
- Education and low levels of sexual health awareness among their peers.

Recommendations

3.2.1

Young people can be disproportionately affected by sexual harassment and violence. Governments must utilise best practice models in developing a legal framework that will protect young people from sexual harassment and violence.

3.2.2

We commend the work of the numerous women and youth organisations addressing sexual violence. We urge governments to co-operate with, and financially support these organisations in their endeavours.

3.2.3

Sexual health and freedom from sexual violence is a human right. NGOs should lobby for this right to be recognised.

3.2.4

Media campaigns are an important tool in promoting health and sexual health. These are not being used to their full potential and will require a concerted effort and considerable funding if they are to deliver a change in attitudes. We call upon all media organisations to take their responsibilities seriously and support government and civil society media campaigns.

3.2.5

We call upon all stakeholders to take positive local customs into consideration. If health and sexual health promotion is to be successful, cultural and religious leaders must be involved.

3.2.6

Young people are inheritors as well as creators of cultural values. We are aware of our, as well as our governments', responsibility to foster positive cultural customs and practices. Young people must play an active role in cultivating positive cultural change.

3.2.7

Governments should create and implement culture-conscious school curricula that introduce health and sexuality education from the first years of schooling.

3.2.8

Discussions with peer educators are fundamental in guiding young people towards healthy living. Therefore all educational institutions in collaboration with the Ministries responsible for health, have the responsibility to ensure that peer education programmes are available.

3.2.9

Governments must provide readily accessible, youth-friendly and professional counselling services in every community. We are aware that

this will require substantial resources and call upon all governments and donors to provide the necessary funding. The Commonwealth Secretariat should take up this suggestion and provide assistance through the Commonwealth Technical Fund for Co-operation.

3.2.10

Young people are dying every day due to poor health services, infrastructure and equipment. Therefore, delegates urge governments to improve health provision by:

- Training young people to act as first aides in their communities;
- Providing communities with health education workers to assist in preventing communicable diseases;
- Making anti-retroviral treatments accessible to all (HIV) sero-positive individuals;
- Expanding and improving health infrastructure in educational institutions;
- Increasing availability of primary health care facilities so that all young Commonwealth citizens have access to local facilities, especially in rural areas;
- Providing incentives for health professionals to work in remote areas throughout the Commonwealth. These incentives should include transport subsidies, housing allowances and scholarships for additional training.

3.2.11

We reiterate the statement made in Abuja that the Young Ambassadors for Positive Living programme must be extended geographically as well as conceptually.

3.2.12

The delegates of the Commonwealth Youth Forum are a source of innovation and ideas. We have demonstrated that with backing and support we can create positive change. We therefore ask the Commonwealth that it support delegates in the creation of a database intended for the exchange of project information and good practice on sexual health, both administratively and financially. CYF6 will evaluate this database. The database would include:

- Examples of established sexual health projects demonstrating best practice
- Project management assistance
- Online tutorials
- Links to funding institutions for sexual health initiatives

3.2.13

Health and sexuality service provision for youth is too basic in many Commonwealth countries. As a result young people are not given sufficient opportunities to become engaged members of their community. We wish to see an increase in the number of youth and sports clubs throughout the Commonwealth.

3.2.14

Governments, civil society and business have a role to play in empowering young people by enhancing their capacity to shape policies, making them effective partners in the development process. Only if young people have a voice at all levels of project design and implementation will attempts to change behaviour be effective.

3.2.15

We urge all governments, the Commonwealth and NGOs to give young people a voice at all levels of health and sexuality policy design and implementation. The exclusion of young people will reduce the effectiveness of the above stated policy.

3.2.16

We believe that the Commonwealth itself is a very powerful network. We urge both the official and unofficial Commonwealth to lead by example and create networks of all organisations and individual stakeholders, both inside and outside the Commonwealth, in the fight against disease.

Targets:

3.3.1

Revision and implementation of laws and increased awareness in society of sexual violence.

