



Commonwealth Youth Ministers

Sixth Meeting, Nassau, the Bahamas, 22-26 May, 2006

Report of the Sixth Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting

**and the
Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus
and Regional Advisory Board Meetings**

**Commonwealth Youth Programme
Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
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Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting Nassau, The Bahamas 24-26 May 2006

Introduction and Background

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) receives mandates for its strategic and operational directions from various governance bodies, namely the Regional Advisory Boards (RABs), Regional Youth Caucuses (RYCs), Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), the Commonwealth Secretariat's Board of Governors (BoG) and its Executive Committee (ExCo), and Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting (CYMM).

CYMM seeks to:

- Enable ministers to consider and discuss emergent themes in global youth affairs;
- Provide ministers with the opportunity to meet their Commonwealth colleagues and to exchange views in an informal atmosphere;
- Review the strategic operations and directions of the CYP and the priorities for action on youth development within the Commonwealth;
- Provide mandates, direction and guidance to the CYP for its next cycle of operations.

The Sixth Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (6CYMM) took place in Nassau, The Bahamas from 24-26 May 2006 under the theme: **Youth Empowerment for the Eradication of Poverty, Crime and HIV/AIDS**. Forty-three countries participated in the meeting; of these, twenty three were represented by Ministers. Representatives of the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sports (CABOS), Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (CYEC), the CARICOM Secretariat, Forum21, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the University of the West Indies (UWI) participated as observers.

The Meeting was opened by the Rt Hon Perry G Christie, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, and chaired by the Hon Neville W Wisdom, Minister of Youth, Sports and Housing.

CYMM was preceded by meetings of the Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus (PYC) and the Pan-Commonwealth Regional Advisory Board on 22 May. These were followed by two sets of workshops on the three proposed strategic work areas and one set of workshops on the CHOGM 2005 mandates and the 6CYMM theme on 23 May.

The CYMM examined CYP's programme and financial performance for 2003-2006, and the proposed work programme and plan of expenditure for 2006-2008. The PYC put forward their recommendations to the CYMM.

The first CYMM was held in the Maldives in May **1992**, the second in Port of Spain in **1995**, the third in Malaysia in **1998**, the fourth in Solomon Islands in **2000** and the fifth in Botswana in **2003**. Prior to that, the operations of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) were guided by the recommendations of the Commonwealth Youth Affairs Council (CYAC).

CYMM 2006

In 2003, Ministers called for greater involvement and participation of young people throughout the CYP governance process. CYMM responded to this call by changing both the content and process of the meeting, providing effective opportunities for young people to communicate the issues they felt to be of greatest concern, through structured workshops.

Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus Meeting
22 May 2006
Nassau, The Bahamas

Deputy Secretary-General Mrs Florence Mugasha, Andrew Simmons and Ignatius Takawira of CYP outlined their hopes and expectations for the meeting, encouraging the youth representatives to make their contribution. It was explained that for the first time youth representatives would be able to make direct contributions to the discussion at CYMM alongside Ministers.

Outgoing **PYC Chair Mr Dev Sindhu** presented the 2003-2006 PYC report. This covered events such as participating in the 4th Commonwealth Youth Forum, Abuja, 2003; youth participation in monitoring the Cameroon elections; PYC visits to the Commonwealth Secretariat; the Youth CHOGM; the conflict resolution conference; and in the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting in Malta in 2005. The PYC's achievements were outlined including updating of the Representatives' handbook; production of a strategic plan; initiation of the Commonwealth Young Journalists Forum; participation in youth forums; and the setting up of a website (www.cyconline.org). Challenges were outlined, especially the need for more resources, greater continuity among representatives and annual reporting for all countries.

Africa, Pacific and Caribbean RYC representatives gave their reports. Issues included:

- the need for greater co-ordination with Commonwealth Youth Forum;
- the need for a vision and sense of direction, taken up by the media; and
- the need for human rights advocacy.

Discussion (The interventions below are by countries' **youth representatives**)

- **Lesotho** called for a quota of youth in parliament.
- **UK** called for clarity on whether the Caucus had a governance or implementation role. Also pointed out that RYC lacked the dedicated funding needed for it to be youth-led, although its activities are being funded under youth participation budgets.
- **Tonga** pointed out the benefits of learning from previous representatives.
- **PYC Chair** confirmed that recommendations coming out of the discussion would be incorporated into the PYC presentation to CYMM.
- **Jamaica** called for research and documentation to ensure a clear path for succeeding youth representatives and **the Chair** suggested a role for the website in this.

The regional rotation system for nominating the PYC Chair was discussed and reaffirmed. It was decided that the handbook's provisions be clarified by a review committee which would also consider gender rotation. Meanwhile Trinidad's representative, **Mr Mobafa Baker**, was elected unopposed as PYC Chair for 2006-2008, in line with the regional rotation policy.

The **incoming PYC Chair** outlined his work experience in project management, HIV/AIDS prevention, radio and among faith-based groups.

The PYC presentation to CYMM was discussed and agreed.

Regional Advisory Board Meeting

22-23 May 2006

Nassau, The Bahamas

The Director of CYP, **Mr Ignatius Takawira**, outlined the purposes of the regional Advisory Board (RAB):

1. to brief delegates on the CYP 2006-2008 Strategic Planning process and Report;
2. to brief delegates on the Fifth Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF5) meeting report;
3. to brief delegates on CHOGM mandates and how they are to be integrated into CYP's programmes;
4. to facilitate a process of sharing and exchanging best practices across the regions;
5. to provide an opportunity for cross-fertilisation of ideas leading to adaptation of innovative youth empowerment programmes in member countries; and
6. to facilitate platforms for debate and discussion on the emerging trends in youth development.

Mr Vic Craggs OBE, CEO of the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (CYEC) briefed the RAB on the CYF5 held in Malta, 16-23 November 2005, with the theme of "Networking for Development." CYF made recommendations to CHOGM on Good Governance, Health and Sexuality, and Sustainable Livelihoods, Enterprise and ICT. It was recommended that the CYF should be formalised and the participation of RYC representatives enhanced.

Responding to questions on youth representation and mandates, **Mr Takawira** affirmed that CYP's planning process engaged young people all the way through from the RABs to CYP's strategic planning meeting in December 2005. **Mr Takawira** clarified that the majority of CYP's mandates emanate from the RABs but that CYP has adopted other global mandates in line with global development frameworks (like the UN's Millennium Development Goals). CYP funding did not allow for implementation of all mandates; its work was consolidated within its three strategic areas.

The **Deputy Secretary-General** pointed out that resource allocation issues are critical to the delivery of CYP programmes, and determine the levels and extent to which young people can participate in planning and implementation processes. She recommended:

- broader involvement of young people in the CYP governance process including programme design and implementation; and
- a focus on the new mandate, 'Respect and Understanding', as a way to enhance Commonwealth values on human rights and diversity.

Three presentations were made:

1. **Youth participation and involvement in the decision-making process at local government level in India** (**Mr Sailesh**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports; **Ms Adita Mehta**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj)
2. **A research-driven approach to youth development – the case of Barbados** (**Dr Richard Carter**, Director of Youth, Barbados)
3. **Youth enterprise development strategy to reduce poverty and create employment – the Fijian experience** (**Mr Poasa Ravea**, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Youth Employment Opportunities and Sports)

Presentation 1: Youth participation and involvement in the decision-making process at local government level in India

Mr Sailesh and Ms Mehta presented a brief profile of India, its National Youth Policy and its national level youth programmes. India's Seven-Point Programme for Youth was outlined:

1. child marriage
2. gender equity (dowry; sex determination)

3. fitness (smoking/drugs; sports/yoga/adventure)
4. HIV/AIDS
5. water literacy
6. national integration
7. employment and livelihood

Ms Mehta outlined the local governance experience of India explaining that *panch* from *Panchayati* means five, indicating the five wise men of the community who would sit and take decisions. With this historical and cultural route, the Panchayati Raj has developed as an institution of local governance at community level. She provided the following statistics to give an idea of the numbers:

- 537 District Panchayats 11,825 elected representatives
- 6097 Intermediate Panchayats 110,070 elected representatives
- 234,676 Village Panchayats 2,073,715 elected representatives

There is a great role for young people in promoting and propagating the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI). The synergy between youth clubs and PRIs leads to motivation, energy, transparency, efficiency and good governance. PRI benefits in many ways from the close engagement with young people such as young people being used as resource persons for village level micro-planning. They also have a special role in oversight and social audit functions and they have a role in experience sharing and spreading best practices.

PRI is a great model to use for creating current and future leaders through the generating interest, creating enthusiasm and a sense of participation in governance, increasing involvement in active politics, and nation-building. The Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) is the premier institute for youth research and an advocacy body of the Government of India, which promotes PRI and training young people in governance.

Ms Mehta proposed that the CYP Asia centre, in association with RGNIYD, may be declared a focal point for “youth in local governments in Commonwealth countries.” This would provide a platform for experience-sharing through exchange visits for Commonwealth youth leaders in local government institutions from Commonwealth countries. She suggested that this should begin at the South Asia level and could be emulated by any other country expressing interest or with a similar environment.

Mr Sailesh and Ms Mehta called for support from youth directors, permanent secretaries and Commonwealth youth ministers to:

- recognise that effective participation of young people at the local level is meant to empower youth, leading to the eradication of poverty;
- develop mechanisms for a greater role for youth in local governance;
- upgrade and augment the infrastructure and resources within the CYP Asia region; and
- collaborate with and pledge financial support for the programmes on youth development in local government.

Presentation 2: A research-driven approach to youth development – the case of Barbados

Dr Richard Carter, Director of youth in Barbados, provided a broad outline of the use of social research to inform the development of youth programmes in his country. Social planners are mostly removed from the reality and this was not the best way to conduct research in the area of youth empowerment. The concepts of involvement, empowerment and participation have to be operationalised. Governments could not rely heavily on census results and other surveys with wide time gaps in between surveys, as the transformation from adolescent to adulthood is short-term. Wide ranging methodologies and different types of surveys such as the National Youth Survey, School Leavers’ Tracer Survey, issue-specific social surveys, and research to prepare for the Directory of Social Services, the Directory of Higher Education and Training, and the Directory of Youth and Community Organisations. Issue-specific social surveys (such as on HIV/AIDS, etc), focus group research, and programme evaluation research have to be consistently

conducted to gather quality information on youth behaviour. In conclusion, Dr Carter highlighted the importance of integrating research into social programme formation. He advised that, as a matter of policy, youth development should be approached from a rights-based perspective and youth should be in the centre of social policy. Finally and most important, political will and commitment is crucial for youth development programmes to bear fruit.

In response to a question as to the level of youth involvement in the research process, Dr Carter stated that young people are consulted and that there are young people working in the ministry whose feedback is taken.

Dr Carter acknowledged a comment that the focus was on surveys rather than scientific research, but said the survey work was systematic and consistent. On the question of evaluation, Dr Carter said formal impact assessment of the research was a weakness now being addressed.

Presentation 3: Youth enterprise development strategy to reduce poverty and create employment – the Fijian experience

Mr Ravea informed Commonwealth Youth Ministers about key development strategies adopted in the Fiji Islands to create employment and reduce poverty and hardship. He outlined strategies implemented through the Ministry of Youth and various other stakeholders, and highlighted the key medium term development strategies highlighted in the National Strategic Development Plan.

Mr Ravea provided the context for youth development in Fiji Islands. With a total population of 840,201 (2004 figures), the country has a youth population of 20 per cent. 53.6 per cent of the population are rural dwellers, the remainder are urban dwellers. While 54 per cent are indigenous Fijians, Indians constitute 38 per cent and other minority communities constitute 8 per cent of the nation's population. Like many developing countries Fiji Islands faces formidable challenges to economic growth due to fluctuating export prices, a narrow export base, and recently, an unstable political climate.

The 2002/03 Household Income and Expenditure Survey revealed an improvement of 22.7 per cent. However, 25 per cent of households are living below the basic needs poverty line. Although absolute poverty is difficult to find in the country, increasing numbers lack basic needs, including essential services. The 2003 Asian Development Bank report revealed hardships faced by families surveyed. These were:

- low income and high living costs;
- limited access to basic services; and
- landless population of indo-Fijians, Melanesians and indigenous Fijians residing in urban squatter settlements.

With a youth unemployment rate of approximately 12 per cent, youth survey findings indicate that about 32 per cent of male youths are seeking jobs as are 26.3 per cent of females. Strikingly, 40 per cent of unemployed young people have been unemployed for three years or longer. Unemployment is higher for those with post-secondary education than for those with only secondary education.

Effective strategies taken up by the government to curb the situation include:

- a key policy for the empowerment of young people to secure gainful employment or self employment;
- the government-endorsed Youth Employment Policy Framework to promote and enhance youth employment;
- a National Youth Policy, incorporating youth enterprise as a key policy objective; and
- a 20-year strategic youth development plan, highlighting small enterprise as a key focal area.

Mr Ravea highlighted a number of agencies involved in achieving the objectives of these strategies, including: the National Centre for Small and Micro-Enterprise Development; Fiji Development Bank – Small Business Equity Scheme; the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry for Women, Social Welfare and

Poverty Alleviation; the Integrated Human Resources Development programme for Employment Promotion. The Ministry of Youth Employment Opportunities and Sports promotes youth enterprise and entrepreneurship development through training, awards, micro-finance, credit, loan schemes, etc.

The challenges and constraints faced by the Ministry in implementing these programmes include:

- inaccessibility of lending institutions to young entrepreneurs;
- lack of capital for investment;
- capacity-building needs of agencies;
- aspiring young entrepreneurs lack the necessary business acumen;
- youth projects are constrained by traditional structures and value systems;
- lack of equal access of youth to land and resources; and
- full implementation of the Youth Employment Policy Framework and close co-ordination of initiatives and resources.

