



CCGHS Informal(04)3

**COMMONWEALTH CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
Informal Session in the Wings of the World Urban Forum, Barcelona**

08.30 am – 10.00am, Tuesday 14 September 2004, Room 124

Annotated Agenda

Introduction

The Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements assists member states in their implementation of the Habitat Agenda. This mechanism provides a forum for high-level exchange of views and experiences in planning for the sustainable development of villages, towns and cities. The CCGHS is supported in practical ways by a partnership of agencies from local government, civil society and the private sector, of which the key partners are: the Commonwealth Secretariat; the Commonwealth Foundation; the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC); the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF); Homeless International; and the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID). Since May 2003, the mechanism as a whole (the Ministerial Group and the partnership) has been renamed as ComHabitat.

2. Building on earlier work by CHEC to harness expertise and experience throughout the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Secretary-General formally initiated the CCGHS in September 1998. At its inaugural Meeting in Nairobi in May 1999, the CCGHS adopted a Commonwealth goal of:

“Demonstrated progress towards adequate shelter for all with secure tenure and access to essential services in every community by 2015”.

3. This Commonwealth Goal is in alignment with the relevant Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In particular target 11, which aims to have achieved by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers and target 10 to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

4. Broad Commonwealth objectives under the Habitat Agenda agreed by the CCGHS (May 2003) have also been identified as follows:

- providing basic services to households, neighbourhoods and villages;
- incorporating shelter provision into national poverty alleviation programmes;

- promoting good governance;
- promoting security of tenure;
- removing systematic discrimination against women especially in respect of title to property and inheritance rights, with general support for the Commission on Human Rights resolution on the equal rights of ownership of and access to land; and
- promoting the attainment of the Commonwealth goal.

Purpose of this Informal Meeting

5. The CCGHS meets in the wings of the UN-Habitat sessions. The purpose of this informal session, is to:

- inform member states of recent activities under the ComHabitat initiative; and
- plan for the sixth meeting of the CCGHS in the wings of the UN-Habitat Governing Council (Nairobi, 11-15 April 2005).

The informal meeting will be chaired by The Hon. Sylvia Masebo, Minister of Local Government and Housing, Zambia. It is expected to be no longer than 90 minutes in duration.

6. This annotated agenda provides background information to the Provisional Agenda [CCGHS Informal(04)2] and outlines issues that Ministers may wish to discuss.

Provisional Agenda Item 2: ComHabitat Work Plan 2004/6

7. On 5th June 2001, CCGHS-4 met in the wings of the UN General Assembly Special Session and adopted a 'Commonwealth Input to Istanbul+5'. This discussed activities for the CCGHS under five broad headings, which capitalise on the strengths that the Commonwealth has to offer in terms of consensus building and the exchange of information, experience and advice. These headings are are:

- Development of partnerships.
- Identification of new innovative resources and use of existing funding more effectively.
- Promoting the sharing of ideas, experience and lessons learned.
- Capacity building and country reports.
- Promoting good governance and security of tenure.

8. Following a long and careful selection procedure involving all of the key partners in the ComHabitat Steering Group¹, Homeless International was selected in April 2004 as the new host for the ComHabitat partnership. On assuming this role, Homeless International worked closely with the Steering Group to prepare a Work Plan for the period up to 2006, when funding by the UK Department for International Development of £295,880 over 5 years is set to conclude.

¹ Commonwealth Secretariat; Commonwealth Foundation; Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC); Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF); Homeless International; and the U.K. Department for International Development.

9. On 7 June 2004, the ComHabitat Steering Group agreed a draft work programme, based on the priorities set by the CCGHS. The Work Plan is presented to this meeting as paper CCGHS Informal (04)4. In Summary, the key elements are as follows:

Research and information sharing. The main obstacle to advancing the Habitat Agenda is not technical innovation, but the dissemination of information and knowledge, and utilisation of expertise that has proved effective elsewhere. Ensuring that existing efforts are not duplicated, ComHabitat will:

- identify key indicators to enable effective tracking of implementation of the Habitat Agenda in Commonwealth countries
- design and build a database detailing implementation of the Habitat Agenda and MDGs by Commonwealth member states
- examine the availability and options for urban development finance
- identify key resource centres where good practice has enabled significant progress in implementing the Habitat Agenda, and where personnel are willing to share their methods, learning and insights with others
- disseminate 'effective practice' information identified above, and where possible, link-up practitioners to facilitate practical learning
- facilitate access to UN-Habitat research and documentation outputs (e.g. by providing digests, web links, etc)
- widely disseminate the results of ComHabitat's research through appropriate media including through its web site and international events.