3.3.2

All reported incidences of sexual violence must be thoroughly investigated. This should be reflected by a marked increase in the number of arrests for sexual violence offences.

3.3.3

Sexual health and violence must be seen as a human rights issue by all Commonwealth citizens and governments. To reflect this, all Commonwealth countries must have active human rights watch bodies.

3.3.4

All Commonwealth governments should create and implement laws to prevent discrimination on any grounds.

3.3.5

A marked increase in the number of sexual health and violence workshops and the number of young people participating in them.

3.3.6

Health programmes must be effective in reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases among young people and increasing the average age of first consensual sexual intercourse.

3.3.7

All Commonwealth schools should have trained peer educators on sexual health, supported by health professionals and educators based in these schools.

3.3.8

All Commonwealth countries have implemented within their national curricula a strategy to include strategic health and sexuality education.

3.3.9

Governments in all Commonwealth countries should support media organisations in their country to ensure all messages broadcast on health and sexuality are factually correct.

3.3.10

A marked increase in government commitment to eradicating preventable disease, measured by the number of projects funded and actively supported.

3.3.11

A pan-Commonwealth database on health and sexuality expertise and 'good practice' case studies will be operative by the time the Youth Forum meets again in 2007.

Sustainable Livelihoods, Youth Enterprise and ICTs

Livelihood - the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks...while not undermining the natural resource base. (After Chambers/Conway 1992)

Entrepreneurship - the process whereby we become aware of business ownership as an option or viable alternative, develop ideas for business...and undertake the initiation and development of a business. (Stevenson 1989, 1997)

4.1 Lines of Discussion

4.1.1

Amongst the recommendations put forward in the Final Communiqué of the Commonwealth Youth Forum 4 (the Abuja Communiqué), the need for proper incentives and financial support to emerging youth enterprises and the need to invest in initiatives that aim at forming the entrepreneurial skills of youth was identified. CYF5 reiterates the importance of having such incentives and initiatives in place in the various Commonwealth member states.

4.1.2

A major hindrance to the take-up of enterprise amongst youth is the strain placed upon young entrepreneurs seeking loans from financial institutions to set up their business. This is even more of a concern in view of the fact that the overall investment of Commonwealth governments in those areas of direct relevance to youth enterprise is not sufficient to meet the various needs of young entrepreneurs.

4.1.3

Moreover, certain legal systems within the Commonwealth prove to be over-complex with respect to enterprise policies by setting up excessively high minimum age limits for the setting up of businesses and loan-taking and consequently placing undue burden on young persons seeking an entrepreneurial career.

4.1.4

The CYF5 reiterates the concerns expressed in the Abuja Forum with respect to the above issues and calls upon governments and the private sector to come together in a committed fashion so as to provide a viable solution to them.

4.1.5

The Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative (CYCI) is seen to be pivotal in providing a solution to the problem of limited accessibility to funds by young

persons seeking to invest in an entrepreneurial future. Hence, it must be ensured that this initiative is made accessible to all young people in all Commonwealth nations and that, at the same time, sufficient awareness of such an initiative is raised. It is envisaged that modifying the current CYCI model so as to come up with a scheme that is partly loan-based and partly grant-based and that includes the necessary accountability structures, would work to achieve even better results.

4.1.6

Moreover, governments are called upon to invest further in youth enterprise. The provision of adequate grants for youth entrepreneurship, training and ICT is essential for the sustainable future of enterprise. It is felt that regular monitoring and stocktaking of the initiatives being undertaken by government is required so as to allow for constant improvement.

