

**Report of the Commonwealth Civil Society Consultation
Marlborough House, London
Wednesday, 10 May 2006**

Introduction

These consultations take place twice a year, normally involving representatives of Commonwealth Associations (CAs) based in London as well as other civil society organisations particularly from Commonwealth developing countries. The May 10th CSO consultation was the 7th such meeting since they were started in 2003.

Objectives

The consultation had as its objectives;

1. To generate new ideas and action for specific areas where the Commonwealth Secretariat Divisions and the Commonwealth Foundation can collaborate with civil society to improve results on programme objectives.
2. To enhance civil society's understanding of the processes that lead up to CHOGM and help fulfil their aspirations for greater participation.

Expected outputs

1. Strategic areas for partnership between civil society, Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) and the Commonwealth Foundation (CF) identified.
2. Strategic opportunities for civil society input to CHOGM processes clearly identified.

Welcoming remarks

Rt. Hon Don McKinnon Secretary-General, Commonwealth Secretariat

The Secretary General welcomed all participants to Marlborough House noting that the semi-annual civil society consultation is always a fruitful day for discussion. He further noted that civil society is constantly evolving. From its roots in churches and schools, to its new incarnation as a community of NGOs, civil society means people banding together locally, regionally, nationally and internationally in the best interests of their own societies and communities. In the Secretary General's view, civil society has grown even further through the people who are skeptical of politics and want to work outside the political process, with the objective of getting their views heard and known.

The Secretary General said that democratic governments cannot function without listening to civil society. The last 20 years have started to show us that the best democratic governments are democratic partnerships – of government, business, and civil society. Whereas some Commonwealth countries fully embrace civil society, others are moving more to recognize its value. With the development of new communications technologies such as cellular phones and the World Wide Web, the challenge for governments is to choose which voices to listen to in the face of increasingly rapid flows of information.

In planning the day's agenda, the CF and ComSec aimed to build on this and achieve quantitative outcomes that can be monitored and measured.

He noted that one of the most important aspects of the Foundation's work is building engagement and dialogue with civil society organisations at ministerial meetings and CHOGM.

There had been notable successes, such as HIPC and the Finance and Women's Affairs Ministerials, but nevertheless progress has been uneven and probably fewer than 50% of ministerial meetings have presented enough opportunity for dialogue with civil society. This is why the Secretariat and the Foundation asked David Kalete, new Civil Society Liaison Manager, to carry out a thorough review as the basis for a forward plan that will see all Ministerials in active dialogue with CSOs within a reasonable timeframe. David would present his preliminary results in the morning.

Dr Collins said that the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum was very important to many in the room but not always from the same point of view. There were some significant successes in Malta, such as the dialogue with Foreign Ministers. The Foundation has taken a hard look at the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum and new ways need to be found to develop the substantive content and tangible outcomes of such dialogues, to improve the inclusion of all representative sectors of civil society, and to strengthen the focus and delivery of messages through communiqués and statements. Dr Collins welcomed the new Deputy Director of the CF Vijay Krishnarayan, who would report to the meeting on this analysis and possible ways forward.

To enrich and focus the work of the Commonwealth and civil society, the latest news on the arrangements in Kampala, would be presented by Warren Nyamugasira. A thoughtful and no doubt challenging analysis of future prospects at CHOGM would be presented by Richard Bourne.

In the afternoon there would be an opportunity for all to get their teeth into key Commonwealth issues: respect, faith and understanding, gender equality, climate change and health care. All are major challenges in the Commonwealth. Dr Collins expressed his hope that everyone would participate and add their voice.

In short, Dr. Collins noted that these meetings were moving beyond the concept of consultation towards one of joint planning and strategising, identifying priorities, monitoring achievements and reaching for genuine outputs and outcomes that help all to achieve more in their work together.

First Panel Discussion: Ministerial and other inter-governmental processes that lead up to CHOGM. What are the opportunities for civil society?

Alexandra Jones: Chair

**Matthew Neuhaus Director, Political Affairs Division Commonwealth Secretariat:
*An overview of the processes and opportunities/moments where civil society can make their contributions***

Matthew Neuhaus said that overall the Maltese did a wonderful job and demonstrated the ability of a small country to host a very good CHOGM. They did it with perhaps the most economical budget ever for a CHOGM, underscoring that the CHOGM need not be too expensive for the Commonwealth's smaller members to manage.

Matthew Neuhaus informed the meeting that he had just returned from Uganda, which held its first multi-party elections earlier this year, and is only now beginning to focus on the hosting of the CHOGM in eighteen months' time. He noted that the Uganda CHOGM will be one in which the venue would consist of many small hotels, which will provide a range of logistical challenges.