In conclusion, Mr Ravea said that Fiji Islands recognises the importance of youth enterprise development. Good governance and commitment from all stakeholders are essential for targeted and effective implementation of programmes and more needs to be done to meaningfully empower young people and provide opportunities.

In response to a question about micro-finance institutions (MFIs), Mr Ravea said young people continue to face problems in getting loans and credit through MFIs. Agencies need to build their capacities and understanding of dealing with these programmes differently. Young people are often restricted by the traditional structures in accessing credit. However, the Youth Employment Framework of the Government of Fiji Islands is a conscious move to ensure smooth transitions from school to the labour market. This framework highlights the key constraints and include attitude and skills upgrade as well.

Kenya stated that it was launching a model of Junior Councils at state level to involve young people in town planning and other issues.

Botswana enquired whether there is a similar programme to that of the National Development Bank in Botswana, providing equity funds with special interest rate waivers. This particular scheme is attracting lot of criticism in Botswana.

CYP Caribbean Centre advised that youth enterprise development programmes as a strategy for youth empowerment are very important. However, it is almost like a social welfare response if they are subject to special waivers. They should be viewed from a holistic enterprise and business development perspective, with sustainability as a key factor.

CYP Pan-Commonwealth Office noted that two major issues emerging from the discussion were research and resources, and drew the RAB's attention to the World Bank report on young people, which is being published in collaboration with CYP.

CYMM Agenda Item 1

The Opening

The Official Opening of the 2006 CYMM was held at the Wyndham Nassau Resort & Crystal Palace Casino, Cable Beach, Nassau on Tuesday 23 May 2006. The meeting received addresses from the Rt Hon Perry G Christie, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, the Hon Neville W. Wisdom, Minister of Youth, Sports and Housing and the Rt Hon Don McKinnon, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth. Mr Dev Sindhu, chairperson of the pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus for the period 2003-2006 delivered a message on behalf of the young people, and the vote of thanks was given by Hon

Olifant Mfa, Assistant Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Botswana, on behalf of the outgoing 2003 CYMM Chair.

The meeting began on Wednesday 24 May with the election of the Chair – the Hon Neville W Wisdom, Minister of Youth, Sports and Housing of The Bahamas – proposed by the representative from **Zambia** and seconded by the representative from **Trinidad and Tobago**. The Chair welcomed the delegations to the meeting, and presented a framework to discuss the Secretariat's action and progress made on previous Commonwealth Youth Ministers recommendations.

The Rt Hon Don McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary-General, addressed the meeting. He reiterated the Commonwealth's commitment to placing young people at the centre of sustainable social and economic development.

The Secretary-General reported on progress and achievements in the CYP's four strategic areas (Youth Enterprise Development, Youth Networks and Governance, Youth Participation and Youth Work Education and Training) for the period 2003-2006, the mandates for which emanated from the RABS/RYPs in 2002. This report contained all the retrospective reporting for the period June 2003 - April 2006. Retrospective reporting was kept to a minimum as the CYMM was intended to be forward looking. More detailed retrospective reports had been submitted to the RAB/RYP in September/October 2005.

The Secretary-General presented a paper requesting delegates to consider reviewing the CYP budget with an uplift in resources.

Agenda Item 2

Adoption of Agenda

The adoption of the agenda was moved by the representative from **Jamaica** and seconded by the representative from **Sri Lanka**. The CYMM 2003 report was not discussed, but it had been sent to Ministers in 2003, and copies had been circulated at various governance meetings. Copies were made available throughout the meeting.

Agenda Item 3

CYP Progress Reports 2003-2006: Secretary-General's Report

A key feature of this CYMM was the Commonwealth Secretary-General's report on progress and achievements in the CYP's four strategic areas (Youth Enterprise Development, Youth Networks and Governance, Youth Participation and Youth Work Education and Training), the mandates for which expired in June 2006.

The **Secretary-General** directed attention to HIV/AIDS and health, child mortality, education and youth participation issues affecting young people in Commonwealth countries. The presentation highlighted various illustrations of young people's efforts towards making a positive difference in their communities. The illustrations from India, Botswana, Zambia and Malawi indicated that young people can contribute towards addressing HIV and AIDS issues, increasing democratic spaces through youth parliaments and engaging in income generating activities to enhance self reliance.

The Secretary-General noted that CYP is a stand-alone division whose programme implementation is dependent on pledges. He advised the meeting to consider the CYP proposal on scaling up budgetary allocation to CYP.

Agenda Item 3

CYP Progress Reports 2003-2006: Performance and Evaluation Report

Mr Ignatius Takawira, Director and Head of Youth Affairs, made a presentation to Ministers on the performance of the Division and its progress. The presentation focused on the achievements, challenges and lessons learnt from CYP programming during the period 2003- 2006.

Ministers reviewed CYP's progress and reaffirmed their commitment to youth development in the Commonwealth. They noted the emergence of a new paradigm guiding the CYP in its work, based on international human rights standards, focusing on criteria such as participation, transparency and accountability in the development and promotion of policy and programmes. Ministers also noted, with satisfaction, that the new youth development paradigm firmly places youth at the centre of sustainable development and democracy.

The CYMM applauded the progress made in raising the profile of the CYP within the international community, but recognised that young people across the Commonwealth have little appreciation of the Commonwealth and the CYP. The CYMM therefore recommended that CYP give higher priority to promoting the Commonwealth and CYP to young people throughout the Commonwealth.

CYMM reiterated the view expressed by the Committee of Management (CoM) that CYP should continue to focus its intervention in areas in which it has comparative advantage. The performance and evaluation report 2003-2006 was endorsed by the meeting.

Agenda Item 3

CYP Progress Reports 2003-2006: Youth Caucus Report

The Chairperson drew members' attention to the important role of the Youth Caucus. As per recommendations of previous CYMMs and the Ministerial Review Group (MRG) to enhance youth centrality, there has been an increase in the resources of the Youth Caucus. Its activities include internships and attachments at the Regional Centres and Pan-Commonwealth Office, participation in election observer missions, representing the CYP at international meetings, and implementing innovative HIV/AIDS programmes across the Commonwealth. UNICEF has made commitments to support this work.

It was recommended in 1998 and followed up in 2000 and 2003 that the Commonwealth Youth Caucus Report be placed early on the CYMM agenda so that Ministers could take full account of the recommendations made by the Youth Caucus.

The outgoing Chair of the Youth Caucus, **Mr Dev Sindhu**, introduced the new Youth Caucus Chair, **Mr Mobafa Baker** of Trinidad and Tobago.

The PYC comprised:

Mr Mobafa Baker	PYC Chair
Mr Batsho Elite Nthoi	Africa representative
Ms Tanjina Noushi	Asia representative
Mr Norman Gilbert	Caribbean representative
Ms Elaine Howard	South Pacific representative

Mr Dev Sindhu presented the 2003-2006 PYC Report, which included achievements, challenges and recommendations to CYP and governments.

The report highlighted work in HIV/AIDS, engagement in the CYP and RYC strategic planning process, participation in decision-making processes through youth parliaments, participation in electoral observer processes and involvement in the review of the Youth Caucus Handbook and other publications.

It was noted that despite young people's commitment to contribute to national and global development, the RYC faced challenges related to access to resources to support their work, marginalisation from national development processes and insufficient recognition or representation in Commonwealth decision-making processes. The report urged member countries to honour their pledges as a way of recognising the importance of young people's contribution to national development.

The Report highlighted the work of the Youth Caucus in revising the *Youth Representatives' Handbook* in order to make guidelines more transparent, noting the need to ensure rigorous selections of active youth leaders who are committed and accountable during their full tenure.

The Report also outlined the various achievements and in-country interventions of the Youth Caucus across the four Commonwealth Regions and noted that this work was guided by CYP's Strategic Plan as a means of creating better focus and impact.

Youth internship for the RYCs, the formation of the Commonwealth Young Journalists Forum (CYJF) and the development of a Youth Caucus website were among the several laudable highlights mentioned.

In conveying the appreciation of the Youth Caucus to Ministers for their continued involvement in the youth development process, the Report also encouraged member governments to provide greater support to RYC representatives to allow them to be more effective as agents of change in their development and advocacy work.

The outgoing Youth Caucus Chair reminded CYMM of the demographic pattern of many Commonwealth countries, particularly the developing ones, which shows that young people will continue to form a very large part of the population in decades to come. This will have serious implications and consequences for economic, social and political development.

Issues Emerging from Reports of the Secretary-General, the CYP Director and Youth Caucus

- **Trinidad and Tobago** asserted that all governments should have not only a National Youth Policy, developed in consultation with young people, but also an implementation plan in place. CYP should identify opportunities for co-ordination and enhanced partnership with other organisations such as CARICOM, the UN agencies, etc in order to maximise on limited resources, and it was imperative that the RYC member in each country was supported at all levels. Trinidad and Tobago will provide resources to the RYC Chairperson to carry out his duties (office space, equipment and staff). The RYC should identify and implement a major project, so that they can stamp their authority on a programme and make a tangible difference at country level, for example, there needs to be a youth response to HIV/AIDS.
- The **Chair** requested the CYP to develop a directory of funding/co-operating organisations to be availed to member governments.
- **Barbados** suggested member countries should build on the Youth Ambassadors for Positive Living (YAPL) programme to contribute to a comprehensive youth response to HIV and AIDS. At national level there should be closer collaboration between Ministries and organisations/agencies that impact on the lives of young people. Barbados supported the CYP budget increment request for £1m. However, it should be noted that funding for youth programmes needed to be increased at the national level too; using our joint capacity to leverage funds would increase the pool of resources for youth development overall. Barbados had increased resources to training, leadership development and human resource capacity. Further investment had been made for the establishment of youth councils

within the school system and on youth programmes eg education, enterprise development, health. Barbados proposed that CYP Regional offices be accorded some level of autonomy so they may respond to young people and youth programming with greater agility.

- **Botswana** sought clarification on the issue of voter apathy raised by RYC, and requested that the RYC pursue programmes which would ensure greater civic education and involvement in the electoral process.
- The **PYC Chair** indicated that his experience in electoral processes showed that fewer young people are participating in electoral processes because they do not feel part of the system and assume there is an aspect of tokenism.
- **Jamaica** proposed the introduction of national youth service in all member countries to respond to the Commonwealths' respect and understanding of values, to build civic pride, and to promote voluntarism and service to country. The example of Jamaica's National Youth Service was cited where 360 young people were trained in disaster preparedness and disaster management. (Refer to www.nysjamaica.org.) The RYC should identify a niche area in which young people could demonstrate an effective contribution to national development; this would ensure that they would receive the support and resources they require. It was necessary to provide requisite skills to young people to be able to raise awareness on youth issues. A curriculum should be developed to train youth club aides and leaders across all levels to assist the professionalisation of the youth sector.
- The **Chair** suggested that an audit be undertaken to assess how many National Youth Service Schemes there are in place and disseminate examples of best practice.
- **Lesotho** shared its concern as to the resource situation of CYP and proposed support to the increase in budget allocation. Defaulting countries should not be accorded equal opportunities to receive assistance from CYP so that they might understand how lack of pledges leads to diminished services to their own young people.
- The **Chair** recommended that all those countries in arrears should bring themselves into alignment.
- **United Kingdom** noted that emerging issues in the discussions were around youth work, youth participation and youth politics. We should look at opportunities for selling on the good practice we have of working with each other. We need to sell the value of what we do in an inspirational way. It was important to focus on visibility and leadership in youth development. The **UK** proposed that CYP/RYC focus on quality, excellence and standards in order to remain a leading agency and become a world expert on youth affairs.

Agenda Item 4

The Way Forward

The guiding youth development paradigm that would inform CYP's work in the 2006-2008 Strategic Period was presented by Ignatius Takawira, Head of Youth Affairs. CYP advocated for youth development that puts young people at the centre through Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods (YESL), Governance, Development and Youth Networks (GDYN) and Youth Work Education and Training (YWET).

Agenda Item 4A

The Commonwealth's Response to Youth Global Challenges in the 21st Century and the Youth Development Index (YDI)

The CYP Director for the Caribbean region, **Mr Henry Charles**, presented the key paper that would provide the platform for CYP's three strategic work areas. Strategies to reduce poverty should focus on

poor people of which young people are a majority. The presentation identified issues for consideration, which included:

- a paradigm shift in youth development moving from welfarism to development;
- a rights-based approach to youth development;
- a strategic approach defining attainable goals, indicators, credible evaluation strategies; and evidence-based interventions.

The idea of a Youth Development Index (YDI) was proposed at 3CYMM in Kuala Lumpur in 1998. Since then, CYP has been working with agencies within the UN system and the World Bank to develop a “framework that provides measurement for the purpose of evaluating changes in the status of youth development at human, institutional and national level”. CYP hosted a consultation in July 2005 involving agencies from the UN system, the World Bank, Youth Development and Research Institution to devise strategies to develop the YDI. This was followed by the Sixth Session of the UN General Assembly adopting Resolution A/RES 60/2 on “policies and programmes involving youth”, which requests the United Nations Secretariat in collaboration with other relevant United Nations programmes and agencies to establish a broad set of indicators related to youth which governments and other actors may choose to use to monitor the situation of young people. CYP has been mandated to lead on this

Agenda Item 4B

CYP Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) 2006-2015

Ms Dwynette Eversley, CYP Programme Manager for the Caribbean region, presented an outline of the Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE), the guiding framework that will inform the work of the CYP between 2006-2015, in line with the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and as the main tool for embarking on an evidence-based approach to youth development. In response to a CYP survey, member governments and stakeholders noted that PAYE was a vital tool for youth empowerment. Some of the challenges observed in implementing it were a lack of dissemination of the PAYE, inadequate resources to develop and test it, and communication difficulties in accessing the PAYE.

