

Commonwealth Secretariat



4th Meeting of the Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group

Millennium UN Plaza Hotel, One United Nations Plaza, 44th Street,
between 1st & 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10017
Saturday 28 February 2009

PROPOSAL FOR CGPMG ROTATION

Background & Rationale

Following the creation of the CGPMG and in accordance with Commonwealth principles of ‘Consensus’, it was envisaged that all CW member countries will have the opportunity to serve in the CGPMG during the life span of the PoA, i.e. before the final review of the Plan of Action on Gender Equality in 2015. Given the diversity of member countries, it was also hoped that the membership at any given time, will present the rich diversity and balance that informs rich discussion and exchange of information and ideas.

At the Senior Officials Meeting held in February 2008 in New York, it became apparent that with the present CGPMG composition, several CW countries were not likely to have the opportunity to serve, neither did the composition afford the diverse and rich combination necessary for such outcomes. Several other issues relating to rotation, membership, appointment of the group’s chair were raised by the Senior Officials. Against this background, the CW Secretariat reviewed the issues raised and is pleased to present this draft rotation policy for your consideration and recommendation.

Proposed New Structure

Currently, the CGPMG is made of 20 members, comprising of the four CW region as well as Civil Society representatives from the regions. The CW is proposing an increase in number of the group to 25. The breakdown for the additional five (5) new members is as follows:

Africa/Europe (3)

Canada/Caribbean (1)

NZ/Aus/Pacific (1)

Justification for Increase

Evidence indicated that based on existing rotation policy, three out of the four regions of CW countries will not have had the opportunity to serve and contribute directly to the CGPMG group until 2015. This is because the region of CW Africa/Europe for example, is comprised of 22 countries with 18 of them in CW Africa, while CW Europe has 3 countries. For a complete breakdown of CW countries, please see table below.¹ In juxtaposing the CW

¹ CW Africa: Botswana, Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, Tanzania & Zambia

Africa/Europe (22 with existing 4 slots) representation with CW Asia (8 with 4 slots) countries, it is evident that CW Asia countries would have served four (4) times each until 2015, while some CW Africa/Europe will not have had any chance to serve. The same experience (though not same magnitude) would have befallen Caribbean and Pacific if nothing is done. In order to address this anomaly and provide each CW country the opportunity to serve in the CGPMG (at least once until 2015), the Secretariat is proposing a total of:

Africa/Europe: 7 members

Caribbean/Canada²: 5 members

Pacific³: 5 members

Asia⁴: 4 members

Civil Society: 4 members

Please see table for further/internal breakdown within regions

Proposed Grand Total CGPMG = 25 members.

What the Increase will Accomplish

- i) It will provide a platform and opportunity for all CW countries to serve and contribute before 2015 when current plan of action is revised
- ii) The projected rotation has been calculated over a three-year period to ensure overall participation of all CW countries before 2015
- iii) Proposed combination and representation provides the ‘strategic and balanced mix’ of CW countries to facilitate dialogue and exchange of ideas and experiences
- iv) It ensures a balanced representation of developing, developed, and small island countries including the diversities they present
- v) It ensures the experiences, challenges and contributes of all CW countries are documented and shared within the life span of the PoA, thus, reinforcing the CW family spirit of consensus, diversity and a ‘trusted partner.’
- vi) In accordance with paragraph 4:20 & 4:22 of the PoA, it will ensure that the Secretary General’s report on PoA implementation is *based on information provided by [all] governments and the Secretariat*, and members of the rotating Gender Reference Group (CGPMG).

Rotation Table Explanatory Note with Actual Breakdown

CW Europe: Cyprus, Malta & United Kingdom

² CW Caribbean: Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago

CW Canada: Canada

³ CW Pacific: Australia, Fiji (suspension), Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, (Cook Islands, Niue)

⁴ CW Asia: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka,

1. **CW Africa:** A total of 7 seats are allotted to Africa/Europe. However, given the location of countries, we propose the following:

Europe: **1 seat** (Cyprus, Malta & United Kingdom). Over a 3 year period, these countries will have the opportunity to serve on the CGPMG.