On civil society participation, he asserted that it makes its primary contribution every day through its daily work at home and that there is no substitute for bilateral engagement of civil society at the official level with member governments in member countries. That has to be seen as part of the process of civil society engagement with the official Commonwealth.

He made the point that every ministerial meeting is different and that is unlikely to change. For some meetings of ministers it is more appropriate that they have a deeper engagement with civil society than for others. There is no one pattern for ministerial meetings.

Matthew Neuhaus thought that a lot of time and effort at the CHOGM is wasted on the Communiqué. He thought that having over 100 paragraphs in the Communiqué was not something to be proud of. The Secretariat is now being asked to provide a draft for a more concise Communiqué. He would hope for a drastic cutting back to a draft Communiqué of approximately 20 paragraphs.

According to Mr Neuhaus, the really important document that comes out of the CHOGM is the Declaration that Heads themselves work on. It does not exist in any draft form before the Heads meet. The Secretariat and the host government wait to see what the Heads are saying on certain issues, and the language which comes out is the language picked up from this.

In the light of this, civil society groups need to think about how their views come through. There are two key ways in which this happens. One is through the provision of documents detailing the outcomes of civil society forums directly to the Heads of Government. The other is the dialogue between Foreign Ministers and civil society. The increased attendance of Foreign Ministers at this dialogue in Malta was encouraging. Matthew Neuhaus did not think that the formalised delivery of the outcomes of the Peoples' Forum and the Youth Forum was very effective. At the time the Ministers were more engaged on their upcoming engagements with the private sector and the Business Forum and small states issues.

Matthew Neuhaus saw Malta as a useful experiment in terms of the format of the CHOGM. It demonstrated that associated events such as the Youth Forum, the Business Forum and the Peoples' Forum retain a very important part in the lead up to CHOGM. They will be continued and plans will be made to make these events work better in terms of process, logistics and the sites.

Matthew Neuhaus stressed that final decisions had not been made on venues and hotels in Uganda, although the Heads of Governments retreat had been selected in Munyonyo (20 minutes' drive from Kampala) on the shores of Lake Victoria. An estimated 4000 participants will be attending, including an estimated 1000 from the media.

Matthew Neuhaus looked forward to an interactive discussion in the day's consultation.

Discussants

Dr Karen Brewer

Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association (CMJA)

Karen Brewer started by saying her focus would be on the overall process of Ministerial Meetings rather than on the CHOGM itself.

She noted that in the run-up to the Report of the High Level Review Group on the Commonwealth, which followed the Coolum Heads of Government Meeting in 2002, the issue of participation of CSOs at Ministerial Meetings was raised.

During these discussions, CSOs pointed out the lack of a harmonised process for participation in different Ministerial Meetings. The New Vision for the Commonwealth Report called for "Civil Society and the private sector to be increasingly involved in ministerial meetings and in their preparatory process". The Report of the High Level Review itself called for greater cooperation between the Secretariat and CSOs in the promotion of the fundamental values of the Commonwealth.

Karen Brewer recognised that within the divisions of the Commonwealth Secretariat, efforts have been made in this regard.

She recalled that it was agreed that ComSec would undertake an analysis of the different requirements of different Ministerial Meetings. In this regard she welcomed the analysis being undertaken by the CF, even if it was four years on. She noted CSOs are still facing the same problems. The Secretary General for example has repeatedly stressed the importance of dialogue between CSOs and Government and yet the rhetoric is not always matched by practice.

More specifically, she pointed out the following issues;

Firstly, accredited commonwealth organisations are not systematically advised of forthcoming ministerial meetings or provided with reports of what has transpired therein. Therefore CSOs are not necessarily aware if; a) they can send a representative to participate in the Meetings; or b) if they can send papers for circulation to Ministers.

Arising from this lack of notification is the fact that the agendas and topics for discussion at these Meetings are not well publicized. This usually deprives CSOs an opportunity to make written submissions on an important issue or indeed to plan to physically participate in the meetings.

Moreover, the ComSec Division responsible for particular Ministerial Meetings, has a tendency to “target” their partner organisations, i.e. sectoral groups who have worked with them more than others. And yet, some accredited associations feel their remit covers a number of sectors. There seems to be no systematic mailing of all accredited organisations notifying them of forthcoming meetings. The fact that they might not be able to participate at meetings or pre-meetings is not necessarily an indicator of the lack of interest in the Meeting or the Topics but more probably an indication of the lack of resources which many associations suffer from.

Karen Brewer’s recommendation was that a full list of forthcoming Ministerial Meetings, the dates and venues be circulated on a regular basis to all Accredited Organisations.

