

Report of the Commonwealth Meetings on the eve of the 53rd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

28 February and 1 March 2009

**UN Millennium Hotel
New York**



Commonwealth Secretariat

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Acronyms

CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGPMG	Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CWGGPS	Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security
CSO	civil society organisation
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
GRB	gender-responsive budget
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review (of the PoA)
NWM	national women's machinery
PoA	Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015
SADC	Southern African Development Community
STPD	Social Transformation Programmes Division
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WAMM	Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting

Executive Summary

This report covers two main meetings held by the Commonwealth in New York on the eve of the 53rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2009 as well a note on selected CSW side events attended by staff from the Commonwealth Secretariat Gender Section. The main meetings are: the 4th meeting of the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG) and a Consultation of Commonwealth National Women's Machineries.

The 4th meeting of the CGPMG, held on Saturday 28 February, was convened to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Group, systematise its ways of working, and finalise the rotation schedule and issues related to nomination of the chair; to look at the Group's mandate, priorities and expected outcomes in terms of the 2010 Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 (PoA) and develop a draft work plan; and to consider an update on the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security. The meeting was chaired by Ms Segakweng Tsiane, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, Botswana.

A review of the CGPMG and a proposal regarding roles and responsibilities and ways of working were presented. The Group responded with a number of suggestions. The setting up of an e-group was welcomed as a modality of improving functionality between meetings. In addition, it was felt that communication to the Group needed to be improved through updating contact details and also using all channels of communication to reach members (for example, missions to the United Nations) and thus avoiding information gaps. The responsibility of members to keep their regions informed was stressed.

A proposed new rotation system to provide more equitable and inclusive membership of the CGPMG for the duration of the PoA was accepted by the Group. This increased the number of members and subdivided the Africa region into two (East and West Africa and Southern Africa), recognising that the continent had a large number of Commonwealth member countries. Agreement was also reached that the Chair for 2009-2010 would be Botswana, the Chair for 2010-2011 would be Bangladesh, and the nomination of the Chair would now follow a regional format.

Professor Barbara Bailey then presented on the Mid-Term Review (MTR) process. Key points included that planning, acting, monitoring and evaluation were part of a cyclical process; that monitoring should be ongoing while evaluation should take place at the end to assess impact; that the MTR should assess both outputs and outcomes; that there was a need to refine the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and add indicators that showed how the PoA was being implemented; that the MTR could serve as a baseline for progress towards 2015; and that the PoA actions needed to be translated into country-specific targets. Following the presentation, the Group decided to establish a sub-group of CGPMG members to refine the M&E Framework indicators. Selected as members were Barbados, Bangladesh, Ghana and Tonga plus one CSO (the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action). The sub-group would work with the Secretariat, Professor Bailey and other resource persons. A draft work plan, which identified objectives, activities, timelines and outputs towards the MTR process, was adopted with a few amendments from members.

The Secretariat presented an update on the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security, which indicated that the list of persons with the competencies required to constitute the Group had been compiled and sent to the Deputy Secretary-General's Office. In view of the importance of this issue, the CGPMG made an appeal for action to set up this the Group to be given the highest priority.

The Consultation of Commonwealth National Women's Machineries (NWMs) was held on 1 March 2009 at the Millennium UN Hotel, New York. There were over 90 participants including nine ministers as well as senior officials and representatives of UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral partners, Commonwealth organisations and civil society. The objectives of the meeting were to consider the report of the CGPMG and updates from the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation on their work; to revise the M&E Framework and consider the MTR and how to dovetail

with other reporting processes; and to discuss plans for and themes of the Ninth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (9WAMM), carded for 2010 in Barbados. It also provided an opportunity for the Commonwealth to caucus on the eve of the CSW and share information and ideas.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Caroline Pontefract, Director of the Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD) at the Commonwealth Secretariat, who welcomed participants to the event and provided an overview of its objectives. The feature address was then delivered by Ms Joanne Sandler, Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), who spoke on the topic 'Who Answers to Women?' She offered a number of examples to show that, despite some notable achievements, women were still not equal participants in decision-making including in crucial areas that affected their very lives. She questioned whether the current crises facing the world would have taken the same course with women in positions of power. She also outlined four concrete recommendations related to increasing accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment that had been put forward by the UNIFEM flagship publication *Progress of the World's Women*. Ms Sandler concluding by asking for participants' input into the most effective way of allocating grants from a gender equality fund being set up with 50 million Euros from the Government of Spain.

Ms Esther Eghobamien, Head of the Gender Section, Commonwealth Secretariat, then made a presentation on the guiding principles and framework shaping the Secretariat's gender work, highlighting its commitment to gender mainstreaming as seen in the Strategic Plan 2008–2012, which she said had gender as a cross-cutting theme. She also provided a brief outline of the work of the Section in the four critical areas of the PoA, following which staff responsible for each area provided more in-depth information on activities undertaken and progress made towards implementing the Plan. This was followed by a report from the Commonwealth Foundation on the activities of civil society organisations (CSOs). The final speaker for this session was Hon. Dr Esther Byer-Suckoo, Minister of Youth, Family and Sports of Barbados, who spoke about the commitment of her country to hosting 9WAMM and its preparedness in terms of facilities.

The report and recommendations from the 4th Meeting of the CGPMG, presented by the Chair, Ms Tsiane (see above) made up the second session.

The third session focused on the MTR, with an overview by Professor Barbara Bailey that provided much of the same information as her presentation to the CGPMG the previous day but that emphasised the need for NWMs to drive the MTR process. Short presentations by Ms Carolyn Hannan, Director, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) and Ms Beverly Jones, Social Affairs Officer, Gender and Development Section, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) looked at assessing implementation of parallel processes such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) at the global and regional levels and underlined the importance of harmonising the review of the PoA with these. Participants then broke into regional working groups to consider the draft NWM work plan.

The focus of the meeting turned in the fourth and final session to the theme and format of 9WAMM. Ms Eghobamien took participants through past WAMMs and asked them to consider what had or had not worked well, how sessions could be improved and what they would like to get out of the meeting. Through a lively discussion, consensus was reached on the need to align the WAMM theme with the current global financial melt-down and its gender implications. "The role of women in transforming societies in the global economic crisis and pushing the boundaries of gender equality through meaningful partnerships" was selected as a tentative theme that needed to be further refined. The meeting closed with Dr Pontefract thanking all those present for their participation and wishing for a successful CSW and safe travels home.

Brief Report on the Commonwealth Secretariat's Participation at the 53rd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, March 2009

This brief report provides information on the Secretariat's engagement at CSW 2009. The Gender Section represents the Secretariat at the Sessions of the UN CSW after the annual consultation with national women's machineries (NWMs). The Secretariat has observer status. The Section also uses the opportunity to convene side event(s) and explore and build strategic partnerships in addition to participating at key parallel sessions and activities.

Side Events

1 *HIV/AIDS care work*

Given the theme of the 53rd Session of the UN CSW, 'The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS', the Gender and HIV programme convened a panel discussion to present initial findings of the research project on 'Unpaid work in HIV Care: gender and policy dimensions'. The project aims to build a body of information and recommendations that can be considered and advocated for at policy and programme levels. The findings were based on interviews with women and men in households where the burden of care-work was being shouldered by individuals in the face of socio-economic constraints.

The event entitled 'Who Cares? The Voices Behind the Politics of HIV Policy and Programmes' had the following speakers:

Prof. Marilyn Waring, global expert on women's unpaid work
Dr Robert Carr, HIV expert
Dr Anit Mukherjee, health economist
Mr Linford Cunningham, outreach educator

The side event was attended by key officials and partners and highlighted the need to rethink policy imperatives and programme design for addressing HIV care work in homes.

The initial qualitative research will be substantiated with a pilot study incorporating rapid and participatory time use surveys in select Commonwealth countries.

2 *Gender and Education*

The Gender and Education programme launched its new publication, titled *Where are the Gaps? HIV & AIDS and Gender Education: Review of Curriculum and Practices in East Africa*, at two side events. The book is based on review research of the pre-service teacher education curriculum and practices in three East African countries (Kenya, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania) carried out by Aga Khan University: Institute for Educational Development, East Africa.

The first launch took place as part of a Panel Discussion on 'Ending AIDS Stigma: Women and Men Working Together', organised by the Commonwealth Foundation. Dr. Caroline Pontefract, Director, STPD and Dr. Jyotsna Jha, Adviser, Gender and Education in the Commonwealth Secretariat jointly launched the book. The event was co-organised by the Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea (PNG) to the UN. Other speakers included Ambassador Robert Aisi, Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the UN; Ms Anisha Rajapakse, Programme Manager, Commonwealth Foundation; Mr. Dean Peacock, Director, SONKE Gender Justice Network, South Africa; Ms Lisa Williams-Lahari, Programme

Manager, Pacific Islands AIDS Foundation; and Ms Jill Iliffe, Executive Director, Commonwealth Nurses Federation.

The second launch took place at a side event organised by UNGEI (United Nations Girls Education Initiative) in UNICEF house. Dr. Jyotsna Jha introduced and launched the book. The Commonwealth Secretariat is a member of the Global Advisory Committee of UNGEI. This event was also marked by the screening of an award-winning film by Camfed, another UNGEI Global Advisory Committee member. The film, titled *Where the Water Meets the Sky*, tells the inspiring story of 23 women from a remote region of northern Zambia who are trained in filmmaking. In one of the poorest areas of the country, where women rarely have a chance to speak out, this courageous group produces a film about an issue that no one will discuss: the plight of young women orphaned by AIDS.

Both events were attended by a cross section of policy planners, activists and researchers working on different aspects related to HIV and AIDS.

Participation in UN CSW Sessions

Staff participated and/or audited various sessions including on addressing violence against women, political leadership and governance, gender and climate change, HIV care, and culture and the law.

Partnerships

The Secretariat formalised strategic partnerships with two key UN agencies, UNIFEM and UNFPA, to advance work in priority areas where the institutions had demonstrated tangible results and had built comparative advantage.

The Secretariat will work with UNIFEM in gender-responsive budgets, aid effectiveness, gender and trade, and strengthening the institutional capacity of NWMs. The Secretariat will work with UNFPA in the area of women's rights, culture and the law.

A. Report of the 4th Meeting of the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG)

28 February 2009

**UN Millennium Hotel
New York**

1 Welcome, Introductions and Objectives

1.1 Welcome: Commonwealth Secretariat

Dr Caroline Pontefract opened the 4th meeting of the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG) by introducing herself as the new Director of the Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD) at the Commonwealth Secretariat and noting that she had previously worked largely in the areas of education and gender. She welcomed all the participants, making particular mention of the new Head of the Gender Section, Ms Esther Eghobamien, who she said had been in that post for less than two weeks, and of the countries rotating into the CGPMG. She said that the mandate for gender equality covered all the divisions at the Secretariat, not just STPD. Two challenges that she highlighted were to mainstream gender into all the work that the Secretariat undertook and to maintain the momentum and keep gender on the agenda given the current global financial crisis. She suggested the need to reflect on the implications of this and on whether it was time for new approaches. She also stressed the importance within the Commonwealth of consensus on shared values.

Dr Pontefract went on to say that it was important for the CGPMG to clarify its ways of working – such as how best to communicate between meetings, the role of the chair, and so on – in order to address key issues for the upcoming Mid-Term Review (MTR) of implementation of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (PoA). She indicated that there had been a meeting of the past and current Chairs of the CGPMG with the Secretariat in December, which would provide a basis for the discussion. She also noted that Professor Barbara Bailey, Director of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica and Dr Auxilia Ponga, Gender Adviser at the Secretariat, had been working on the MTR process and would present an update on this to the meeting. She then invited H E Rosalyn Hazelle, Ambassador Plenipotentiary, St Kitts and Nevis, and past Chair of the CGPMG to offer some thoughts.

1.2 Looking Forward: Reflections from the Past Chair

Ambassador Hazelle began by echoing Dr Pontefract's reference to the importance of keeping gender on the agenda and added that the work of the CGPMG was to ensure that implementation of the PoA remained on track and bring about a better quality of life for women and families. She said that the effects of economic downturns were often felt more severely by women, who were left with fewer resources but still had to juggle their various responsibilities – caring for children, the elderly, those affected by AIDS, and so on.

Looking briefly at some of the key achievements of the CGPMG so far, Ambassador Hazelle stressed in particular the importance of the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security (CWGGPS), given the key role that women could and should play in conflict and post-conflict situations. She applauded the recent achievement of Bangladesh, where a team of women ministers (including the Prime Minister and Home Minister) had recently persuaded rebels from the Bangladesh Rifles to lay down their arms.

Ambassador Hazelle also said that there was a need for more focus on gender and trade and to ensure that the issue of women remained relevant. In some regions, such as the Caribbean, the agenda of men and boys also needed to be pushed forward. She appealed to the Group in the movement towards the 9th Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (9WAMM) to ensure the validity of its work and that it was inclusive and holistic. She said that all issues were women's issues and that the Group had to play a pivotal role and not allow gains to be eroded. She then passed the meeting to the new Chair of the CGPMG, Ms Segakweng Tsiane, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, Botswana.

1.3 Introductions, Objectives and Adoption of Agenda

Ms Segakweng Tsiane first offered special recognition to the Minister from Barbados as the host of 9WAMM and to Bangladesh as the next chair of the CGPMG. She then congratulated Ambassador Hazelle for setting the stage, making particular mention of the Group's achievements in terms of establishing the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and the CWGGPS, and called for a vote of thanks. She also committed herself to moving things forward. She then asked participants to briefly introduce themselves.

Ms Tsiane went on to recap the purpose of the CGPMG as being to monitor and evaluate implementation of the PoA. She said that the M&E Framework was intended to set indicators for tracking progress and provided the main tool for the 2010 MTR and for identifying possible new issues. She stressed that she wanted to move forward on the CWGGPS since peace and security were major concerns in women's lives. She said the meeting provided an opportunity to review how the CGPMG functioned and help it become more democratic through a change in rules related to rotation and also to have more of an impact. Ms Tsiane then took participants through the draft agenda, which was adopted (Annex A-I).

2 Review of the CGPMG

2.1 Background and Overview

Dr Meena Shivdas, Gender Adviser at the Commonwealth Secretariat, went over some of the background of and issues for consideration by the Group based on a paper that had already been circulated (Annex A-II). She noted that the key responsibilities with which the CGPMG had been charged on its establishment in 2005 were: (i) to provide advice to the Secretariat on the development of PoA indicators; (ii) to identify the most appropriate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for the PoA; (iii) to provide advice to the Secretariat on the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the PoA in 2010; (iv) to consider any issue that might be referred to it by Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs related to the implementation of the PoA; and (v) to work with the Secretariat as necessary to develop terms of reference, including for membership of the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security (CWGGPS).

Dr Shivdas noted the several successes of the Group so far, which included: facilitating the development of the M&E Framework, adopted at 8WAMM in 2007, which set out indicators to enable countries to systematically track progress in gender equality and would be the main tool for undertaking the 2010 MTR; developing the terms of reference of the CWGGPS; and defining some modalities for the functioning of the CGPMG, including developing guidelines on membership rotation. She then flagged several issues for consideration. First, there was a need to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the Group as the terms of reference were not specific on this; second, the Group was supposed to also operate as a virtual group, but it was not yet clear how this would function; third, concerns had been raised the previous year about the method of membership rotation and the Secretariat had been asked to take another look at this; and fourth, guidelines and criteria were needed on the nomination of the chair.

2.2 Roles, Responsibilities, Ways of Working

Ambassador Hazelle said that the purpose of reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the CGPMG (Annex A-III) was to ensure that the Group was high energy and goal-oriented because it had big tasks to accomplish. One concern had been that the current method of membership rotation did not allow for the full participation of all Commonwealth member States. Looking at the roles of the Chair, she emphasised that these included communicating with members between meetings, signing communications (or designating the Secretariat to do this on her behalf), and being in close communication with the

Secretariat. She said that the Saturday meeting held in New York each year prior to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was very important and allowed ideas and recommendations to be taken to the wider meeting of Commonwealth national women's machineries (NWMs) on the Sunday. She suggested that at least one face-to-face meeting between the Chair and the Secretariat should take place between the annual meetings.

Emphasising that one of the responsibilities of members was to keep other countries in their region updated, Ambassador Hazelle also suggested that they needed to prioritise the Group in their basket of work. She appealed to her colleagues to act quickly on letters as the Chair needed to get input from countries in order to make decisions. She also mentioned the importance of learning from the best practices of others. In addition, she said that civil society needed to be constructively involved.

Ambassador Hazelle suggested that the administrative support and expertise of the Secretariat was very important. She said that the Secretariat could facilitate e-group discussions, and that there was a need to decide on the number, topics, etc. of these and whether they would be regional or open to everyone. There was also a need to coordinate with regional bodies, such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in her own case.

Plenary discussion

The discussion mainly focused on the issue of communication, and it was mentioned that sometimes there was a turnover of staff in the NWM so that it would be useful if the missions in New York and London were brought into the loop. While it was proposed that the Chair might have some personal contact with new members, it was also pointed out that information on these individuals was not always available until the meeting itself. Since members were representing their region and should be speaking for it, regional level contacts were essential to ensure that there were stronger linkages and better communication and hand-over systems in place. On the other hand, it was felt to be impractical for each region to develop its own system and that this could be coordinated by the Secretariat. Both members and the Secretariat should take responsibility for keeping contact information up-to-date. The idea of an e-group was favourably received. Some participants indicated that they would like to share information about their activities in this way.

The representatives from civil society organisations (CSOs) suggested that the role of civil society was not clear in the paper on roles and responsibilities and proposed that this be captured. It was mentioned that the Commonwealth Women's Network could be one channel for sharing information and for identifying members from civil society to rotate in and out.

The Chair said that the discussion would have given the new Head of the Gender Section a good idea of the kind of communication members needed, and stressed that all members had a role to play in setting up systems and structures at the regional level and sharing ideas. She expressed her hope that the virtual group would help thrash out issues and institutionalise ways of working.

2.3 Membership Rotation

Ms Elsie Onubogu, Gender Adviser at the Commonwealth Secretariat, presented an overview of the proposal to amend the structure of the CGPMG by increasing the number of members (Annex A-IV). She explained that the rationale for this was that the current rotation policy put the fundamental Commonwealth values of equality, equity and consensus at risk as several countries – particularly from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific – would never get a chance to serve on the CGPMG in the 10-year lifespan of the PoA to 2015. The PoA, however, required that all member States be consulted. The previous year's meeting of NWMs in New York had therefore asked for the policy to be reviewed by the Secretariat, which was now proposing to add five new members: three from Africa/Europe, one from

Canada/Caribbean and one from the Pacific.

Ms Onubogu went on to say that the proposed new membership would be made up of seven members from Africa/Europe (one from Europe, three from East and West Africa and three from Southern Africa); five members from Canada/Caribbean (one from Canada and four from the Caribbean); four members from Asia; and five members from the Pacific (one from Australia/New Zealand and four from the other countries). She noted that there would continue to be one CSO per region, and reminded participants that Europe had been willing to cede the regional CSO seat to Africa. She concluded by saying that the new rotation process would ensure the participation of all countries, fair balance between developing and developed countries and enrichment of the MTR.

Plenary discussion

The proposal met with general agreement. There was some concern expressed, however, about the non-attendance of some members and whether this indicated a lack of interest and the need for replacements to be found. In response, it was noted that members might be absent because of financial issues and the question was raised as to whether they might be assisted. It was also pointed out that other reasons for non-attendance included the inability to travel due to national elections. It was agreed that it was the responsibility of member States to send a representative, and that this person could be from the New York mission if it was impossible for someone to come from the country itself. However, information would continue to go to the capital. Another area of concern was ensuring that the method of rotation did not lead to all the expertise in the Group leaving at the same time.

There was also some discussion as to the number of CSOs in the Group. While members of civil society that were present suggested that they would like to have five seats – with the representative from Europe putting in a particular plea for those countries to be represented since gender was a very strong theme in the European Union and they would have many ideas to share – they were reminded that Africa/Europe was one of the four Commonwealth regions and also that not only had Europe ceded its CSO seat to Africa but also Canada had done this for the Caribbean. It was also underlined that the Secretariat's mandate was with NWMs.