4.1.7

Education is critical to the formation of young entrepreneurs all around the Commonwealth. As a start, a culture of enterprise must be instilled into young persons from their early school days so as to drive young persons towards entrepreneurship. A culture that does not look down on enterprise, when compared to other professions, should be fostered amongst young persons. Creative thinking is seen to be an indispensable tool for enterprise that should be taught at school and hence inserted in the national educational curricula. Coupled with this is the need to ensure compulsory secondary education for all persons in all countries. In this respect the delegates noted with approval that the right to universal free education and the supplementing of regular school education by enterprise training opportunities have worked to mark progress in the development of youth. Moreover, education and employment opportunities for young people are seen to be key in maintaining social cohesion in the countries of the Commonwealth, which, like Malta, are facing the challenge of the growth of xenophobia attendant on immigration.

4.1.8

Building on the experiences and the achievements of young entrepreneurs in some Commonwealth nations, such as Malta, enterprise-related educational programmes, such as the Young Enterprise initiative (also known as Junior Achiever), are seen as necessary tools to achieve a youth enterprise of high standard. It is felt that such programmes should not only be encouraged but should find their place within national educational curricula. Moreover, a follow-up to such programmes should be devised and encouraged so as to continue to better equip young persons for the challenges faced in the business world.

4.1.9

Closely linked to this is the wider use that should be made of electronic means of communication so as to offer young people the opportunity to further their education in the sphere of enterprise. Hence the need to offer and recognise on-line courses is deemed a must in today's day and age.

4.1.10

An equally essential educational aspect in the drive towards an increase in youth enterprise is that of training. The Forum notes that, currently, young entrepreneurs are still finding it hard to find companies that are willing to offer them support in the form of training. It is believed that if all stakeholders were to make a serious commitment towards this goal, a number of initiatives conducive towards the provision of support for youth entrepreneurship by the private sector could be devised.

4.1.11

The importance of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the development of young entrepreneurs cannot be overemphasised. This Forum recognises that the levels of ICT available to young persons in various regions of the Commonwealth are not up to desirable standards and are not cost-effective and sustainable. Moreover, in certain regions ICT infrastructure is found to be grossly lacking. A further concern that has been raised is that young persons are not using ICT to the best of possibilities.

4.1.12

In view of the fact that greater amounts of information are today being disseminated over the internet and by electronic means of communication, the digital divide that is present within the regions and nations of the Commonwealth is seriously hindering development in various respects. These include the development of enterprise amongst youth, and the proper networking of young persons and their representative organisations within the Commonwealth. Hence the bridging of the digital divide is considered core to the proper development of the Commonwealth and of youth within it. A serious commitment by the Governments of the Commonwealth to this matter is therefore called for.

4.1.13

CYF5 firmly believes that it is not possible to talk of enterprise without seriously considering sustainable development. To do otherwise seriously runs the risk of failing to create the right scenario to utilise enterprise to alleviate poverty. The Forum recognises the importance of restructuring the international trading system to alleviate poverty and acknowledges the roles of the IMF, WTO and World Bank.

4.1.14

Young persons and civil societies, too, have a vital role to play in ensuring that youth enterprise is given due regard by governments, the private sector and civil society, amongst other stakeholders. To this effect, civil societies must ensure that the views of youth are sufficiently voiced and that their concerns are placed high on NGO agendas. On a generic level, it is felt that there is still more to be achieved by civil societies with respect to lobbying governments and other stakeholders. Moreover, civil societies must take it upon themselves to provide young persons with adequate training where possible.

4.1.15

Finally, this Forum firmly believes that proper networking of young entrepreneurs and youth representative organisations amongst the countries of the Commonwealth is essential for the flourishing of youth enterprise. Learning from each other's experiences is recognised as being one of the best ways for young persons to progress in this sphere of activity. Through the exchange of ideas and experiences, this very Forum has proved to be a unique learning opportunity for those participating in it. It is believed that similar opportunities such as youth exchanges, internships, as well as effective virtual networking, will help overcome the barrier of lack of information dissemination with respect to funding, educational and other opportunities, all of which are core to the development of youth enterprise.

Recommendations

4.2.1

CYF5 calls on the Commonwealth to ensure that the proposals put forward be given due consideration by Heads of Government, are made easily accessible to all and properly publicised.