Secondly, she pointed out that there continues to be inconsistencies in practice in what is deemed “participation”

- Some Ministerial Meetings do not allow “observers” to attend while others do;
- Some allow observers to attend but they cannot make any contributions, except with the express permission of the Chair;
- Others allow ‘timed slots’ for CSO contributions, even though these have a dubious success rate, as was CMJA’s experience at the last Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting. In this instance, although CSOs were allocated 1 speaking slot for every 6 ministerial interventions, time constraints dictated curtailment of interventions by CSOs;
- Some Ministerial Meetings allow “observers” to help with drafting of papers, participate in debates and in Senior Officials Meetings including presenting of papers in the meetings being held prior to the Ministerial Meeting (as is the case with the Law Ministers). She was not sure if all Ministerial Meetings have a pre-Senior Officials Meeting (in the case of the Law Ministers Meeting this is held usually 12 months prior to the Ministerial meeting) and if so, what the mechanisms are for participation/submissions to such meetings.
- Some Meetings cater for a pre-consultation with CSOs as has happened in the past for Health Ministers Meetings or for the Committee of the Whole. Leaving aside the confrontations which might arise between governments and CSOs, have been witnessed at some meetings, the feed-in from Ministerial Meetings from such consultations can sometimes leave a lot to be desired and can be inconsistent.

Therefore, she stated, the existing system is extremely confusing and leads to the perception, perhaps wrongly, that CSO participation continues to be at the “grace and favour” of the organisers of the Ministerial meeting in question and done under sufferance.

4. Parallel processes.

Bernice Sam noted that civil society parallel processes are important in building intra-civil society solidarity. Civil society groups drew on their strengths from across the Commonwealth to produce a valuable tool – *Breaking with Business as Usual* - that is in high demand across the Commonwealth.

She recommended that in the follow up to CHOGM, the agenda for developing a similar report must be set way ahead of time to allow for adequate preparations to be made. She noted that the Action Plan on Digital Divide is evidence of good working relations between civil society and governments.

5. Civil Society Preparatory meetings in London preceding COW.

Bernice Sam noted that Civil Society Preparatory meetings in London meetings provide a clear 'roadmap' for CHOGM, allowing civil society to identify concrete issues that governments should take aboard. She recommended that following on from gains made in Malta regarding the civil society dialogue with Foreign Ministers and the interaction with President Museveni, a balance should be struck between ComSec and the CF in their preparation for the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum and CHOGM 2007. She observed that the last civil society meeting in London before the COW seemed to show a 'disconnect' between ComSec and CF.

6. Pre-Committee of the Whole (COW) drafting work by Civil Society.

Bernice Sam recommended that, given the amount of work that goes into the drafting process:

- A review of the preparatory meeting, in terms of information reaching participating civil society representatives early enough will be helpful, so as to allow for outputs from the national consultations and e-consultations to be disseminated on time.
- Identification of persons to constitute the drafting group should be done with a view to having persons who have been actively involved or participated in processes leading up to the pre-COW meeting.
- Those who participate in the pre-Cow drafting sessions should be considered for inclusion in the proposed sub-thematic organizing groups for CPF 2007. This way, sentiments of non-inclusion that arose in Malta could be avoided.
- Time allocated to the drafting committee should be better managed. This would mean that at the group work stage, facilitators should be encouraged to keep participants focused on the objectives of reaching consensus and prioritization. Introduction of new agenda items at the group work stage sometimes takes away time and the mandate given the groups.
- Civil society groups and Commonwealth associations that have pressing issues for inclusion should take advantage of opportunities presented in activities preceding this particular pre-COW meeting for such agenda items to be included in the synthesis.
- If new agenda items are allowed to be tabled at the pre-COW consultation, then the process should be made known to all of civil society early enough. It is expected that the moderator or facilitator at the meeting will sum up all key points that must be considered for prioritization by groups before the groups work stage.

Regarding the reporting to the COW, she recommended that a clearer format be established, and the number of CSO speakers presenting the report be reduced from 4 to 2.

7. Civil Society involvement in Ministerial meetings.

Bernice Sam noted that CSAC had presented a list of members with expertise and interest in particular ministerial meetings, who could be requested to make contributions as the need arose. She also recommended that adequate funds be allocated to enable CSOs to adequately prepare for these meetings.

8. The Civil Society Lounge

Bernice Sam noted that the Civil Society Lounge facility did not work very well in Malta. Accreditation of CSOs was good, but many could not utilize the facility due to the many activities and security challenges. She recommended that if there is a similar facility planned for CHOGM 2007, it

should be easily accessible to civil society participants. The challenges of Malta should be taken on board when planning for a similar facility in Kampala.