The revised 2006-2015 PAYE would be aligned to address and support the MDGs. CYP intends to market and promote PAYE across the Commonwealth Secretariat and through RYC activities. The PAYE views the empowerment of young people as “creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf and their own terms, rather than at the direction of others”.

The PAYE has provided CYP, member governments, the young people and all other stakeholders, a very deliberate, transparent and accountable platform on which to engage. Unless a partnership defines the rules of engagement and the paradigm of the engagement it will have difficulties in operating. CYP needs a new mandate to continue with this PAYE for a similar timeframe up to 2015, which is also the MDG timeframe.

CYMM was asked to consider this thrust of the CYP as a means to strengthen and enhance the approved PAYE as a guiding plan for CYP up the year 2015.

Agenda Item 4C

Youth Development Strategies: The Malaysian Experience

The Minister from Malaysia, **Hon Dato’ Azalina Dato’ Othman Said**, Minister of Youth and Sports, shared youth development strategies and best practices from Malaysia.

The Hon Minister reported that Malaysia is currently in its second phase of its vision to be a developed nation by 2020, and she outlined examples of initiatives to progress youth development. These included a national youth consultative council; national youth development policy; a youth development action plan (initiated in 2004) and its 11-point framework; the creation of a social and development act for youth; and defining the age of youth in all organisations. These initiatives will be brought before parliament in September 2006. The strategy is based on the eradication of poverty with emphasis on the development of human capital.

The CYP/Malaysia YDI initiative started in 1998 to enhance performance and evaluation strategies and measure impact on youth development. Thus far, the country has developed 7 domains and 33 indicators.

Issues Emerging from the Way Forward, Agenda Items 4A - 4C

- The **Chair** emphasised the importance of the paradigm shift in working with young people to a rights-based framework and the need to bring clarity and extended impact through an evidence based approach. He urged delegates to further review the report of the Youth Caucus and to ensure that their recommendations were fully integrated into this new framework.
- **Tanzania** pointed out that young people are the majority, they are poor and they are unemployed. We should create opportunities for self-employment through registered co-operatives, positive peer pressure and the provision of an enabling environment through legal and financial legislature. The key to achieving this is through training in entrepreneurship and working in credit unions.
- **Grenada** reported that in Grenada, youth development is one of three national priorities. CYP was commended on the work undertaken in the Caribbean. Member governments were encouraged to strengthen youth programming, particularly through strengthening young people, primarily the RYC. The Minister herself benefited from such a process, as she is a product of the CYP Diploma and subsequently represented the RYC. Grenada recommended that CYP:
 - provide support to governments to adopt a research- and evidence-based approach;
 - persuade governments to remove from their psyche that 'youth are the future' and appreciate that they are the present as well;
 - assist youth ministries to demonstrate the link between youth development and national development;
 - advocate for increasing the youth budget at national level;
 - support leadership training and capacity-building at national levels;
 - present, disseminate and promote best practices in Youth Work within the Commonwealth;
 - provide direct support towards monitoring and evaluation of youth development programmes;
 - provide more direct support to building the internal capacity of youth ministries; and
 - forge stronger links between CYP and other ministries.
- **Namibia** emphasised the issue of co-ordination, programme synchronisation and alignment. Youth ministries cannot operate without solid support and partnership from, for example, Ministries of Education. Youth development cuts across all sectors. Initiatives in non-formal education require links and partnerships with National Youth Councils. The Minister urged colleagues to endorse the request for the increase of the budget for the CYP.
- **Bangladesh** emphasised co-ordination among national agencies. One of the avenues for building cohesion is through national youth policy and plans of action and another is through training institutions to deliver targeted skills development programmes. YDI can support the planning effort at national level. The Minister commended the work of CYP and supported the increase in budget to enable CYP to undertake its activities.
- **India** identified unemployment as a major challenge and shared information on three initiatives: the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme; the Rights to Information Act; and the voluntary work of youth networks such as the NSS.
- The **New PYC Chair** commended the alignment of the PAYE with the MDGs; emphasised the involvement of the RYC in rolling out the PAYE which included full training on what the PAYE

comprises; encouraged Ministries of Youth to support the RYC to speak out on their role in the PAYE; called for mainstreaming in youth departments.

- **St Lucia** noted that CYP's age definition for youth was 15-29 years, but discussion focused on 15 -25 year-olds.
- The **Chair** responded that there were various definitions. For the purposes of the PAYE and YDI, members should provide information based on CYP's definition. This proposal was accepted.
- **Canada** moved a motion to adopt the key paper and the PAYE draft and **Tanzania** seconded the motion.

Agenda Item 4D

CYP Strategic Plan 2006-2008: Strategic and Operational Plans

Three strategic areas will form the plank of CYP's work for the period 2006-2008. These are:

- Governance, Development and Youth Networks (GDYN)
- Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods (YESL)
- Youth Work Education and Training (YWET)

The Director and Head of Youth Affairs, **Mr Ignatius Takawira**, presented the Strategic and Operational Plan 2006-2008.

Agenda Item 4E

CYP Budget Performance and Resource Provision

The Head of the Finance and Management Information Section (FMIS), **Mr Chris Luswata**, presented the paper on budget performance and resource provision, outlining the proposed budgets for 2006/07 and 2007/08. As per the new governance procedures, these budgets had been presented to the Commonwealth Secretariat's Board of Governors for approval at their meeting on 18 May 2006. It was proposed that the CYP budget increases in line with inflation, based on the UK Treasury's forecast GDP deflator index (which currently estimates the UK inflation rate for 2006/07 and 2007/08 at 2.46 and 2.66 per cent respectively).

The proposed 2006-2008 programme budget in support of the Strategic Plan is designed to maximise the impact of programmes through the targeting of activities in each major programme area that support directly the Advocacy, Brokerage and Catalytic (ABC) role of the CYP, and ensure appropriate levels of funding for critical core programmes with a view always to broker/access greater funds and 'in kind' resources from partners.

Levels of funding for each programme area also reflected the degree of priority for the major programme areas: **YESL** (40-45 per cent), **GDYN** (25-30 per cent) and **YWET** (30-35 per cent), as expressed in the CHOGM, Regional Advisory Board and the Regional Youth Caucus meetings.

Issues Emerging From the Way Forward, Agenda Items 4D - 4E

- **Barbados** asked how the linkage between CYP's 2006-2008 Strategic and Operational plan and the 2006-2015 PAYE is realised, as the PAYE will have indicators linked to the MDGs. If CYP is targeting to attain the MDGs by 2015, CYP's indicators for the next two years will be critical to achieving these targets. At present, there are no indicators relating to the MDGs in the PAYE. PAYE has been adopted in principle.

- The **Chair** reminded delegates that while the PAYE had been adopted in principle, it was the contribution from ministers and other stakeholders that would provide the quantitative and qualitative indicators and thereby enhance the data.
- **Cook Islands** raised a concern that the priority areas of the South Pacific region – youth health and well-being and the breakdown in family relations – were not adequately addressed.
- **Tonga RYC** said that it and the Pacific youth had realised the need to address the family relations issue and the critical importance of family values; therefore any efforts to work with young people had to include young people’s links to family and community. The importance of family values needed greater attention in the Strategic Plan.
- **United Kingdom RYC** asked what the basis was for resource allocation to the CYP pan-Commonwealth Office and to the regional centres.
- The **Head of FMIS** responded that the allocation reflected trends in expenditure, geographical dispersion and spread and type of activities.
- **Lesotho RYC** noted that young people were under-represented at the meeting and that poverty, crime and HIV/AIDS could not be eradicated if youth were not part of the planning and delivery process, particularly since young people make up more than 50 per cent of the Commonwealth population. As Ministers endorse the Strategic Plan, the programmes and resources should reflect the importance accorded to young people.
- The **Deputy Secretary-General** provided clarification that there have been extensive consultations with young people across the Commonwealth prior to the development of the Strategic Plan. In addition, this forum was a ministers meeting and provision had been made for youth at the regional level.

Agenda Item 4F

Programme Priorities 2006-2008

The original four sub-programmes for 2003-2006 have been revised and deepened in line with the RAB and RYC recommendation “for consolidation of the Plan rather than development of new strategic priorities” and to incorporate the strands from the CHOGM 2005 mandates. As a result, there are now three strategic programme areas for 2006-2008.

The authors of the strategic papers (available at www.thecommonwealth.org/cyp) provided CYMM with the *conceptual framework/paradigm* and strategies for implementation, providing an insight into the intended *impact* of the programme. Each programme area was presented in terms of the underpinning theory, the vision and intended impact and the suggested strategies for attaining these goals.

Programme 1 Governance, Development and Youth Networks (GDYN)

Ms Amanda Shah

Ms Shah requested delegates to examine the GDYN strategic programme area as part of a web of programmes being delivered by the CYP. The GDYN strategic programme area of the CYP aims to provide an enabling environment for young people to become central actors in societal change, specifically in planning and taking decisions about development.

Ms Shah called for opportunities to actively assess and strengthen our own systems, and build monitoring and evaluation systems, which would enhance capacity-building and extend impact.

Programme 2 Youth Enterprise And Sustainable Livelihood (YESL)

Mr Cecil Ryan

Mr Ryan outlined the scope and parameters of the YESL strategic programme area. CYP considers youth enterprise development a useful strategy for creating income opportunities for young people, while empowering young people and adding value to their contributions. However, it is limiting for at least two reasons: it treats young people as a population sector separate from mainstream life; and income generation and employment creation for young women and men are not placed within the wider context of youth policy as part of an integrated social and economic development process. Given the complex nature of youth livelihoods, it is clear that policy interventions that focus solely on providing jobs for youth will rarely be sustainable if they fail to take into account the holistic nature of youth livelihood systems.

Programme 3 Youth Work Education And Training (YWET)

Mr Chandu Christian

Mr Christian argued that the profession of youth work should have a more extensive role in defining social policy (with special reference to youth policy development) if it is expected to develop and deliver youth programmes as well as provide *feedback* to planners and policy-makers on implementation and research. It is the responsibility of the youth worker to ensure that the interests of young people, both organised and unorganised, are protected. A holistic development of young people demands that we pay attention not only to their physical and mental development but also to their spiritual development.

Agenda Item 4G Strategic Planning Cycle

The Director of CYP, **Mr Ignatius Takawira**, reported on the High-Level Review recommendations approved by CHOGM in Durban 1999 and Coolom in Australia in 2002. The Commonwealth Secretariat was directed to streamline its operations as well as reduce the number of governing bodies overseeing the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat Divisions.

As a result, the CYP Committee of Management was dissolved and its functions were subsumed by the newly established Commonwealth Secretariat Board of Governors (BoG) and its Executive Committee. The CYP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was also revised to align it with the new governance structures.

All Commonwealth governments are represented on the BoG. It meets annually (in May) to give strategic direction on major policy issues, review implementation of CHOGM mandates and approve strategic plans, work programmes and budgets (in a two year cycle that is synchronised with CHOGMs). The BoG reviews the implementation of CHOGM mandates, thus supplanting the functions of the Commonwealth Senior Officials Meetings in non-CHOGM years. The Board of Governors may meet outside the UK from time to time.

Mr Takawira summarised the changes as follows:

- In order to align itself with the Commonwealth Secretariat, CYP is moving from a 3-year cycle to a 2-year cycle for the 2006-2008 period;
- CYP will move to a 4-year cycle for 2008-2012;
- Thereafter, CYMM will meet every 4 years to consider CYP programme areas and budgets;
- In order to minimise loss of momentum and enhance continuity, CYMM will select a group of six to eight Ministers to conduct a mid-term review of CYP progress and budgets, commencing in 2010;
- This CYMM is to consider these arrangements for endorsement in principle; and
- The next CYMM will consider the terms of reference and composition of the mid-term review group.

Issues Emerging from the Way Forward, Agenda Item 4G

Several countries discussed the implications for youth representation and the length of tenure for youth representatives.

- The **Chair** endorsed the request for the RYC to discuss the implications for youth representation and submit a proposal for discussion.
- The **PYC Chair** (the RYC having had an opportunity to caucus on the issue) submitted the following proposal:
 - RYC's should be appointed for a two-year term and should be eligible to serve another two-year term, based on their willingness to serve and following an assessment of their past performance and plans for the next two years by CYP, ministers and young people.
 - Youth representation on the evaluation committee should be made up of the four regional coordinators or their deputies (appointed in the manner reflected in the Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus Handbook) and the Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus Chairperson, in line with the principle outlined in the CYP Memorandum of Understanding agreed at CYMM 2003 in Botswana, which ensures youth representation at all governance meetings where youth matters are discussed.
- The Chair summarised the resolution of the proposed new CYP governance alignment to the Commonwealth Secretariat as follows:
 - CYMM will meet every four years to consider CYP programme areas and budget and the process commences in 2008;
 - The next CYMM will select a group of six to eight ministers, representing the four regions of the Commonwealth. The interim committee will include the incoming and outgoing CYMM chair and representation from the RYC;
 - The interim committee will conduct a mid-term review of CYP's progress and budgets;
 - The principles and the modalities of the interim meeting will be deliberated and decided upon at the next Regional Advisory Board Meetings. They will then be presented to CYMM 2008 for final approval.

The meeting agreed and adopted the above resolution.

Agenda Item 5 **Reports from Collaborating Partner Agencies**

The following agencies have partnered with the CYP on joint programmes, or have funded specific projects:

Commonwealth of Learning (CoL)
Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (CYEC)
UN Agencies – UNICEF
Commonwealth Advisory Body of Sports (CABOS)
The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

Partners made presentations to ministers on their work with CYP and strategies for enhancing collaboration in the future.