4.2.2

The Forum calls on the Commonwealth to use its muscle in order to ensure revision of any state-induced impediments to the take up of enterprise by young persons, in particular complex laws that mandate excessively high minimum ages for the setting up of businesses and the taking of loans.

4.2.3

The Forum calls on the Commonwealth to use its muscle in order to ensure that more viable financing solutions for young persons wishing to invest in enterprise are made accessible. In particular, efforts must be made to bring about better loan facilities for young entrepreneurs, such as facilities with repayment terms based on revenue points, rather than time periods.

4.2.4

Moreover this Forum calls on the Commonwealth and their respective members of government to ensure that the CYCI is made accessible to all young people in all Commonwealth nations and that, at the same time, sufficient awareness of such an initiative is raised. Moreover, the Commonwealth must give intense thought to improving the current CYCI model by, for example, making it part loan and part grant-based whilst introducing proper accountability measures. The Commonwealth must also ensure that young entrepreneurs can use the CYCI as security against bank loans.

4.2.5

The Forum calls on the Commonwealth to establish Regional Youth Enterprise Agencies (RYEAs) run by young persons. This may be done through already established platforms, such as Youth Caucuses. The aim of such RYEAs would be to serve as supervisory bodies linking countries within a region.

4.2.6

The forum values networking and information sharing. It calls for a further serious pan-Commonwealth investment in the sharing of intra and inter-regional best practices through, for instance, the setting up of e-groups and easily accessible resource centres, both electronic and otherwise.

4.2.7

The Forum calls on the Commonwealth to coordinate with universities and other educational institutions so as to provide proper and adequate training, with an emphasis on on-line forms of training, to all young persons willing to acquire entrepreneurial skills.

4.2.8

The Commonwealth must lobby Governments for the establishment and accessibility of proper ICT structures throughout the Commonwealth.

4.2.9

The Commonwealth must encourage private companies to invest further in the development of young entrepreneurs through training schemes and must create educational initiatives such as training and internship programmes.

4.2.10

The Commonwealth must constantly recommend youth enterprise policies for governments to adopt.

4.2.11

CYF5 notes that a number of the concerns expressed in this document with respect to Youth Enterprise had previously been expressed by the same Forum. Based on the firm belief that young persons have a wealth of energy and vision to offer in the drive towards a sustainable and viable future for enterprise, the Commonwealth Youth Forum calls on Governments to give young persons the opportunity to give their due contribution by being actively involved in the formulation of government policies relating to the development of youth enterprise and ICT.

4.2.12

Governments of the Commonwealth are called upon to support and recognise the contribution that Youth Organisations have to offer to the whole of their nation. Governments are requested to fully commit themselves to creating the adequate structures for youth organisations to work within.

4.2.13

This Forum calls on the governments of Commonwealth states to give this Forum's concerns and recommendations utmost consideration and do all that is in their power to meet the needs of young entrepreneurs as expressed in this document. Moreover, the Forum appeals to the said governments to give this and all other CYF documentation due publicity and

assist youth organisations in publicising Commonwealth Youth Programmes.

4.2.14

Governments must be committed to adopting the Commonwealth's principles and recommendations for youth enterprise formulation.

4.2.15

This Forum calls upon Commonwealth Governments to invest generously in youth enterprise by making accessible the necessary funds, infrastructure and training required for young persons to take up an enterprise.

4.2.16

This Forum calls upon Commonwealth Governments to provide the necessary cost effective and sustainable ICT solutions so as to allow youth enterprise in their country, and beyond, to flourish. It is recognised that the current digital divide is a serious impediment to proper networking amongst youth across the Commonwealth in all areas, including that of enterprise.

4.2.17

The governments of the Commonwealth are called upon to immediately review those laws and policies that hinder the take up of enterprise by young persons and allow for unfair competitive practices by monopolies. In particular, governments are requested to repeal those laws that set an excessively high minimum age limit for the setting up of businesses and the taking out of loans.