Following the discussion, the Chair indicated that she would take the proposal to the larger meeting the following day. It was also agreed later in the meeting that Bangladesh would not rotate out of the Group in 2010 due to the special circumstances connected to the position of Chair.

2.4 Nomination of the Chair

Dr Pontefract reminded participants that in 2008 the Group had nominated Botswana and Bangladesh to each serve for a year. However, Botswana had not yet had the opportunity for full involvement for several reasons, mainly connected to staff changes at the Secretariat. She said that Bangladesh had therefore graciously agreed to allow Botswana to continue as Chair until 2010, when the position would be passed to Bangladesh.

Plenary discussion

The representative from Bangladesh said that his country was interested in the most efficient way of working, no matter who was the chair, and that Botswana should have a fair chance. Ms Tsiane responded that she was most indebted for this gesture of peace and progress and made a commitment to support Bangladesh in the transition process. She added that there would be communication between Bangladesh, Barbados, Botswana and the Secretariat around 9WAMM. The Secretariat also offered thanks to Bangladesh for supporting the strength of the Group. It was agreed that the rotation of the chair be regional (thus the next one after Bangladesh should come from the Pacific) and that the region should

choose their nominee. It was also agreed that countries could not chair again before another member from their region had served. On a question from civil society about having the opportunity to chair, it was noted that the Group reported to ministers and governments and therefore this was precluded by the protocol involved.

3 Summary and Way Forward

Ms Esther Eghobamien, Head of the Gender Section at the Secretariat, briefly summarised the morning's decisions, starting with the adoption of the agenda. She said that roles and responsibilities had been made clearer and there was agreement that the virtual group would be supported by actual meetings. Discussions on ways of working had emphasised the importance of communication and the involvement of all members. The advocacy role of members at regional level was particularly important, and work needed to be harmonised among and between key partners. She went on to say that while the Secretariat had a role to play as the overall coordinating body, members also had this role in the region and clear channels of communication should be established. Other areas of agreement mentioned by Ms Eghobamien concerned the rotation proposal, the next chair and the process for subsequent chairs, and she said that these decisions would be taken to the meeting the following day. Finally, she indicated her appreciation for the good will extended by Bangladesh.

4 CGPMG: Mandate, Priorities and Expected Outcomes, 2009-2010

4.1 Background on the Mid-Term Review

Dr Auxilia Ponga, Gender Adviser at the Secretariat, introduced this session on the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the PoA by providing some background information (Annex A-V). Referring to recent workshops in the Caribbean and East and Southern Africa, she said that only three of the countries in the former region had national gender policies. Although there were various programmes and policies on gender, the position of the NWM within government made it impossible for this to be monitored government-wide. In addition, she said that while almost all the countries in East and Southern Africa had national gender plans, very little on gender had been included in overall national plans such as poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs). Dr Ponga stressed that this made it hard to monitor and evaluate progress in this area. She said that it also made it difficult to mainstream gender and ensure gender-sensitive targets and indicators at national level. However, she noted that an added advantage for the MTR was the upcoming Beijing +15 review process, for which countries would already be seeking data. She concluded by saying that M&E needed to be a basic part of work on gender so that it was possible to find the necessary data/statistics.

The Chair then introduced Professor Barbara Bailey, Director of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica and member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and invited her to present on the M&E process.

4.2 The M&E Framework and the Mid-Term Review (MTR) Process

Professor Bailey made a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix A-VI) from the perspective of M&E concepts, processes and operationalisation, saying that there was a need not only for clarification of roles and responsibilities but also for clear understanding of what M&E were in the context of the PoA. She first set the context by reminding participants that the implementation of the PoA was to be undertaken by governments, the Secretariat and partners, and that its M&E should be harmonised with other instruments and processes such as CEDAW and review of the Beijing Platform for Action. She said that the MTR was due to be completed by 9WAMM, scheduled for 2010 in Barbados, and that its objective was

to assess the extent to which governments and the Secretariat had achieved actions set out in the PoA since its adoption in 2005 (that is, to reflect the status of implementation at the national level and outputs/outcomes up to 2010).

Professor Bailey continued by saying that operationalising the PoA at the national level required undertaking a situational analysis to provide baseline data; strategic planning, to include an ongoing plan for M&E, assessing resources, personnel, and so on; and a final evaluation of impact. She emphasised that planning, acting, monitoring and evaluation were part of a cyclical process, and that it was essential to monitor the congruence between intentions and actual observations – and between the vision, goal and objectives, and targets – and adjust plans as one went along.

According to Professor Bailey, the actions identified in the PoA to achieve its goals and vision were quite general and needed to be translated into country-specific targets followed by the identification of indicators for monitoring. She defined monitoring as “the regular collection and analysis of data to provide information on progress achieved during implementation of activities related to explicitly stated targets” (which thus could be formative), and evaluation as “assessing the positive and negative medium- and long-term impacts of the intervention on the target group in terms of effectiveness and sustainability of the outcomes” (and hence summative). She said that the importance of M&E was that it improved programme management and decision-making, it allowed accountability to stakeholders including funders, and it provided data on programme progress and effectiveness that could be used to plan future resource needs and for policy-making and advocacy.

Turning to the role of the CGPMG, Professor Bailey said that this included advising the Secretariat on the development of indicators, identifying an M&E framework, ensuring effective implementation of the PoA, advising the Secretariat on the MTR and working with the Secretariat on other issues such as peace and security. In terms of developing indicators, she noted that gender indicators pointed out how far and in what ways interventions had met gender equality/equity target and stressed the importance of both quantitative and qualitative indicators as well as of baseline data. She also highlighted the fact that indicators had to relate to specific targets/objectives and expected results.

Professor Bailey then offered a critique of the M&E Framework, which she said dealt with outputs and not outcomes. Taking Critical Area 2 as an example, she questioned the extent to which the number of incidents reported or the existence of laws on violence against women said anything about its elimination. She also asked whether countries would contextualise the themes, deciding which was the most relevant, and whether the CGPMG was providing guidance on how harmonisation with other processes would be achieved. She noted that although different agencies required separate reports, commonalities could be mapped.

Finally, Professor Bailey said that the questionnaire used for the MTR should be based on clear indicators and targets. She offered a template for national MTRs, which consisted of an introduction (a situation analysis in relation to 2010 outputs); systems and structures established for implementation and M&E activities; results achieved in relation to each of the four critical areas and in relation to established targets; challenges/obstacles encountered and lessons learnt; and further actions required and time frame for full achievement of outcomes by 2015. However, she said that countries would need guidelines if they were to achieve this and that there had to be more clarity about the roles of various players (NWMs and civil society). Her last slide, on the timeline, was blank, as she questioned how the national reports were going to turn into regional reports and then reach the Secretariat for the final report to be completed by June 2010. She thought that the NWMs needed to be presented with more concrete information on the following day and expected that this would be the focus of the afternoon session.

Plenary discussion

Participants were enthusiastic about the presentation, and the slide on the cyclical process of planning, acting, monitoring and evaluation was found to be a particularly useful summary. Some concern was expressed about the apparent problems with the M&E Framework. However, it was noted that the Framework had been put together by the Group for Ministers based on the consultant's report, and that while it might have flaws it had been adopted by consensus with the recognition that countries were working at different levels. Another point raised was that although the lack of indicators in the Framework might make it more challenging to develop the questionnaire, this process could be seen as opening up a window for revamping the Framework itself. It was noted that there were huge existing sources of indicators. Reference was made to the Gender Index developed by UNECA for the African region, which had started by helping five countries to develop indicators and was now moving on to another group of countries.

It was agreed that the way forward was to contextualise indicators against global and national targets, with countries identifying those indicators that were relevant to them and modifying them as appropriate. Since the MTR was imminent, this could itself serve as a baseline for progress to 2015.

5 Draft CGPMG Work Plan (2009-2010) and Operationalisation

5.1 Process

This working session was facilitated by the Commonwealth Secretariat, which in its role as adviser to the Group proposed a draft document for consideration (Appendix A-VII). Participants divided into regional groups in order to discuss the work plan and how this might be put into action. The main questions for discussion were identified as what were the key areas for involvement of the members of the CGPMG before 9WAMM and what modalities should be used (considering availability, finance, the role of the Secretariat, and so on).

5.2 Report Back

In general, participants thought that the work plan was feasible, although each region suggested some minor changes in the dates and activities, with the members from Asia, for example, suggesting that some activities might take more or less time than indicated but that it was difficult to see what problems there might be before they had seen the questionnaire. One issue might be that the remoteness of some areas would affect the quality of information gathered in the limited timeframe. Members from the Pacific thought that the administration of the questionnaire and the desk review could take place at the same time and that the regional meeting might take place earlier. The Canada/Caribbean grouping suggested that more time was needed to prepare the terms of reference for the consultant. The members from Africa/Europe suggested an extra month for completing the questionnaire, thus moving all the subsequent dates forward a month. The meeting of NWMs in New York in 2010 could then be used to review the report, which could be presented at 9WAMM as a bound document and printed afterwards.

In response to a question about the role of the regional consultant, the Secretariat clarified that this would be to offer help to those NWMs that needed it, given that they were stressed financially and in terms of human resources. It was also suggested that the consultant might play a role in the desk review. The members from Canada/Caribbean wanted the CGPMG to have an input into the terms of reference, and also that there should be a meeting between the Chair and Secretariat and further communication with the Group before consultants were selected. It was suggested by the Africa/Europe members that the terms of reference should be sent around in March for review with a timeline for endorsement/comment. It was agreed that if no response was received, silence meant consent.

Other issues that came up included a suggestion from the Pacific members that national consultations be held to collect information for the various reports that were up-coming (including Beijing +15 and the Pacific Platform for Action) before a regional meeting facilitated by the Secretariat was held. They thought the Secretariat could fund either the national or regional consultations. Members from Africa/Europe suggested adding a day to the New York meetings in 2010 for the CGPMG to look at the work plan. In addition, the members from Asia suggested that Group matters should be put onto the Secretariat's website to share information and make communication more efficient, and that the MTR process might lead to a manual on M&E and feed into international partnerships beyond the Commonwealth (such as ASEAN or CARICOM).

There was some discussion about the input of CSOs. On the one hand, CSOs present suggested that there was a need for shadow reports from the regions that were intended not just to critique but also to offer an independent voice. On the other hand, it was noted that national consultations would include both governments and civil society and also that WAMM offered two opportunities for CSO participation, first as every 6th speaker and second through their presentation. It was also noted that some governments were open to shadow reporting and some were not. There was felt to be a need for the Group to further assess how shadow reporting would work.

There was also discussion around when the report would be finalised, whether in time for the February meeting to be approved by NWMs or for the Senior Officials meeting just before 9WAMM.

5.3 Sub-group on Indicators

Following discussion it was agreed that a sub-group of the CGPMG would be set up with regional representation to look in particular at indicators, and that it should meet for a day shortly (and possibly again later if funding could be made available) to ensure the MTR process was successful. Barbados, Bangladesh, Ghana and Tonga were selected to be part of the group, with the Commonwealth Foundation to provide the name of the selected CSO by the following day.¹ Barbados noted the difficulty of participation due to the heavy workload associated with the hosting of 9WAMM and it was agreed that a replacement might be found from that region.

6 Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security

Ms Elsie Onubogu, Gender Adviser at the Secretariat, noted that conflict had a widespread effect not only on the country or countries directly concerned but also on neighbouring countries (for example, because of refugee flows and migration). She said that it was recognition of this fact that had led the CGPMG to agree on the terms of reference for a Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security (CWGGPS), which had been endorsed by 8WAMM and subsequently also by the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). She went on to explain that the Group had not yet been established due in the first instance to the initial set of nominations for its members not having had the wide representation required, and then because of transitions and other factors within the Secretariat. The list was now with the Deputy Secretary-General of the Secretariat and awaiting approval.

However, Ms Onubogu assured those present that work was still being undertaken in this area. Some examples she provided included a training workshop in Mozambique on good practices in gender and Demobilisation, Disarmament, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR); dialogue in Sri Lanka on how women and young persons could be involved in peace building and reconstruction processes; a plan for a

¹This was subsequently announced to be Nelcia Robinson from the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA).

situational analysis in northern Uganda; inclusion of reference to the CWGGPS in the UN Secretary-General's 2008 Report on women, peace and security; and involvement of the Secretariat in an inter-agency UN meeting. She also said that the Secretariat was represented on the working group to plan celebrations of the tenth anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security in 2010 and briefly noted some plans for the future, including an upcoming presentation at a colloquium in Liberia and the establishment of an early warning system for the Pacific to prevent conflict before it occurred.

Ms. Onubogu further informed the group that the UN Secretary-General had granted a request from female Foreign Ministers to hold a 'Special Session' in 2010 on the issue of violence in the context of post-conflict reconstruction. She suggested that this could provide an opportunity for Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women Affairs (from conflict countries) to interface with their Foreign Affairs counterparts, and she was currently lobbying to create a space for this to take place.

Plenary discussion

The discussion brought out the fact that several countries were concerned about peace and security, related not only to conflict but also to escalating crime and gun violence as well as the current financial, food and fuel crises. It was noted that the Secretariat responded to formal requests from governments, so countries wanting some kind of assistance would need to submit these. The important intervention by women in Bangladesh to bring about peace in their country was again noted with appreciation.

It was agreed that the CGPMG would send an appeal to the Deputy Secretary-General saying that it considered the CWGGPS to be very important and requesting that it be given the highest priority.

7 Conclusion

Ms Tsiane concluded the meeting by saying that it had been a long but productive day and thanking the members for their wonderful participation and professional input. Dr Pontefract thanked her in return for doing such an excellent job of chairing the meeting.

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Annex A-I: Agenda

- 0830** **ARRIVAL & REGISTRATION**
- 0900** **Welcome, Introductions and Objectives**
Welcome, Dr Caroline Pontefract, Director, Social Transformation Programmes Division, Commonwealth Secretariat
Looking Forward: Reflections from the Past Chair, Ambassador Rosalyn Hazelle
Introductions, Objectives of the Meeting and Adoption of Agenda
Ms Segakweng Tsiane, Chair of the CGPMG, Botswana
- 0930** **Review of the CGPMG: Working Session**
Facilitated by the Commonwealth Secretariat
Background and Review of Current TORs
- Roles and Responsibilities of the CGPMG
 - Clarification of remaining responsibilities
 - Roles and responsibilities of the Chair
 - Roles and responsibilities of the Members
 - Role and responsibilities of the Commonwealth Secretariat
 - Ways of Working
 - Membership Rotation
 - Nomination of the Chair
- Summary of Agreements and Way Forward
- 1100** **BREAK**
- 1130** **CGPMG: Mandate, Priorities and Expected Outcomes, 2009–2010**
Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and 2010 Mid-Term Review of Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (PoA)
- Synthesis of issues, methodology and process
 - Commonwealth M&E Framework and the global agenda
 - Role of the CGPMG
 - Consideration of draft TORs
- 1330** **LUNCH**
- 1430** **Draft CGPMG Work Plan (2009–2010) and Operationalisation: Working Session**
Facilitated by the Commonwealth Secretariat
Draft CGPMG Work Plan Format
Expected Activities and Outcomes for 2009-2010
- 15:30** **WORKING BREAK**
- 1600** **Concluding Draft CGPMG Work Plan (2009–2010) and Operationalisation**
- 1630** **Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security**
Update
- 1700** **Recap and Recommendations for NWM Meeting**

Closing Remarks, Ms Segakweng Tsiane, Chair

Annex A-II: Note for Consideration by the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG)

1 Background

The Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG) was established in 2005 to function as a mechanism for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (PoA). The terms of reference (TOR) for the Group were agreed in 2005. They contain within them four key responsibilities for the Group to take forward:

- i To provide advice to the Commonwealth Secretariat on the development of PoA indicators;
- ii To identify the most appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework for the PoA;
- iii To provide advice to the Commonwealth Secretariat on the Mid-Term Review of the PoA in 2010;
- iv To consider any issue that may be referred to it by Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs, related to the implementation of the PoA, and work with the Secretariat, as necessary, to develop TORs, including membership, for the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security.

The CGPMG meets annually in conjunction with the annual consultation of national women's machineries (NWMs) held in the wings of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. Its work and successes so far include:

- Facilitating the development of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for the PoA, adopted at the 2007 Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting. The M&E Framework sets out indicators to enable countries to systematically track progress in gender equality and it will be the main tool for undertaking the 2010 Mid-Term Review of the PoA;
- Developing the TORs of the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security;
- Defining some modalities for the functioning of the CGPMG. This has involved developing guidelines on membership rotation of the group.

The CGPMG is made up of a rotating core of 20 NWMs and civil society organisations. The current membership is:

Africa/Europe: Botswana, Cameroon, Cyprus, Ghana

Asia: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Maldives, Singapore

Canada/Caribbean: Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize

Pacific: Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga

Civil society (from the four regions):

- Women in Law and Development (WILDAF), Ghana/ National Council of Women Malta and Forum of Civil Society Organisations (FCSO Malta)
- Impulse NGO Network, India
- Women's Institute for Alternative Development, Trinidad and Tobago
- Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women (PACFAW), Fiji

The first Chair of the CGPMG (2006–2008) was Ambassador Rosalyn Hazelle of St Kitts and Nevis. The 2008 meeting of the CGPMG nominated Botswana to chair the Group from 2008–2009 and Bangladesh to chair from 2009–2010.

2 Issues for Consideration

In order to strengthen the operations of the CGPMG, the New York meeting will address the following issues:

2.1 Role and Responsibilities of the CGPMG

While the CGPMG TORs set out broad guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of the Group, these are not specific about the roles of the Chair and the members in delivering those responsibilities, particularly between the New York meetings.

After a review of the TORs of the CGPMG and an assessment of its function, it was felt that the following issues require consideration:

- Identification of specific issues to be addressed during the current term (within the context of the outlined responsibilities); and
- Identification of expected outputs/outcomes.

It has been suggested that a work programme may help to clarify the role of the Group and provide a structure to achieve the expected outputs/outcomes. It is hoped that the accompanying document on 'Roles and Responsibilities' [Annex A-III] will facilitate discussions towards this end.

2.2 Operationalisation

The current TORs of the CGPMG stipulate that it is a virtual group but will meet in conjunction with meetings of Commonwealth Heads of NWMs in the wings of the CSW in New York as required. Coordination of the CGMPG will be by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The CGPMG has yet to consider functioning as a virtual group in the intervening months between the New York meetings. The functioning of such a group may offer the opportunity for the Chair and the members to build on discussions held at meetings in New York. The Commonwealth Secretariat could play a facilitating role. Suggested modalities could include:

- Creation of a member e-group;
- Bi-monthly conference calls;
- Quarterly e-updates by the Chair (facilitated by the Gender Section);
- Meetings of the CGPMG prior to New York as and when required (facilitated by the Gender Section, funds allowing).

2.3 Membership Rotation

According to the CGPMG rotation guidelines, selection of new members to the Group is done alphabetically. However, due to concerns raised by member countries, the 3rd meeting of the CGPMG in 2008 suggested that the Secretariat re-visit the method for determining membership rotation.

The Gender Section conducted a projection until 2015 and found the following picture emerging:

- In regions with fewer countries (e.g., Asia), the same countries rotated in every other year;
- In the large Africa/Europe group, some countries would never have an opportunity to be on the Group in the life of the current PoA;
- At some points in the life of the current PoA, there would be a complete absence of developed country members in the Group.

Taking the above into consideration, the Gender Section had produced a revised rotation guideline for consideration by the CGPMG [Annex A-IV].

2.4 Nomination of the Chair

It has been noted that guidelines/criteria to assist countries in nominating the Chair are needed; the TORs for the CGPMG make no mention of how the Chair should be elected/selected, only mentioning that the term of the Chair would be for one year and a maximum of two terms would be possible with the approval of Group members.

The CGPMG is to discuss the issue and agree on a way forward.

Annex A-III: Role and Responsibilities of the CGPMG

1 Background

This note seeks to provide initial thoughts on the roles and responsibilities of the current Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG), and is based on discussions between the past and present Chairs of the CGPMG (Ambassador Rosalyn Hazelle and Ms Segakweng M Tsiane) and the Secretariat.

Its purpose is to initiate discussion at the 4th meeting of the CGPMG on 28 February 2009, which will take place on the eve of the meeting of Commonwealth National Women's Machineries on 1 March 2009.