The Commonwealth of Learning (CoL)

CoL assists on open learning and distance education projects, particularly the YWET programme. Owing to a board meeting taking place at the same time as CYMM, a CoL representative could not be present. Mr Henry Charles, regional director for the Caribbean, read the message from **Sir John Daniel**, President and Chief Executive Officer of CoL.

CoL recently had the opportunity to meet with colleagues from Commonwealth Youth Programme in London and from the Caribbean Regional Centre to discuss ways to use information and communications technology and open/distance learning in the delivery of its Diploma and Certificate programmes.

CYP and COL share a similar challenge that motivates their work: recognising that conventional methods of education and training simply cannot meet the massive need for learning in support of development. In recent conversations with CYP, the two agencies agreed that technology is transforming other areas of life and it is time to use it to improve radically the scope and scale of learning. The two agencies also share similar aims: to empower people with the learning that makes them agents of development.

The Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (CYEC)

CYEC has participated in a major project on Citizenship and Young People and, together with CYP, has co-ordinated the Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) since its inception in 1997. **Mr Vic Craggs OBE**, CEO of CYEC and **Mr Jean-Paul de Lucca**, Chair, Commonwealth Youth Forum, presented a summary report of CYF5, which took place in Malta in 2005.

The Focus of CYF5

- the overarching theme was ‘networking for development’, and the emphasis was on what young people can do as ‘active citizens’. CYF focused on interchange and skills development; thematic issues included youth poverty, unemployment, participation, HIV/AIDS, human rights and democracy; good governance and active citizenship, health and sexuality, sustainable livelihoods, enterprise and ICT;
- delivering the message to young people, civil society, the private sector and governments as partners in development ;
- presenting a message to CHOGM highlighting critical youth issues;
- some 35 countries were represented, encompassing 110 delegates and all four Commonwealth regions.

Recommendations

- investment by governments and Commonwealth agencies in the institutionalisation and sustainability of CYF in Uganda 2007 and beyond;
- formalisation of CYEC and CYP roles in supporting CYF;
- Youth Caucus representation at future CYFs to ensure synergy and linkage with action plans and targets;
- support for a Commonwealth Youth Network, structure and ICT platform;
- development of a Commonwealth Youth Pact to assist young people’s involvement in decision-making and promote citizenship education.

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF has partnered with CYP on a range of projects and has provided in excess of £200,000 for youth health peer projects and youth participation publications. **Ms Christine Norton**, Regional Adviser, Adolescent Development and Gender Equality, UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean presented UNICEF’s message.

UNICEF’s contribution to the MDGs overlaps with some of the key priorities identified by the CYP including HIV/AIDS prevention, prevention and reduction of crime and violence, youth participation and networking and quality education and several other areas that affect the respect, protection and fulfilment of the rights of children in these and other countries around the globe. UNICEF’s goal for and with young people is holistic and positive adolescent development which moves away from a problem focus to a developmental focus aimed at increasing skills and assets as early as possible and creating more protective environments which nurture the transition from childhood to adulthood across the lifecycle.

In this respect, UNICEF thanked CYP, and specifically Andrew Simmons, for working closely with UNICEF to put out a set of tools to facilitate more meaningful youth participation. These will be used around the world to help build capacity of young people and adults.

Three challenges were presented around which CYP and UNICEF could work together in the future:

1. creating a culture of rights;
2. creating a continuum of investment in youth; and
3. mainstreaming youth development.

Commonwealth Advisory Board on Sport (CABOS)

CABOS is in the process of working with CYP to explore opportunities for using sports as a tool for development. **Ms Beng Choo Low**, a member of CABOS, made a presentation on

- changing young people's lives through sport
- the power of sport to deliver mainstream youth agendas
- youth development through physical education and sport
- young people at risk - building inclusive communities
- promoting healthy lifestyles and increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS through sport
- policy recommendations

After lengthy debate on the strategies for promoting Sport, the **Chair** summarised the discussion as follows: Sport can be used as a positive power to deliver the mainstream youth development agenda through the promotion of healthy lifestyles, increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS, and through reducing youth crime and poverty. Sports can also be a tool for engaging, inspiring, motivating and empowering youth to realise their full potential.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

Dr Heather Johnson, Deputy Programme Manager, Community Development, CARICOM Secretariat, presented the framework for collaboration between CARICOM and CYP.

Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM)

- regional integration organisation
- small island developing states 15 + 5
- population of 3 million, 58 per cent under 30
- improve quality of life of citizens
- co-operation in foreign policy, economic development, trade, human and social development

Why CARICOM/CYP collaboration?

- one goal – youth empowerment, development
- one region, same youth population, same issues and priorities
- adoption of one institutional framework – RSYD
- same youth governance structures (ministries, Directors of Youth Affairs, youth organisations)
- overlap in programming
- unique competitive advantages (specialist vs multi-sectoral)
- both headquartered in Georgetown, Guyana

All partners indicated a willingness to continue collaborating with CYP.

The **Chair** requested that CYMM takes note of the work of CYP and its partners.

Agenda Item 6

Ministerial Thematic Key Papers by Lead Speakers

CYMM received presentations from eminent speakers who made presentations on topical issues affecting young people in the Commonwealth:

- Youth crime and violence (Superintendent Keith Bell, The Bahamas)
- HIV/AIDS: the challenges for young people (Mr Jonah Josiah, Kenya)
- CHOGM Mandate on Respect and Understanding (Mr Ignatius Takawira, CYP Director)
- CHOGM Mandate on the Digital Divide (Mr Carlos Fernandes, Singapore)

Full texts are available from www.thecommonwealth.org

In addition, two cross-cutting issues also core to the CYP's new programming areas during 2006-2008, were presented:

- National Youth Councils and National Youth Policy (Dr Tennyson Joseph, St Lucia)
- Youth mainstreaming (Dr Rawwida Baksh, Adviser & Head, Gender Section, Commonwealth Secretariat)

Synopsis Youth Crime and Violence

Superintendent Keith Bell, The Bahamas

The computer, digital and cellular age brings about changes in the face of crime and usher in a new generation of technologically-astute young offenders. The assumption is that the largest offending demographic group will continue to be young males between 15 and 25 years of age. This at-risk group continues to grow as a strong, constant male presence is notably absent from the home and the only role models available to these disenfranchised youths are gangster movie heroes and the stars of rap, reggae and rock.

The increase of technology and global access to information combined with the changing face of the traditional family structure has resulted in a large number of young people who, while technically smarter and more astute, lack the fundamental discipline and support most commonly seen in two-parent traditional families. New, materialistic images portrayed by 'surrogate parents/role models' from film, television and music are reaching the youth (many of whom are latchkey children) during their formative years, resulting in increased delinquency and criminal behaviour among the young people of The Bahamas, the Caribbean and the rest of the world.

The input of various government departments that focus on youth (sports, culture, and youth) was addressed and the necessity for a policy of inclusion when dealing with matters concerning the youth was also given attention.

The presentation also examined the School Policing Initiative, a strategy that was recently instituted by the Government of The Bahamas, which seeks to address the growing concern of violence within the school system. By extension, the Programme also serves as a catalyst to direct young people in the areas where they show special interests as opposed to imposing subjects on them. In this way, it is anticipated that their paths would be redirected and they would become productive citizens of society.

Synopsis HIV/AIDS: The challenges for young people

Mr Jonah Josiah, Kenya

HIV/AIDS is undoubtedly a universal challenge, perhaps the greatest so far faced by Commonwealth member states, with the vast majority being developing countries in Africa, Asia, Caribbean and the

Pacific. Commonwealth countries account for approximately 30 per cent of the world's population, but carry a disproportionate 60 per cent of the world's HIV/AIDS burden. Thirteen Commonwealth countries in sub-Saharan Africa now have HIV/AIDS adult prevalence of between 15 to 39 per cent, with women disproportionately infected.

It is estimated that 50 per cent of all new HIV infections are among young people, and that 30 per cent of the 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS are in the 15-24 age group. The vast majority of young people who are HIV positive do not know that they are infected, and few know the HIV status of their partners. In sub-Saharan Africa, 60 per cent of all infections occur in young females.

Poverty is gradually becoming a youth phenomenon, in turn creating a downward spiral of inter-generational poverty. The HIV/AIDS epidemic, combined with the demographic, cultural, social and economic factors associated with those living in poverty, presents a significant challenge in establishing a sustainable livelihood. As a group, young women and men are marginalised in society, which results in limited access to resources, including kinship networks, education, land, technology and little or no interaction with formal institutions. Young women in particular, are affected in a disproportionate manner.

Synopsis CHOGM Mandate on Respect and Understanding
Mr Ignatius Takawira, CYP Director

Multiculturalism in some Commonwealth countries today is dividing, and thus damaging, its people. The Commonwealth people are being divided into religious faith groups even though all are multi-faceted individuals with a range of economic, cultural and ideological identities. This classification interferes with their freedom to make choices and ultimately denies them the freedom to choose what they want to become.

Extremist and terrorist groups mostly attract young people who are inspired by ideological beliefs or pragmatic political aims, such as self-determination, secession, recognition as citizens. These beliefs are only created as a result of their division and classification in the first place, which has led to their disempowerment and isolation.

The subject of respect and understanding is broad, topical, sensitive and at times emotive. The Commonwealth undertakes to promote respect and understanding through a robust and inclusive consultative process, using all the available Commonwealth networks of official and civil society-based organisations.

The consultations will also take into account the work already done by other organisations in this field and add value to that work, ensuring that the Commonwealth work on this subject is underpinned by the Commonwealth's fundamental values of democracy, human rights, good governance, gender equality and respect for the rule of law.

Synopsis CHOGM Mandate on the Digital Divide
Mr Carlos Fernandes, Singapore

Participation of young people in youth policy-making has been strengthened by developments in ICT, and advances in technology are opportunities for creating sustainable livelihoods, particularly by increasing access to services and markets for rural areas.

Young people are increasingly choosing to educate themselves in the fields of computer science, information technology, management information systems and electronics. Because of the growing demand for these skills, many young people are finding employment at attractive pay scales. This has served to open the doors for students from developing countries who are now in high demand worldwide for their essential skills in today's information society.

The presentation highlighted the strides made by young people in contributing to national development through technology and scientific, technical and medical research. It demonstrated how country efforts may be accelerated by providing young people with appropriate incentives and opportunities, and how advances in technology and communications can create opportunities for youth self-employment. Finally, it proposed how the CYP Technology Empowerment Centre (CYPTEC) model may be enhanced and extended to other countries.

Synopsis National Youth Councils and National Youth Policy
Dr Tennyson Joseph, St Lucia

CYP's work to develop national youth policies (NYPs) dates back to 1974, as it believed the creation of NYPs is an acknowledgement of the specific needs of young men and women, as well as formal recognition of their unique contribution to national development. NYP provides a means and a symbol for society as a whole to declare, document and intensify their commitment to their young citizens, and an occasion to determine appropriate priorities, goals and strategies. It provides an opportunity to give expression to a nation's understanding of values, rights and responsibilities as regards their young women and men. No policy can stand in isolation as though it were a completely independent sphere or activity without interface with and integration into other related policies. Youth research has for a long time been relatively isolated from youth policy; however there has been growing awareness and action to redress this separation.

National Youth Councils (NYCs) have been instrumental in building the qualities of character and leadership and engendering a spirit of civic activism in young people. Building up youth organisations means building up young people with experience and leadership qualities. But building organisations also means building healthy organisational traditions. This is not only concerned with framing appropriate rules and regulations, as important as these are, but also calls for a commitment to a certain set of values and principles. The search for appropriate youth leadership has to extend beyond urban and educated groups to include rural and marginalised young people, so that the voluntary spirit and ensuing services rendered by NYCs and other youth organisations may be optimised. Sustainable development should also involve how youth councils and youth organisations can become less dependent on governments or other subsidies in order to be truly non-partisan and be seen as intrinsically relevant and representative of the widest cross-section of youth.

Synopsis Youth Mainstreaming
Dr Rawwida Baksh, Adviser & Head, Gender Section,
Commonwealth Secretariat

Dr Baksh and the Gender Section have developed groundbreaking strategies, policies and tools for gender mainstreaming. Dr Baksh shared experiences and challenges for initiating similar action to place youth development issues on the national and global agenda.

The challenge of making young people an integral part of our work is especially sharp for those organisations that do not work with 'youth issues' and with young people in a direct way. These can be said to be mainstream organisations working in areas such as agriculture, law, economic development, architecture, social policy, research, health and so on. Their work has an impact on young people as it

does on all members of society. Over the years, most organisations, whether they work with young people or not, have realised that their work is not maximising its impact. They are also aware that they may not survive into the future unless they bring in young people as full partners.

Mainstreaming youth forces all our organisations to think in a different way about our relationships with young people. This is especially true for organisations that do not work in the 'youth field' as stated above. Mainstreaming youth in society is about ensuring that young people are a full part of all organisations and all social institutions that make up our societies. Like gender mainstreaming, youth mainstreaming seeks to ensure the full citizenship of people; enabling an excluded sector of society to become integral in shaping the nature of that society through its different social formations, organisations and institutions.

It also helps organisations and institutions that serve society to prioritise the needs and interests of young people. Its final aim is to enable organisations to bring young people into their ranks, making them partners with adults to create a better world.

Agenda Item 6

Ministerial Thematic Key Papers by Lead Speakers: Youth Participation: The Indian Experience

Hon Prithwiraj Chavan, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, shared his country's experience and opportunities for delegates to emulate the work delivered through youth networks.

India is demographically 'young,' with a national average age of about 27 years and it will continue to be young for the next 25 years. The demographic bulge is evidenced by the fact that 77 per cent of Indians are below 35 years of age. Youth and adolescents (between the ages of 10 and 35) are estimated to number about 500 million, constituting 47 per cent of the country's population. The needs and aspirations of youth differ vastly along different cleavages, like the rural/urban or student/non-students divides.