Advocacy. The diversity of Commonwealth membership in terms of size, income and type of economy, combined with a tradition of working through consensus based on shared values, makes the Commonwealth a particularly useful forum for forging consensus on international issues. There are Commonwealth countries on every continent. ComHabitat's strengths with respect to advocacy stem from its inter-governmental links (Commonwealth Heads of Government, Ministerial-level CCGHS) and its networking of different constituencies (central and local government, business, civil society and non-governmental organisations). Although some activities can be planned in advance, the nature of advocacy is such that there needs to be flexibility of response to current events and issues. Activities include:

- consultations by the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements in the wings of UN Habitat meetings
- advocacy of Commonwealth concerns at international meetings. For example, at the 13th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, which addresses 'sanitation & water and human settlements'
- participation/organisation of networking events to identify needs and approaches
- links with UN-Habitat's campaigns on urban governance and secure tenure; links with UN Millennium Project task forces 7 (water & sanitation) and 8 (improving the lives of slum dwellers).

Networking. Actively develop a network of contacts to assist Commonwealth governments in their delivery of the Habitat Agenda and MDGs. Actions include, to:

- establish linkages with relevant organisations in Commonwealth countries, particularly civil society networks. A decision on the structure of ComHabitat by the CCGHS in April

- 2005 should help to involve a greater range of partners;
- develop and implement a communications strategy, including:
 - further developing and maintaining the ComHabitat web site;
 - developing information materials (e.g. brochures/flyers).
- take steps to mobilise the necessary resources to sustain a long-term resource, advice and referral centre.
- deliver ComHabitat networking events; and
- establish links with UN-Habitat's campaigns on urban governance and secure tenure/establish links with UN Millennium Project task forces 7 (water & sanitation) and 8 (improving the lives of slum dwellers).

Issues for the informal meeting:

10. It is envisaged that this draft work programme will be formally adopted by the CCGHS when it next meets in April 2005. To facilitate the process, this informal meeting could provide its views on the draft Work Plan in terms of the following:

- General balance of the programme
- The focus and approach taken in the two research projects on: the availability and options for urban development finance ; and indicators for tracking implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the MDGs
- How best to develop the ComHabitat web site to provide maximum value to member states
- Activities and future priorities beyond 2006.

11. These views will be incorporated into a revised Work Plan for adoption at the April 2005 meeting.

Provisional Agenda Item 3: Feedback on the Interim ComHabitat Structure

12. Discussions on the ComHabitat structure assume that the initiative will be actively supporting Commonwealth member states beyond 2006 towards attainment of the Commonwealth goal and MDGs in 2015. Discussion of the Work Plan, structure and funding of ComHabitat are all closely linked.

13. The matter of structure was considered at a consultation meeting held in London (4-5 December 2000), which started work on a Commonwealth Input for Istanbul+5 in June 2001. This meeting suggested:

- the CCGHS structure should be simple and flexible so that it could readily adapt to changing circumstances and national constraints;
- the CCGHS should meet to evaluate reports on project implementation, make an overall review of policy and structure in regard to the project, and agreed and endorse any new work programme;
- it envisaged a 3-tiered structure comprised of: CCGHS (formulating policy/taking decisions); Steering Group comprised of the key partners and 5 regional representatives nominated through High Commissions (giving form and substance to CCGHS decisions, and implementing and monitoring the work plan; and an Operational Group (managing projects); and

- CCGHS would seek to develop partnerships with all levels of government, civil society, private sector and individuals to promote pro-poor programmes.

14. Building on these proposals, and addressing the twin concerns of ensuring effective follow-up to CCGHS decisions and representation of all sectors in society as well as all regions in the Commonwealth in the work, the fifth session of the CCGHS (Nairobi, 7-8 May 2003):

- Renamed the CCGHS Framework (in its entirety) as ComHabitat
- Agreed a 2-tier structure:
 - ComHabitat Council*: the intergovernmental group (i.e. CCGHS) and representatives of local government, civil society groups and others. Discussions would be open to all, with expertise co-opted as needed, though decision making remains with national government representatives.
 - ComHabitat Management*: combines Steering Committee and Operational Group proposed earlier. This group would oversee the work of ComHabitat host and liaise with Commonwealth High Commissions in Nairobi.

15. Given the recent changes within ComHabitat's management arrangements and the relatively small number of governments that were represented at the CCGHS the last meeting in Nairobi (May 2003), the Steering Committee proposes that the structure of ComHabitat be finalised and formally adopted at the sixth session in April 2005.

16. With this in mind, the Steering Group, at its meeting in June 2004, agreed an Interim Structure on the basis of which it will work until such time as the structure is formally adopted by the CCGHS. The Interim Structure is provided to the informal meeting as CCGHS Informal (04)5.