2 Chair

Communicates with the Group

- On all matters
- Signatory
- Can designate the Secretariat to sign on her/his behalf
- Can initiate via the Secretariat
- Follow up with members to ensure regional activities are being carried out

Communicates with the Secretariat

- Input from member countries
- Shares initial analysis/issues

Role in New York

- Chairing meeting
- Reporting to NWMs on activities and decisions taken
- Informing on constitution of CGPMG re: rotation
- Letter to NWMs prior to NY
- Convening meeting in consultation with the Secretariat (virtual or face to face)
- Develop a work plan

3 Commonwealth Secretariat

- Provide administrative secretariat support
 - i. Facilitation of communication e.g., e-group
 - ii. Circulation of papers
- Provide technical and professional advice
 - i. Prepare draft discussion papers
- Explore additional funding possibilities for meetings beyond New York
- Ensure all communications/inputs from member countries are sent to Chair and share reflections
- Communication and coordination with UN and others to ensure harmonisation
- Explore and coordinate with regional bodies/fora on partnerships, advocacy and influencing with Ministers
- Discuss with CGPMG members modalities for interfacing with Ministers between WAMMs
- Support development of work plan

4 Members

- (As per adopted TORs)
 - i. To be elaborated and processes determined
- Determine role of member with region
- Develop work plan and monitor its implementation
- Determine role at WAMM
- Provide guidance to the Secretariat

5 Mid-Term Review (MTR)

- Secretariat to send out M&E Framework and indicators and identified regional priorities
- Draw on regional processes

6 New York Meeting

- Inform members of outcome of meeting
- Role of CGPMG with regard to the Working Group
- ComSec to input on regional process and findings
- Update on Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security

7 Operationalisation

- E-group (Secretariat to set up)
- Bi-monthly conference call
- E-updates by Chair
- Meeting prior to New York
- Regional sub-groups
- Interact with NWMs
- Secretariat to prepare something to enable the Group to develop work plan during New York
- Concept paper for Mid-Term Review
- Looking at Beijing +15
- Provide template
- Use discussion paper for MTR for basis of session within CGPMG
- Consider MTR in the context of ongoing M&E

Annex A-IV: Proposal for CGPMG Rotation

Background and Rationale

Following the creation of the CGPMG and in accordance with Commonwealth principles of ‘consensus’, it was envisaged that all Commonwealth member countries would have the opportunity to serve in the CGPMG during the life span of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (PoA), i.e., before the final review of the Plan in 2015. Given the diversity of member countries, it was also hoped that the membership at any given time would present the diversity and balance that informs rich discussion and exchange of information and ideas.

At the meeting of national women’s machineries (NWMs) held in February 2008 in New York, it became apparent that with the present CGPMG composition, several Commonwealth 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 and appointment of the Group’s chair were raised by the NWMs. Against this background, the Commonwealth 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 the four Commonwealth regions as well as civil society representatives from the regions. The Commonwealth Secretariat is proposing an increase in number of the group to 25. The breakdown for the additional five new members is as follows:

Africa/Europe (3)
Canada/Caribbean (1)
Pacific (1)

Justification for Increase

Evidence indicated that based on existing rotation policy, countries in three out of the four Commonwealth regions would not have had the opportunity to serve and contribute directly to the CGPMG by 2015. This is because Africa/Europe, for example, is comprised of 21 countries with 18 of them in Africa and 3 in Europe.¹ In comparing CW Africa/Europe (21 with existing 4 slots) representation with CW Asia (8 with 4 slots), it is evident that CW Asia countries would have served 4 times each until 2015, while some in CW Africa/Europe would not have had any chance to serve. The same experience (though not of the same magnitude) would have befallen the Caribbean and Pacific if nothing were 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/Canada : 5 members
Pacific : 5 members
Asia : 4 members
Civil society: 4 members
Proposed Grand Total CGPMG = 25 members

¹CW Africa: Botswana, Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia; CW Europe: Cyprus, Malta and United Kingdom

What the Increase Will Accomplish

- i) It will provide a platform and opportunity for all CW countries to serve and contribute before 2015 when the 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) The 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 contributions 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 and 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

- 1 Africa/Europe: A total of 7 seats are allotted to Africa/Europe. However, given the location of countries, we propose the following:
Europe: 1 seat. Over a three-year period, all 3 countries will have the opportunity to serve on the CGPMG.
Africa: 6 seats. Given the spread of Commonwealth Africa, we propose the following:
East and West Africa: 3 seats over the three-year period. This means with a total of 9 countries, they will have the opportunity to serve on the CGPMG
Africa South: 3 seats over the three-year period. This means with a total of 9 countries, they will have the opportunity to serve on the CGPMG.
- 2 Canada/Caribbean: a total of 5 seats are allotted to the region. However, we propose that Canada and Australia/New Zealand (see below) are allowed to be part of the CGPMG throughout the period. 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.
Canada/Caribbean will get a total of 5 seats with the following breakdown
Canada: 1 seat
Caribbean: 4 seats: with a total of 12 countries,² they will all have the opportunity to serve over the three-year period.
- 3 Asia: 4 seats: with a total of 8 countries,³ Asian countries are best placed to serve (perhaps more than twice) in the CGPMG.
- 4 Pacific: 5 seats: with a total of 11 countries⁴ 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 three-year period, all countries will have the opportunity to serve on the CGPMG.

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

³ CW Asia: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka

⁴ CW Pacific: Australia, Fiji Islands (suspension), Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu (Cook Islands, Niue)

- 5 Civil society organisations (CSOs): 4 seats allotted remain unchanged. For Africa/Europe, it was agreed at the 2006 meeting that the CSO would be 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. 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 Commonwealth member countries, though it is grouped together with Europe – an additional three. In order to ensure fair and balanced representation, we have revised the composition and increased Africa's representation as well as that of other affected regions.

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

Annex A-V: Note on the Mid-Term Review of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015

Background

The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (PoA) provides the framework within which the Commonwealth contributes to advancing gender equality. The PoA builds on past achievements, seeks to close persistent gaps, reflects the Commonwealth’s response to global changes as they impact differently on women and men, and engages with new and emerging challenges. The PoA formed part of the Commonwealth’s contribution to the United Nations Beijing +10 Global Review in 2005.

The Mid-Term Review (MTR), as well as other methods of monitoring and evaluation, are elaborated as part of the PoA mandate. Among various ways identified in the PoA are the Secretary-General’s biennial report on the implementation of the PoA to Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs) and the periodic meetings of Ministers Responsible for Women’s /Gender Affairs. Further “The Secretariat will integrate monitoring of the PoA into its 4-year strategic planning and 2-year operational planning cycles, and gender audits of the Secretariat’s work will be undertaken to assess its impact in promoting equality between women and men in the Commonwealth”.

The MTR coincides with the Beijing +15 processes. Member countries have encouraged the Secretariat to harmonise the MTR with reviews in place at regional and international levels. The Secretariat has therefore taken steps to contact the United Nations Economic Commissions for Africa and for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECA and UNECLAC) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) to facilitate information sharing of their processes at the 2009 Commonwealth consultation of national women’s machineries (NWMs) in New York.

The year 2010 will see the completion of the MTR and the Beijing +15 review; it will also be the year in which the Commonwealth Women’s Affairs Ministers will hold their 9th Meeting (9WAMM) in Barbados.

Mid-Term Review

The MTR offers a unique opportunity to refocus attention on interventions needed to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. It will assess the extent to which the aspirations of the PoA have been achieved since its adoption in 2005. It will also generate authoritative evidence that will assist member countries as well as the Secretariat in making informed decisions to improve policy and practice.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for the Commonwealth Plan of Action adopted at the 8th Commonwealth Women’s Affairs Ministers Meeting (8WAMM) in 2007 will be used as the main tool for undertaking the MTR. The Framework sets out indicators and data sources for each of the four critical areas of the PoA:

- Gender, democracy, peace and conflict
- Gender, human rights and law
- Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
- Gender and HIV/AIDS

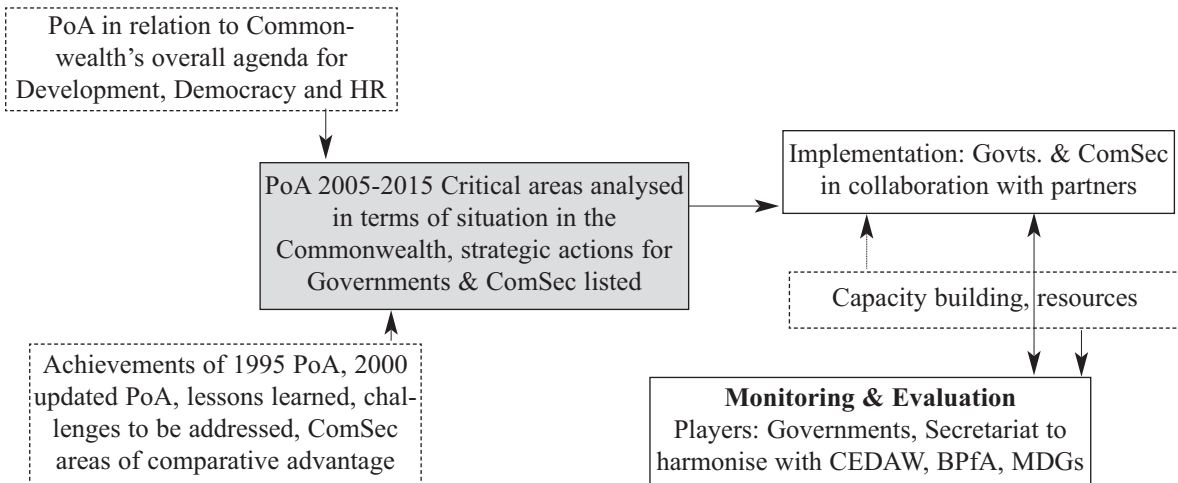
Regional workshops in the Caribbean and in Southern and Eastern Africa on the implementation of the M & E framework were conducted throughout 2008 by the Commonwealth Secretariat. More workshops are planned for 2009. The outcomes from these workshops and the substantive discussions at the Commonwealth meetings in New York will inform the MTR. The MTR process and outcomes therefore form a major part of the agenda for the meeting of the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG) and the annual consultation of Commonwealth NWMs.

The final report of the MTR will be presented to 9WAMM, to be held in Barbados in 2010.

Annex A-VI: Monitoring & Evaluation Framework & 2010 MTR of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015

Barbara Bailey, PhD, University Director, Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona (PowerPoint presentation)

The Context



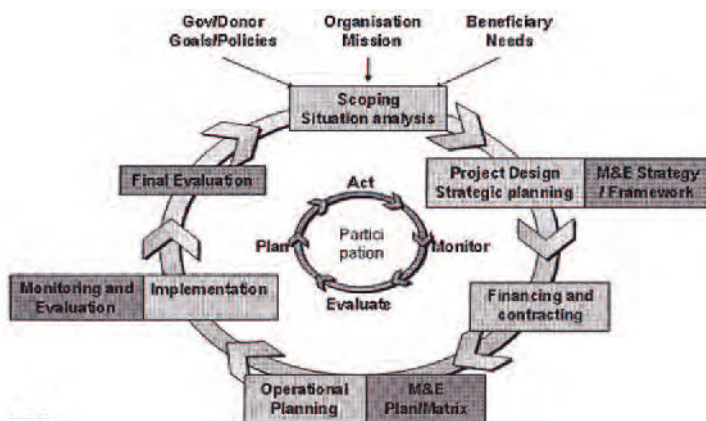
The 2010 Mid-Term Review

- Mid-Term Review report to be developed and presented to 9WAMM scheduled for 2010 in Barbados
- Objective of the MTR: to assess the extent to which governments and the Commonwealth Secretariat have achieved actions set out in the PoA since its adoption in 2005
- MTR will reflect the status of implementation at the national level and outputs/outcomes up to 2010

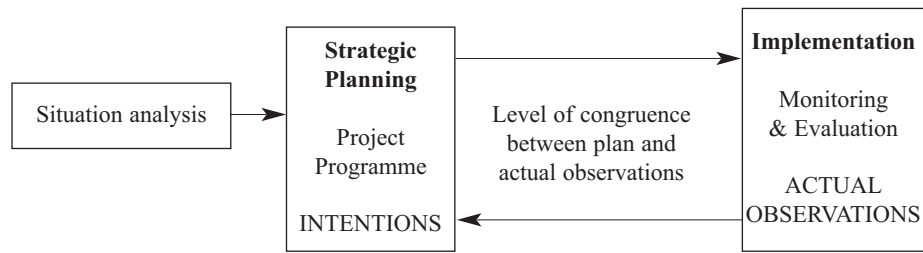
Operationalising the Plan at the National Level

- In relation to proposed actions/outputs – carry out a situation analysis
- Design an initiative to address the situation – strategic planning – which includes a plan for ongoing monitoring and evaluating of the outcomes
- Operationalise the plan – determine resources and personnel required to implement the plan
- During implementation include ongoing monitoring and evaluating, within a determined time frame (short, medium, long term) and use data gathered to report on achievement of the desired output
- Conduct a final evaluation of the outcome, that is, the impact of the intervention

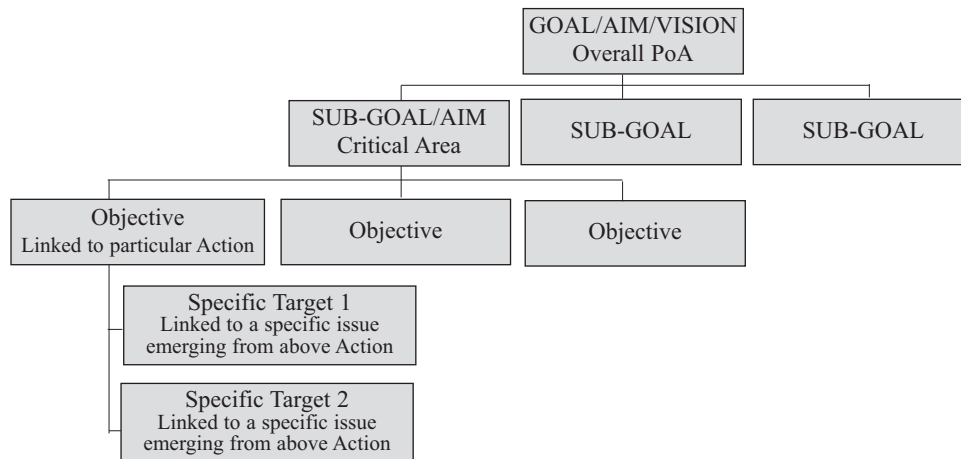
Plan, Act, Monitor and Evaluate: A Cyclical Process



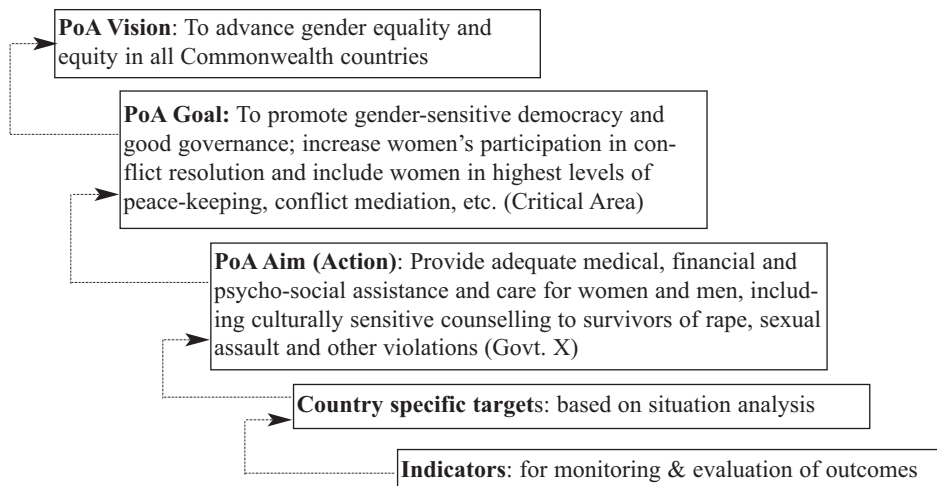
Relationship: Planning & Implementation



Vision, Goals/Aims, Objectives/Targets



Commonwealth PoA: Mission/Goals (Critical Areas)/Specific actions/targets



M&E: Definitions

Monitoring is the regular collection and analysis of data to provide information on progress achieved during implementation of activities related to explicitly stated targets – can have a formative function

Evaluation is assessing the positive and negative medium and long-term impacts of the intervention on the target group in terms of effectiveness and sustainability of the outcomes – summative

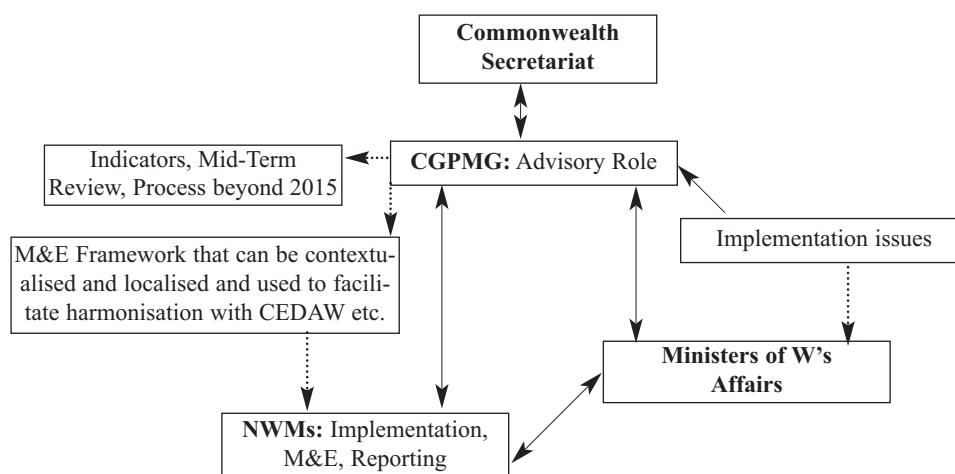
M&E: Distinctions

Item	Monitoring	Evaluation
Frequency	Periodic, regular	Episodic
Main action	Keeping track/oversight	Assessment of impact
Basic purpose	Improving efficiency Adjusting work plan	Improve effectiveness, impact, future programming
Focus	Inputs, process outputs, work plans	Effectiveness, relevance, impact, cost-effectiveness
Information source	Routine systems, field observations, progress reports, rapid assessments	Same as with monitoring plus surveys, studies
Undertaken by	Project managers (NWMs) Community (beneficiaries) Supervisors, Funders	Programme managers, Supervisors, Funders, External evaluators

Importance of M&E

- Provides data on programme progress and effectiveness
- Improves programme management and decision-making
- Allows accountability to stakeholders, including funders
- Provides data to plan future resource needs
- Provides data useful for policy-making and advocacy

Role of Commonwealth Gender PoA Monitoring Group (to assist with M&E and reviewing the POA)



Using Indicators

What is an Indicator?

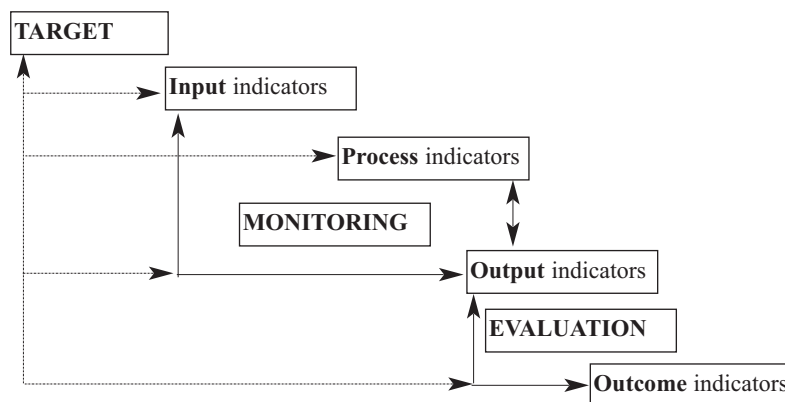
- An indicator is a variable/factor that provides a reliable means to measure achievement and changes resulting from an intervention
- The factor measures changes over time (short, medium, long term) and gives an indication of the results of the intervention
- Gender indicators point out how far and in what ways interventions have met the gender equality/equity target

Why the Need for Indicators

- Indicators provide a means of showing how well the PoA is being implemented against expected results (targets), that is, the level of congruence between intentions and actual outputs

- They make progress measurable and visible and help us to determine whether commitments have been or are being fulfilled

M&E Indicators



Questions to ask:

- Inputs: What resources are required to achieve the target?
- Process: Measures implementation – What has to be done to ensure that the target can be achieved?
- Output: What immediate results do you expect from implementation of the intervention?
- Outcome/Impact: What long-term changes occur as a result of the intervention – negative, positive, sustainable?