Decentralised governance

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI)

- 537 elected District Councils (Panchayats), having 12,000 elected members.
- 6097 Intermediate Councils (Panchayats), having 110,070 elected members.
- 234,000 Village Councils (Panchayats), having 2.1 million elected members.
- About 70 per cent of elected members are youth.

Indian youth networks

21.4 million volunteer youth are networked through five youth organisations:

1. Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) - 8 million (for non-student rural youth)
2. National Service Scheme (NSS) - 2.4 million (for student youth)
3. Bharat Scouts and Guides (BSG) - 3.5 million
4. National Cadet Corps (NCC) - 1.5 million
5. Youth Red Cross (YRC) - 6 million

Opportunities for Synergy

- Youth Clubs have incubated today's grass-roots leaders
- 230,000 Youth Clubs
- 8 million members
- 240,000 Panchayats

Affirmative action

- Voting age has been reduced to 18 years.
- At all three tiers of local self government institutions (Panchayats), 33 per cent reservations exist for women for all posts .

Agenda Item 6

Ministerial Thematic Workshops

Eight parallel **ministerial thematic workshops**, in two sets of four were held. Ministers were given opportunities to interrogate the speakers about their presentations during plenary and ministerial workshops. Ministers assisted the facilitators, and members from the RYC acted as rapporteurs to the meeting. In collaboration with the facilitators, delegates assisted in the preparation of recommendations for reporting to the plenary by the Chair of each workshop.

The purpose of the ministerial thematic workshops was to provide an opportunity for delegates to examine national and regional priorities, achievements and aspirations in these areas, reflect on regional and pan-Commonwealth trends, and exchange information on country experiences in order to identify fruitful lines of development.

Each workshop looked at the following:

1. Strategies for operationalising and implementing the strategic programme area or theme;
2. Policies and resource support from governments;
3. Role of civil society, development institutions and other stakeholders in the development and implementation process; and
4. Developing indicators to monitor and evaluate the strategic programme or theme to feed into the Youth Development Index.

Agenda Item 6A

Ministerial Thematic Workshops - Set I

Four separate sessions were held on:

1. Youth crime and violence;
2. HIV/AIDS: The challenges for young people;
3. CHOGM Mandate - promoting respect and understanding;
4. CHOGM Mandate - young people and the digital divide.

Workshop 1

Youth Crime and Violence

Issues raised

- The increased incidence of crime, its many causes, tackling it.
- Young people as victims and as perpetrators.
- How the socioeconomic effects of government decisions/non-decisions affect the future of young people and the choices they make.
- Deterioration of morals in society.
- Partnerships, youth empowerment organisations, youth enrichment programmes and urban renewal programmes being undertaken in The Bahamas and other countries. Aimed at reducing criminal, gang activities and anti-social behaviour, and creating a safer home/community environment for young people.

Recommendations

- International methods of addressing crime.
- Use of media to balance negative stories about youth with positive ones.
- Infusion of positive life skills in the school curriculum.
- Strengthen programmes for the critical age group 10-14, a weak area.
- Use of uniform discipline groups as well as the community to assist with positive youth friendly programming

Workshop 2 HIV/AIDS: the challenges for young people

Issues raised

- Why are young people in particular affected by HIV/AIDS.
- Issues around sex and sexuality.
- Supporting family values and structure.
- Educational systems – do they provide adequate education?.
- Health Services – are they accessible and youth friendly?.
- Role of media.
- Youth/PLWA involvement and participation throughout design, implementation and monitoring of projects – for quality and accountability.
- Funding of HIV/AIDS programmes.
- Differences experienced by small and large states.
- Unsupportive legal and judicial system.
- Translating knowledge into positive behaviour change.
- The need to invest more in outreach.
- Endorsement of CYP's YAPL initiative.
- The need for comparable data and best practices shared across different countries.

Recommendations

- CYP to provide Commonwealth countries with technical support in delivery of HIV/AIDS programmes targeted at youth behaviour change.
- The need for HIV/AIDS information to be provided to youth during all CYP seminars, meetings and workshops that involve youth.
- Although the YAPL initiative as an innovative programme is recognised, the full potential of the programme needs to be fully exploited.
- Initiatives to be developed, emphasising the need for the family and parents to be more responsible in shaping the lives of young.
- There is inadequate data on youth and HIV/AIDS, the YDI process should initiate research to fill the gap.

Workshop 3 Promoting respect and understanding

Issues raised

- Policy-makers must use frameworks to analyse causes of conflict, appreciate their people's perceptions of injustices and consult and agree broadly on what might be done to mitigate/address these injustices.
- They must empower young people through good quality and accessible education, enterprise and sustainable development and political inclusion as long-term protection mechanisms against extremist ideas, conflict-making situations and politically motivated violence.
- Young people must have the awareness and freedom to choose their identity rather than be classified

and/or vilified because of economic status, socio-political status, health, gender or any similar typecasting.

Recommendations

- Promote and support good practise like the Uganda youth NGO's 'always be tolerant' ethos that infuses their operations.
- Develop and adopt school curriculum on dispute resolution, peace education and tolerance.
- Promote and support local, regional and international exchange programmes.
- Examine the spiritual dimension of peace, tolerance, respect and understanding.
- Undertake wide consultation and research to establish causes, examine manifestations and find solutions.
- Involve young people at every level, promote youth empowerment itself to take forward the respect and understanding agenda
- Recognise critical importance of family, community and social networks in promoting good values – put them at the centre of any strategy. (Respect comes from the interpersonal level first.)
- Optimise the role of education in awareness-building and examine strategies for de-bunking stereotypes.
- Collate and distribute diverse case studies from around the Commonwealth, including from Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tonga, and Northern Ireland.

Workshop 4

Young people and the digital divide

Issues raised:

- Basic infrastructure, literacy and English-language competence are factors. For example in India two-thirds of the population is illiterate and there are some eighteen languages. In Uganda, many schools are without electricity, although school computers are subsidised.
- Success stories in India include the CYPTEC on Wheels and some 100,000 rural kiosks.
- In Malawi, people who were once not privy to ICT have become trainers to others.
- Income tax forms are done online in Singapore and UK.

Recommendations:

- CYP to use models of best practises that exist across the Commonwealth with regard to information technology accessibility approaches and availability.
- Infrastructural development to facilitate the availability and access of technology is being demanded with urgency.
- Call for CYP to build up resources and support national efforts between government and private sector agencies.
- Examine how open source technology can be used by a country that is not as populous.
- Use a combination of methods that are not all technology based such as sending email to a hub, which is then printed and hand-delivered by local methods available (bicycle, motorcycle, rickshaw).
- Get used PCs from certain countries and donate these to other countries. Convince governments and organisations in Commonwealth countries which have human resource capacity and relevant skills to invest in skills development in other Commonwealth countries.

Agenda Item 6B

Ministerial Thematic Workshops - Set II

Four separate workshop sessions were held on:

1. Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE)
2. Youth Development Index (YDI)
3. Youth mainstreaming
4. National Youth Policy (NYP) and National Youth Councils (NYC)

Workshop 5 Plan of Action For Youth Empowerment (PAYE)

Issues raised

- How to better align PAYE with governments' national youth development strategies.
- How to align PAYE with MDGs.
- What empowerment is: its enabling conditions.
- How to achieve youth participation, including through the RYCs, training and participation "tools".
- Involvement of other Commonwealth Secretariat Divisions and partners.
- The link between implementing PAYE and achieving youth mainstreaming.
- Addressing implementation issues such as funding, human resources, marketing and promotion.
- Collaboration with civil society, IGOs, the private sector, the media, etc.

Recommendations

- Make indicators qualitative and country-specific.
- Ensure that we align PAYE with Strategic Plan and YDI.
- Baseline studies and research on youth will need to take into account national statistics.
- Whose document is the PAYE, governments or Secretariat? This needs clarification.
- Avoid duplication: harmonise indicators with targets set by UN agencies.
- Monitoring and evaluation must be onus of all stakeholders – make that clear.
- Train youth to monitor and evaluate PAYE and involve them in disseminating information and progress reports.
- Suggest partnership for co-ordination: activities to be done at national level by different youth bodies .
- Build partnerships with UN agencies for implementation at national level.
- Focus on how to motivate countries to implement PAYE.
- PAYE to incorporate role of family as for the CYP 2006-2008 Strategic Plan.

Workshop 6 Youth Development Index (YDI)

Issues raised

- General agreement on the importance of the YDI.
- Concern over the issue of resources for the development and implementation of the YDI.
- Concern over the technical challenges involved in the development and implementation of the YDI, including data collection, the range and scope of indicators to be used.
- Concern on how the YDI will deal with cultural variation and the cultural relevance of indicators.
- Critical issue of involving of young people in the development of the YDI to ensure buy-in right through the process.

Recommendations

- The development of a national mechanism to co-ordinate data collection to be fed into the YDI.
- The creation of a digest of the YDI and the establishment of focal points in the relevant ministries.
- The provision of technical assistance and specialised training through CYP, exchange programmes, internships, etc in respect of the implementation of the YDI.
- Consideration of the recommendation that there be an initial focus on those indicators relevant to the three strategic areas of CYP (GDYN, YESL and YWET) as part of a phased introduction of the YDI.
- Circulation of the framework of proposed indicators under the YDI to Commonwealth member states for their consideration, review and comment.

Workshop 7 Youth Mainstreaming

Issues raised

- Strategic youth development plans need to address barriers to young people including:
 - criteria for start-up loans;
 - cultural implications and obligations;
 - negative attitudes; and
 - gender inequality.
- There is a lack of understanding of the youth agenda by other agencies.
- Youth ministries need to be in a better position in government to influence change; lack of governmental co-ordination on youth issues.
- Cross-sectoral approach with relevant stakeholder participation, especially youth participation.
- Youth ministry's role would be to:
 - establish a cross-government/ multi-sector approach;
 - undertaking advocacy and influence;
 - providing resources and identifying key focal points in other ministries;
 - identifying credible NGOs and community organisations; and
 - ensuring developments reflect the current needs of young people.

Recommendations

- Under PAYE action point 3, National Youth Policies and Operational Plans implemented in all countries by 2015.
- Youth development to be represented as a percentage of the national budget by 2015.
- Increase resource allocation to youth ministries by 30 per cent.
- Offer incentives to the private sector to provide internships, training, mentoring and other socially responsible activities.

Workshop 8 National Youth Policy (NYP) and National Youth Councils (NYCs)

Issues raised

- Importance of national youth policies and national plans of action in youth development implementation.
- Importance of functional national youth councils in co-ordination of youth programme delivery.
- Importance of appropriate indicators for youth empowerment to measure impact
- What is the broad set of policy emphases desired by CYP?
- The need for a democratic youth-led approach. How is such youth inclusion to be actualised in the formulation of youth policy? Is the thrust to come from youth groups, the National Youth Councils or the democratically elected government?

- How can the adoption/agreement by member states of the CYP National Youth Policy approach be measured?
- What is the relationship between the government and the NYC?
- What is the role of the NYC and other civil society groups in the formulation of National Youth Policy?

Recommendations

- Highlight and document specific national disagreements, objections and points of concern related to the applicability/desirability of the CYP agenda.
- Highlight specific national experiences with respect to the approaches adopted. Specific discussions may centre on the role of National Youth Councils, civil society, youth groups and government in the framing of NYP.
- Identify key areas around which clear modes of measurement of the actualisation of the CYP agenda can be undertaken. The existing documents on the YDI can provide a basis for discussion.
- Highlight specific national experiences, which can inform the CYP on the efficacy/practicability of the NYP framework pursued.
- Indicate country positions on specific areas of emphasis as highlighted in the CYP policy documents with a degree of explanation. For example:
 - the policy may be unworkable due to resource constraints;
 - the policy may not meet national approval; and
 - the policy is ideologically objectionable;
- National Youth Policy and National Plans of Action should be mandatory. National Youth Policies must be integrated into national development plans and contribute towards enhancing the profile of youth ministries.
- Indicate country-specific reactions to the experience of National Youth Councils, and other youth organisation in the implementation of National Youth Policy, and highlight the relationship between the NYCs and governments. National Youth Councils should be non-partisan, democratically-elected and broad-based. While they may be a legitimate partner of government, they should retain their independence and continue to be representative of the vision and views of young people.
- Strengthen the relationship between the NYCs, youth groups and governments to ensure greater democratic participation in the formulation of NYP. Enhance support to young people and undertake capacity-building for youth organisations.
- Develop suggested indicators that inform the formulation of a YDI as it relates to NYP and NYCs. These should:
 - include standards on shelter;
 - include measurement of skills levels;
 - include indicators to measure importance of youth ministries;
 - use CYP's age definition; and
 - analyse the ratio of young people in government as a measure of youth empowerment.

Agenda Item 6C

Report-Back on Ministerial Thematic Workshops

- **Barbados** identified a need for special training on PAYE and said there should be local monitoring and evaluation committees consisting of government agencies and young people. This was consistent with what was agreed previously about youth involvement. Further, there should be a national audit of all donor support since there should be a clear understanding of the level of support from each agency. The PAYE needed to be strengthened in order to gain government support, and countries should continue to participate in the review of the PAYE in order to ensure consensus across 53 countries.
- The **Botswana RYC member (Africa RYC co-ordinator)** requested that all countries within the Commonwealth accept the definition of young people as defined by CYP. Young people would lose

the opportunity to be involved in the consultative process if the older age group is allowed. There are cultural practices which suggest that young people should give way to older persons. If there is a youth parliament but parliamentarians are 35 years of age there will be a problem of distinguishing between the members of youth parliament and the parliament.

