



Commonwealth Secretariat

Briefing Note – Environmentally Sustainable Development

The challenge

- Address the social and human impacts of climate change and its effects.
- Deal with the unprecedented growth in urbanisation and overcrowded slums.
- Alleviate shortages of financial and technological resources and support.
- Strengthen the quality and participation of small states in international negotiations on climate change.
- Seek practical ways to move towards a low-carbon world economy.
- Give small states a voice and negotiating power for their interests on the international arena.

The Commonwealth strategy

- Convene global forums to develop the knowledge and capacity of international negotiators.
- Organise workshops for experts to establish the effects of climate change on agricultural policies.
- Provide legal expertise, training and technical assistance on preparation, making of submissions and taking common positions on climate change.
- Support progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals especially those related to cities and human settlement.
- Provide advice and expertise to establish policies and laws that govern the development and management of natural resources.
- Develop sustainable development policies to help manage the impact of climate change.
- Assist member states to be effective in preparing for and responding to natural disasters.
- Use of information and communication technologies for effective disaster management.
- Introduce initiatives to find sustainable solutions to globalisation.
- Address human settlement issues through the ComHabitat forum.

Key principles

- Improvement of international environmental governance.

- Partnership with small states to develop a clear understanding of key environmental issues.

The practical response

- The Commonwealth Secretariat through its Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) provides advisory, legal, and economic assistance to member states on managing their natural resources, attracting investment and reform of the mining sector as well as legislation.
- The CFTC collaborates with the UN Division on Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea in delivering training workshops to help member states prepare their submissions to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.
- We help countries develop strategies for the development and promotion of tourism.
- CFTC promotes environmental sustainability by providing training to strengthen agricultural institutional capacity and build environmental awareness.
- Provides advice to member states about taxing investors and payment of fair tax.

Ministerial meetings or other highlights

- A mandate to implement the Lake Victoria Climate Change Action Plan (LVAP) to improve international environmental governance agreed on in the CHOGM held in Kampala in November 2007.
- The Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment held its Fifteenth Session on 16 February 2009 in conjunction with the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at UNEP Headquarters at Gigiri, Kenya.

Other Commonwealth players and their works

- We work with the CPA on environmental issues and climate change, the CFA h provides professional support to its members and unites foresters, scientists, students NGOs and policy makers.
- The CCGHS is a forum for exchange of views and experiences in planning sustainable development of villages, towns and cities.
- The CGHE is a forum for consultation on environment and sustainable development issues.
- CFTC provides funding and technical assistance to member countries on climate change and environmental issues.
- ComHabitat addresses issues of human settlement in partnership with other stakeholders such as CCGHS and Commonwealth Association of Planners among others.

Relations with other bodies involved in the sector

- We work with UN Habitat and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, regional organisations, the private sector, young people. We also work with the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development and Homeless International.