4.2.18

Commonwealth Governments are requested to facilitate the situation for young persons entering into the realm of enterprise. In particular, they are requested to encourage financial institutions to grant loans to young entrepreneurs under conditions that are easy for such young entrepreneurs to meet.

4.2.19

Commonwealth Governments are requested to provide incentives to the private sector and civil society to provide training to young persons wishing to acquire entrepreneurial and ICT skills. A possible way of doing so would be to grant tax or other incentives to companies that provide training to young persons.

4.2.20

This Forum calls upon Commonwealth Governments to invest adequately in education by:

- Ensuring that secondary education is compulsory for all;
- Introducing programmes, such as Young Enterprise, specifically aimed at building entrepreneurial skills in the national curriculum and, where such programmes already exist, developing them further;

- Adequately addressing the need for young persons to acquire practical entrepreneurial skills by introducing this aspect amongst the assessment criteria of students in their individual national educational systems;
- Providing and acknowledging more accessible forms of entrepreneurial education, such as on-line courses;
- Ensuring that the educational system of their country is conducive towards enterprise and avoids depicting enterprise in a less attractive fashion than other professions;
- Introducing creative thinking in their national educational curricula from an early age;
- Together with youth organisations implementing programmes aimed at the building of leadership skills and self-esteem amongst youth.

4.2.21

Commonwealth Governments are called upon to introduce centres to act as a comprehensive One-Stop-Shop for the needs of young persons wishing to embark on an entrepreneurial career. Such centres are to provide consultation services with regard to helping entrepreneurs perform market research and raise funds. In the same spirit, governments are called upon to remove those bureaucratic obstacles found in their respective countries that hinder the take up of enterprise by young persons.

4.2.22

This Forum calls upon Governments to give due weight to sustainable development and adopt policies and initiatives that promote this. The promotion of eco-farming is undoubtedly one of the areas governments must focus on.

4.2.23

This Forum calls upon civil society to lobby further so as to achieve the aims listed in this document, in particular to convince governments to involve young persons in national policy formation. It further requests civil society to be more proactive when addressing issues regarding youth and to take the topic of youth enterprise to heart.

4.2.24

Civil Society also plays an important role in providing the necessary entrepreneurial skills to young persons. They are called upon to provide training programmes and internships to young persons wishing to enter the business environment.

4.2.25

Civil society is called upon to collaborate with governments and private sectors to ensure that adequate traineeship programmes are made available to young persons wishing to embark into enterprise.

4.2.26

Civil society must continue to raise awareness about the importance of enterprise amongst youth. In doing so they must embark on programmes

that render enterprise more attractive. Convincing accomplished entrepreneurs of the need to foster enterprise amongst the youth and further convincing such persons to train, and act as role models for, young persons is an objective that civil societies must aim at achieving.

4.2.27

Civil society must offer all the support it can muster for youth organisations and young entrepreneurs.

4.2.28

This Forum calls upon the private sector to recognise the need to promote enterprise amongst young persons and provide them with financial and educational backing they are capable of providing.

4.2.29

Private companies, in particular financial institutions, are called upon to provide young entrepreneurs with grants and loan facilities that are not cumbersome. Financing on repayment terms based on revenue points rather than time periods is highly recommended.

4.2.30

This Forum further calls upon the private sector to provide young entrepreneurs with adequate training, internships and scholarships, as well as to offer apprenticeship schemes.

4.2.31

This Forum calls upon young persons and their representative bodies to recognise that they have the prime responsibility to ensure that the recommendations made in this document are taken seriously and bear fruit. They are called upon to act as watchdogs and to incessantly lobby Governments and other stakeholders so as to achieve the goals set by this Forum. In particular they are to continue lobbying with government so as to have infrastructural facilities set up within reasonable distances.

