

Commonwealth Secretariat

---



**Commonwealth  
Youth Ministers Meeting**

Colombo, Sri Lanka, 27-30 April 2008

---

**Provisional Agenda Item 6**

**YMM(08)6-2  
PAP-COE-ASA**

**CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE;  
PROGRAMMATIC AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION,  
ASIA**

Commonwealth Secretariat  
Marlborough House  
London SW1Y 5HX

March 2008



**Commonwealth Youth Programme Regional Centre for Asia  
Centre of Excellence in Youth and Local Self-Governance**

**Project Objectives:**

- Provide a platform for Commonwealth Asian countries to come together for discussing issues concerning young people in democracy and local self-governance
- Exchange and share views and experiences in their respective countries in the area of local self-governance and participatory development
- Study existing laws, policies and programmes concerning local self-governance
- Promote leadership skills among young people in development at the grassroots level
- Build capacity of young functionaries of local self-government structures
- Conduct research in the field of youth, development and local self-governance
- Document best practices in different countries with regard to involvement of young people in development and governance at the grassroots level
- Strengthen the involvement of NGOs in youth and governance

**Methodology:**

- Conferences/seminars
- Interactive Workshops both at national and international level
- Capacity building workshops
- Research/Action research projects/Documentation
- Consultancy
- Networking
- Fellowships/Exposure Visits

**Programmatic Content:**

- Salient features of the Local – Self Government in the Commonwealth Asian countries
  - Legal and constitutional frameworks
  - Structure of LSG System- organic relationship between various structures
  - Duties and responsibilities of LSG functionaries
  - Initiatives for empowerment of local governments
  - Planning, budgeting and resource mobilization for LSG institutions
- Laws, policies and programmes for youth empowerment/youth participation in development
  - State initiatives
  - Civil society initiatives
  - Other initiatives
- Areas of interface – both complementing and conflicting factors between the members of LSG institutions and youth organisations
  - Role of youth in rural governance such as participation in 'gramsabha' (village assembly) meetings and social audit

- Role of youth in local self government institutions/ grass root planning and development
- Networking of youth development organisations working in the field of Local Self Governance
- Role of young women in local self-government
  - Problems and prospects of women participation in decision-making and development programmes
  - Strategies to involve young women in local self-government and development programmes and projects at the grassroots level
  - Women oriented initiatives at grassroots level
- Involvement of socially and economically weaker sections, specially the young from these sections
- Involvement of youth and local bodies in social reform programmes
  - Child labour
  - Child marriage
  - Adult literacy
  - Right to information
  - Water literacy
  - Employment and sustainable livelihood
  - Prevention of domestic violence
  - Disaster management
  - National integration
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Substance abuse
  - Consumer rights

Programmes in the above areas will be organized both by the CYP Asia Centre and the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD). A Steering Committee under the Chairmanship of the Secretary of Youth Affairs and Sports, Govt. of India/Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs will oversee the programme implementation and also appraise the outcomes. The other members of the Committee will be the Regional Director, CYP, Director, RGNIYD, Joint Secretaries in the ministries of Youth Affairs and Sports and Panchayati Raj, besides two external experts.

In order to actualize the mandate given to the CYP Asia Centre by the Commonwealth Youth Ministers, the existing facilities at the Centre – both in terms of hardware and software would need significant upgrade. In addition, certain new facilities will have to be created. The same will also apply to the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development.

It may be noted that the Government of India in the then Ministry of Education and Social Welfare donated the Jwalamukhi Hostel Buildings of the Punjab Engineering College under the administrative control of the U.T. Administration for setting up of the Commonwealth Asia Pacific Youth Centre (subsequently renamed as Commonwealth Youth Programme Asia Centre) in 1975. An agreement to this effect was signed between the Government of India and the Commonwealth Secretariat which was extended from time to time. As per the terms of the agreement the CYP Asia Centre was to carry out day to day maintenance of the buildings. It was only in the year 1997 that the agreement was revised under which a provision for major repairs/renovation of the building to be carried out by the Government of India was made.

The concerned buildings are reported to be more than 50 years old and consequently require major repairs/renovations even otherwise from the safety point of view. However, if, as mandated by the Commonwealth Youth Ministers, it were to be a centre of excellence for youth and local

self-governance, the need for this as well as for creation additional facilities becomes all the more pressing.

The total project cost over a five year period, including the cost of creation/up-grade of new facilities at the CYP Asia Centre and the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, is estimated at £ 2 million. The Government of India has committed to meet the entire cost of creation/up gradation of infrastructure to ensure programme delivery beginning from 2008 onwards.

Further partnership opportunities have been explored through discussions with the UN Resident Representative to link the Centre of Excellence programme with UNDP's Governance programme and to seek interest in and commitment to the Centre's work. The feedback from the UNDP was positive and further efforts will be directed towards the UNDP's Regional office in Bangkok.

In addition, CYP will seek private sector involvement and contributions to the Centre, particularly from knowledge-based companies. A list of such companies will be drawn and it is hoped that an event (half-day advocacy for the Centre) could be organized with the Secretary General's participation and support. Moreover, the Indian Technical and Economic Co-operation (ITEC) programme will be contacted for exploring the possibility of accessing some funds from the ITEC.

An Inter-Ministerial Coordination and Implementation Committee headed by the Secretary in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India has been constituted to oversee the programme implementation and appraise the outcomes.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Increased awareness about CYP amongst local government functionaries and young people from the eight Commonwealth countries
- Information on laws, policies, local governance structures and role of young people therein shared
- Best practices in the above areas disseminated
- A body of knowledge created
- Capacity of youth developed to play an effective role in local self-governance
- Capacity and skills of youth developed for effective participation in grassroots level planning and development
- Political, social and economic empowerment of rural and socially disadvantaged youth
- Youth issues mainstreamed into national development agenda

#### **Timelines**

It is recognized that creation of new infrastructure and up gradation of existing ones will not be accomplished before the first year of the 5 year programme cycle proposed. A time period of two years has been earmarked for completion of all works related to infrastructure, furniture and fixtures, i.e. by June, 2009. If required, facilities available with external agencies will be hired.