



Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF)  
Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka  
10-14 November 2013

## **Civil Society Perspectives for a Commonwealth Post 2015 Development Agenda**

CPF 2013 Outcome Document

### Preamble

We, the peoples of the Commonwealth, at the 2013 Commonwealth Peoples' Forum (CPF), in Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka, 10-14 November 2013:

Recalling that our experiences and aspirations are articulated in the publication '*Commonwealth Perspectives: Ideas for a new development agenda*', and

Have been reflected in the Commonwealth Civil Society submissions to the Committee of the Whole on 16 October 2013, and

In endorsement of, alignment with and building on these initiatives and other key global and regional post 2015 processes,

Recognising that despite some progress there is still a lot to be done for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and

Noting that the multiple crises related to finance, climate, fuel and food is further imperilling this achievement, and in

Making reference to the Post-2015 agenda, the re-launch of the Commonwealth Foundation, with a new mandate given at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth 2011, and

Considering all the universal commitments endorsed by Commonwealth countries including the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus, the Doha outcome document, the Rio + 20 sustainable development pillars and outcomes of Commonwealth Ministerial Meetings.

We call on our Commonwealth Heads of State and Government to:

1. Recognise, in line with the Istanbul Principles for civil society development effectiveness and the Busan partnership for development framework, the centrality of civil society in development and invest in supporting the conditions that create an enabling environment for civil society to participate in development processes more fully, proactively and effectively.
2. Foster development processes that are inclusive, equal, and just;
3. Strengthen institutions and promote processes that support participatory governance and cross boundary knowledge sharing;
4. Commit to a framework of mutual accountability at the global, regional and national level;
5. Ensure that all development policies and processes are firmly grounded in a human rights based approach.

### **Common Civil Society Perspectives from the Commonwealth**

Civil Society recognises the great potential to improve global development effectiveness offered by a new post 2015 development agenda. To achieve this, there are some common issues that need to be addressed by member states of the Commonwealth:

#### **1. Women's Political, Social and Economic Empowerment and Gender Equality**

Create a stand-alone Goal to empower girls and women to achieve gender equality, prevent and eliminate violence against women; and integrate women's empowerment into all relevant goals focusing on specific concerns

related to economic, political and social empowerment including sexual and reproductive health rights.

## **2. Young People**

Implement the resolutions made at the 8th Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting to place young people at the centre of sustainable development, support a specific, stand-alone Goal on young people's empowerment, meaningful and effective participation in political processes and decision-making, and ensure youth related indicators for all goals.

Provide access to lifelong skills based learning and better access to tertiary education for youth in terms of proximity and affordability.

## **3. Livelihoods, Decent Work and Social Protection**

Ratify core International Labour Organisation (ILO) standards and establish annual meetings of Commonwealth labour ministers to monitor progress on the commitments.

Ensure and guarantee livelihoods for all, along with decent work conditions, which also address growing informalisation; contribute to combat and defeat child labour and human trafficking; build capacities for entrepreneurship and accessing jobs especially amongst youth, and ensure universal social protection for working families.

## **4. Migration**

Recognise and strengthen the role of migrants and the diaspora in all countries as a development partner and promote protection of the right to decent work by migrants and families, whether they are documented or undocumented migrants.

Harmonise and provide transparent, accountable and participatory negotiations and policy formulation processes and develop and implement legislation that will guarantee the rights of migrant workers and families.

## **5. Urbanisation and Human settlements**

Give priority to urban growth and manage cities as significant agents of today's global economy.

Address common concerns around health, waste management, land use management and transport.

Advance the Commonwealth State of the Cities programme as a reporting mechanism, and a means to build the evidence base for the development of urban policy.

Establish a sectoral group on Human Settlements to build partnerships between government, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the private sector.

## **6. Health**

Ensure that access to universal healthcare is made available to all; research on alternative traditional medicines is sufficiently funded; programmes to prevent and reduce Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are implemented and those to address HIV/AIDS are continued.

## **7. Education**

Pursue the adoption of a Post-2015 framework for education, which calls for free, quality and inclusive education at all levels, minimising differences in learning outcomes, defined by national standards, and respecting traditional forms of knowledge, and to provide opportunities for lifelong learning.

Adapt curriculum to the demands of the job market and restructure the quality of education in order to make people job creators rather than job seekers.

## **8. Food Security and Food Sovereignty**

Ensure food sovereignty and food security for all as a basic entitlement.