17. In summary, the Interim Structure has 4 elements:

- i) *The Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements (CCGHS)*
ComHabitat will be governed by the intergovernmental (ministerial) group, which will be responsible for appointment of the ComHabitat Management and Advisory Group. Its meetings will be convened by the Commonwealth Secretary-General and will be open, when appropriate, to observers from other agencies representing civil society, local authority and private sector interests.
- ii) *ComHabitat Management and Advisory Group (MAG)*
The detailed oversight of ComHabitat would be the responsibility of a ComHabitat Management and Advisory Group composed of up to 7 representatives appointed by the CCGHS (from across Commonwealth regions), the ComHabitat Secretariat, and up to 7 representatives co-opted from a broad range of NGO, CBO, CSO and local authority groups. This group would meet twice a year or as determined by the Group to oversee the work of the ComHabitat Secretariat and progress on the work plan. It would liaise with the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi and provide advice to the CCGHS and ComHabitat Secretariat.
- iii) *ComHabitat Network*
To facilitate a broader engagement by many more organisations and individuals a broad forum, the ComHabitat Network will be developed – made up of the CCGHS

and a full range of other interest groups. The Network would meet on an annual basis at a time and place that coincides with meetings of the CCGHS. Individual partners within ComHabitat (e.g. CHEC, CLGF) may also wish to organise events, within their own mandates, that support the ComHabitat Work Plan. The Network would serve as a mechanism for learning, exchange and support.

iv) *ComHabitat Secretariat*

The ComHabitat Secretariat is based within Homeless International for the period April 2004 to June 2006. It is responsible for the day-to-day programme of activities determined by the CCGHS.

Issues for the informal meeting:

19. To facilitate discussions by the CCGHS in April 2005 on the structure of ComHabitat, the informal meeting is asked to:

- Consider the Interim Structure; and
- Give their views on the suitability of the structure in supporting the aims and objectives of ComHabitat and action to implement with work programme set by the CCGHS;

Provisional Agenda Item 4: Consultations on Chair for CCGHS-6

20. CCGHS-3 (Nairobi, 10 February 2001) agreed that the Chair of the CCGHS would rotate every two years on a regional basis. The previous Chair was from Asia (Bangladesh) and the current Chair is from Africa (Zambia). This means that the next Chair should come from the Caribbean region.

Issues for the informal meeting:

- The informal meeting is invited to note that the CCGHS at its next session is due to elect a new Chair from the Caribbean region. The Commonwealth Secretary-General will write formally to all governments to this effect shortly, inviting the Caribbean Region to consult on the matter in good time to propose their nomination(s).
- Caribbean member states are asked to consult with one another to propose a Chair at the next session in April 2005.

Provisional Agenda Item 5: UN CSD-13 and CCGE-11

21. The CCGHS may wish to consider ways in which its work is relevant to that of thirteen session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13), which will take place in New York from 2 to 13 May 2005, and which will consider policy lessons related to water, sanitation and human settlements.

22. In this context, the CCGHS may also wish to note that the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment (CCGE) will meet in the wings of UNEP's Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (Nairobi, February 2005) to consider issues of concern with respect to the UNEP meetings and CSD-13. The CCGE is the Commonwealth's primary intergovernmental forum for consultations and promoting agreement on environment and sustainable development issues at the Ministerial-level.

Issues for the informal meeting:

- The CCGHS is invited to give its views on priority issues for, and possible Commonwealth inputs to, the 13th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.
- The agenda for the CCGE has yet to be determined through consultation with member governments. However, with the CSD focusing on issues related to human settlements, water and sanitation, this could be a possible focus for the CCGE too. Does the CCGHS envisage ways in which the CCGE could address priority concerns in its discussions next February?

Provisional Agenda Item 6: Agenda for CCGHS-6

23. The sixth formal session of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements is scheduled to take place in the wings of the 20th Session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council (Nairobi, 11-15 April 2005).

24. In pursuance of previous decisions by the CCGHS, the agenda might include the following:

- A review of the ComHabitat Work Plan 2004/6, action taken to date, and future work priorities up to 2015
- A decision on the structure of the ComHabitat initiative

Issues for the informal meeting:

- Should these issues form the core agenda items for the CCGHS meeting in April?
- Are there additional items that could be included, for example to assist member states in canvassing views in advance of the UN-Habitat Governing Council sessions?

Provisional Agenda Item 7: ComHabitat Networking event

Issues for the informal meeting:

25. The CCGHS is informed that a ComHabitat networking event will be held during WUF on Thursday, September 16th, 3-6 pm, Room 124.

26. The event aims to share specific practical experiences of using multi-sectoral partnerships to implement the Habitat Agenda and work towards the Millennium Development Goals. Teams from Nairobi and Mumbai will present their experiences of moving from a situation of confrontational evictions of railway-side slum dwellers, to negotiations with slum dwellers' federations resulting in mass voluntary resettlement. The event will also provide an opportunity to discuss ComHabitat's immediate plans and future direction. The Hon Sylvia Masebo, Minister of Local Government and Housing, Zambia will chair the session and other Commonwealth ministers are invited. Invited speakers include: Sheela Patel, Director of the Indian NGO SPARC; Dr. S.V. Joshi, Metropolitan Commissioner, Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA); Mr. A.S.Garud, Chief Engineer, Indian Railways (Mumbai); Jane Weru, Executive Director, Pamoja Trust, Kenya; Mrs Edith Jenkins, Estate Manager, Kenya Railways; Mr Renson

Mbwagwa, Director of Physical Planning, Ministry of Lands and Housing, Kenya and community leaders from both countries.

Provisional Agenda Item 8: Any Other Business

27. CCGHS members may have additional matters that they wish to raise under this agenda item.