11. Reporting back to the next CPF of what happened between CHOGLMs/CPFs
Finally, Bernice Sam recommended that the next CPF have a slot for reporting back to civil society about what has worked between Malta and Uganda. This would be monitoring the outcomes of CPF and CHOGLM.

Plenary Discussion

Alexandra Jones thanked both discussants for speaking in specific, candid and constructive terms. She gave some background information on the issue of accreditation, noting those 12 – 13 years ago, NGOs had no accredited position at all. They had to masquerade as media organisations in order to participate in CHOGLM. A provision was then made for NGOs to participate, but even then a number of civil society bodies still had to masquerade as NGOs in order to participate. The current accreditation categories were therefore introduced about 3-4 years ago, to allow for a variety of participating CSOs to register themselves, on the terms of what they constitutionally were. She noted that it was never intended that the different categories would create different levels of privilege or access and this issue would further be addressed and rectified.

The following issues were raised and addressed:

- It was asked what the mechanism was for devising a theme so that people can prepare for Kampala.

Matthew Neuhaus answered that discussions on the theme have been held with President Museveni and are now being handled by the Secretary General. Discussions are also being held over the specific dates of the CHOGLM. There are several elements in thinking on the theme. One issue which has resonated with President Museveni and others, was the one covered in the address given by Jim Wolfenson at the annual Commonwealth Lecture, about the “three-speed world”, with the issue of how to elevate so called “third-speed” countries to the rapidly developing status of the Asian Tigers. He noted that the Commonwealth has two pillars, development and democracy, and therefore governance issues should also be addressed. The single slogan of the CHOGLM must encompass a broader programme of issues.

Further points and questions followed:

- It was asked what should be done about written submissions to the ComSec in advance of the CHOGLM. Was there any point in submitting them? They are often not acknowledged. Are they looked at? Are they a waste of time?
- It was also observed that the theme of “Networking the Commonwealth for Development” was narrowly interpreted by Heads of Government as the digital divide and missed civil society’s potential incorporation into development networking. Accordingly it was asked how civil society’s concerns for the theme can be brought to attention.
- It was noted that Chairs at the Foreign Ministers’ meeting could have played a more central role in: ensuring discipline in the length of interventions, thus facilitating exchange, and; playing a more provocative role in ensuring points are responded to.
- It was asked what arrangements were being made for national consultations in advance of the Summit in Uganda to involve trade unions from developing countries.
- It was recommended that the private sector be included in a tripartite action with governments and civil society.

- It was asked how resources for the full participation of often under-funded civil society organisations could be secured.
- It was recommended that the Women’s Affairs Minister’s Meeting make a specific intervention into the CHOGM.

Alexandra Jones then offered a brief period for response from the representatives of the Foundation and the Secretariat.

Mark Collins expressed mixed feelings about the suggestion of shortening of the Communiqué. He expressed his familiarity with the “tyranny of mandates”, and noted that the Communiqué provided valuable mandates to a variety of different constituents. He suggested that there might be room for more Declarations and noted the need to consider how civil society views and opinions could be included in that process.

Formal plans had not been laid on national consultations in the run up to Kampala, but the Foundation intended to provide financial support for convening them. Previously, the take-up of national consultations had been disappointing in terms of participation. Representatives of some significant Commonwealth Organisations were notably absent.

Dr Collins hoped that tri-sectoral fora comprising governments, civil society and the private sector would be established in Kampala so that ideas could cross-fertilise and that the problem of simply “preaching to the converted” would be avoided. He noted that the issue of ensuring representative press coverage of the issues raised at CHOGM needed to be addressed as well.

Matthew Neuhaus explained that written submissions sent to ComSec are forwarded to member governments. The level of impact of written submissions depends amongst other things on; if the paper is very considered, represents a range of organisations and its linkage to the CHOGM theme. In addition, papers produced in the few days preceding the CHOGM, which are pertinent to the issues being discussed at the time are also taken seriously. Such documents include; the communiqués from the Peoples’ and Business Forums.

On the Communiqué and the “tyranny of mandates” he felt that there should only be one Declaration out of the CHOGM, with the other documents being called ‘statements’. He also noted that there was no Declaration as such on the issue of Respect and Understanding, but the mandate emerged from the Communiqué.

A further two points were raised:

- It was asked where the Commonwealth Day theme of “Health and Vitality” originated from. It was then suggested that the relationship between ecology and business interest needs to be linked to any discussion on health.
- It was suggested that an ad hoc CSO committee could be put together to advice on the process, format and notification issues regarding national consultations prior to the CHOGM.