Africa: **6 seats** (given the spread of CW Africa), we propose the following:

East & West Africa: 3 seats over the 3 year period. This means with a total of 9 countries, they will have the opportunity to serve on the CGPMG⁵

Africa South: 3 seats over the 3 year period. This means with a total of 9 countries,⁶ they will have the opportunity to serve on the CGPMG.

2. **CW Caribbean/Canada:** a total of **5 seats** are allotted to the region. However, it is pertinent to mention that in the case of Canada and the other 2 countries - Australia & New Zealand; we propose they are allowed to be part of the CGPMG throughout the period with the following breakdown. Given their peculiar classification as 'developed' and the diversity they bring, it is our opinion that their participation will help to provide strategic and beneficial comparisons and differences for the group. Such comparison is essential for monitoring and evaluation.

CW Caribbean/Canada will get a total of 5 seats with the following breakdown

CW Canada: 1 seat

CW Caribbean: 4 seats: with a total of 12 countries⁷, they will have the opportunity to serve over the 3 year period.

3. **CW Asia: 4 seats:** with a total of 8 countries⁸, Asian countries are best placed to serve (perhaps more than twice) in the CGPMG.
4. **CW Pacific: 5 seats: with a total of 11 countries⁹** and the following breakdown, the countries will have the opportunity to serve on the CGPMG over the 3 year period.

Australia/New Zealand: 1 seat (to be rotated over the period)

Other Pacific: 4 seats for 9/10 countries. Over the 3 year period, all countries will have the opportunity to serve on the CGPMG.

⁵ East & West: Cameroon, Ghana, Gambia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, & Seychelles

⁶ South: Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, & Zambia.

⁷ CW Caribbean: Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago

⁸ CW Asia: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka,

⁹ CW Pacific: Australia, Fiji (suspension), Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, (Cook Islands, Niue)

5. **CW Civil Society Organisations (CSOs): 4 seats** allotted remain unchanged. For Africa and Europe, it was agreed at the 2006 meeting that the CSO will be represented from Africa.

Summary

From the foregoing, it is evident that some regions (given the number of countries that make up the region) will have more opportunities than others. This is unavoidable and beyond our control. However, it is the nature of the Commonwealth family with the diverse spread of countries including, size, population, etc. . It is a fact however, that Africa carries nearly two-thirds of the CW member countries, though it is grouped together with Europe – an additional 3. In order to ensure fair and balanced representation (particularly when other regions such as Asia is made up of nearly one-third of Africa. It is for this reason that we have revised the composition and increased the Africa's representation as well as those of other 'affected regions.

Through the proposed composition, it is envisaged that maximum benefit, contributions and participation of CW countries is achieved. Specifically, we have captured the rationale and benefits in the preceding paragraphs. The Secretariat will appreciate your comments and reactions accordingly.

PROPOSED ROTATION FOR THE CGPMG (2009)

CURRENT COMPOSITION OF CGPMG = 20 MEMBERS

REGION	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES				TOTAL
AFRICA EUROPE	21	1=E	3=SADC	3=EA/WA	7
CARIBBEAN CANADA	13	1=CANADA	4=CARIB		5
PACIFIC ISLANDS NZ/AUS	11	1=NZ/AUS	4=PACIFIC ISLANDS		5
ASIA	8				4
CSO	4				4
TOTAL					25

EXPLANATORY NOTE: Given the challenge of non-representation and balance representation between developed and developing countries, the Secretariat is proposing an increase to the present composition of the working group. The increase is necessary to ensure that within a two year period (and only in one or two cases, a three year period), all CW countries have had the opportunity to serve in the CGPMG. The present composition will also ensure that there is fair balance between the developed and developing countries, as essential feature expected to influence south/south cooperation and sharing of ideas. Furthermore, in at least one instance (Africa), it is necessary to allocate 3 out of the 5 seats to the Southern region since the region has nearly two-thirds of the countries from Africa.