Types of Indicators

- Both quantitative and qualitative indicators are important in monitoring and evaluation – they complement each other
- Focus is usually on quantitative indicators but they do not tell us the entire story and can in fact distort the reality – access to a service does not necessarily tell us about the quality of the experience (e.g., more victims of GBV have cases reported and taken to court but victims often re-victimised in the process)

Quantitative/Qualitative Indicators

- Quantitative – useful in terms of monitoring input, process and output variables in relation to targets
- Qualitative – essential in evaluating impact and gathering information on experiences and understanding people’s views
- Qualitative indicators – not easy to identify or measure – different data collection strategies required

Baseline Data

- In monitoring and impact studies, results must be compared against baseline data collected before the intervention
- If there are no baseline data, there is no way to verify that the observed outputs/outcomes are a result of the intervention (inputs and processes)
- The situation analysis can provide the baseline data if in fact it informed the identification of issues and the development of the vision, goals, objectives and targets

Targets, Indicators and RBM

- RBM – results-based management
- If indicators are to show results they must relate to specific targets/objectives and expected results
- Targets therefore need to be stated in terms that indicate the expected result
- **Example Aim/Action:** “Provide adequate medical, financial and psycho-social assistance and care for women and men, including culturally sensitive counselling to survivors of rape, sexual assault

and other violations.” (Govt. X, p. 30)

- **Specific Target(s): What would be the specific outputs from the action?**

M&E Framework for the Commonwealth PoA 2005-15 adopted in 2007

- Is the framework adequate for measuring progress towards achievement of the PoA at the national level?
- How do the proposed outputs relate to the actions laid out in the PoA?
- Are the indicators relevant to all regions?
- At the national level are all themes to be addressed simultaneously?
- Are all the themes and/or outcomes of equal significance to all countries/regions and should any be given priority treatment over others?

Harmonisation of M&E of Commonwealth PoA with M&E of other mechanisms

- Is each country to determine how to achieve harmonisation?
- Several actions in the Commonwealth PoA are common to other mechanisms – Beijing +15, CEDAW, MDGs, CRC, etc. and national gender policies
- M&E activities can therefore inform all of these mechanisms and determine progress in relation to obligations under these agreements
- Each agency, however, requires a separate report

Developing the MTR: Strategy and Time Line

Template for National MTRs

- Introduction: the situation analysis in relation to 2010 outputs
- Systems and structures established for implementation and M&E activities
- Results achieved in relation to each of the 4 critical areas and in relation to established targets
- Challenges/obstacles encountered during implementation and M&E activities, lessons learnt to inform future activities
- Further actions required and time frame for full achievement of outcomes by 2015

Mechanism for Producing the Final MTR

- Role of NWMs
- Role of the CGPMG
- Role of the Commonwealth Secretariat
- Product from each of the players
- Synthesis of products into the final report
- Timely production of the final report for tabling at 9WAMM

Timeline leading up to 9WAMM

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Annex A-VII: CGPMG Sub-group for the MTR Indicator Review

Africa/Europe: Ghana

Asia: Bangladesh

Canada/Caribbean: Barbados

Pacific: Tonga

CSO:* Nelcia Robinson, Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)

* with the additional expertise of Ms Lisa Pusey, International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAW) Asia Pacific.

Annex A-VIII: Work Plan of the CGPMG

Objective	Activities	Timeframe												Lead	Output	OVI	Remarks	
Pre-WAMM																		
2009																		
		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D					
- To identify tasks needed for a smooth MTR process and engage action; - To ensure efficient delivery of the MTR report	Review draft TORs of consultant														CGPMG and Commonwealth Secretariat	Finalised TORs		This will take place during the meeting of the CGPMG in NY
	Endorse work plan of the CGPMG														CGPMG	Agreed work plan of activities to be undertaken by the CGPMG, with modalities of operation established		This will take place as above
	Endorse final MTR methodology														CGPMG	Final MTR methodology ready for application		This could be undertaken by a technical 'sub-group' of the CGPMG, led by the Chair
	Reporting template														MTR consultant with ComSec giving feedback	Template developed for review by CGPMG		
	Regional consultant TORs														MTR consultant with ComSec giving feedback	Regional TORs developed for review by CGPMG		
	Review reporting template														CGPMG, ComSec and MTR consultant	Finalised reporting template ready for administering to countries		This could be undertaken by a technical 'sub-group' of the CGPMG, led by the Chair
	Review TORs of regional consultants														CGPMG and ComSec	Finalised TORs for regional consultants		As above
	Administer questionnaires														ComSec			
	Desk review														MTR consultant	Overview reportage conducted by MTR consultant towards final synthesis of regional outputs		

Objective	Activities	Timeframe												Lead	Output	OVI	Remarks	
Pre-WAMM (cont.)																		
2009																		
		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D					
	Regional meetings													ComSec, MTR consultant, regional consultants and relevant members of the CGPMG	Fully consultative regional inputs generated and agreed for the MTR report			
	Delivery of first drafts of regional reports to MTR consultant													Regional consultants				
	First draft of the synthesised MTR Report													Consultant				
	Review and feedback on the first draft													CGPMG and ComSec	First draft is strengthened			This could be undertaken by a technical 'sub-group' of the CGPMG, led by the Chair

2010																		
		J	F	M	A	M	J											
								(WAMM)										
- To finalise and deliver the MTR Report on the implementation of the PoA as well as key messages at 9WAMM	Delivery of second draft of synthesised MTR Report							MTR consultant										
	Presentation for review of final draft MTR report							CGPMG and ComSec	CGPMG reviews final draft and approves for final editing towards publication									
	Strategy for efficient and effective dissemination of MTR discussed and agreed							CGPMG and ComSec	Clarity on approach to be used for maximising the message of the PoA across the Commonwealth and at the global level									
	Final MTR report delivered to ComSec for publication							MTR consultant										

2010 (cont.)											
		J	F	M	A	M	J (WAMM)				
	Summary of report developed?							ComSec	WAMM-format- ted product developed for Ministers as part of official docu- mentation		
	Presentation of the report and key messages delivered to Ministers at 9WAMM							Chair of the CGPMG	Ministers consid- er the key recom- mendations and messages of the report towards informed discus- sion on the effec- tive implementa- tion of the PoA		

Post WAMM

2010-2011												
		J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F			
To implement and follow up recommendations from 9WAMM												

Annex A-IX Participant List

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Margaret Bruce
Head of Law Development Section (Acting)

Jennet Kem
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Rapporteur

Tina Johnson
Consultant

B. Report of the Consultation of Commonwealth National Women's Machineries

1 March 2009

**UN Millennium Hotel
New York**

SESSION 1

Opening, Feature Address, Updates

1.1 Opening Remarks

Dr. Caroline Pontefract, Director of the Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD) at the Commonwealth Secretariat, opened the Consultation of National Women's Machineries (NWMs) by extending a warm welcome to all those present. She noted that participants included Ministers from Barbados, Ghana, Kiribati, Nigeria, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia² as well as senior officials from numerous Commonwealth member countries; the Chair and members of the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG); Ms Joanne Sandler, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), who would be addressing the meeting, and other colleagues from the UN; other partners from multilateral, bilateral and civil society organisations; and colleagues from the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Joint Office in New York and the Commonwealth Foundation. She extended a special welcome to the Minister from Barbados as host country for the Ninth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (9WAMM), and said that there would be more discussion on that meeting later in the day.

Dr. Pontefract then set the context for the meeting, saying that it was an annual event that enabled the Commonwealth to caucus on the eve of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and share information and ideas. She reminded participants that the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (PoA) contributed to achieving gender equality through four main critical areas, and that this was a significant year as it was time for the Mid-Term Review (MTR) process. She noted that the CGPMG, established to support implementation of the PoA, had met the previous day.

After moving for the adoption of the agenda (Annex B-1), Dr. Pontefract said that the objectives of the meeting were to consider the report of the CGPMG and updates from the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation on their work; to revise the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and consider the MTR and how to dovetail with other reporting processes; and to discuss plans and themes of 9WAMM. She said that the meeting would be divided into four sessions, and gave a brief overview of each. She then asked participants to quickly introduce themselves.

Ms Kashmala Tariq, member of the Parliament of Pakistan and chair of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) made a formal request that the CWP should be an official part of the group. The Secretariat noted that consideration of this request would be guided by consultations with other Secretariat divisions and sections as well as the recognised need to include other key groups and institutions involved in running an effective gender management system.

Dr. Pontefract then invited Ms Joanne Sandler, Deputy Executive Director of UNIFEM to deliver the feature address (Annex B-II).

1.2 Feature Address: Who Answers to Women?

Ms Sandler began by thanking the Commonwealth Secretariat for a long history of partnership and also the Ministers of Gender Equality and Women's Affairs and their staff for their commitment, courage and creativity. She said that UNIFEM knew very well the challenges they faced: it had worked with some 90 ministries and departments of women's affairs over the previous four years and was also in a similar situation of being mandated to advance gender equality both within and outside the system but often without the necessary authority, status, staffing or budgets. She informed participants that she wanted to

²Ministers from Namibia and South Africa also joined the proceedings during the day.

focus on two issues: the question of accountability; and an emerging opportunity on which she hoped those present might offer some feedback.

To highlight accountability gaps, Ms Sandler used examples from the fourth edition of UNIFEM's flagship publication, *Progress of the World's Women*, published the previous year, which asked the question "who answers to women?" She noted that the themes of the CSW – equal sharing of responsibility, gender perspectives on the financial crisis, and equal participation of men and women in decision-making – were also directly pertinent to this question. She said that the overall failure to achieve equal participation in decision-making was an accountability failure that, in many cases, was also a question of life or death. As examples, she mentioned the huge spikes of HIV infection rates for women over the previous 5–10 years and the decrease in maternal mortality by .4 per cent per year instead of the 5.5 per cent needed to meet the Millennium Development Goal. She highlighted the small number of women on National AIDS Councils and suggested that progress in both areas would not be so slow if women were involved in decision-making and budget setting.

In addition, Ms Sandler said that women's continued lack of participation in decision-making in conflict resolution processes contributed to making peace agreements more tenuous since the specific violations they experienced were often excluded, and reconstruction plans also lacked provisions that would make women full participants in sustaining peace. She said that it was not known whether the various crises currently facing the world would have evolved differently if men and women shared responsibility and participation in decision-making, but that the many achievements for women's rights over the past three decades had begun to generate a better basis for women's demands. Some examples of these achievements mentioned by Ms Sandler included the use of temporary special measures to increase women's participation in decision-making (with 24 countries having achieved or surpassed 30 per cent representation in parliament); the new commitments to women's human rights in peace processes in several conflict or post-conflict countries when women were supported to participate; and the institutionalising of gender-responsive budgets and generating of sex-disaggregated data in several countries, which was building a better evidence base for devising public policies and programmes.

Turning to the global financial crisis, Ms Sandler referenced an article in the *New York Times* that had questioned whether this crisis would have taken the same course if the investment bank Lehman Brothers had been Lehman Sisters or, better yet, Lehman Brothers and Sisters. She said that the article had cited research showing that diverse groups performed better at problem solving than homogeneous groups; moreover, men were particularly likely to make high-risk bets under financial pressure when surrounded by other males of similar status, whereas women's risk-taking was unaffected by this kind of peer pressure. She suggested the need for many more women as heads of Central Banks, finance ministries, regulatory bodies and major business enterprises as well as for closely monitoring and publicising the gender-specific impact of the financial crisis at the national level.

Ms Sandler said that *Progress of the World's Women* had made four concrete recommendations related to increasing accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment: (i) promotion of a gender-responsive approach to accountability for women's rights and gender equality, with the performance of power-holders partly judged on the extent to which they addressed gender gaps and gender justice; (ii) introduction of special temporary measures or positive action of some kind to reach the gender parity zone of 40–60 per cent of women in parliaments; (iii) backing for both men and women in decision-making by strong and informed constituencies that supported an agenda for gender equality and social justice; and (iv) taking a holistic approach that combined introducing positive action and incentives while reducing gender discrimination, particularly in the area of care and care-giving. She also said that capacity development and support should be provided for women in decision-making positions, as well as human and financial support for women's NGOs and networks.

Ms Sandler then turned to the second part of her presentation, which was to ask those present for their thoughts on the most effective distribution and use of 50 million Euros given to UNIFEM by the

Government of Spain to launch a gender equality fund. She said that 7–10 grants of between \$2 million to \$7 million would be made over the next year on the basis of a competitive application process to strengthen Ministries of Women’s Affairs and women’s networks to drive the agenda for women’s economic and political empowerment. She asked for participants’ ideas on how the money could be used most effectively to fast track implementation of existing commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment; what advice they had on how to make the application process effective and accessible; what kinds of partnerships should exist at the national level to ensure that the supported efforts become sustainable after the grant period ended; and what kind of technical support (if any) would be helpful.

Ms Sandler ended by wishing everyone a very productive session and a very fruitful outcome of the CSW.

Plenary Discussion

Dr. Pontefract thanked Ms Sandler for her inspiring speech, which she said provided much food for thought, and asked participants to focus on the specific questions that had been posed in order to provide UNIFEM with the feedback it was seeking on the new gender equality fund.

It was noted that some countries in Southern Africa had already achieved the first target set by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) of 30 per cent women in parliament and were aiming for the new SADC target of 50 per cent. The Caribbean, however, despite commitments to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), was said to lack a critical and sustained mass of women in leadership, while those temporary special measures that did exist in the region were for so-called ‘marginalised men and boys’ and not for women and girls.

The point was emphasised that it was not all about the numbers: the importance of having programmes for women’s empowerment and for women to have the power to influence the system in a patriarchal world and lift up other women was also highlighted. It was suggested that what many women needed most of all was to be afforded a space to breathe as the burdens of childcare, fetching water, caring for the elderly, etc. prevented them from thinking about their own emotional and political advancement. This was said to be critical if it were not to be only elite women who moved ahead, and one possible way to do this might be to combine micro-finance programmes with empowerment programmes. The point was also made that while countries definitely needed the funds, there should be clear systems in place and transparency in oversight to ensure that they were properly utilised.

Ms Sandler concluded this section of the programme by noting that she appreciated the input and wanted as much feedback as possible on how to use this huge opportunity. She announced a reception to launch the fund at 6.00 pm the following day, to which everyone was invited, and said that another meeting would be set up then for further discussion.

1.3 Update on the Work of the Gender Section, Commonwealth Secretariat

1.3.1 Overview

Ms Esther Eghobamien, the new Head of the Gender Section, made a PowerPoint presentation (see Annex B-III). Before offering an overview of the Section’s work, she said that she wanted to stress the overall commitment to gender mainstreaming in the Secretariat. As evidence of this, she pointed firstly to the presence of colleagues from other Divisions including Legal and Education and from partner organisations such as Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) and the Commonwealth Foundation. Secondly, she said gender mainstreaming was recognised as a cross-cutting theme in the Secretariat’s Strategic Plan 2008–2012, and the core results and indicators of the PoA were embedded within the Human Development Programme and other components of the Strategic Plan,

Commonwealth organs and business operations/functions. Thirdly she referred to a specific directive from the Deputy Secretary-General to work towards a Gender Policy for the Secretariat as a step towards the implementation of recommendations from the gender audit conducted the previous year, and the strengthening of institutional mechanisms and capacities for increased gender mainstreaming through, for example, human resources and staff training.

Ms Eghobamien went on to call attention to the comparative advantage and cutting edge of the Secretariat, which resided in its political legitimacy and convening power (for example, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting – CHOGM, ministerial meetings on education, justice, trade, health, women, and so on) as well as its capacity and track record in brokering policy and negotiating consensus. In addition, she mentioned the networks of Commonwealth civil society organisations and associations, the provision of cost-efficient technical assistance, and the rich pool of resources, knowledge and tools that the Secretariat could harness. She said that its delivery strategies included capacity building, advocacy, research and knowledge creation, technical assistance and partnerships.

Turning to the PoA, Ms Eghobamien mentioned the central focus of work under each of the four critical areas. These were elections and the provision of technical assistance and policy advice under Gender, Democracy, Peace and Conflict; culture and the law, CARICOM model legislation, and the rights of indigenous and tribal women under Gender, Human Rights and Law; gender-responsive budgets, trade policy, access to markets and social protection under Gender, Poverty Eradication and Economic Empowerment; and unpaid work in HIV care under Gender and HIV/AIDS. She said that in order to inform the meeting of substantive progress made since the last Consultation of NWMs in 2008, she would be calling on her colleagues to provide updates that dealt with the strategic objectives and focus of the critical area of the PoA they were working in; internal and external linkages with key partners in the Secretariat and with regional and global partners; programming modalities and results; and challenges and future directions.

In conclusion, Ms Eghobamien referred to some of the upcoming work of the Gender Section, which included focusing on gender mainstreaming in other sections/divisions of the Secretariat including Education, Justice and the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division (SPED); preparations for the MTR, Beijing +15 and 9WAMM; and strengthening mechanisms for PoA implementation, for example, the CGPMG and CHOGM.

1.3.2 Gender, democracy, peace and conflict

Ms Elsie Onubogu, Gender Adviser, said that in terms of gender and democracy, work with member countries had to go beyond numbers and ensure that women who were elected were able to make a difference. She indicated that the Secretariat was taking a regional approach and offered the example of the Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (CIWIL), which was being set up with UNIFEM and national partners to provide ongoing training and capacity building for women including young girls to prepare them for leadership position. If this proved to be effective, it would be replicated in other regions. She said the Secretariat was also working with SADC on pushing increased women's participation in leadership by putting in place special temporary measures.

Moving on to the area of peace and conflict, Ms Onubogu said that the Gender Section continued to promote global frameworks – such as United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security – that pushed for women to participate and be represented in peace negotiations and reconstruction processes. She briefly mentioned the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security, agreed to by the meeting of NWMs in 2007 and endorsed by 8WAMM, which she said she would be talking about in greater detail later in the day. She noted that this had been mentioned as part of progress towards implementing UNSCR 1325 by the UN Secretary-General in his recent report on women, peace and security.

1.3.3 Gender, Human Rights and Law, and HIV/AIDS

Dr. Meena Shivdas, Gender Adviser, said that the strategic objective in the area of gender, human rights and the law was to advance women's rights through laws and customs with a focus on gender, culture and the law. Partners included the Justice Section and Human Rights Unit at the Secretariat as well as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNFPII), UNIFEM, CARICOM, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), SADC, women's law and development networks and Ministries of Gender and Law in Africa and Asia.

Dr. Shivdas said that the programme had convened colloquia in West Africa, Southern and East Africa and Asia on gender, culture and the law that brought together ministries of gender and law, traditional and faith leaders, the judiciary and women's law networks to dialogue on women's rights through law and customs, and a Pacific colloquium was scheduled for May. It had also undertaken a review of CARICOM model legislation on gender equality, which had been presented to and endorsed by Law Ministers; held a workshop on indigenous women's rights, with a comprehensive publication to follow; and provided the gender dimensions to the planned plan of action on combating trafficking in women and children mandated by Law Ministers. Other activities Dr. Shivdas mentioned included promoting widows' rights in Nigeria through work with faith leaders on writing of wills; regional dialogue with the judiciary, land tribunal and traditional leaders and assisting the women judges' association on strengthening jurisprudence of equality programmes in Kenya; joint work with UNFPA on regional training of traditional and faith leaders on women's rights, law and culture in Tanzania; and an expert group meeting in Bangladesh for a regional model law on gender equality. She said the programme planned to focus on violence against women through building on the Secretariat's integrated model on addressing violence against women and linking this to global efforts. She also stressed that the erosion of women's rights in different areas due to the economic crisis was a challenge.