- The **CYMM Chair** reminded the meeting that it had previously agreed to accept the Commonwealth's definition of youth for the purposes of CYP interventions, but since the definition varies across member states it would be difficult to impose definitions on countries. He further noted that The Bahamas was forced to redefine youth age category after a study indicated that there was need to start at an earlier age.
- The **PYC Chair** endorsed the views of the Botswana RYC member. He requested an emphasis on family life skills, since this pointed to an impact on issues of HIV/AIDS and crime and violence.
- **Samoa** recommended that the Secretariat and CYP should become a vehicle and tool through which the shift in the youth ministries may become operational on the ground as she saw "no shift in the way we work and the role we play." There was recognition of enhanced empowerment as a result of the very good work CYP had been developing over the years. However, the proposed operational plan should look beyond 2008 and look at how we could more efficiently use the funds, and better serve our needs. The Regional Centres should play a huge role in dispersing and decentralising CYP, and we need to see that the regional priorities are implemented. Areas like fundraising should be considered so that we consider an exit strategy in the next 10-15 years.
- The **CYMM Chair** was fully supportive of the budget increase, but cautioned that if the request for additional funds is going to be considered, it would mean greater responsibilities. Endorsing the UK's comments, the Chair added that CYP should make its expertise more available to governments and make its presence felt more aggressively.
- **Uganda** indicated that the issue of age definition is a constitutional matter and must be left to individual countries to define; it was premature to call for harmonisation. She observed that there is a linkage between the thematic areas, and was pleased to note the cohesion. The Youth and Crime workshop showed that information technology is one factor that is being used to promote crime and undesirable material such as pornography. However, the digital divide presentation painted a positive picture of the opportunities through technology. CYP needed to develop action points on how to reconcile the apparently contradictory positions.
- **The CYMM Chair** stated that technology can be both useful and harmful and suggested that CYP provide advice or guidelines on how best to use ICT and still prevent access to material damaging to our young people.
- **The CYMM Chair** summarised a number of contributions on the issue of defining the youth age group by stating that there was consensus that country definitions remain their prerogative but that CYP's definition would be used for purposes of the YDI.
- **CYP Director Mr Ignatius Takawira** indicated that CYP will work on the inputs from the workshops and the discussions in plenary, and translate these into CYP's strategic and operational plans, and its operations. He acknowledged India's sharing their experience and thanked them for their advice on building centres of excellence in each region and for their promise to augment their support to the Asia Regional Centre.

Agenda Item 6D

Consolidating Workshop Outcomes into the CYP Strategic and Operational Plan

The Director of CYP's Africa Regional Centre, **Mrs Valencia Mogegeh**, presented the following emerging areas, emanating from the workshops and plenary, for integration into the draft strategic plan.

Governance, Development and Youth Networks (GDYN)

1. Documentation and dissemination of examples of good practice and success stories of effective youth participation in the conceptualisation, planning and implementation of policies and projects.

2. Outcomes of CYMM should be tabled at individual government level for bilateral discussions.
3. Scaling up of CYP resources in order to allow the programmes to reach the targets mandated by CHOGM, CYMM and other international development frameworks.
4. CYP to adopt a more critical role within Commonwealth structures to promote the mainstreaming of youth issues on the agendas of other ministerial and policy-making initiatives.
5. Governments to develop or review national youth policies and national plans of action, and mobilise resources for their effective implementation.
6. CYP to develop a directory of funding or co-operating organisations to be availed to member governments.
7. Strengthen CYP to assist countries in youth development and to improve quality of CYP programmes through the Youth Development Index (YDI).
8. Member governments and CYP to support initiatives which build leadership capacity, such as NYCs and RYCs.

Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihood (YESL)

1. Strengthen collaboration among stakeholders including government ministries, young people, youth serving organisations, development partners and lending agencies.
2. Strengthen sharing of ideas across the four Commonwealth regions.
3. Promote research as a critical element of sustainability.

Youth Work Education and Training (YWET)

1. Conduct a cost benefit analysis of professionalising youth work.
2. Conduct research and analysis of how youth work can impact on national development.
3. Increase access to diploma programmes (enrolment).
4. increase grants for the diploma programme so as to enable more youth to undertake the programme, especially in countries with large youth populations.
5. Provide youth work training at certificate, diploma, degree, and post-graduate levels.
6. Practicums should be included in the Diploma programme.
7. Monitor programme implementation.
8. Conduct short courses on stand-alone modules for youth workers such as leadership, conflict resolution and management skills so as to equip them with the skills and competencies to carry out their tasks effectively.
9. Encourage professional development of youth workers.
10. Undertake advocacy of professionalisation and institutionalisation of youth work with the governments and other stakeholders.
11. Document and disseminate best practices in YWET.
12. Undertake YWET programmes in partnership with other international institutions which are involved in similar activities.

Agenda Item 7

Commonwealth Development Awards (CYDA)

Mr Andrew Simmons advised the meeting that the Commonwealth Youth Development Awards are designed to recognise and reward the contribution made by young people to the development of their societies. Since their inception, there have been some notable innovations with respect to the Awards. CYMM 2003 agreed to increase the Gold Awards from three to four in order to ensure that there is one award per region. Award committees at the national level were set up to assess the applications before they are sent to the CYP regional centres, and officials of the various ministries responsible for youth provide technical assistance in the preparation of the application forms. Promotion of the awards is done through the local government information services and the national media in order to ensure maximum participation.

To enhance the quality of the Award process, CYP requested CYMM to defer the judging of the Gold Award for the 2005-2006 programming year to September 2006.

Reasons for the deferral

During the period 2005-06, CYP has instituted numerous strategies to enhance the quality of the awards and promote and market them at national and regional levels. These strategies were further affected by the lack of human capacity at some Regional Centres to implement these changes. The work to re-structure and re-organise the award process has therefore taken longer than anticipated.

Challenges and recommendations

The following challenges were identified by the 2005 Award Committee:

- *Inconsistency*: the application forms vary across the four regions, for instance, the Asia applications did not indicate the age groups of project members, yet being youth-driven is an important criteria. Many from other regions did not provide information on other criteria like the proposed use of prize money. It was recommended that the forms be standardised, allowing for a section to reflect regional variability and appendices where necessary.
- *Misunderstanding of the principle of the Awards*: most of the Asian applicants indicated what projects they planned to implement rather than what they had already done. The panel was concerned that the applications for the Gold Award were actual winners of the Silver Awards.
- *Project writing appears generally to be weak*. In most cases, goals, objectives, activities and outcomes seem to be in isolation. CYP to include project writing skills in meetings like RABs. 'How to' booklets could also help. In some cases projects appeared over-ambitious and had too many target groups.
- *Validation*: It was difficult to prove some of the information provided in the application forms. Proof could be in form of CDs, videos, pictures, etc.
- *The quality of some of the projects that won at Silver level was very poor*. Regional Centres to ensure they validate the applications before they are sent to the London office. Further, Regional Centres should synthesise information on winning projects at Silver level so that judging at the Gold level is made easier.
- *The role of ministries* responsible for youth and the Commonwealth Youth Caucus in publicising the Awards and ensuring quality applications was emphasised.

The **Chair** called upon youth ministers and the Youth Caucus to facilitate the dissemination and operationalisation of the Youth Development Awards.

Agenda Item 8 **Financial Matters**

The Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General (DSG), **Mrs Florence Mugasha**, provided an overview:

- The financial management of the CYP has been (reasonably) sound over the past three years.
- The audits for 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 have been unqualified from all the regional centres. The audits for 2003-06 are submitted to the BoG and ExCo.
- Budgetary utilisation has been optimised during the last three years.
- Collection of pledges has shown mixed results over the years, but is averaging out at reasonably high levels.

The **DSG** referred to the papers prepared by the Secretariat with proposed pledges for consideration and decision by Ministers. The total pledge income has been equated to the total plan of expenditure – with and without the proposed budget increase. The proposed pledges for each government have been based on an agreed indicative scale of contribution. The scale is only used as a guide on proposed pledges from

each country to equate the income to the expenditure budget. Governments may vary their pledge at their discretion.

Agenda Item 8

Financial Reports: Proposed Pledges for the Next Work Cycle 2006-2008

The Head of the Financial Management and Information Section (FMIS), **Mr Chris Luswata**, informed the meeting that the CYP operates within the framework of the Commonwealth Secretariat and is funded by pledges from Commonwealth Governments. The CYMM provides an opportunity for member governments to confirm pledges for the coming and intervening financial years leading to the next CYMM.

Prior to this year's meeting in The Bahamas, meetings had been held and pledges made every three years. It has been proposed that the timing of future meetings is changed to synchronise with the wider Commonwealth strategic planning cycle. Under the proposal, the next CYMM is due in two years' time (May 2008), and then every four years thereafter. Subject to approval of this proposal, member governments meeting in The Bahamas were invited to make their pledges for the next two years (2006/07 and 2007/08).

At its meeting in Botswana in 2003, CYMM noted that the scale was set in 1988 and recommended that a review is done to update it. The Commonwealth Secretariat assessed scale of contributions, on which the CYP scale is based, is currently under review by the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors. The scale has therefore been retained pending the outcome of that exercise.

In addition to the zero real growth pledges outlined above, the circulated schedule has included an analysis of the additional pledges that may arise if the meeting agrees to the option of increasing the available budget as presented in the Secretary General's paper on the subject. The analysis assumes an increase of up to £1 million (or part thereof) to the budget, and a proportionate increase in pledges based on the existing indicative scale.

The proposed pledges were set at the same level as the budget. A shortfall in pledges will necessitate a curtailment of programmes to balance the income and expenditure.

The proposed pledge for each member was arrived at by applying a scale of indicative contributions to the total budget for the year. The indicative scale was adopted by the Commonwealth Youth Affairs Council in 1988, and subsequently endorsed by the CYMM in 1995 and 1998. The scale was formulated, with relevant adjustments, from the scale of assessed contributions used for the Commonwealth Secretariat budget. It is therefore based on the principle of capacity to pay. In the case of CYP, the scale is used as a guide, and members retain the discretion to pledge more or less than the proposed amount.

The pledges were based on proposed budgets of **£2,596,254** and **£2,665,314** for **2006/07** and **2007/08** respectively. These budgets have been increased in line with inflation (zero real growth) each year as approved by the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors in February 2006. The forecast UK inflation rates for 2006/07 and 2007/08 are 2.46 per cent and 2.66 per cent respectively. The proposed budget for 2007/08 is regarded as being indicative at this stage. Revised inflation uplift will be used when it is published in February 2007.

Agenda Item 8

Financial Reports: Arrears of Pledges

Mr Chris Luswata provided Ministers with information regarding arrears of pledges to the CYP as at 10 May 2006. The management of arrears to all of the Secretariat's Funds (including CYP) is governed by the Abuja Guidelines. The guidelines were approved by the Heads of Governments meeting (CHOGM) in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2003. A copy of the guidelines was circulated for information and reference.

An age analysis of arrears by member country and a list of countries affected by the Abuja Guidelines were circulated. Under the guidelines, members experiencing payment problems can discuss and agree a payment plan for the arrears with the Secretariat. Special dispensation to suspend payments may also be considered for members recovering from major disaster or economic shock.

Issues Emerging from the Financial Reports

Proposed Pledges for the Next Work Cycle 2006-2008

First, the **Chair** requested governments to consider and make a decision on the options in the Secretary General's paper regarding the additional resources and to indicate their support for any of the three options indicated.

These options were:

- Option 1: Retain current budget plus an annual inflationary increase linked to the UK inflation rate (zero real growth)
- Option 2: One-off increase of £1 million, plus an annual inflationary increase thereafter
- Option 3: A different increase to the budget plus an annual inflationary increase thereafter

Secondly, the **Chair** requested Ministers to consider the proposed pledges (with or without the additional budget). He urged Ministers to approach the matter with a high degree of responsibility and commit to pledges for 2006-2008, bearing in mind the amount of work that governments were asking CYP to carry out, while still recognising the need for transparency and holding CYP to high standards of accountability. In line with the procedures followed in Botswana in 2003, it was recommended that proposed pledges be adopted by consensus. Ministers who wished to vary their pledge from the proposed amount, or to consult further, may indicate so accordingly.

Thirdly, the **Chair** requested Ministers to note the contents of the papers on arrears, and to urge members concerned to address their arrears accordingly.

- **Namibia** stated that good ideas and intentions needed to be actively transformed into programmes. Over the past few days, CYMM had discussed programmes that they would like to see benefit young people of the Commonwealth. Many of these activities are to be undertaken by the CYP. We should therefore look at the strategic plan and work areas as a *fait accompli*: to hesitate at this stage might send the wrong message. Namibia wished to endorse Option 2 of the proposed pledges with regards to the proposed uplift in the pledges.
- **Bangladesh** queried the scale of assessment for 2006/2007 figures, based on an inflation rate of 2.46 per cent. Sought to know how the figure of £1 million was calculated. Was the amount of the proposed increase in relation to a programme demand, and increase in activities or an estimate? What would be the impact on the programme should the amount not be collected?
- **Head of FMIS Mr Chris Luswata** explained that at the 5CYMM in Botswana, the pledges proposed were higher than the plan of expenditure. For 6CYMM, the figures presented bring the income (pledges) in line with the plan of expenditure. The £1 million is an estimated figure, but the paper indicated activities for which money would be spent.
- The **CYMM Chair** sought to know the effectiveness of collecting arrears and the ability of governments to pay.