Ensure enabling conditions for the sustainability and viability of small and family farms and small scale fishing; promote sustainable cultivation practices; recognise the rights of farmers and fisher folk to access productive resources; put in place safety nets for example, public stockholding of foods; and take forward earlier commitments such as the Perth Declaration on Food Security.

## **9. Heritage, Culture and Creative Expression**

Consult creative sensibilities during planning processes and adopt and implement the Hangzhou Declaration, which calls for a new approach to public policy that embeds heritage and culture.

## **10. Governance and Diversity**

Ensure access, authority and accountability at all levels and tackle corruption decisively; ensure participation of communities and vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples and disabled persons and those living in poverty and experiencing marginalisation and civil society organisations, as a 'non-negotiable' element of participatory governance at the local, national, regional and global levels.

## **11. Financing for Development**

Fully engage in the global process of reforming the international financing architecture and consider innovative mobilisation of domestic resources for development.

## **12. Global Environmental Justice, Climate Change and Natural Resource Management**

Commit to all relevant conventions and action plans, and establish effective mechanisms with proper regulation and enforcement of compensation and investment in mitigation and adaptation, including incentives to avoid deforestation.

Define common but differentiated responsibilities for emissions reduction within Commonwealth Member States, particularly between developed and developing countries, and the largest emitters of greenhouse pollution that have the greatest prospect of securing an effective global agreement.

Ensure that the laws that govern environmentally sustainable development have real power and authority and that environmental standards and safeguards are more consistent across the Commonwealth.

Create an enabling environment that embraces traditional good practices, builds citizen capacity for managing natural resources and for meaningful participation throughout policy and planning processes.

### **13. Science and Technology**

Facilitate access to telecommunication technology; promote science and technology as part of basic education for all; and share technology and science throughout the Commonwealth, including to the most isolated and disadvantaged communities.

Support and nurture innovation and creativity; recognise the role of traditional knowledge as the basis for science and technology.

### **Commonwealth Region Specific Perspectives**

In addition to the above listed recommendations, civil society present at the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum 2013, call on the Commonwealth Heads of States and Governments, particularly those within Africa, Asia, and/or from Small Island States to:

#### **Africa**

1. Put in place mechanisms that promote respect for life and ensure human dignity with a specific focus on ending all forms of violence and conflicts in Africa.
2. Shift from dependence on externally driven financing for development towards domestic resource mobilisation through tax justice and other financing mechanisms that promote national ownership.
3. Develop initiatives that are focused on addressing the structural barriers to poverty eradication and that lead to inclusive growth.

#### **Asia**

1. Commit to just, responsive, inclusive, transparent and accountable governance that includes independence of the Judiciary and access to justice for all, as well as participatory and accountable conflict resolution.
2. Right to basic entitlements such as water, sanitation, transport, communication and information.

## Small States

1. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Marine Environments
  - a. Create a stand alone goal for SIDS in view of their inherent, interlinked vulnerabilities and in pursuit of cross cutting resilience building;
  - b. Curb overfishing; Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing; marine pollution and provide oversight of marine extractive industries;
  - c. Promote an ocean based economy with sustainability as its foundation;
  - d. Establish a SIDS specific regional/inter-regional development bank to finance projects.
  
2. Sustainable energy
  - a. Adopt a common position within the Post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals discussions to demand for “Sustainable Energy for All” as one of the goals, whilst ensuring universal access to and affordability of reliable, renewable energy sources. Member States should also end harmful fossil fuel subsidies.
  
3. Minority Rights
  - a. Recognise, protect and promote the universal, inherent, indivisible, inalienable rights of all people of sexual orientation and gender identities based on shared Commonwealth and Yogyakarta Principles;
  - b. Recognise and promote the economic, social and political empowerment of disabled people by ratifying and implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol backed by the allocation of appropriate resources;
  - c. Acknowledge the historical experiences of discrimination and oppression suffered by Indigenous peoples and recognise their cultural and traditional knowledges and social development as articulated in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
  
4. Non Communicable Diseases
  - a. Make the reduction of NCDs a priority issue.

## Conclusion and way forward

To support the practices and proposals outlined above, Commonwealth Member States must support enabling conditions for Civil Society as an underpinning development need and do the following:

1. Include civil society as partners in development frameworks, recognise their multiple roles in engagement, development and implementation;
2. Develop, foster, support and improve effective relationships between Commonwealth Member States and civil society, mutual respect for each other's roles and responsibilities for good governance, and the right of civil society to represent and advocate;
3. Appropriately support partnerships between civil society organisations and the public and private sector, with resources, access to information, skills and capacity.