Turning to the area of gender and HIV/AIDS, Dr. Shivdas said that the strategic objective here was to mainstream gender in HIV policy and programmes and the focus was unpaid work in HIV care: gender roles, policy and programme implications. She said that the partner at the Secretariat was the Health Section, while external partners included UNIFEM, UNAIDS, Aidsfree World, the International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW), national HIV agencies and Ministries of Gender. Dr. Shivdas said that qualitative research on carers had been initiated across select countries, initial findings from which would be presented at a CSW side event on 5 March, and there were plans for wider research to inform policy and programming. Other activities that she mentioned were consolidation of work on gender and HIV in Asia through finalising publications; continued collaboration on a Caribbean interagency project; and collaboration with the Health Section on proposed work on HIV, stigma and the law. She said that challenges included addressing the links between violence against women and marginalised groups and HIV as well as the HIV care burden in the current economic crisis.

1.3.4 Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment

Ms Jennet Kem, Gender Adviser, said that the strategic objective in the area of gender and economic empowerment was to ensure gender mainstreaming in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of macro-economic policies and programmes at national, regional and international levels. She noted that it was a very broad area of work, with key components on gender-responsive budgets (GRBs) and on mainstreaming gender in aid effectiveness, trade policies and agreements, employment, agriculture, and so on. In terms of partnerships, she said that internally there was cooperation with various other sections and divisions including the Special Advisory Services Division (SASD), Economic Affairs Division (EAD) and Governance and Institutional Division (GIDD), while externally partners included UNIFEM, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Network on Gender Equality (OECD-GENDERNET), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Ms Kem said that key programme strategies were policy dialogue, technical assistance, capacity building, research, knowledge creation and sharing of good practices. She said one important result had been getting Ministers of Finance engaged in implementing GRBs and reviewing progress every two years, which had resulted in concrete measures to institutionalise GRBs in a number of Commonwealth member countries. She said that GRB work was taking a new orientation towards being sector-based in specific countries, and work was also planned on engendering the other side of the budget (revenue generation and collection).

Noting that the current macro-economic context, characterised by multiple crises, provided both opportunities as well as challenges for enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment, Ms Kem said that there was a need to plan work around emerging economic issues. She also identified the lack of country presence as a challenge, but added that this was often mitigated by strong partnerships with NWMs and/or international agencies. She said that work towards gender mainstreaming in social protection, especially for those in the most vulnerable and precarious areas of work such as agriculture and the informal sector, would be very critical for 9WAMM, and that identification of country-specific indicators had been built into some planned activities to facilitate monitoring.

Ms Kem concluded by mentioning that knowledge had been shared through various publications on social protection, the gender impacts of revenue collection, engendering trade policies, and a number of toolkits on gender-responsive budgets.

Ms Fatimah Kelleher, Senior Programme Officer, Gender, then specifically addressed the area of gender, trade policy and market access, outlining the developments within the programme in this area over the past year. She said that the Gender Section had been working towards building capacity within ministries of trade, gender and civil society in order to facilitate the inclusion of gender analysis in trade policy formulation and trade negotiation. In 2008 it had delivered advocacy on gender, trade policy and poverty reduction in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) at UNCTAD XII, Accra, and initiated pilot level projects in India and Uganda towards mainstreaming gender that included training of negotiators, training of trainers and the commissioning of sub-national research that would contribute to the growing body of evidence on gender and trade. In that regard, further pan-Commonwealth research had also been commissioned towards a publication on gender and trade and gender and market access case studies.

In the more specific area of the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (EU-ACP) Economic Partnership Agreements, Ms Kelleher informed that substantive gender analytical research had also been conducted in Jamaica, Mozambique and United Republic of Tanzania in collaboration with the international NGO One World Action, and two regional workshops had already been delivered in CARICOM and SADC to disseminate the Jamaica and Mozambique research. One key result from the Jamaica workshop had been a request from the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, for assistance in applying a gender lens to their ongoing free trade negotiations with Canada. She said that further dissemination was planned in the East Africa region, as was a major advocacy event in Brussels for participants from the EU, ACP, Ambassadors to the EU, civil society and other bilateral and multilateral stakeholders.

In the area of gender and market access, Ms Kelleher also reported that the Gender Section had completed a pilot project in Pakistan aimed at linking rural women artisans with international designers. This had been implemented in collaboration with the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), Pakistan and had delivered significant outputs, including the establishment of an enterprise facilitation unit within RSPN, various capacity-building activities in design and entrepreneurial mobilisation, design master classes, and an exhibition of all the commissioned products that the women had completed. Ms Kelleher identified one key outcome as the development of a fair and ethical costing model that allowed the

women to earn three to four times more for their work than they had earned previously. Follow-on to the project was planned.

Ms Kelleher concluded by highlighting the need to build on the substantial work conducted in gender and trade for the future, especially in the area of assisting countries to build capacity for mainstreaming gender in trade policy, and in the negotiation (where not already completed), implementation and monitoring of the EU ACP Economic Partnership Agreements in relevant Commonwealth countries. Having built a body of evidence and developed tools for training, the Commonwealth Secretariat was now in a position to assist countries to build capacity and replicate these initiatives.

1.3.5 Public Sector and Governance and Monitoring the Implementation of the PoA

Dr. Auxilia Ponga, Gender Adviser on Public Sector and Governance as well as on monitoring the implementation of the Commonwealth Plan of Action, mentioned that two workshops had been held in the area of monitoring and evaluation. She also stressed that there were still too few women in decision-making positions within the public sector and in governance structures as a whole, and that it was important to work to support the real needs of women and men. She spoke to her work on developing online and distance learning (ODL) materials to ensure civil servants had skills, knowledge and tools to use in mainstreaming gender in their daily operations. To this end four workshops had been held and future plans included the preparation of a training manual that could be used for developing ODL materials as well as piloting this in four countries in Africa.

Dr. Ponga said that the other thrust of her work had been working with regional bodies to ensure the Secretariat's presence in their strategies and programmes, especially as it did not have country or regional offices. She was also concerned with mainstreaming gender within the Commonwealth Secretariat itself, work that was on-going. For the future, Dr. Ponga said that she would be focusing on the Mid-Term Review and preparation for 9WAMM while continuing work on the above named projects.

Plenary discussion

Dr. Pontefract said that the presentations showed that the Gender Section was working in a variety of ways and in a number of areas, and she highlighted the need for greater harmonisation among areas to ensure they were working closely together. She said that since the Section covered a very wide remit, it was planned to harness expertise to ensure more inter-related processes. She then opened the floor for comments.

Congratulations were offered by participants to the Gender Section on its work. In the area of gender and trade, it was suggested that there be capacity building on gender mainstreaming for the ministries that worked with trade policy, as although NWMs sometimes attended their meetings, the final documents did not include a gender perspective. It was also suggested that the work be taken beyond the country level to regional bodies; the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), for example, had an entirely economic approach and no gender lens or sense of the effects of trade on families. Capacity-building was also called for in the public sector.

Another area highlighted was domestic violence, where it was suggested that the Secretariat could act as a pressure group since some countries still did not have related legislation. It was felt that more sensitising of men was also needed.

While one participant reported Cabinet approval for GRBs and the intention to increase the number of sectors looked at, another felt that GRBs were still not well known. It was suggested that there be better communication between the Secretariat and countries, including through email, and also that it was important for the Secretariat to avoid duplication by joining hands with other agencies doing similar work.

The proposal was put forward that the time might have come for a global campaign on gender equality in the context of the economic crisis, volatile political life and lack of progress on the issue. This included ensuring that gender equality was a cross-cutting theme of processes such as the Millennium Development Goals. Mention was also made of the fact that understanding was still limited as to what gender equality meant, what the benefits could be for reducing poverty and for society in general, and why it should be enthusiastically embraced. While there were said to have been spectacular pockets of success, progress was not widespread

Dr. Pontefract said participants' comments showed that there was a need for better communication, both about what the Section was doing as well as to get feedback on what was needed, and she added that the time was right for global alliances for moving forward on gender. She then invited Ms Anisha Rajapakse, Programme Manager, Commonwealth Foundation to present her report.

1.4 Report by the Commonwealth Foundation

Ms Rajapakse gave a brief account of the work of the Commonwealth Foundation, noting that its mandate was to strengthen the capacities of civil society organisations to meet Commonwealth priorities in the areas of development, democracy and culture. She said that women's organisations wanted a stronger and more proactive women's network, and that the funds provided by the Foundation were often used for work by civil society organisations (CSOs) towards implementation of the Gender Plan of Action (PoA).

Ms Rajapakse then handed the floor to Ms Nelcia Robinson, CSO representative from the Caribbean, who confirmed that the PoA had provided a framework for CSO work on gender equality. As an example, she mentioned several on-going campaigns to have more women in politics. She said CSOs were also involved in awareness raising and were encouraging governments to sign the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) convention on diversity, which would have an impact on gender equality. Other areas in which CSOs were working included GRBs and HIV and AIDS. In the latter area, she said that the Commonwealth Foundation had spearheaded the development of the Pan-Commonwealth Civil Society Network on HIV and AIDS in 2006, which had a particular concern with ending stigma, and funded a study in the Pacific on the gender nature of the epidemic with a view to producing evidence-based material. She announced the holding of a workshop on HIV and AIDS during the CSW. Finally, she said that civil society and the Secretariat should work more closely together, and that the former should be facilitated to carry out its work.

In response to a question from the floor, Ms Rajapakse said that the Foundation gave funding to registered non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from Commonwealth countries (providing grants of £5,000–10,000) and aimed to promote collaboration between NGOs and governments. She said that more information about this could be found on the Foundation's website³ and that applications were welcomed. Ms Rajapakse also announced that the Commonwealth Women's Network was relocating to Barbados to provide support to 9WAMM.

Plenary discussion

Participants agreed that CSOs played an crucial role. Several emphasised the importance of CSOs working hand in hand with government and not in opposition, and an example was offered where a coalition of CSOs had rallied behind the NWM to get a law passed on domestic violence. Another view expressed was that CSOs offered checks and balances to government. They could also work with all political parties and, in one case, had mounted a platform to encourage each party to say what it would do for women. It was suggested that CSOs also needed capacity building.

The announcement that the Minister of Gender Affairs of Uganda, the host for 8WAMM, had been promoted to be the Minister of Finance was greeted with applause by participants.

³www.commonwealthfoundation.org/

1.5 Update on the Ninth Women’s Affairs Ministers Meeting (9WAMM), 2010, Barbados

Hon. Dr. Esther Byer-Suckoo, Minister of Youth, Family and Sports of Barbados, said that she would just be offering some general comments on 9WAMM (Annex B-IV) as the meeting themes were yet to be selected. She said that her Government remained committed to hosting the meeting and that preparations were already underway at the highest level. Systems in place included the setting up of a National Committee with the Bureau of Gender Affairs as the Secretariat.

Hon. Byer-Suckoo reassured participants that, despite being a small island with a population of only 120,000, Barbados had the necessary hotel and other infrastructure necessary to host the conference and its parallel events, including the social activities. She mentioned some of the international meetings that had already been held in the country and several more that would take place in 2010. Given the timing of these meetings as well as of the annual carnival, she indicated it would be best for 9WAMM to take place in early June.

Hon. Byer-Suckoo said that the committee would have to ascertain the associated costs so that these could be included for funding in the national budgetary provisions for the 2010–2011 financial year. She emphasised that all sectors of Barbadian society would be encouraged to be part of the process and invited the Commonwealth Foundation to facilitate civil society engagement as a crucial part of 9WAMM. In addition, she said that the CARICOM Secretariat would be invited to make an input into the planning process.

Stating that details should be finalised by the 2010 NWM meeting, Hon. Byer-Suckoo concluded by saying that she looked forward to welcoming delegates to hot weather and spicy Caribbean flavour.

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SESSION TWO

Report and Recommendations from the 4th Meeting of the Commonwealth Gender PoA Monitoring Group (CGPMG)

Ms Segakweng Tsiane, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, Botswana, and Chair of the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG) presented the report of the CGPMG, held on the previous day (see Annex B-V).⁴ She said that the proceedings had been supported by a meeting in December of the past and current Chairs and the Secretariat.

Ms Tsiane said that the objectives of the meeting had been to review the CGPMG in order to clarify its roles and responsibilities, systematise ways of working and finalise membership rotation and the nomination process of the Chair; to consider and discuss the Mid-Term Review (MTR) process and the role to be played by the CGPMG; to finalise the CGPMG work plan in view of the MTR; to consider an update on the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender Peace and Security; and to inform about new membership to the CGPMG.

2.1 Review of the CGPMG

Ms Tsiane said that a review of the CGPMG regarding its functionality had been presented and looked at its successes so far while also considering the need for greater clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities both within the Group and between it and the Secretariat. A proposal had then been presented, outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Chair, the Secretariat and the members along with

⁴A full account of the meeting can be found in Section A of this publication.

considerations on ways of working. In response, the Group had made a number of suggestions. These included having greater clarity on the role of CSOs within the roles and responsibilities of the CGPMG; providing better orientation for in-coming members; strengthening communication at the regional level to facilitate greater relevance and increase efficiency; and more regular briefings from the Chair between the meetings of the Group in New York. The setting up of an e-group was also welcomed as a modality of improving functionality between meetings. In addition, it was felt that communication to the Group needed to be improved through updating contact details and ensuring that the correct ones were used, as well as using all channels of communication to reach members (for example, missions to the UN) and avoiding information gaps. Members also had a responsibility to ensure that the communication was carried internally.

Ms Tsiane reminded participants that the Secretariat had been requested the previous year to address the standing rotation policy and suggest an alternative system that would provide more equitable and inclusive membership of the CGPMG for the duration of the PoA. A revised rotation system had been presented that provided for an expanded membership, with the Africa region sub-divided into two (East and West Africa and Southern Africa), recognising that the continent contained a large number of Commonwealth member countries, many of which would never get an opportunity to serve in the Group under the current rotation system. She said that the proposed new system had been accepted by the Group.

Ms Tsiane then said that the nomination process for the Chair had also been discussed and agreement had been reached that the Chair for 2009–2010 would be Botswana, following prior consultation with and gracious agreement by Bangladesh; the Chair for 2010–2011 would be Bangladesh; the nomination of the Chair would now follow a regional format (hence the subsequent Chair would be from the Pacific); regions should caucus to select the country to chair; and countries could not chair again before another member from their region.

2.2 Mandate, Priorities and Expected Outcomes of the CGPMG 2009-2010 in Relation to the Mid-Term Review of the POA

Ms Tsiane said that Professor Barbara Bailey had presented on the Mid-Term Review (MTR) process. Key points included that planning, acting, monitoring and evaluation were part of a cyclical process; that monitoring should be ongoing while evaluation should take place at the end to assess impact; that the MTR should assess both outputs and outcomes; that there was a need to refine the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and add indicators that showed how the PoA was being implemented; that the MTR could serve as a baseline; and that the PoA actions needed to be translated into country-specific targets.

Ms Tsiane said that following the presentation the Group had decided to establish a sub-group of CGPMG members to refine the M&E Framework indicators. The sub-group would consist of one CGPMG NWM member from each region and one CGPMG CSO member. The countries selected were: Bangladesh for the Asia region; Ghana for Africa/Europe; Tonga for the Pacific; and Barbados for Canada/ Caribbean. The CSO member would be Nelcia Robinson from the Caribbean, but the CSO grouping had indicated that they would also draw on the expertise of Ms Lisa Pusey from International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific. The sub-group would work with Professor Bailey and other resource persons.

2.3 Work Plan of the CGPMG 2009–2010

Ms Tsiane reported that the Commonwealth Secretariat, as adviser to the CGPMG, had prepared a draft work plan for the consideration of the Group. She said that this identified objectives, activities, timelines and outputs towards the MTR process. Following discussion by members in regional groups, it was adopted with their amendments (see Annex A-VIII).

2.4 Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security

Ms Tsiane said that the Secretariat had presented an update on the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security as well as on work in this programme area. She said that this had informed that the list of persons with the competencies required to constitute the Group had been compiled and sent to the Deputy Secretary-General's Office. The CGPMG had acknowledged the progress made so far but, in view of the importance of this issue, had made an appeal for the Deputy Secretary-General's to give this matter the highest priority.

After presenting her report, Ms Tsiane said that the meeting had stressed the need for greater clarity on roles and responsibilities and that communication had emerged as a critical item. She added that, given the work to be done, there would be a mid-year meeting of the CGPMG in July/August in Botswana. She concluded by saying that she would like to take the opportunity to offer her view on the relationship between governments and civil society and say that the work of CSOs was pivotal and was supported with funds in Botswana.

Plenary discussion

Dr. Pontefract said that it had been important to strengthen the CGPMG and clarify roles and responsibilities, and that communication had been flagged as a joint responsibility, to be initiated by both members and the Secretariat. She emphasised the clear mandate it had given for undertaking the MTR process and after that to taking forward its recommendations. She said that the sub-group to look at indicators would try and make them more meaningful while allowing countries to contextualise them and select those that were most appropriate. She also expressed her concern that the MTR should harmonise with other reporting procedures. Dr. Pontefract then offered special thanks to Bangladesh for allowing Botswana to continue as Chair for another year because the latter had not had a real opportunity to serve due to internal issues, including staff turnover, at the Secretariat.

Participants voiced their appreciation for the work of the Group, but questions were raised about the indicators, the timeframe and when the Group would be providing information so that countries could move forward with the MTR. Dr. Pontefract replied that the timeframe had been discussed in some depth the previous day, and this work would be continued later in the day, and that a meeting of the sub-group was being prioritised.

Uganda expressed concern that the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender Peace and Security had not yet been set up despite the terms of reference having been adopted the previous year as well as the fact that conflict was a priority and the Group was needed to provide impetus. Ms Onubogu responded that the next stage was for the Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General to appoint the members based on the nominations provided, which included not just NWMs but also people from the military, judiciary, and so on. She also mentioned that the Secretariat was consistently pushing the fact that women were not just victims but also peace-makers, and gave the example of the women ministers in Bangladesh who had recently negotiated with rebels to lay down their arms. She said that countries needed national action plans on UN Security Resolutions 1325 and 1820, as had recently been prepared by Uganda. Dr. Pontefract added that the issues on the Working Group had mainly been administrative concerning procedure, but that the format was now satisfactory so it would be set up shortly.

The Commonwealth Foundation was asked how more CSOs could get involved in the process, and participants were informed that there would be national consultations for civil society as well as shadow reporting. There was also a question about retaining expertise when members rotated out of the CGPMG, and Dr. Pontefract mentioned that Ambassador Hazelle, the previous Chair, had attended a meeting in London with the current Chair and that the Group also had drawn on her expertise the previous day. Ms Tsiane confirmed that continuity and mutual support were very useful and assisted in resolving issues and said that she would like to offer special recognition to Ambassador Hazelle.

SESSION THREE

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the Mid-Term Review of the PoA, 2010

3.1 Overview Presentation

Professor Barbara Bailey, Director of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica (and member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) said that she had acted as a resource person at the Caribbean workshop on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and had been asked to share her experience with the meeting of NWMs. She emphasised that the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (PoA) had to be integral to daily life if half of the goals were to be achieved by 9WAMM and the Mid-Term Review (MTR) in 2010. She said that the major players were the Secretariat, the CGPMG, NWMs and others on the ground with responsibility for implementing the PoA, and that M&E were an essential part of the Plan.

Professor Bailey then made a PowerPoint presentation (see Annex B-VI) that started by looking at the PoA and its four critical areas. Stressing that the areas were inter-related, she said that the Secretariat aimed to integrate implementation through generating and sharing knowledge and information, capacity building and budgetary support, and M&E and reporting to inform the MTR report due to be tabled at 9WAMM. She then talked about operationalising the plan. Taking an example of a recommended action under the theme of gender, democracy, peace and conflict – “provide adequate medical, financial and psycho-social assistance and care for women and men, including culturally sensitive counselling to survivors of rape, sexual assault and other violations” – she asked how this action could be achieved and how one would know when it had been achieved. She then suggested a process that involved carrying out a situation analysis, designing an intervention to address the situation, operationalising the plan (determining necessary resources and personnel and including ongoing monitoring within a determined time frame), and conducting a final evaluation of the impact of the intervention. She said that monitoring was not something to be done after the fact but should be ongoing as it enabled a change of direction if actions were not having the desired results. She emphasised that planning, acting, monitoring and evaluation were part of a cyclical process, and that it was essential to monitor the congruence between intentions and actual observations – and between the vision, goal and objectives and targets.

