



CHRI
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
working for the practical realisation of human rights in
the countries of the Commonwealth



Programme

**Civil Society/Human Rights Defender space in the Commonwealth: A
dialogue to share lessons learnt and good practice**

3 – 4 June 2019

**Conference Hall, 2nd Floor, Commonwealth Small States Office, Rue du Pré-de-la-
Bichette 1, Geneva 1202**

Day 1: 3 June 2019

Time and Session	Facilitator	Overview	Expected outcomes
Session 1: Opening segment 10:00 - 10:30	<p>Ms. Gayethri Pillay, Counsellor/Charge d’Affaires, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Seychelles</p> <p>H.E. Ambassador Sumbue Antas, Permanent Representative, Republic of Vanuatu</p> <p>Mr. Charles Kent, Human Rights Officer, Permanent Mission of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</p> <p>Mr. Sanjoy Hazarika, International Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)</p> <p>Mr. Tony Sisule, Human Rights Adviser, Commonwealth Secretariat</p>	<p>Welcome and opening remarks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting the scene for seminar
Session 2: Introduction, objectives and expectations 10:30 - 10:45	<p>Mr. Yashasvi Nain, Human Rights Officer, Commonwealth Secretariat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of delegates and facilitators • Objectives of the seminar • Pre-seminar evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions done and objectives of the seminar are clear • Pre-seminar evaluation
Refreshments 10:45 - 11.00			
Session 3: Normative framework as it pertains to civil society and human rights defender space 11:00 - 11:30	<p>Mr. Iniyani Ilango, Independent Human Rights Expert</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norms on civil participation and protection of human rights • State of civil society space across the globe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normative framework understood

Session 4: Commonwealth framework and challenges faced by civil society 11:30 - 12:00	Mr. Sanjoy Hazarika, International Director, CHRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth commitments to promote and protect civil society space • Examples of violations that erode civil society space • Responsibilities of states and civil society to maintain respectful communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding of Commonwealth commitments and erosion of civil society space
Session 5: Best practice in state and civil society collaboration in global advocacy for climate action 12:00 - 12:30	H.E. Ambassador Sumbue Antas, Permanent Representative, Republic of Vanuatu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study Vanuatu: Best practices in state and civil society collaboration on global advocacy for climate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of best practices in collaboration on climate action
Session 6: Best practice in state and civil society collaboration 12:30 - 13:00	Ms. Gayethri Pillay, Counsellor/Charge d’Affaires, Permanent Mission of Republic of Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study Seychelles: Best practices in state and civil society collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of best practices in state and civil society collaboration
Lunch 13:00 - 14:00			
Session 7: Best practices in state and media engagement for national development 14:00 - 15:30	H.E. Ambassador Penda Andreas Naanda, Permanent Representative, Republic of Namibia Mr. Joseph Ailonga, Chairperson, Editors’ Forum of Namibia - VIA SKYPE LINK Mr. Sanjoy Hazarika, International Director, CHRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of media freedom in state building and national development: Case study Namibia • Media freedom in Namibia: Successes and challenges • Media solidarity in engagement with states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding of good practice in promoting and protecting media freedom and safety of journalists
Refreshments 15.30 - 15.45			
Session 8: Group discussions	Group work Reports to plenary	Guiding questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer discussions in small groups to encourage better practice

15:45 - 17:00		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is it necessary to create and increase space for civil society participation?• What are the drivers of conflict between governments and civil society?• How can effective collaboration between civil society and governments be sustained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generating champions for advocacy
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Day 2: 4 June 2019

Time and Session	Facilitator	Overview	Expected outcomes
Session 9: Role of parliament and parliamentarians in sustaining civil society space 10:00 - 11:00	Hon. Kenneth Okoth, Member of Parliament, Kibra Constituency, Republic of Kenya Hon. Lenny Lebon, Former Member of Parliament, Republic of Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of parliament and parliamentarians in protecting the space for civil society and human rights defenders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understanding of the role of parliament in promoting and protecting civil society/human rights defender space
Refreshments 11:00 - 11:15			
Session 10: Role of national human rights institutions in protection of civil society space 11:15 - 12:15	Advocate John R. Walters, Ombudsman, Republic of Namibia Mr. George Morara, Commissioner and Vice-Chairperson, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in promoting and protecting the space for civil society and human rights defenders NHRI as a bridge between government and civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved understanding of the role of NHRIs compliant with the Paris Principles
Session 11: Best practice in state and civil society collaboration 12:15 - 12:45	Ms. Esther Ahulu, RTI Project Officer, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Africa Office, Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study Ghana: Collaboration for protection of right to information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice in promotion and protection of right to information understood
Session 12: Best practice from outside of the Commonwealth of effective relationships between civil society and governments 12:45 - 13:15	Mr. Iniyan Ilango,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies from outside the Commonwealth on building effective relationships between governments and civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice from outside the Commonwealth understood
Lunch 13:15 - 14:15			

<p>Session 13: Group discussions</p> <p>14:15 - 15:45</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work • Reports to plenary 	<p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we move from conflictual to collaborative engagements between states and civil society? • What ingredients are vital for resolving differences when they arise and sustaining collaboration? • What platforms have proven to be useful in maintaining respectful relationships? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer discussions in small groups to encourage better practice • Generating champions for advocacy
<p>Refreshments 15:45 - 16:00</p>			
<p>Session 14: Concluding segment</p> <p>16:00 - 16:30</p>	<p>Tony Sisule</p> <p>Ms. Gayethri Pillay</p> <p>H.E. Ambassador Sumbue Antas</p> <p>Mr. Charles Kent</p> <p>Mr. Sanjoy Hazarika</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of main recommendations • Evaluation tool administered • Final remarks and potential next steps and ways to champion the promotion and protection of civil society/human rights defenders space in the Commonwealth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations and next steps are outlined