- **India** endorsed Option 1 and urged Ministers to reflect on the areas of discussion over the last three days. “We should not lose focus of what we are trying to do, to build centres of excellence for youth development.”
- **Singapore** endorsed Option 1 and was supportive of the objectives of CYP but disagreed that the budget had been stagnant. There had been an increase with inflation, hence it was not a zero real growth budget. It was also not clear at this stage what the proposed uplift would be used for. Indirect costs currently stand at 40 per cent; efforts should be made to reduce this and any reductions made channelled towards direct programme costs. Acknowledged that there is a downward trend in indirect costs to 32 per cent and 30 per cent, but more could still be done. CYP should find more creative ways of finding other sources of income.
- **United Kingdom** endorsed comments from India and Singapore. CYP should endeavour to make itself more visible and relevant to its stakeholders (valorisation). CYP has a good product to sell, but this needed to be done in a focused and specific way. Reiterated one of the strengths of CYP is having young people as part of its governance structure; consider the skills and knowledge CYP brings to young people and do not throw this away. CYP should take advantage of its strengths, play a more significant role compared with other development agencies and market itself in such a way that it can attract funding from other donors. If £700,000 is what we require just to open our doors for business every day, then that is not enough. We have an excellent product, we have a fantastic array of young people, we have infrastructures and networks, but we are not sufficiently selling what we do. Let us do more to demonstrate and profile our work, learn how to sell this better, and not only look to governments for support when there are numerous other avenues for sourcing funding.
- **Canada** had a new government which was only 100 days old, therefore was not able to make any commitment with respect to increasing the budget at this point.
- **Barbados** asked that ministers consider CYP’s request for increased financial resources in the wider context of other available sources of funding. Emphasised the need for selling and marketing CYP as a credible youth organisation, packaged more strategically. The Secretariat needed to address the issues of pledges as a means of leveraging more resources. While we needed to consider Option 2, the Secretariat must address the issue of pledges and whether the country is getting value for money. Endorsed the views of Singapore and requested CYP to provide sufficient information on the uplift in pledges. The Secretariat had taken us down an unfamiliar road in terms of the budgeting process. For example, there was an absence of information on how the increase would be used across the regions and how countries would benefit from this increase. CYP should also take cognisance of the budgeting process in countries and provide the information in a timely manner, necessary for requests to our finance ministers.
- **Australia** endorsed the views of Singapore, Barbados and UK. Reiterated that Australia was committed to the Commonwealth and the work of the CYP and had provided over AUD\$11 million in Commonwealth-related funding in the 2005-06 financial year. However, it could not commit to the increase in the budget; any increase needs to be considered in line with Australia’s annual budget cycle and the rate of exchange when setting aside the pledged amount. Australia’s commitment to CYP was already agreed in their budget process in May; thus supported Option 1. Suggested that CYP articulate its areas of comparative advantage, prioritise its programmes in line with areas of most need, focus its resources accordingly and indicate how this money would be used.
- **Mauritius** endorsed the views of Singapore and Australia and urged the Secretariat to make the maximum effort to recover arrears, which at this stage was in excess of £1m.
- **Antigua and Barbuda** expressed the view that the request for increase in pledges was a valid one. Was working seriously to clear arrears accumulated by the previous administration, and therefore could only commit to honouring the pledges at the current level plus inflation.
- **St Lucia** supported Australia’s comment regarding budget processes in countries as budget for the next year had already been approved, and therefore could not consider an increase for 2006/7. However, the country could consider increase for 2007/8 but an increase to the magnitude of 40 per cent is significant and could only be justified by a new thrust in the programmes as a way of addressing and correcting the historical anomaly.

- The **CYMM Chair** reminded ministers that having come from a position of deprivation; we have a tendency to give support to things that are physical instead of things that are educational and spiritual. Encouraged ministers to look at the request for pledge increase in this light, to give attention to the holistic development of young people, including the spiritual dimension. If governments did not commit more money into developing young people, they would invariably pay by having to spend much more money to deal with or prevent the resulting problems. For example, it cost more to keep a young person incarcerated than it did to develop them. In The Bahamas, it cost \$18,000 to keep a young man incarcerated, but only \$2,000 to keep a young person meaningfully occupied. It was important to see the link between ministries of youth and national development, and to resource youth development appropriately.
- **Barbados** reiterated that there was general understanding and support for the work of the CYP; the discussion was not so much about whether the request was justified or not, but about the timing and the lack of information. CYP should provide sufficient information to governments in a timely manner, bearing in mind the budget cycle of governments, so that the request could be considered further. CYP should furnish respective countries with a breakdown of the costs for programmes, on a regional basis, and demonstrate how these programmes would play out. Once the information was submitted, we could consider the increase for the 2007/8 financial year.
- The **Chair** indicated that consensus showed that ministers agreed to adopt Option 1, and to consider other options on the submission of more extensive information.

Issues Emerging From the Financial Reports

Arrears of Pledges

- The **Chair** urged the Secretariat to be more pro-active in collecting arrears, for instance, half of the arrears were owed by one country that was not present. He invited colleagues to comment on the arrears.
- **Seychelles** reported that its involvement with CYP had increased significantly in the past three years. Reassured the meeting that its arrears will be settled during the 3rd quarter of 2007.
- **Jamaica's** ability to pay arrears was affected by the hurricanes suffered during the last two years. They would make provision to clear the first year's arrears within this financial year and clear the rest in the next financial year.
- **Mozambique** committed to paying its arrears within the next year.
- **St Lucia** queried the amount shown for St Lucia, reflecting a small amount of arrears. The record was not accurate, as payment was made in March. The house noted the comment and FMIS would update the record.
- **Deputy Secretary-General Mrs Mugasha** invited governments to have bilaterals with **Mr Luswata** to discuss and negotiate a payment plan on clearing arrears. She requested ministers to advise the Secretariat on how best it should communicate to governments on matters related to arrears, as some ministers had indicated that they had not received the relevant information. She requested permission for the Secretariat to liaise directly with countries through the Permanent Secretaries in Ministries of Youth as well as London High Commissions.

Agenda Item 9

Conclusions and Recommendations, Communiqué, Message to CHOGM 2007

The **Deputy Secretary-General** presented the draft Communiqué and message to CHOGM for CYMM's consideration and approval. Delegates made comments and amendments, working through the document paragraph by paragraph.

Ministers adopted the 6CYMM Communiqué and Message to CHOGM 2007 as amended.

COMMUNIQUÉ

Sixth Meeting Of The Commonwealth Youth Ministers 6CYMM, Nassau, The Bahamas 24-26 May 2006

The Sixth Meeting of Commonwealth Youth Ministers (6CYMM) convened in Nassau, The Commonwealth of The Bahamas from 24-26 May 2006. The Meeting was preceded by meetings of the Pan-Commonwealth Regional Advisory Board and the Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus on 22 and 23 May 2006. These Meetings comprised senior government officials and youth representatives of the Commonwealth. The theme of the 6CYMM was *Youth Empowerment for the Eradication of Poverty, Crime and Violence and HIV/AIDS*.

2. Twenty-three Ministers from forty-three countries attended the Meeting. Representatives of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sports (CABOS), the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (CYEC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the University of the West Indies (UWI) participated as observers.

3. The Opening Ceremony of the Meeting was addressed by the Honourable Perry G Christie, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, the Right Honourable Don McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary General, and the Honourable Olifant Mfa, Assistant Minister of Labour and Home Affairs of Botswana. The Honourable Neville W Wisdom, Minister of Youth, Sports and Housing of The Bahamas, who was elected Chair of 6CYMM, also addressed the Opening Ceremony.

4. Ministers expressed their deep appreciation to the Governor-General, the Government, and the people of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas for their warm and generous hospitality. They acknowledged the special arrangements made for CYMM and the excellent administrative and logistical support provided by youth and government volunteers who comprised the Bahamas Task Force. They also congratulated the Honourable Neville W. Wisdom, for his leadership in chairing the Meeting.

Youth empowerment and development issues

5. The Ministers welcomed the opportunity to use the Meeting as a valuable forum for exchanging national experiences for the holistic development of young people. The Ministers expressed concern that their Meeting was taking place against the background of a growing world youth population that is estimated to reach three billion by the year 2015. This growth is giving rise to increased pressures on Governments and the CYP to develop strategic, integrated and sustainable outcomes to address escalating challenges brought about by unemployment, HIV/AIDS, violence and crime and other challenges of globalisation. The Meeting recognised that these issues contribute to greater inequity, dire poverty, vulnerability and widening social exclusion and marginalisation among young people.

6. Against the background, the Meeting acknowledged that there are growing demands on CYP resources from governments and youth networks. These demands continue to outstrip CYP's ability to play an advocacy, brokerage and catalytic role in guiding and supporting Government policies and strategies on youth development and empowerment in ways that are mutually reinforcing to young people and their countries and communities.

CYP Progress Report 2003-2006

7. The Meeting accepted the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Report on the achievements, challenges and lessons learnt from CYP's programming in its four strategic areas (Youth Enterprise Development, Youth Networks and Governance, Youth Participation and Youth Work Education and Training) during the period 2003-2006. The Report also highlighted the Commonwealth Heads of

Government (CHOGM) mandates for youth that are underpinned by the Commonwealth work in the areas of peace, democracy, equality, good governance, and development.

8. Acknowledging CYP's unique position as the only international agency for which youth development is the singular mandate, the Meeting further noted CYP's competitive advantage in fostering youth networking and participation in its programming, and in forging strategic partnerships to broaden the impact of youth development for a wider beneficiary population. The Meeting reiterated the centrality of CYP's role as a repository of Commonwealth-wide best practices and lessons that can be shared among Governments and other stakeholders to mitigate the effects of resource constraints on youth development.

9. The Meeting agreed that CYP's three-year strategic planning cycle should be aligned with the Secretariat's four-year strategic planning cycle, with effect from 2008. The Meeting approved the establishment of a biennial ministerial mid-term review panel to look at CYP's progress and financial performance. The panel will be drawn from the four Commonwealth regions of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific, and will include the incoming and outgoing CYMM chairs, the Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus Chair and Youth Caucus Members representing each region. Other modalities concerning the panel will be further determined and presented to CYMM 2008 for approval.

Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus

10. Ministers welcomed the report of the Youth Caucus and the significant contributions it had made to the governance process. The Report highlighted the various achievements and in-country interventions of the Youth Caucus across the four Commonwealth Regions and noted that this work was guided by CYP's Strategic Plan as a means of creating better focus and impact. Youth internships for the RYC Members, the formation of the Commonwealth Young Journalist Forum (CYJF) and the development of the Youth Caucus website were among laudable highlights mentioned.

11. The Report also outlined the need for the revision of the *Youth Representatives Handbook* in order to make guidelines more transparent and emphasised the requirement for selected representatives to be actual youth leaders who are active in their communities, and who are committed and accountable for the full period of their tenure.

12. Ministers adopted a Resolution presented by the Pan-Commonwealth Youth Caucus for the national youth representatives to be appointed to serve for two-year terms on the Youth Caucus. The Meeting also supported the recommendation that Youth representatives be allowed to serve for a further two-year term based on their availability and willingness to serve, as well as on a full assessment of their performance by relevant stakeholders.

13. In conveying their appreciation to the Ministers, the Youth Caucus requested Member Governments to provide greater support to RYC representatives to allow them to be more effective as agents of change in their development and advocacy work in their communities and societies.

Commonwealth Youth Programme – The Way Forward

14. CYP presented a report outlining the youth development paradigm that will inform and guide its work during the period 2006 to 2008. This paradigm advocates for a holistic approach to youth development and empowerment that puts young people at the centre through Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods (YESL), Governance, Development and Youth Networks (GDYN) and Youth Work Education and Training (YWET). It emphasises the importance of research and an evidence-based approach to youth development to enhance impacts at national, regional and international levels.

15. The report also introduced the concept of the Youth Development Index (YDI), which is a "framework that provides measurement for the purpose of evaluating changes in the status of youth development at human, institutional and national level". The Meeting adopted the paper, and endorsed the

call for a more strategic approach to be taken to youth development, reinforced by the rights-based and evidenced-based approach to youth development.

Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) 2006-2015

16. CYP presented the working draft Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE), which provides the overarching framework for its development work with young people during the period 2006-2015. The draft Plan is a revision of the PAYE that was approved for the period 2000-2005 and takes into consideration the views and recommendations of Member Governments and their experiences in the implementation of the original PAYE. The revised PAYE is in line with Commonwealth mandates, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and takes into account emerging global challenges facing youth. The PAYE views the empowerment of young people as “creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf and their own terms, rather than at the direction of others”.

17. The Meeting acknowledged that the PAYE continues to provide a deliberate, transparent and accountable framework document for the engagement of CYP, member governments, young people and all other stakeholders in the area of youth development. The Meeting endorsed the framework and implementation rationale for the PAYE at the national and the wider Commonwealth levels and emphasised the need for aligning the PAYE with the CYP’s strategic programming, and for a more strategic involvement of youth networks in its implementation, progress reporting and monitoring. The Meeting endorsed a new mandate for CYP to continue with the PAYE up to 2015, which is also consistent with the MDG time frame.

Youth Development Index (YDI)

18. The Meeting noted with appreciation CYP’s pioneering work in spearheading the Youth Development Index (YDI) in order to achieve a standardised tool that can measure critical aspects of youth development. The Meeting accepted the merit of an evidence-based approach to inform responses to youth development interventions. They further recognised the importance of the YDI in the context of measuring the impact of Government strategies for youth development across all sectors. The Meeting also acknowledged the nexus of the YDI with the PAYE and with CYP’s strategic programming, and in the overall context of youth development. The Meeting agreed that priority be given in the YDI to first measuring the impact and progress in the three priority areas of the CYP. The Meeting endorsed CYP’s continued approach to the development of the YDI in partnership with other development agencies and institutions.