Professor Bailey pointed out that the PoA only dealt with aims and actions and that these needed to be translated into country-specific targets. Until this was done, it would not be possible to come up with indicators. However, she said that it was not necessary to start from scratch, as there were already indicators in existence. She then provided definitions of the terms ‘monitoring’ and ‘evaluation’ and the difference between them. She said that M&E was important because it improved programme management and decision-making, allowed accountability to stakeholders including funders and provided data on programme progress and effectiveness that could be used to plan future resource needs and for policy-making and advocacy.

According to Professor Bailey, a battery of gender indicators was an essential component of any strategy for M&E of progress towards gender equality. Such indicators pointed out how far and in what ways initiatives had met the gender equality/equity target, measured gender-related changes in society over time, provided a means of showing how well the PoA was being implemented against expected results, and made progress measurable and visible. She said that indicators needed to be both quantitative and qualitative; the latter were harder to identify and measure and required different data collection strategies but using only the former could sometimes distort the picture. She mentioned some sources of existing indicators, saying that countries with national gender policies should have indicators and that Secretariat programme officers could also help with indicators for the various themes. She said that indicators must relate to specific targets/objectives and expected results. She also noted that countries might all come up

with different targets for the same aim. In addition, she said that results needed be compared against baseline data collected before the intervention and that the MTR could form the baseline for 2015.

Professor Bailey said that in order to implement, monitor and evaluate, it was necessary to determine centres of responsibility and to have a timeline for achievement of the results. She said the process should be driven by NWMs, who had overall responsibility, with expertise from the Secretariat, the CGPMG and the regional consultants. She also identified challenges, which included the need for resource support to respond to the demand for information, for capacity building across sectors, for improved data collection systems, for training in gender analysis, and for equipping National Statistical Offices and other agencies to take a gendered approach to data collection and analysis. In her final slide, Professor Bailey referred to a handout on activities involving NWMs and the timeline for these, which was then distributed.

3.2 Discussants

3.2.1 Ms Carolyn Hannan, Director, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW)

Ms Hannan addressed the issue of whether or not there would be a review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (and of the outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly – Beijing+5) in 2010 to commemorate the 15th anniversary of their adoption (Annex B-VII). She said that the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) was preparing a draft resolution on this that would be discussed at the upcoming CSW.

In providing an overview of how such a review and appraisal might take place, Ms Hannan noted that the 10th anniversary in 2005 had featured expanded use of interactive dialogue, with broad-based participation of governmental delegations at the highest level of responsibility and expertise and of civil society and UN organisations; a high-level plenary, open to the participation of all UN Member States and Observers; the transmission of the Commission's outcome, through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to the UN General Assembly; and the adoption of a Declaration that called for accelerated implementation.

Ms Hannan stated that the UN regional commissions were already carrying out a review and appraisal of progress made towards implementation, and questionnaires had gone out to all regions (with various deadlines). She said that regional reports would be prepared by the end of September and that the dates of regional meetings had generally been set. She also noted that if the mandate were received to hold a review and appraisal, DAW would not send out a new questionnaire but would utilise the responses received by the regional commissions. The focus of the report that DAW then prepared would depend on the mandate received.

In response to a question from Jamaica, Ms Hannan said that United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) had sent out the questionnaire for the Caribbean to NWMs and a regional meeting was planned for 2010 as well as possibly a virtual one.

3.2.2 Ms Beverly Jones, Social Affairs Officer, Gender and Development Section, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

Ms Jones stated that UNESCAP had sent out the questionnaire to governments, an Expert Group Meeting was carded for May and a High Level Meeting would then be held in the second week of September. This would feature panel discussions, papers and side events on a number of issues, which might include the gender aspects of climate change, national disaster management and food security; gender and ageing; migration and trafficking; the impact of the financial crisis; women, peace and secu-

rity; and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The outputs would be an overview report and statistical update that would be sent to DAW/CSW.

Ms Jones noted that the Asia and the Pacific was a very diverse region, including both large countries and small islands. She suggested that it would be important to determine priorities and emerging issues, exchange experiences and identify new and persisting gaps and challenges. Finally, she said that she was hoping for a wide response to the questionnaire, which would help highlight which issues needed special attention and lessons learned, and noted that it could be found on the UNESCAP website.

Plenary discussion

There was a brief discussion before participants broke into regional groupings to discuss the MTR. Professor Bailey noted the overlap between the Commonwealth and DAW processes. The need to ensure that the different monitoring processes dovetailed was mentioned. The impact of the global downturn on women was also raised as an issue that needed a quick response.

3.3 Working Groups

Professor Bailey walked the participants through the NWM work plan (Annex B-VIII). They were also asked to rank the four critical areas. Dr. Pontefract added that following their input, the Secretariat would streamline or amend the work plan as appropriate and put it into action immediately. Moreover, the subgroup on indicators of the CGPMG would be convened in the UK as soon as possible. The meeting then broke into regional groupings.

Report back

The theme of gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment emerged as an important priority. The time line for the MTR process was generally agreed upon. The UN Economic Commission for Africa, for example, had already circulated the UN questionnaire. Responses were due by 31 March and countries felt that they could use some of the same data in national consultations. In responding to the one group that found the timeline rather unrealistic, Dr. Pontefract noted that this was unfortunately all the time that was available.

In terms of challenges, the Pacific group mentioned communication as the region was very diverse geographically and said that they would need to prepare for the questionnaire well in advance. The Canada/Caribbean noted the extra task of Barbados as the host of 9WAMM. Another issue mentioned was the lack of available statistics on some of the areas in the M&E Framework and the fact that data collection, compilation and analysis would take time. In addition, the insufficiency or lack of national capacity to carry out the MTR process was mentioned.

Participants also raised the issue of competing priorities at national, regional and international levels as well as the need for harmonisation with Beijing+15 and other reports. It was suggested that the Secretariat should align the review process with existing regional priorities and indicators, such as the Pacific Platform for Action. However, participants also recognised the existence of some sources of data in, for example, CEDAW reports and reports on other instruments to regional and international bodies.

In response to the suggestion that more consultation was needed on the terms of reference for regional consultants, Dr. Pontefract said that these would be discussed and circulated with a brief time to respond. Participants were also reminded of the existence of a battery of indicators that could be developed to suit the various national and regional contexts.

Professor Bailey explained that the questionnaire would be designed on the basis of indicators developed with the Secretariat and the sub-group of CGPMG and countries did not need to do this, though they might need to contextualise them. She added that the MTR timeline had mainly been intended to clarify the process by providing a matrix that showed all players how they would work both separately and together.

Dr. Pontefract closed the session by acknowledging the excellent contribution of Professor Bailey and the great work of the regional groups.

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SESSION FOUR

9WAMM and Closing

4.1 9WAMM, Barbados

Using a logframe handout (Annex B-IX), Ms Esther Eghobamien, Head of the Gender Section at the Secretariat, took participants through past WAMMs, including the outcomes and communiqué from 8WAMM. One outcome she highlighted from that meeting was that, as had been mentioned earlier, the Minister of Gender in Uganda, the host country, was now the Minister of Finance. She said that there was a need to discuss and select the theme of 9WAMM, as well as the format that the meeting would take as this had varied over the years, and she suggested that participants might focus on where the gaps were and how to enhance the discussions and introduce new perspectives. She also looked at progress made on taking forward key recommendations from the past two WAMMs, including strengthening institutional mechanisms to ensure delivery of the PoA, establishing the CGPMG, and developing the process and modalities for undertaking the MTR as part of the M&E Framework. She noted that Ministers at 7WAMM had agreed that every 6th speaker in plenary would be a CSO representative, and that this had enriched the discussions at the ministerial meetings.

Ms Eghobamien then asked the participants to consider a number of questions, drawing on lessons from past WAMMs: (i) What had worked well in terms of theme, format, participation and outcomes? (ii) What had not worked well? (iii) How could the sessions be restructured/strengthened in order to maximise contributions from participants? (iv) What new things would they like to see for 9WAMM? And (v) What would they like to get out of the meeting?

Dr. Pontefract added that the purpose of the ministerial meeting held every three years was to discuss, prioritise and share ideas and progress, and identify challenges mapping common ground.

Plenary discussion

A lively discussion ensued on the themes and format of 9WAMM. It was proposed that the purpose of the meeting was also to escalate action towards gender equality. It was also noted that the times were unique and not an occasion for business as usual as women's progress might be eroded in the economic downturn. It was felt that the meeting could be an opportunity to flag up the key role of women in economic progress and development, encouraging men to be partners in the process, and for women to showcase the way in which they worked and interacted with society and how they saw economic empowerment more broadly than the view perhaps taken to date. It could highlight to ministers, CHOGM and the private sector the importance of putting finances in the hands of women as money went further when controlled by women. The issue of accountability, as explored in the UNIFEM presentation, was also put on the table. Based on these suggestions, consensus was reached on the need to

align the WAMM theme with the current global financial melt-down and its gender implications and on the tentative theme, to be refined, of “the role of women in transforming societies in the global economic crisis and pushing the boundaries of gender equality through meaningful partnerships”.

In terms of the format of the meeting, the involvement of the business sector through a private sector forum and of trade unions was suggested, as well as a roundtable of women entrepreneurs. Another roundtable could focus on the MTR. It was recommended that there be mechanisms for follow up of the youth roundtable. A proposal was also made to invite ministers of finance to attend.

4.2 Other Business and Closing

Dr. Pontefract asked whether there were any announcements or final questions. The South African delegate told participants that she had been requested by her Minister to prepare a brief on the meeting that could be shared with other SADC Ministers attending the CSW.

A question was asked as to whether CSOs were preparing a shadow report on governments or a report on their own activities as it was important not to change the current partnership into a combative relationship. It was emphasised that the PoA was directed at governments and the Secretariat. A CSO representative said that the shadow report had been agreed to at the previous year’s CGPMG and would not be combative but contribute to the process by offering an independent vision. It was felt that further thought should be given to this issue. Clarification on the role of CSOs at Ministerial meetings and the place if any of shadow reports at WAMM would be sought through internal consultations and the findings would be communicated to CSOs and the Commonwealth Foundation.⁵

Dr. Pontefract then brought the meeting to a close by complimenting the participants for being such an excellent group and saying she looked forward to working with them again. She thanked all those present for their contributions, offered best wishes for the CSW and/or their travel back home and expressed her sense of anticipation for the meeting in Barbados. Hon Esther Byer-Suckoo, Minister of Youth, Family and Sports of Barbados responded that she was also looking forward to greeting everyone in her country.

⁵At a follow-up meeting in March between the Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation it was agreed that the CSOs would prepare an alternate report, highlighting their activities towards implementation of the PoA, the challenges and the way forward. This would be considered by the CSO Forum at 9WAMM, and key concerns and issues could then be presented by CSOs to the Ministers’ Meeting.

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Annex B-I: Agenda

- 0900** **ARRIVAL & REGISTRATION**
- 0930** **Welcome, Introductions and Objectives**
Dr. Caroline Pontefract, Director, Social Transformation Programmes Division, Commonwealth Secretariat
- 0945** **Feature Address**
Ms Joanne Sandler, Deputy Executive Director, UNIFEM
- 1000** **Update by the Head of the Gender Section, Commonwealth Secretariat**
- Progress and priorities
 - Update on activities in the Critical Areas of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015
- Plenary Discussion
- 1045** **Update on the Ninth Women’s Affairs Ministers Meeting (9WAMM), 2010, Barbados**
- 1100** **BREAK**
- 1130** **Report and Recommendations from the 4th Meeting of the Commonwealth Gender PoA Monitoring Group (CGPMG)**
Ms Segakweng Tsiane, Chair of the CGPMG
- Roles, responsibilities, ways of working
 - The role of the CGPMG in the Mid-Term Review
 - 2009–2010 Work Plan
 - Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security
- Plenary Discussion
- 1230** **LUNCH**
- 1330** **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the Mid-Term Review of the PoA, 2010**
- Overview: *Prof. Barbara Bailey, University of the West Indies*
 - Discussants: *Ms Carolyn Hannan, UN Division for the Advancement of Women*
Ms Beverly Jones, UNESCAP
- Plenary Discussion
- 1500** **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the Mid-Term Review (cont.)**
Working Session
- 1600** **BREAK**
- 16:30** **Working Session Feedback and Plenary**
- 1700** **9WAMM, Barbados**
Drawing Lessons from Previous WAMMs
Plenary Discussion *facilitated by Esther Eghobamien, Head of Gender Section*
Working Session
- o Possible themes
 - o Priorities and outcomes
 - o Format/structure
- Plenary Discussion
- 1800** **Summary and Close**

Annex B-II: Feature Address

Who Answers to Women?

Joanne Sandler, Deputy Executive Director, UNIFEM

It is a pleasure and privilege for me to be addressing this consultation on behalf of UNIFEM. I want to thank the colleagues at the Commonwealth Secretariat for a long history of partnership and for this invitation. And I want to thank you, Ministers of Gender Equality and Women's Affairs and staff of these specialised ministries and departments, for the commitment, courage and creativity that we know you bring to your responsibilities every day.

We know, very well, the challenges that you face for two reasons: firstly because over the past four years, UNIFEM has worked with nearly 90 ministries and departments of women's affairs on the ground. And secondly because, as the women's fund at the United Nations, UNIFEM is positioned – with our sister organisations OSAGI, DAW and INSTRAW and the many gender units in UN organisations – very similarly to many national machineries. That is, we have a dual mandate of encouraging and providing coordination and policy advice so that the whole system works in accordance with agreed policies to advance women's rights, and at the same time we are asked to make technical expertise available that builds collective commitment and capacity to scale up what works to advance gender equality ... but we are asked to do that, often, without the authority, status, staffing or budgets required to enable us to perform our roles effectively.

In that regard, we – ministries and departments for women, gender units, and the UN specialised organisations on gender equality – are part of what I would call an 'architectural' challenge. As stated in the paper on 'What Role for National Women's Machineries?' that Gladys Mutukwa prepared for the Eighth Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting in Uganda, women's ministries are "seen as the conscience of the government on women's rights". But how can we serve our role as an effective 'conscience' when, too often, we are not even present when key decisions affecting women's lives, livelihoods and rights are made by those in power? The current debate on the gender architecture of the United Nations – which you will be hearing much more about over the next two weeks – is very pertinent to these questions.

How we play the privileged roles that we have been given and how the institutions that we are part of enable us to play these roles are elements of two mutually reinforcing challenges for advancing women's human rights: scaling up implementation of what works and building accountability for commitments made to gender equality and women's empowerment. These are the mutually reinforcing challenges that I hope we generate concrete recommendations to address over the next 18 months as we engage in assessment processes related to the 30th anniversary of CEDAW, the 15-year anniversary of Beijing and the 10-year anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325.

You may know that late last year UNIFEM published the fourth edition of *Progress of the World's Women*, which asks the question "who answers to women?" and gathers innovative and inspiring examples from around the world of efforts to strengthen gender-responsive accountability. The themes that the upcoming CSW will be focusing on – equal sharing of responsibility, gender perspectives on the financial crisis, and equal participation of men and women in decision-making – are also directly pertinent to this question of accountability.

So, in my remarks over the next few minutes, I will use some of the findings from *Progress of the World's Women* to highlight accountability gaps, some potential responses, and also put forward an emerging opportunity for which I hope you might offer some feedback.

Progress defines gender-responsive accountability as having two dimensions: first, women must be able to demand answers from power-holders; and second, where answers are inadequate, women must be able to demand corrective action.

The key gaps in accountability that we are facing can be illustrated through the key themes of the CSW.

The overall failure to achieve equal participation in decision-making is an accountability failure and, in many cases, a question of life or death.

This is certainly true when it comes to decision-making around public health issues, such as HIV and AIDS or maternal mortality. UNIFEM research in 2005 showed that only 6 per cent of decision-making positions on National AIDS Councils for which data were available were held by women. Imagine how participation of women – and particularly those most directly affected and infected by HIV and AIDS – might have helped to identify different priorities for the AIDS response and might have avoided the huge spikes of infection rates for women over the past 5–10 years. And I seriously doubt that if women had a greater say in decision-making and budget allocations that progress on MDG 5 on maternal health would be so abysmally slow, decreasing only .4 per cent per year instead of the 5.5 per cent needed to meet the target and to avoid millions of entirely preventable deaths.

And it is also certainly true for negotiating an end to conflict. The UNIFEM study of 16 peace processes since 2000 found that only 1.2 per cent of signatories to peace agreements were women, there were no chief or lead peace mediators who were female in 13 cases for which information was available, and women's participation in negotiating delegations averaged 9.6 per cent in the six cases for which information was available. The absence of women from these negotiations has deleterious effects on two fronts. Firstly, it means that the specific violations that women experience as a result of war and in its aftermath are often omitted from the equation of building peace. And, secondly, the post-conflict reconstruction plans that get negotiated through these processes omit policy, programme and budgetary provisions that would make women full participants in sustaining peace. So, peace agreements become even more tenuous.

We do not know if the many crises that the world currently faces – whether climate change, economic crises, or peace and security crises – would have evolved differently if men and women shared responsibility and participation in decision-making differently, but we have both experience and a normative basis that call on us to significantly strengthen our advocacy and demand accountability for commitments made. The many achievements for women's rights over the past three decades have begun to generate a better basis for our demands.

We know that special temporary measures can increase women's participation in decision-making, as we have seen in the 24 countries that have achieved or surpassed the 30 per cent representation in parliament. We know that where support is made available for women across lines of conflict to advocate together for peace and influence peace processes, we see new – if still inadequate – commitments to women's human rights, as we have witnessed in Afghanistan, Sudan, Uganda and other conflict or post-conflict countries. We know that when Ministries of Finance, statistics bureaus and local governments work with Ministries of Women's Affairs and women's networks to institutionalise gender-responsive budgeting and to generate sex-disaggregated data we build a better evidence base for devising public policies and programmes – and sometimes even better budgets – that take gender equality into account, as we have seen in some of the nearly 70 countries that now have experience with gender-responsive budgeting.

And we have to call for greater participation of women in financial decision-making, acknowledging that the gender dimensions of the causes and consequences of the global financial crisis have received little attention. On 8 February, *New York Times* columnist Nicolas Kristoff asked whether this crisis would

have taken the same course if the investment bank Lehman Brothers had been Lehman Sisters or, better yet, Lehman Brothers and Sisters. He cites research from an article in the *Journal of Economic Theory* that diverse groups perform better at problem solving than homogeneous groups and research from the *Evolution and Human Behaviour Journal* that men are particularly likely to make high-risk bets under financial pressure when surrounded by other males of similar status, whereas women's risk-taking is unaffected by this kind of peer pressure. We need to see many more women take on positions as heads of Central Banks, of finance ministries, of regulatory bodies and of major business enterprises. And we need to be closely monitoring and publicising the gender-specific impact of the financial crisis in all of our countries.

Progress of the World's Women makes four concrete recommendations related to increasing accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment. It makes these recommendations in the context of the principles of the Paris Declaration and a stronger focus on ownership, alignment, accountability, results-based management and harmonisation. I share these with you mindful that you will be focusing on monitoring and evaluation and as an input into your consideration of what factors need to be monitored.

Firstly, we need to promote a gender-responsive approach to accountability for women's rights and gender equality. That means that the notion of accountability of power-holders – whether in the public or private sphere – must include their accountability for performance in advancing women's human rights and gender equality. One of the criteria against which the performance of power-holders must be judged is the extent to which they address gender gaps and gender justice.

Secondly, we know that the quickest route to changing the ratio of men to women in decision-making is by introducing special temporary measures or positive action of some kind. In elections held in 2007, *Progress of the World's Women* found that women in countries with some form of electoral quota captured 19.3 per cent of the seats, as opposed to 14.7 per cent in countries without such quotas. Of the 24 countries where women constitute more than 30 per cent of the national assembly, at least 18 have some form of positive action. One estimate is that gender parity in decision-making will take twice as long in countries without special temporary measures than in countries that have them and that at the current rate of change it will take developing countries 40 years to reach the gender parity zone of 40–60 per cent of women in parliaments. So leadership that fails to institute some form of positive action or special temporary measure for addressing gender gaps in decision-making is failing the accountability test.

