



# COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM



## Transforming Societies – realising People’s Potential: Living up to Human Rights Commitments

### Agenda

“There is no shortage of legislation and declarations on human rights;  
what is in crisis is the resolve to act on those commitments.”  
- Don McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary General, Fourth Session of the United  
Nations Human Rights Council, March 2007

#### DAY 1: Monday, 19 November 2007

#### REGISTRATION

10h15 – 10h30

**Master of Ceremonies: Nana Oye Lithur**

#### WELCOME ADDRESS

10h30 – 10h45/ co-convenors: Maja Daruwala, Richard Bourne, Livingstone and Mohammed (CHRI, CPSU and their local partners FHRI and HURINET-U)

#### SESSION 1

10h45 – 13h00/ Moderator (Richard Bourne, CPSU)

Looking at human rights as a matrix for transforming societies and its relations with other factors of progressing societies.

**Theme 1: Reality of Commonwealth compliance with human rights commitments** 10h45 – 11h05  
Opening Address by **Yash Ghai**

11h05 – 11h55 Following discussion:

- What are the obstacles to Commonwealth members’ compliance with their human rights commitments?
- How can civil society monitor Commonwealth members’ compliance?
- The reality of Commonwealth UNHRC members’ compliance with both commitments made to the Commonwealth and the Council;
- The necessity for action at national, UN and Commonwealth levels to ensure compliance with commitments-what the CHOGM should do to facilitate;
- What civil society could do to monitor and advocate compliance among Commonwealth UNHRC members; and
- What other international bodies should be similarly targeted for compliance oriented action? African Union?

11h40 – 12h00 Summary by the Richard Bourne

[Break]

**Theme 2: Human Rights: a utilitarian tool to transform society**

12h15 – 12h35 Presentation by guest speaker: Yash Ghai

12h35 – 13h10 Following discussion:

- What is the relationship between human rights and sustainable development?
- How human rights help governments achieve the objectives of a developing society?
- Do human rights frameworks work with or against other issues that affect developing societies (development, security and counter-terrorism, business, etc.)?
- Can we create a sustainable development model where commonwealth human rights framework fits?

13h10 – 13h15 Summary by Richard Bourne

[Lunch break]

**SESSION 2**

14h15 – 18h15/ Moderator Livingstone Sewanyana

***Theme 3: Commonwealth mechanisms for compliance – what role the commonwealth can play to ensure compliance; the role of civil society within the Commonwealth; the compliance mechanisms within the Commonwealth***

14h15 – 14h45 Presentation by guest speaker: Syed Sharfuddin (Confirmed)

An overview of the existing formal Commonwealth mechanisms available to monitor, encourage or sanction states' compliance with human rights commitments.

14h45– 14h55 A Commonwealth system for Compliance at the UNHRC & constructive engagement by Commonwealth states at the UNHRC

14h55 – 15h10 Summary by Livingstone Sewanyana

[Break]

***Theme 4: Creating an enabling environment for Compliance***

15h25-1800 Moderator Eunice Brookman-Amisshah

15h25 – 15h45 guest speaker: Dr. Alex Conte

Guidelines to identify issues of particular importance, such as police accountability, public participation and transparency, to reduce human rights violations by ensuring better governance and more effective social development.

15h45 – 15h55 Following Discussions

**LAUNCH OF CHRI CHOGM REPORT**

15h55 – 16h05 Maja Daruwala, Sam Okudzetu, CHRI (with Tessa Boyd-Caine) Launching of the CHOGM report: *'Stamping out Rights: the Impact of Anti-Terrorism Legislation on Policing'*

16h05 – 16h40 Police Expert Group – Panel

(Michelle Kagari, Tessa Boyd Caine, CHRI, Carolyn. Gomes)

Types of democratic policing; processes of democratic policing; civil society's demands – leads to demand for an expert group.

16h30 – 16h50 Following Discussion

17h00 – 17h20 Tools for the enabling environment: Right to Information & Model National Human Rights Action Plans – Panel

(Carolyn Gomes, Tracey, Maja, Mohammed Ndifuna, Sam Okudzeto)

17h20 – 17h50 Following discussion:

- How efficient have the existing mechanisms been?
- How can civil society use these mechanisms in the most efficient manner?
- What can civil society advocate for to make these mechanisms more efficient?
- Examples of successful and unsuccessful use of existing Commonwealth compliance mechanism (case study); and
- Example of alternative mechanisms developed by civil society to enforce compliance with human rights obligations (case study).

17h50 – 18h00 Summary by the Moderator: Eunice Brookman-Amisshah

**DAY 2: Tuesday, 20 November 2007**

**SESSION 3:**

08h30 – 11h30/ Moderators Mohammed Ndifuna, Living Stone Sewanyana & Maja Daruwala

08h 30-9h00 Summary of issues discussed in CHRF, Lucy Mathieson & R. Iniyan Ilango

***Preparation of the CHRF statement***

9h00 – 11h00 panel: (Nana Oye Lithur, Director CHRI Ghana, Clare Doube, CIVICUS)

9h00 – 9h10 Introduction to the Communique

9h10 – 9h50 Preparation of the Communique - Drafting of the CHRF statement to be included in the CPF communiqué to influence Commonwealth Heads of Governments and other officials present at the CHOGM

[Break]

10h00 – 10h30 Expectations from CHRF after CHOGM 2007

10h30 – 10h40 Internal Agreement on Expectations for CHRF after CHOGM

10h40 – 11h00 Amendments to the Communique

**11h00 – 11h30 Closure of the CHRF**

11h00-11h30 Moderator Maja Daruwala

11h05-11h 30 Closing remarks by the Commonwealth Secretary General, Hon. Rt. Don. Mckinnon followed by a question and answer session

*The CHRF is supported by:*



Canadian  
International  
Development  
Agency

Agence  
canadienne de  
développement  
international