

WHAT IS 8WAMM?

Background

Women's Affairs Ministers Meetings (WAMMs) are held triennially. The Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon Don McKinnon, is responsible for the general organisation and conduct of 8WAMM which is serviced by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. The previous meeting, 7WAMM, was held in Fiji Islands on 30 May-2 June 2004, and Ministers agreed the new Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 (PoA).

8WAMM is of strategic importance for a number of reasons. It is the third WAMM to take place in Africa, the previous two were held in Nairobi (1985) and Harare (1987). It is the first WAMM being held since the new PoA was agreed by Ministers at 7WAMM (2004), presented to the UN Beijing+10 Global Review, and endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) at their meeting in Malta 2005. Finally, it is being held five months prior to CHOGM in the same host country, Uganda, which offers potential for bringing women's empowerment and gender equality to the attention of Heads of Government.

Venue and Dates

8WAMM will be held in Uganda on 11-14 June 2007 at a venue to be decided.

Theme

The proposed theme of 8WAMM is "Financing Gender Equality for Development and Democracy".

Objectives

The key objectives of 8WAMM are:

- To provide a forum for discussion, sharing of experiences and forward planning on the proposed theme of "Financing Gender Equality for Development and Democracy";
- To report on the implementation of the PoA, the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender Audit, and the Commonwealth Gender PoA Monitoring Group;
- To discuss and agree a PoA Monitoring and Evaluation Framework; and
- To develop a strategy/message for CHOGM in Uganda.

Chairperson

The Commonwealth tradition is for the host country to chair the meeting and as host Minister, the Hon Syda Bbumba, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development will chair 8WAMM.

Participants

8WAMM will bring together a rich mix of some 250-300 Women's Affairs Ministers; Senior Officials; parliamentarians; magistrates, judges and lawyers; women entrepreneurs; gender and youth civil society organisations; and international, Commonwealth, regional and bilateral partner agencies from around the Commonwealth and globally.

Programme and Format

The structure of 8WAMM will include the following:

- Senior Officials Meeting;
- Opening Ceremony;
- Ministerial Meeting to include Plenary Sessions, Thematic Working Groups, a Government-Civil Society Dialogue, and an Inter-Generational Dialogue;
- Partners' Forum to include workshops of Parliamentarians; Magistrates, Judges and Lawyers; Women Entrepreneurs; Young People; and Donor/Partner Agencies.

Civil Society Participation

The CSO Partners' Forum will feed into the plenaries of the Ministerial Meeting, in which every 6th speaker will be a civil society representative. In addition, the Thematic Working Groups allow for more informal exchanges between Government and civil society representatives. And finally, open and constructive discussion is promoted in the Government-Civil Society Dialogue. Young people will have a particular opportunity to engage with Ministers in an Inter-Generational Dialogue.