Thirdly, while accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment might begin by advancing women's equal participation in decision-making, it cannot end there. The risk of over-focusing on the numbers can distort the ultimate objective: greater progress toward development, equality and peace. Both men and women in decision-making need to be backed by strong and informed constituencies that support an agenda for gender equality and social justice, and that hold all of us accountable for delivering on promises to women.

And, finally, we must continue to identify and address the multiple forms of gender discrimination that keep special temporary measures from being effective or that create a grossly uneven playing field where no temporary measures exist. We have many examples where, despite some temporary measures, the gender discrimination that keeps women from being able to access financing required to run a successful campaign, or that make women candidates particularly vulnerable to violence, or that prevent women from exercising their right to vote thwart the intention of policy changes to achieve greater gender balance in decision-making. We have many examples where despite the existence of a ministry of women's affairs or an equal opportunity office, gender biases keep their leaders outside of mainstream decision-making or budgeting processes and reduce their effectiveness. A holistic approach that combines introducing positive action and incentives while reducing gender discrimination is critical, and this means – in particular – that addressing the imbalance between men and women in sharing responsibility for care and care-giving must be addressed. Providing necessary capacity development and support to

women who ascend to decision-making positions must receive attention and budgets, as must the critical importance of providing human and financial support to women's NGOs and networks, which are often at the forefront of identifying where the most egregious forms of gender discrimination are occurring.

To end – and in keeping with some of the issues that I have just raised – I wanted to pose some very concrete questions to this esteemed and experienced group. Many of you will have heard that the Government of Spain has given UNIFEM 50 million euros to launch what we are currently calling The Gender Equality Fund. Our plans are to design this Fund to support the strengthened capacities of Ministries of Women's Affairs and women's networks to drive the agenda for women's economic and political empowerment. The funds will be given on the basis of a competitive application process to support countries to fast track action on components of gender equality strategies, laws and plans of action that your ministries have taken leadership in building consensus around, but that often lack the necessary budgets and focus that would enable these plans and policies to generate concrete results for women. We hope to make 7–10 grants of between \$2 million to \$7 million over the next year.

So, UNIFEM would very much appreciate any thoughts that you have on the most effective distribution and use of these funds. How would you see an infusion of \$2 to \$7 million in your countries most effectively used to fast track implementation of existing commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment in a way that will generate concrete and visible results for women's empowerment? What advice do you have on how to make the application process effective and accessible? What kinds of partnerships should we be calling for at the national level to ensure that the efforts supported become sustainable after the grant period has ended? What kind of technical support (if any) do you think would be helpful?

I end by thanking you, by inviting your comments, and by wishing you a very productive session today and a very fruitful outcome of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Annex B-III: Commonwealth Secretariat Update

Esther Eghobamien, Head, Gender Section, Commonwealth Secretariat (PowerPoint presentation)

Objectives

- To re-affirm Commonwealth Secretariat commitment to gender equality mainstreaming
- To highlight the comparative advantages of the Secretariat in delivering gender equality results
- To outline the critical areas of the PoA, mechanisms for achieving stated objectives and update of progress recorded since the last NWM
- To present a forecast of plans towards the MTR and 9WAMM

Gender in the Commonwealth Strategic Plan 2008–2012

- Commitment to gender mainstreaming reflected in recognition as cross-cutting theme
- Core results and indicators of PoA embedded within the Human Development Programme and other components of the Strategic Plan, Commonwealth organs and business operations/functions
- Specific directive by the Deputy Secretary-General to work towards a Gender Policy for Secretariat as step towards implementation of Gender Audit recommendations
- Strengthening institutional mechanisms and capacities for increased gender mainstreaming, e.g. HR & staff training

Comparative Advantage & Cutting Edge of Commonwealth Secretariat

- Political legitimacy and convening power (e.g. CHOGM, Ministerial Meetings on education, justice, trade, health, women, etc.)
- Capacity & track record in brokering policy and negotiating consensus solutions
- Network of Commonwealth CSOs/associations
- Provision of cost-efficient technical assistance
- Rich pool of resources, knowledge and tools

Commonwealth Secretariat Delivery Strategies

- Capacity Building
- Advocacy
- Research and Knowledge Creation
- Technical Assistance
- Partnerships

Critical Areas of PoA Implementation

- Gender, Democracy, Peace and Conflict (elections)
- Gender, Human Rights and Law (culture and the law, CARICOM model legislation, rights of indigenous and tribal women)
- Gender and HIV/AIDS (unpaid work in HIV care)
- Gender, Poverty Eradication & Economic Empowerment (GRB, trade policy, access to markets, social protection)
- Gender, Public Sector & Governance (technical assistance, policy advice)

Substantive Progress in PoA Implementation Post-2008 NWM Consultation

- Strategic objective/focus of component/Critical Area for PoA
- Internal & external linkages, i.e. key partners within the Commonwealth Secretariat, among partners (regional, global) and interlocutors especially members
- Programming modalities & results: capacity building, policy dialogue, technical assistance, research/knowledge creation
- Challenges & future directions (MTR, 9WAMM, emerging issues)

Conclusion

- Other sites for gender mainstreaming: Education, Justice, Strategic Planning & Evaluation Division (SPED)
- Mid-Term Review, Beijing +15 & 9WAMM
- Strengthening mechanisms for PoA implementation e.g. CGPMG, CHOGM
- Strategic directions: partnership building for synergy, consolidating achievements/ monitoring and tracking results, leveraging resources within global financial crisis context

Annex B-IV: Chair's Report of the 4th Meeting of the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group

Background

The Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG) had its 4th meeting on 28th February 2009. There were four important agenda items:

- 1 Review of the CGPMG
- 2 Mandate, priorities and expected outcomes of the CGPMG 2009–2010 in relation to the Mid-Term Review of the POA
- 3 Work plan of the CGPMG 2009–2010
- 4 Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security

Objectives of the meeting were:

- To review the CGPMG in order to clarify our roles and responsibilities, systematise ways of working and finalise membership rotation and the nomination process of the Chair;
- To consider and discuss the Mid-Term Review process and our role as the CGPMG;
- To finalise the CGPMG work plan in view of the Mid-Term Review;
- To consider an update on the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security;
- To inform about new membership to the CGPMG.

1 Review of the CGPMG

1.1 A review of the CGPMG regarding the functionality of the Group since it was constituted was presented. This looked at the successes of the Group so far, and also considered the need for greater clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities of the Group and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

1.1.1 A proposed set of roles and responsibilities was presented to the Group, outlining the roles and responsibilities of (a) the Chair, (b) the Commonwealth Secretariat and (c) the members, along with considerations on ways of working.

1.1.2 Members considered this, and communicated the following suggestions:

- Greater clarity needed on the role of CSOs within the roles and responsibilities of the CGPMG;
- In-coming members need to be better orientated – to be facilitated by Gender Head;
- Strengthening of communication at the regional level is important to facilitate greater relevance and increase efficiency – regional members need to mobilise better before they arrive;
- E-group is welcomed as a modality of improving functionality between NY meetings;
- Briefings from the Chair need to be more regular between NY meetings;
- ComSec communication to the Group needs to be improved through (a) updating contact details and ensuring that the correct ones are used and (b) using all channels of communication to reach members and avoid information gaps (e.g UN missions);
- Members also have a responsibility to ensure that the communication is carried internally.

1.2 In reviewing the CGPMG, the Commonwealth Secretariat was also requested to address the standing rotation policy and suggest an alternative rotation that would provide a more equitable and inclusive membership of the CGPMG for the duration of the POA.

1.2.1 A revised rotation was presented. This provided for an expanded membership of the CGPMG, with the Africa region sub-divided into two (with representation from W. and E. Africa and Southern Africa), recognising that the continent has a large number of the Commonwealth membership within its borders, many of whom would never get to serve under the current rotation system.

1.2.2 The proposed new rotation was accepted by the Group.

1.3 Nomination of the Chair were also discussed.

1.3.1 Agreements by the Group regarding nomination of the Chair were:

- Chair for 2009–2010 will be Botswana, following prior consultation with and gracious agreement by Bangladesh
- Chair for 2010–2011 will be Bangladesh.
- The nomination of the Chair will now follow a regional format, hence the subsequent Chair will be from the Pacific.
- Regions should caucus to select the country to chair.
- Countries cannot chair again before another member from their region.

2 Mandate, priorities and expected outcomes of the CGPMG 2009-2010 in relation to the Mid-Term Review of the PoA

2.1 Professor Barbara Bailey presented on the Mid-Term Review. Key points included:

- Planning, acting, monitoring and evaluation are part of a cyclical process.
- Monitoring should be ongoing and evaluation takes place at the end to assess impact.
- The MTR should assess both outputs and outcomes (i.e. impact of outputs).
- There is a need to refine the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and add indicators that show how the POA is being implemented.
- The MTR can serve as a baseline.
- The POA actions need to be translated into country-specific targets.

2.2 Following the presentation, the Group decided to establish a sub-group of the CGPMG members to refine the M&E Framework indicators. The Group will consist of one CGPMG NWM member from each region, and one CGPMG CSO member. The countries selected were: Bangladesh for the Asia region; Ghana for Africa/Europe; Tonga for the Pacific; and Barbados for Canada/Caribbean. The CSO member is Nelcia Robinson. The CSO grouping also indicated that they would draw on the expertise of Lisa Pusey from International Women's Right's Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific.

3 Work plan of the CGPMG 2009–2010

3.1 The Commonwealth Secretariat, as adviser to the CGPMG, had prepared a draft work plan for the consideration of the Group. The work plan identified objectives, activities, timelines and outputs towards the MTR process.

3.2 This was discussed by members in regional groups, and was adopted following their inputs.

4 Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security

4.1 The Commonwealth Secretariat presented an update on the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security as well as on work in this programme area.

4.2 The list of persons with the competencies required to constitute the Group had been compiled and sent to the Deputy Secretary-General's Office.

4.3 The CGPMG acknowledged the progress made so far, but in view of the importance of this issue, made an appeal for the DSG to give this matter the highest priority.

Annex B-V: Barbados' Preparation for Hosting the 9th Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting

Hon. Dr. Esther Byer-Suckoo, Minister of Youth, Family and Sports

Madame Chair, delegates and distinguished guests. I bring you the assurance that the Government of Barbados remains committed to the hosting of the 9th Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (9WAMM) as I indicated at our last meeting here in 2008. We received correspondence from the Commonwealth Secretariat in January indicating our responsibilities, and already efforts are underway to make this event a memorable and productive activity.

We do not underestimate the importance of this event and we have commenced collaboration at the highest national levels to ensure its success. Last Wednesday there was a meeting with my Ministry (the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Bureau of Gender Affairs to put systems in place. At that meeting a committee was established to work with the Commonwealth Secretariat through the Bureau of Gender Affairs, which will act as the local secretariat.

A number of hotels have been proposed, and as we get closer to the conference and after the dates have been finalised we will have the requisite rooms reserved. There are several facilities in the island, including the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, formerly the Sherbourne Conference Centre, equipped to host the conference and its parallel events, including the social activities.

Barbados was the venue of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in 1994 where 125 States and territories participated, 46 of which were Small Island Developing States and territories. More recently, Barbados hosted the Commonwealth Finance Minister's Meeting three years ago and the Commonwealth Association of Public Administrators (CAPAM) and Soroptomists International meetings last year.

Barbados is a regular host of international meetings and appears to be becoming the home of Commonwealth international meetings. We have also won the bids to host the ICC T20 and the World Women's Boxing, both in 2010. This should therefore allay any reservations/concerns about our capacity to host this conference.

In terms of the host government's responsibilities, the planning committee is preparing to stage an Opening Ceremony and Reception for delegates and other invited guests on the Sunday evening on the eve of the conference and will seek to meet the provisions outlined there. We have the necessary hotel accommodation and other infrastructure. I am sure we will discuss later today prospective dates for the meeting, but what I can say at this time is that 2010 is a very busy year on Barbados' calendar for the hosting of international events. There will be the ICC Champions Trophy in March/April; a World Women's Boxing Tournament in September and our annual Crop Over (Carnival) celebrations in July/August. Against this background, the conference will be best suited to take place in early June, which is around the period of the last WAMM in Uganda. We are being guided by the Secretariat's stated requirements and will continue to work closely with the Secretariat over the next year for clarity and to ensure satisfaction and success.

From where we are now, the 9WAMM National Committee will have to ascertain costs associated with the Barbados' responsibility to the conference. Once these are determined, the Cabinet, which has already agreed in principle, will be invited to approve the programme and include the funding in the national budgetary provisions for the 2010–2011 financial year, which commences in April 2010.

All sectors of Barbadian society will be encouraged to be part of the process. In addition, the CARI-COM Secretariat will be invited to make an input in the planning process. The Government of Barbados

invites the Commonwealth Foundation to facilitate civil society engagement as a crucial part of 9WAMM.

When we meet again in February/March 2010 we expect that significant progress would have been made and the theme, dates, structure of the programme, venues and all other logistic planning will have been finalised.

I note that the last hour of today's programme will address themes, priorities, outcomes and structure of the 9WAMM. Once these components are finalised, we can then focus on the structure of the programme inclusive of parallel events that would lend to the total outcomes.

Barbados looks forward to hosting the 9WAMM next year, when you will experience hospitality with spicy Caribbean flavour.

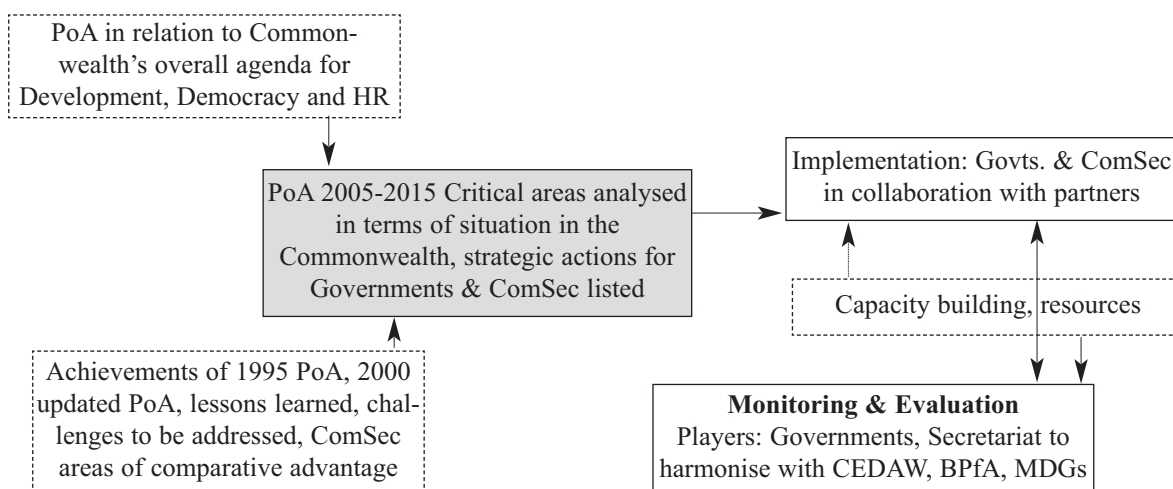
I thank you.

Annex B-VI: Monitoring and Evaluating the Commonwealth Plan of Action

Barbara Bailey, PhD, University Director, Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona (PowerPoint presentation)

The Context: The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015

- The PoA provides a framework within which the Commonwealth will advance its commitment to gender equality and equity within its overall framework and agenda for development, democracy and human rights.
- The PoA therefore focuses on four critical areas with gender as a cross-cutting concern:
 - * Gender, democracy, peace and conflict
 - * Gender, human rights and law
 - * Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
 - * Gender and HIV/AIDS



Implementation Strategies

- The Commonwealth recognises the four areas as inter-related and aims to integrate implementation through various strategies:
 - Generating and sharing knowledge and information
 - Capacity building and budgetary support
 - **Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** and reporting to inform the Mid-Term Review (MTR) report due to be tabled at 9WAMM

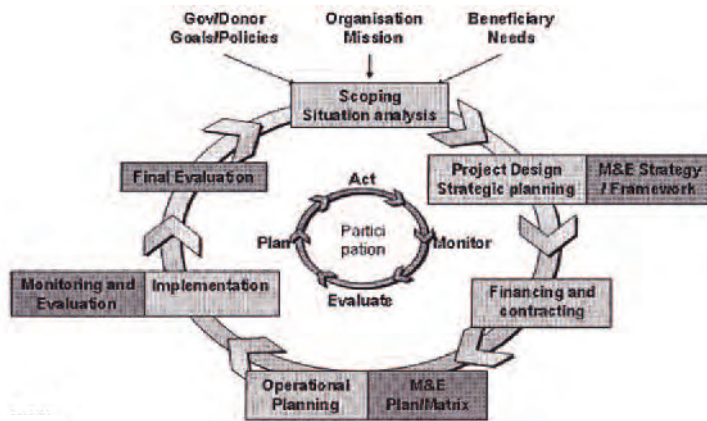
Operationalising the Plan of Action

- **Theme:** Gender, democracy, peace and conflict (p. 25)
- **Recommended action:** Provide adequate medical, financial and psycho-social assistance and care for women and men, including culturally sensitive counselling to survivors of rape, sexual assault and other violations. (Government X, p. 30)
- How would you achieve this recommended action?
- How would you know when the action has been achieved?