4.2.32

Young people and their representative bodies are required to ensure that support for training, awareness, ICT infrastructure and incentives, as proposed throughout this document, is achieved from the private sector, civil sector, and the government alike.

4.2.33

This Forum calls upon young people and their representative bodies to recognise the importance and value of enterprise today and to invest highly in it.

4.2.34

Young people and youth organisations are encouraged to make the best use of opportunities available for young entrepreneurs by informing themselves of these opportunities, being proactive in establishing proper

networks for the exchange of information and experiences and sharing information with each other.

4.2.35

Youth organisations are requested to promote enterprise amongst youth in their nation, and even beyond, and to come up with their own agenda for such promotion. In doing so, they must promote award schemes for successful entrepreneurs. Youth organisations should coordinate and organise an annual 'Entrepreneur Week', during which nation-wide campaigns aimed at fostering youth enterprise and disseminating information take place.

Towards CYF6

After considering the evolution of the forum since its inception in Edinburgh 1997 we emphasise the importance of charting a clear path into the future of young people of the Commonwealth. Taking into account the array of suggestions promulgated by this forum, it is clear that the Commonwealth youth forum lives only through the continuity of its knowledge networks and fundamental working principles; and the diversity of its constituencies.

5.1

We therefore commit ourselves to:

- Continuing to refine the action plans and targets we started at CYF5 and to take a strategic approach to implementation
- Ensuring that action begins from situation analyses which are specific to member countries and are undertaken by young people
- Establishing a youth planning team which will sustain CYF's network in a transparent and accountable manner and which will work with National Youth Councils and other youth organisations
- Bringing about better coordination between regional and pan-Commonwealth levels
- Bringing new resources and contact persons into the network for the purposes of sharing knowledge, funding and best practice
- Reporting to CYF6, which will be held in Uganda in 2007, on progress made at national and other levels on the recommendations made by the Commonwealth Youth Forum according to the working principles set out above
- Seeking better coordination with CHOGM and the Commonwealth People's Forum and their media channels to ensure that CYF receives the publicity it deserves
- Where our mandates expire before 2007, ensuring continuity of contact and understanding among our successors

Targets

5.2.1

CYF5 calls upon CHOGM to institutionalise the Forum before the end of 2006 in order to facilitate sustainability and continuity.

5.2.2

CYF5 calls upon member governments to ensure that all Regional Youth Caucus members are delegates to the CYF6 in Uganda as a means of fostering synergy between the Commonwealth Youth Programmes thematic areas and the CYF themes.

5.2.3

CYF5 calls upon member governments, the Commonwealth Youth Programme, the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council and others to provide the necessary institutional resources and technical assistance to

assist the Government and young people of Uganda to successfully host CYF6.

5.2.4

CYF5 asks member governments to adopt an endowment policy within the Commonwealth Youth Programme that will aid the long-term financial sustainability of the CYF and ensure equitable youth participation from all Commonwealth Regions.

5.2.5

The Ugandan organisers of CYF6 must place the development of a “CYF Vision 2015” on the agenda. This forum will coincide with the expiration of the Millennium Development Goals and the Commonwealth Youth Programme’s evaluation of its 2011-2015 Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE).

5.2.6

To ensure the Commonwealth Youth Forum becomes a sustainable project, we call upon the Commonwealth Youth Programme and the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council to build the capacity of a cadre of young people who will be composed of both alumni and present CYF delegates to facilitate the organization of future CYFs.

5.2.7

CYF5 calls upon CHOGM and future CYFs to articulate and insist that Action Plans developed at CYF are linked to the work of Regional Youth Caucus as a matter of cohesion, continuity and the achievements of targets.

5.2.8

CYF calls upon the Commonwealth Youth Programme and the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council to sign a memorandum of understanding that outlines specific roles and responsibilities of both entities in the organization and sustainability of CYF.

5.2.9

The CYF calls upon CYP and CYEC to ensure that international media is invited to future CYFs, in order to better expose and convey, the work and energy which constitute the CYF.