Youth Mainstreaming

19. The Meeting accepted CYP’s proposed youth mainstreaming approach as a core element in implementing the PAYE, the YDI and its Strategic Plan. It was agreed that governments should mainstream youth development and empowerment in all policy-making, planning and programme delivery in the political, legal, economic and social spheres. The Meeting recognised that Youth Ministries should seek to ensure increased allocations for youth development from the national budget, as appropriate. It acknowledged the importance of setting targets for youth development and monitoring and evaluating progress through the YDI. The Meeting agreed that Youth Ministries should be more strategically placed to enable them effectively to lead the multi-sectoral, youth mainstreaming approach.

Health and HIV/AIDS

20. Ministers recognised that HIV/AIDS continue to be a global emergency, noting further that HIV/AIDS rank among the most severe issues facing youth in the Commonwealth. They urged the Commonwealth to redouble efforts at HIV/AIDS peer education and training which focus on life-skills as well as life styles and behaviour change and to support countries in implementing youth-centred approaches to counter the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

21. The Meeting further noted that substance abuse, the growing incidences of communicable and preventable illness affecting youth and other pathological behaviour result from youth alienation and

exclusion and from other challenges of modern day living. In this regard, the Meeting urged the CYP to continue to focus education and awareness programmes for Governments and youth in the context of creating sustainable livelihoods and to develop an index of best practices in the area for the benefit of member countries. Most significantly, the Meeting acknowledged the need to find more creative approaches to spread positive messages on healthy living and HIV/AIDS through music and through non-traditional media that resonate more effectively within youth populations.

Crime and Violence

22. The alarming increase in the incidence of crime in which young people are the principal victims, as well as the perpetrators was highlighted at the Meeting. Ministers examined the multiplicity of causes which result in the high incidence of youth violence, increasing youth criminal trends, and how government policies can affect the future of young people, and the choices they make. Unemployment and unstable family relationships were acknowledged as important factors influencing youth involvement in crime and violence.

23. The Meeting discussed the need for countries to share best experiences and models for dealing with youth crime and violence, taking into account the scope and scale of dealing with large and small populations across the Commonwealth.

Promoting Respect and Understanding

24. In keeping with the mandate of the 2005 CHOGM to develop strategies to promote Respect and Understanding in Commonwealth and to prepare a Report for CHOGM 2007, the Meeting discussed the challenges and unique advantages facing the Commonwealth's development and democracy work. The Meeting noted that these challenges are linked to the multi-culturalism of the Commonwealth, at individual, community, national, regional and international levels.

25. The Meeting recognised the importance of young people to the promotion of respect and understanding and concluded that young people will need positive family structures and the support of policy-makers to achieve this target. Building upon the unique advantage of the Commonwealth as an expression of diversity, consensus-building, democracy and partnerships, the Meeting called on the Commonwealth Secretariat to document case studies from around the Commonwealth dealing with conflict management, to develop materials on dispute resolution and peace education targeted at young people, and to continue to mainstream education, curriculum and awareness among youth to address stereotypes.

National Youth Councils and National Youth Policies

26. The Meeting commended Member Governments for the tremendous strides made in implementing National Youth Policies and encouraged those Governments which have not yet done so to implement national youth policies. The Meeting acknowledged that together with the existence of National Youth Councils, youth policies significantly accounted for building fundamental youth capacity, youth leadership, democracy, advocacy and positive youth participation and engagement.

27. The Meeting encouraged Governments to integrate national youth policies into economic development policy in the context of sustainable youth development. The Meeting endorsed an asset-based approach to youth policy formulation that recognises the link to democratic youth-centred involvement in the design, monitoring and evaluation of policy and related youth programmes. The Meeting encouraged Governments and the Commonwealth Secretariat to design an agenda that makes an appropriate balance between welfare and development in youth development.

Youth and the Digital Divide

28. The Ministers underlined the significant potential contribution of information and communication technologies to youth development. The importance of ICTs to youth was emphasised in the areas of education and research, for career and other choices, for partnerships and advocacy networks,

for social change and for income-generation and for the participation of young people in policy-making. Ministers regretted that many youth in the Commonwealth are not able to exploit the tremendous potential offered by ICTs.

29. Acknowledging that the fast developing discipline of ICT necessitates that young people are part of the latest developments, the Meeting encouraged CYP and Governments to continue to facilitate opportunities for youth capacity-building for ICTs and to examine mechanisms for forging partnerships with major ICT service providers to enhance young people's access to and use of ICTs.

Youth Participation in Commonwealth Development

30. Ministers endorsed the principle of the rights-based approach to the participation of young women and men in the design, monitoring and development of programmes and policies and agreed that the Regional Youth Caucuses have strategic roles to play in this regard. The rights-based approach to youth development involves express linkage to rights, accountability, empowerment and non-discrimination among other fundamental tenets.

31. The Meeting emphasised the vital role of the family and family relationship in youth issues and development. It also reiterated the necessity for programmes to recognise the importance of supporting family structures and wider positive societal relationships.

32. Governments and the CYP were urged to continue to empower young women and men with the essential knowledge, skills and capacities to be effective in these roles and to provide them with adequate tools and resources to engage collaboratively in improving their communities.

Youth Development Strategies – The Commonwealth Experience

33. The Meeting welcomed the opportunity to benefit from the experiences and valuable lessons of Member countries. Presentations and discussions in the areas of research-based enquiry, development of human capital, participation in decision-making, enterprise and wealth creation and the overall empowerment of young people took into account the challenges of globalisation, changing youth culture and the need for creativity and innovation in addressing youth development strategies.

34. In order to optimise the benefit of Pan-Commonwealth lessons and experiences, the Meeting agreed that the CYP Asia Centre, in association with sister organisations in the region will be a focal centre for co-operation and learning in the field of youth and local government under the programme area of Governance, Development and Youth Networks (GDYN). The Meeting further agreed that the other three regional centres (Africa, the Caribbean, and the South Pacific) will be developed as centres of excellence in research, knowledge gathering and information sharing in the fields of crime and violence, HIV/AIDS, youth enterprise and sustainable livelihoods, and youth work education and training.

CYP Strategic Plan

35. The Meeting received the new 2006-2008 CYP Strategic Plan and agreed to consolidate priorities and incorporate the CHOGM 2005 mandates and other emerging global challenges in the Plan. CYP informed the meeting of the strategies identified for implementation under the three new programme areas, which were developed from consultations with the Regional Advisory Boards and the Regional Youth Caucuses held during September and October 2005.

36. The Meeting endorsed CYP's strategic and operational plan for the two-year period 2006-2008 in relation to Governance, Development and Youth Networks (GDYN), Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods (YESL) and Youth Work Education and Training (YWET). The Meeting further endorsed that CYP will incorporate the cross-cutting themes of the Commonwealth Secretariat relating to ICT, capacity-building, youth participation, youth mainstreaming, evidence-based research, gender equality and equity and communications and marketing.

37. The Meeting acknowledged the importance of sports to youth development and its positive power to deliver the mainstream youth development agenda in CYP's strategic areas. In particular, the role of sports for the promotion of healthy lifestyles, in increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS, in reducing crime and poverty, and for engaging youth to realise their full potential was reinforced. As a result, CYP was urged to use sports as a programme delivery mechanism.

38. The Meeting also commended CYP's efforts to align its Strategic and Operational Plans with the PAYE, the YDI and within the overall CHOGM mandates on youth development. The Meeting requested CYP to further refine its Strategic Plan in line with inputs made at the various thematic workshops.

CYP Financial Matters

39. The Meeting received reports on the proposed pledges for the Work Cycle 2006-2008, the CYP Budget for 2007-2008 and the Arrears of Pledges.

40. In considering the Secretary-General's request for increased resources for the CYP, Ministers acknowledged CYP's zero real growth budget since 1995 and approved the current budget based on zero real growth.

41. Recognising the value of the CYP as a catalyst in bringing about life-changing experiences among the youth across the Commonwealth, the Meeting resolved that the CYP should continue to play this crucial role in order to realise the goal of youth empowerment for the eradication of poverty, crime and HIV/AIDS. To this end, Ministers agreed that the Programme can benefit from increased resources and that such additional resources should be channelled to programmes and not administrative costs. The Ministers therefore called on all member states to, in their best endeavours, consider making more resources available to the CYP, as appropriate.

42. In this connection, the Meeting recognised that, for a number of reasons, some member states are unable to make immediate commitments to financial increases to the CYP. It was acknowledged that assistance may be provided on a regional basis, for specific projects or contributed in kind. The Meeting agreed that the CYP will forward to Ministries of Youth for their consideration a proposal for an increase in the CYP's budget for the 2007 to 2008 financial year.

43. The Meeting called on member states with arrears to redeem their pledges as a matter of priority.

Commonwealth Youth Development Awards

44. Ministers received the report on progress made with the Commonwealth Gold and Silver Awards. These Awards recognise the contribution of young people in enhancing the quality of life of people at the community and grass roots levels of member countries. Ministers noted constraints facing the Awards and endorsed recommendations for the improvement of the programme. Among measures identified were for greater support from Governments and youth networks in the promotion of the programme within their respective countries, for the linkage of the programme with ongoing national development awards and schemes, and for the enhanced involvement of the Youth Caucus in the overall delivery and implementation of the Awards. Ministers agreed to extend the judging of the 2006 Gold Awards to September 2006 to allow for better participation and involvement of Governments, and to facilitate the restructuring of the Awards.

Reports from Collaborating Agencies

45. The Meeting acknowledged reports from CYP partners in youth development including, the CARICOM Secretariat, CABOS, CYEC, UNICEF, and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and underscored the need for continued strategic collaboration as a means of maximising resources to benefit youth development across all Commonwealth regions. The Meeting noted the recommendation from

CYEC that in an attempt to harmonise the work being done between the CYP and CYEC, the Youth Caucus should be involved in the Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) at the levels of planning and participation.

46. As a result of the CABOS report, the Meeting received a recommendation for the formal establishment of the Commonwealth Youth Games. The Meeting acknowledged the merits of the proposal as a means of fostering healthy life styles and the spirit of co-operation, sportsmanship and leadership among youth. However, the Meeting agreed that the matter required further consultations at the national and Commonwealth levels.

Message to CHOGM 2007

47. Ministers agreed to submit the attached Message to CHOGM 2007 in Kampala, Uganda.

Next Meeting

48. Ministers accepted the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host their next Meeting in 2008. The Meeting also accepted the offer of the Government of India to be considered as the alternate host should the need arise.

Nassau, The Bahamas
26 May 2006

Message to CHOGM 2007 from Commonwealth Youth Ministers

We, Commonwealth Youth Ministers at our Sixth Meeting in Nassau, The Bahamas, from 24-26 May 2006, reaffirm the development and empowerment of young people as a fundamental Commonwealth goal. We acknowledge that our youth have a lot in common and that they are our common wealth.

We recognise that young women and men in the 15-29 age group constitute over half the population of the Commonwealth, and reaffirm our commitment to youth development through a rights-based approach, and to promoting the role of young people in national development, democracy and good governance. We agree that the Commonwealth needs to create a democratic, stable and peaceful enabling environment and conditions in which young people can both benefit from and share the responsibilities of national development.

Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) 2006-2015

We recommend that CHOGM endorse the new Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) 2006-2015, which is aligned to Commonwealth and international mandates such as the UN's Millennium development Goals (MDGs) and provides the framework for all Commonwealth youth development work in the areas of poverty eradication, and economic empowerment, democracy and good governance, HIV/AIDS and gender equality. We also recommend the Strategic Plan for the period 2006-2008 to CHOGM, which is focused on three priority areas: Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods; Governance, Development and Youth Networks; and Youth Work, Education and Training.

Youth Development Index (YDI)

We recognise that the monitoring of the performance of youth development programmes and their impact on young peoples' lives and their communities has been inadequate and inconsistent. We endorse the Youth Development Index as a Commonwealth-led global monitoring mechanism for measuring youth development in member countries, in collaboration with international partners.

Youth Mainstreaming

We endorse youth mainstreaming as the core approach for implementing the PAYE and Strategic Plan. We agree that governments should mainstream youth development and empowerment in all policy-making, planning and programme delivery in the political, legal, economic and social spheres.

We recognise that family structures underpin CYP's strategic plan and priority areas, and that there is need to strengthen them within our societies.

We also recognise that some Youth Ministries are under-resourced and not optimally placed in government. We therefore call on Heads of Government to, where appropriate, increase resource allocations for youth development to enable the Ministries to more effectively lead the multi-sectoral, youth mainstreaming approach to youth development and empowerment.

We submit the attached Communiqué to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kampala, Uganda in November 2007 for their endorsement.

**Nassau, The Bahamas
26 May 2006**

Agenda Item 10

Any Other Business

Youth Forum at 16CCEM

Mr Takawira informed delegates of the Youth Forum at the 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16CCEM) to be held in Cape Town, South Africa in December 2006.

Venue for CYMM 2008

The **Chair** indicated that the venue for CYMM was rotated on a regional basis, and the 2008 meeting would be held in the Asia region.

Ministers accepted with pleasure the offer from the Government of Sri Lanka to host the 7th Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting in 2008. They also accepted India's offer as alternate host.

Other

The Meeting thanked Mr Ignatius Takawira, Director and Head of CYP; Mr Andrew Simmons, Deputy Director; and Mrs Cristal de Saldanha Stainbank, Adviser (Youth Development), for their contributions to youth development and wished them well as they finished their tour of duty with CYP.

In declaring the meeting closed, the **Chair** noted that it had endorsed a very important blueprint for the empowerment of young people. He extended a vote of thanks to the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the team from the Commonwealth Secretariat and the team from the host government.

The **Youth Caucus Chair** extended thanks and appreciation to the Government of The Bahamas and the entire meeting for the opportunities to place youth development on all national agendas.

The representative from the **United Republic of Tanzania** reiterated thanks to the Chair, the host country, and the organisers of the meeting.

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