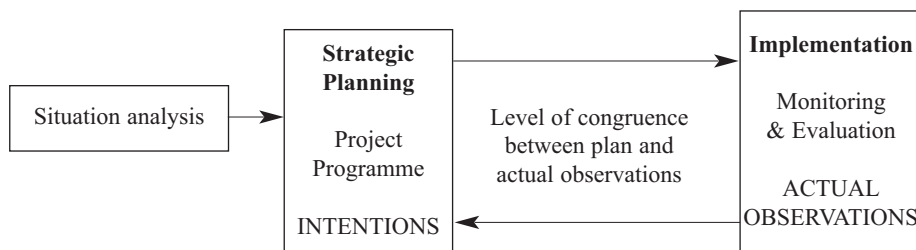
Plan, Act, Monitor and Evaluate

- In relation to proposed actions/outputs – carry out a situation analysis
- Design an initiative to address the situation –strategic planning – which includes a plan for ongoing **monitoring and evaluating** of the outcomes
- Operationalise the plan – determine resources and personnel required to implement the plan
- During implementation include ongoing monitoring and evaluating, within a determined time frame (short, medium, long term) and use data gathered to report on achievement of the desired output
- Conduct a **final evaluation** of the outcome, that is, the impact of the intervention

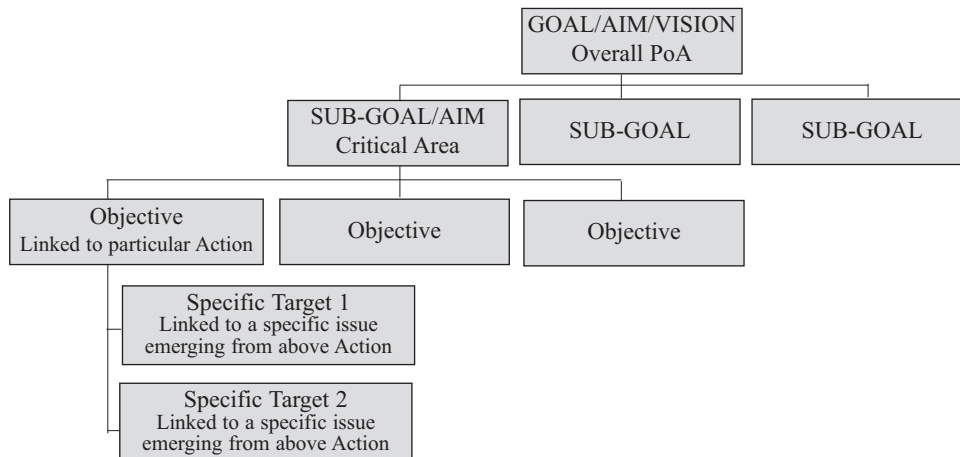
Plan, Act, Monitor and Evaluate: A Cyclical Process



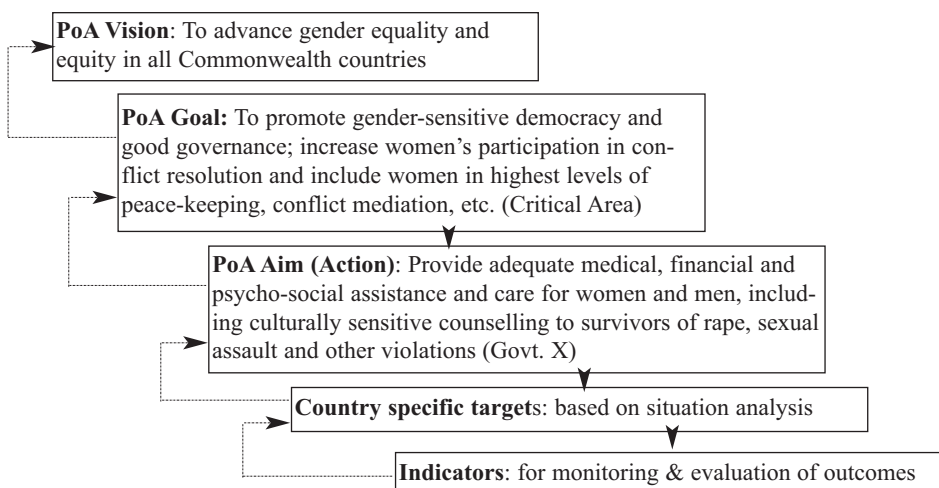
Relationship: Planning & Implementation



Vision, Goals/Aims, Objectives/Targets



Commonwealth Plan of Action: Mission/Goals (Critical Areas)/Specific actions/targets



Definitions and Distinctions

M&E: Definitions

- **Monitoring** is the regular collection and analysis of data to provide information on progress achieved during implementation of activities related to explicitly stated targets – can have a formative function
- **Evaluation** is assessing the positive and negative medium and long-term impacts of the intervention on the target group in terms of effectiveness and sustainability of the outcomes – summative

M&E: Distinctions

Item	Monitoring	Evaluation
Frequency	Periodic, regular	Episodic
Main action	Keeping track/oversight	Assessment of impact
Basic purpose	Improving efficiency Adjusting work plan	Improve effectiveness, impact, future programming
Focus	Inputs, process outputs, work plans	Effectiveness, relevance, impact, cost-effectiveness
Information source	Routine systems, field observations, progress reports, rapid assessments	Same as with monitoring plus surveys, studies
Undertaken by	Project managers (NWMs) Community (beneficiaries) Supervisors, Funders	Programme managers, Supervisors, Funders, External evaluators

Importance of M&E

- Provides data on programme progress and effectiveness
- Improves programme management and decision-making
- Allows accountability to stakeholders, including funders
- Provides data to plan future resource needs
- Provides data useful for policy-making and advocacy

Using Indicators

Achieving the Vision/Aims/Targets

- Many organisations aim to mainstream gender in projects and programmes but few (systematically) track how effective they are in doing so
- How can we determine if the Commonwealth Secretariat's PoA is achieving its stated Vision/Goals/Aims?
- We must identify indicators that can be used to track progress towards the attainment of specific targets ⇒ ultimate achievement of related aims ⇒ goals ⇒ Vision
- The development of a battery of gender indicators is therefore an essential component of a monitoring and evaluation strategy

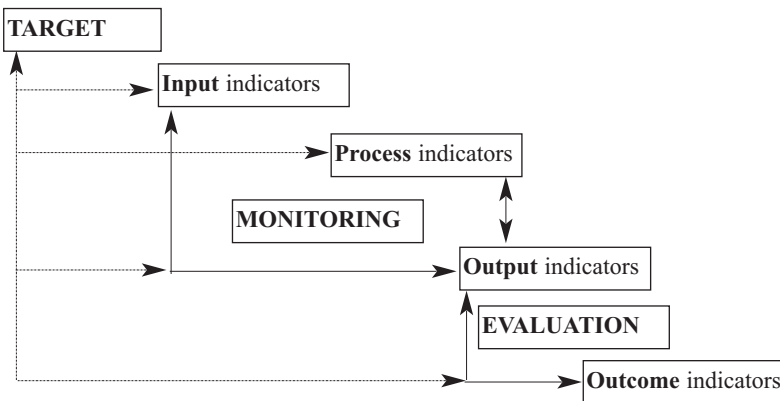
What is an Indicator?

- An indicator is a variable/factor that provides a reliable means to measure achievement and changes resulting from an intervention
- The factor measures changes over time (short, medium, long term) and gives an indication of the results of the intervention
- Gender indicators point out how far and in what ways interventions have met the gender equality/equity target
- Indicators measure gender-related changes in society over time

Why the Need for Indicators

- Indicators provide a means of showing how well the PoA is being implemented against expected results (targets), that is, the level of congruence between intentions and actual outputs
- They make progress measurable and visible and help us to determine whether commitments have been or are being fulfilled

M&E Indicators



Questions to ask:

- Inputs: What resources are required to achieve the target?
- Process: Measures implementation – What has to be done to ensure that the target can be achieved?
- Output: What immediate results do you expect from implementation of the intervention?
- Outcome/Impact: What long-term changes occur as a result of the intervention – negative, positive, sustainable?

Types of Indicators

- Both quantitative and qualitative indicators are important in monitoring and evaluation – they complement each other
- Focus is usually on quantitative indicators but they do not tell us the entire story and can in fact distort the reality – access to a service does not necessarily tell us about the quality of the experience (e.g., more victims of GBV have cases reported and taken to court but victims often re-victimised in the process)

Quantitative/Qualitative Indicators

- Quantitative – useful in terms of monitoring input, process and output variables in relation to targets
- Qualitative – essential in evaluating impact and gathering information on experiences and understanding people's views
- Qualitative indicators – not easy to identify or measure – different data collection strategies required

Existing Sources of Indicators

- ComSec
- UNECLAC
- UNIFEM
- CARICOM
- National gender policies

Targets, Indicators and RBM

- RBM – results-based management
- If indicators are to show results they must relate to specific targets/objectives and expected results
- Targets therefore need to be stated in terms that indicate the expected result:
- Example Aim/Action: Provide adequate medical, financial and psycho-social assistance and care for

women and men, including culturally sensitive counselling to survivors of rape, sexual assault and other violations. (Govt. X)

- Specific Target(s): ??

Baseline Data

- In monitoring and impact studies, results must be compared against baseline data collected before the intervention
- If there are no baseline data, there is no way to verify that the observed outputs/outcomes are a result of the intervention (inputs and processes)
- The situation analysis can provide the baseline data if in fact it informed the identification of issues and the development of the vision, goals, objectives and targets

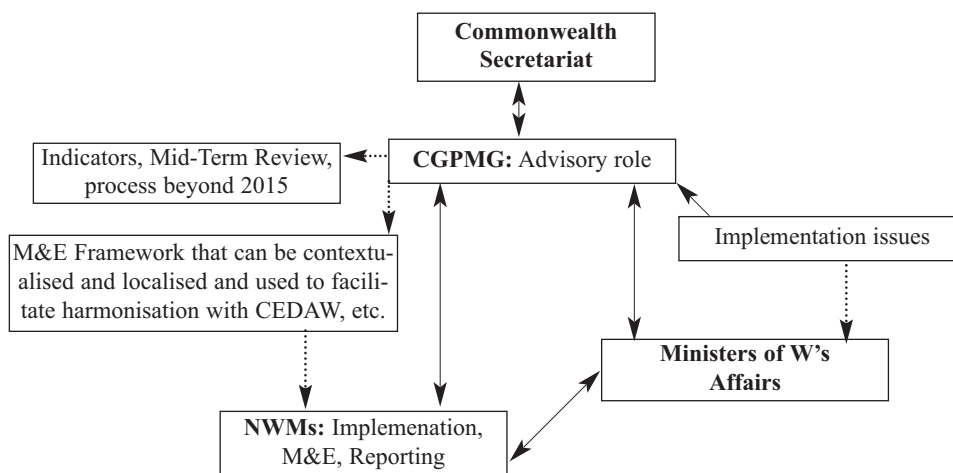
Centres of Responsibility and Time Lines

- In order to implement, monitor and evaluate must determine centres of responsibility.
- Can have a division of roles – but there must be coordination of the various functions
- Implementation may be the responsibility of many agencies – government & NGO
- Monitoring and evaluation is usually a specialised function and requires special expertise
- Must have a time line for achievement of results – this is an important dimension of the monitoring and evaluation process
- Therefore need a well developed Action Plan for Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation

Implementing and Monitoring the PoA: Challenges

- Resource support to respond to demand for information – capacity building across sectors
- Improved data collection system
- Training in gender analysis
- Equip National Statistical Office and other agencies to take gendered approach to data collection and analysis
- Use data sources that are already being used in other processes

Role of Commonwealth Gender PoA Monitoring Group & Commonwealth Secretariat



The Mid-Term Review: Process & Time Line

- Activities involving NWMs (See Handout [Annex B-VIII])
- Interface with CGPMG
- Interface with the Commonwealth Secretariat

Annex B-VI: On the Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Caroline Hannan, Director, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women

In 2006, when establishing the new multi-year programme of work from 2007, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was not ready to take a decision on whether or not to hold a review and appraisal of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of its adoption. It decided to postpone the decision until 2009.

In its decision on the methods and organisation of work of the CSW in 2006, ECOSOC [the Economic and Social Council] therefore requested the Commission to discuss at its fifty-third session (2009) the possibility of conducting in 2010 a review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

The SG report, "Proposals for a multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women the Commission" (E/CN.6/DA09B), which was prepared to support Member States in their consideration of this issue, provides the following information and recommendations:

- A background on the modalities for the 10th anniversary commemoration in 2005:
 - Expanded use of interactive dialogue, with broad-based participation of governmental delegations at the highest level of responsibility and expertise and of civil society and organisations within the United Nations system, with an emphasis on sharing of experiences and good practices on efforts to overcome the remaining challenges of implementation.
 - A high-level plenary, open to the participation of all UN Member States and Observers, on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.
 - The transmission of the Commission's outcome, through ECOSOC, to the General Assembly, including to the high-level event of the General Assembly on the review of the Millennium Declaration.
 - The adoption of a Declaration that called for accelerated implementation.
- Information on the regional review and appraisal processes, including that:
 - Review and appraisal-processes for the 15th anniversary are being organised in all regions by the regional commissions.
 - A common questionnaire has been developed to solicit information from Member States that will be compiled into regional reports.
 - The regional reports will be presented at review meetings in the regional intergovernmental bodies in all regions in 2009 and 2010.

The reports will subsequently be presented to the CSW.

- Presentation of a proposal that the Commission may wish to consider:
 - Organising a review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action and commemoration of the

15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at its fifty-fourth session in 2010, similar to the ten-year review and commemoration process at its forty-ninth session in 2005.

- Ensuring a strong regional focus in the 15-year review and commemoration and that the regional reviews and outcomes of the regional level intergovernmental processes are given adequate attention, in line with mandates encouraging increased regional focus in the work of the Commission.
- Follow the modalities of the 2005 commemoration – a high-level plenary meeting and transmit the outcome to the Annual Ministerial Review in ECOSOC, and through ECOSOC, to the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly and the proposed MDGs Review Summit to be convened in 2010.

The Bureau is preparing a draft resolution (which will be a Chairperson's text) on the possibility of a review and appraisal in 2010. The draft will be made available in the coming week and informal negotiations will begin.

The Division has worked together with the regional commissions on the preparation of the Common Questionnaire. DAW is awaiting a mandate from the Commission. If that mandate is received to hold a review and appraisal, DAW will not send out a new questionnaire but will utilise the responses received by the regional commissions. The focus of the report prepared by DAW will depend on the mandate received.

Regional processes:

DAW has received information on the following processes:

- Questionnaires have gone out in all regions (deadlines different – March to end April)
- Regional reports will be prepared before the end of September – to feed into the CSW process (some earlier)
- Regional meetings dates are becoming firm:
 - ECE [Economic Commission for Europe] 13–14 July
 - ESCAP [Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific] 2nd week of September
 - ESCWA [Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia] 19–23 October
 - ECA [Economic Commission for Africa] October or November
 - ECLAC [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean] June 2010

Annex B-VIII: NWMs Work Plan (February 2009-February 2011)

Objective	Activities	Timeframe												Lead	Output	OVI	Remarks	
Pre-WAMM																		
2009																		
		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D					
- To identify tasks needed for a smooth MTR process and engage action; - To ensure efficient delivery of the MTR report	Administer questionnaires (use template provided) from the Secretariat and desk reviews													NWM/CSO	National Report			
	National consultation process (work with regional consultant and CGPMG members in the region)													NWM	Consensus report from national processes			
	Develop national report with assistance from regional consultant													NWM MTR consultant, with ComSec giving feedback	Draft MTR report			
	Regional meeting to consider national reports													NWM	National MTR report			
	Development of regional reports by the regional consultants																	
	Submission of regional reports to the ComSec by regional consultants																	
	Delivery of first drafts of regional reports to MTR consultant													ComSec, consultants and the CGPMG give feedback				
	MTR consultant to develop first draft of MTR report													Representatives of NWM, consultants, ComSec, CGPMG	Draft regional report			

2010										
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June (WAMM)			
- To finalise and deliver the MTR Report on the implementation of the PoA as well as key messages at 9WAMM	Review and feedback on the first draft							CGPMG and ComSec, MTR consultant		
	Strategy for efficient and effective dissemination of MTR discussed and agreed							ComSec, consultants and CGPMG	Comprehensive dissemination strategy	
	Final MTR Report delivered to ComSec for publication							MTR consultant	MTR Report	
	Summary of Report developed?							ComSec	Summary report	
	Presentation of the Report and key messages delivered to Ministers at 9WAMM								Chair of the CGPMG	WAMM Communiqué
Post WAMM Activities										

Annex B-IX: Planning the 9th Women’s Affairs Ministers Meeting (9WAMM), 2010, Barbados

The 9th Women’s Affairs Ministers Meeting (9WAMM) will be held in 2010 in Barbados. To facilitate planning and preparation for this important meeting, the NWM consultation provides the space for discussing the following:

- Possible themes and focus of 9WAMM;
- Structure and format; and
- Key outputs of the meeting and way forward.

By drawing on lessons from previous WAMMs – including identifying what worked well, what could be improved upon, and challenges and success in implementation of WAMM recommendations – the New York meeting offers the opportunity to suggest broad parameters to guide the 9WAMM preparatory process.

1 PAST WAMMS

	5WAMM	6WAMM	7WAMM	8WAMM
Date	25–28 Nov 1996	17–19 April 2000	30 May–2 June 2004	11–14 June 2007
Venue	Trinidad and Tobago	India	Fiji Islands	Uganda
Theme	Engendering the Agenda	Advancing the Commonwealth Agenda into the New Millennium	Partnerships for Gender Equality	Financing Gender Equality for Development and Democracy
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review progress on implementation of the 1995 PoA • To develop further strategies for implementation of the PoA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review progress on implementation of the PoA • To discuss the Update to the 1995 PoA (2000–2005) • To explore effective strategies for integrating gender into the priority areas for CW action • To identify innovative, flexible and cost-effective strategies in view of declining resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review progress on implementation of the 1995 PoA and its 2000 Update • To negotiate and adopt the new PoA for Gender Equality 2005–2015 • To network and share experiences on critical challenges identified in the PoA and to discuss emerging issues • To strengthen partnerships for PoA implementation among governments, IGOs and CSOs 	Review the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implication of new aid delivery mechanisms on women • Role of national women’s machineries and the public sector in financing gender equality • Implications of financing gender equality on HIV/AIDS interventions • How investing in gender equality could promote peace and democracy
Participants	45 countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Ministers and Senior Officials • Commonwealth IGOs and associations • CSOs • Partners from UN agencies, international and regional orgs, bilateral agencies 	45 countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Ministers and Senior Officials • Commonwealth IGOs and associations • CSOs • Partners from UN agencies, international and regional orgs, bilateral agencies 	43 countries, 225 participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Ministers and Senior Officials • Commonwealth IGOs and associations • CSOs • Partners from UN agencies, international and regional orgs, bilateral agencies 	32 countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Ministers and Senior Officials • Commonwealth IGOs and associations • CSOs • Partners from UN agencies, international and regional orgs, bilateral agencies

Structure/ Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Officials' meeting • Opening Ceremony • Plenaries • Thematic Working Groups on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implementation of PoA -Gender Management Systems -Gender integration into politics -Integrating gender equality into macro-economic policies -Women's human rights • Parallel NGO Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Officials' meeting • Opening Ceremony • Plenaries • Thematic Working Groups • Parallel NGO Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Officials' meeting • Opening Ceremony • Plenaries • Thematic Working Groups on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Democracy, Peace and Conflict -Human Rights and Law -Poverty Eradication and Economic Empowerment -HIV/AIDS • Drafting Committee meetings • Partners' Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Officials' meeting • Opening Ceremony • Plenaries • Roundtables on Tracking the Money for Gender Equality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Aid Effectiveness -Gender-Responsive Budgeting -Gender & Trade -Micro-finance & Innovative Financing • Partners' Forum
Key Outcomes and Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5WAMM Conclusions and Recommendations • Ministers set the target of 30 per cent of women in decision-making • Commonwealth initiative on gender-responsive budgets introduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6WAMM Communiqué • Ministers' Message to the Commonwealth High Level Review Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the New Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 • Ministers' Statement to CHOGM, Malta 2005 • Ministers agreed that every 6th speaker in plenary would be a CSO representative at 7WAMM and future WAMMs • Ministers agreed to retain their title of 'Women's Affairs Ministers' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8WAMM Communiqué and Kampala Statement to CHOGM 2007 • Ministers adopted the M&E Framework for the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality • Ministers endorsed the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security

2 Progress on Taking Forward Key Recommendations from Past Two WAMMS

Different initiatives have been undertaken by Commonwealth member countries, the Secretariat and partners to implement the recommendations of the past WAMMs. With regards to 7WAMM and 8WAMM the following progress has been made:

7WAMM

Adoption of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015

- The Commonwealth Secretariat, focusing on four critical areas:
 - o Gender, democracy, peace and conflict
 - o Gender, human rights and law
 - o Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
 - o Gender and HIV/AIDS

has worked to strengthen its internal institutional mechanisms to ensure delivery of PoA commitments. This has included establishment of portfolios dedicated to each of the PoA critical areas. The CGPMG is another strategic mechanism that has been established to provide oversight in monitoring and evaluating implementation of the PoA. External linkages have also been established to facilitate delivery of the PoA.

- Capacity-building initiatives and technical assistance have been provided to support gender mainstreaming in member countries e.g. different training programmes have been undertaken to: enhance women's participation in decision making; develop gender-responsive budgeting; promote review of legislation; and strengthen women's engagement in trade and export.
- The Secretariat has worked to develop knowledge and gender mainstreaming tools e.g. the GMS toolkit and the gender mainstreaming series.

Ministers agreed that every 6th speaker in plenary would be a CSO representative at 7WAMM and future WAMMs

- 7WAMM and 8WAMM plenary sessions have included speaking slots for CSO partners, which has enriched the deliberations of the ministerial meetings

8WAMM

Ministers adopted the M&E Framework for the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality

- The M&E Framework will be the main tool guiding the 2010 Mid-Term Review of the PoA. The Secretariat is working with the CGPMG and member countries to develop the process and modalities for undertaking the MTR.

8WAMM Communiqué and Statement

- Advocacy for financing gender equality at various strategic platforms e.g. the outcomes of 8WAMM influenced 2007 CHOGM's commitment to GRBs; the Commonwealth experiences on GRBs have informed global discussions on aid effectiveness and financing development.

3 Drawing on Lessons from Past WAMMS

- i What has worked well?
 - Theme
 - Format
 - Participation
 - Outcomes
- ii What has not worked well?
- iii How could the sessions be restructured/strengthened in order to maximise contributions from participants?
- iv What new things would you like to see for 9WAMM?
- v What would you like to get out of the meeting?

NB: The discussion will focus on the substance, structure and process of WAMMs and not on logistics/administrative arrangements.

Annex B-X: Participant List

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**JOINT OFFICE FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH PERMANENT
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