Alexandra Jones then closed the discussion noting that specific issues could be followed further in the day’s panel meetings.

where the Ministerial Meeting processes have had effective CSO input, the follow-up collaboration with CSOs is better.

6. Funding is an issue. Only where the Foundation has provided substantial funding, has there been substantial CSO participation in ministerial level processes.

Dr Mark Collins

Chair

Dr Collins thanked David Kalete for the overview pointing out that although the document was a “work in progress”, and many elements could be further adjusted and developed, it provided a background for a strategic planning process to improve enhance with an of all ministerial meetings and that was surely to be of great benefit to all involved.

Warren Nyamugasira

Member of CFCSAC

Proposed arrangements for the next Commonwealth Peoples’ Forum in Uganda

Warren Nyamugasira started by observing that Uganda as a country, strongly desires to host the CHOGM. He noted that President Yoweri Museveni’s leadership of the Ugandan delegation to the Malta CHOGM; his address to civil society on a substantive topic – *Trade, Power and Africa-and whether Africa can Trade Itself out of Poverty* and the Ugandan Foreign Minister’s participation in the dialogue with CSOs as well as the commitment to its follow-up, are all exemplifications of Uganda’s desire to host the Heads of Government Meeting.

Secondly, Mr Nyamugasira recommended that the Commonwealth Peoples’ Forum (CPF) should be part of the wider processes happening in Uganda and the East Africa sub-region. For example, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum had just concluded in Uganda, but had limited civil society participation from outside Uganda and the Women’s Affairs Ministerial Meeting will be taking place in Uganda in July 2007. The World Social Forum is to be hosted in East Africa in Nairobi, Kenya from 20th to 25th January 2007, with the theme: *Another World is Possible – People’s Struggles, People’s Solutions*. There were also plans to organise a Great Lakes Peace Caravan, which could be linked to the theme of *Respect, Faith and Understanding*. These and other events and processes could be seen as ‘test runs’, which can energise civil society in Uganda, generate issues, root Ugandan civil society in people’s struggles, deepen the gender agenda, influence the way in which the CPF is organised, and provide issues to be integrated into the Peoples’ Forum. Mr Nyamugasira invited everybody seriously to consider how to participate effectively.

On the media discussion on the CHOGM, Mr Nyamugasira pointed out that Kampala is awash with debates on questions such as: Should Uganda host the CHOGM? What are the political and human rights overtones? Should the Queen attend and if so where will she stay? Does CHOGM make economic sense? Are there enough hotel rooms? And so on. Mr Nyamugasira argued that while there is evidently an interest in the CHOGM, the public debate is not yet focussing on issues. The Commonwealth Peoples’ Forum is not yet visible. What is needed is a media strategy to generate debate on substantial issues and give the Peoples’ Forum greater visibility.

Mr Nyamugasira then stressed that an emphasis needed to be placed on the potential legacies of the CHOGM and CPF. These could include:

1. Going beyond ‘talking to ourselves’ and instead generating powerful political messages.
2. Raising the stature of the Commonwealth Peoples’ Forum – a good CPF makes a good CHOGM.
3. Improved coordination and crossing bridges to the Business Forum.
4. Raising the quality of what is said and how it is said.
5. Leaving behind a more respected civil society which is not undermined in any way.

6. Show-casing good practices in HIV/AIDS, gender, decentralisation and conflict management. Mr Nyamugasira recommended that field visits should become an integral part of the CPF with actual interaction with the local people, their struggles and their solutions.

On the political content of the CPF, Mr Nyamugasira pointed out that the event is coming during a period of political transition towards pluralism in Uganda, although the focus on the Peoples' Forum will help to improve the situation. The new NGO laws are considered restrictive and Ugandan NGOs are handling the matter internally. They have petitioned the President and have put in place a self regulation (quality assurance certification) system to prove that they can be responsible and accountable without the need for government control.

On the practical arrangements for the CHOGM and CPF, Mr Nyamugasira noted that there was limited space and small hotels – although he pointed out that “small can be beautiful” by enabling proximity amongst the people. Since resources are limited, the issue is raised of how a poor country can bid to host CHOGM. Mr Nyamugasira suggested that this could be an opportunity to do “more with less” and reinterpret the concept of space by going back into open air and out into the community, taking lessons from the way the World Social Forum is organised. He further suggested that Commonwealth Associations should work through their Ugandan counterparts so as to avoid flying visits that do not connect with the country. He mentioned that that a government task force is addressing the practical arrangements for the CHOGM with limited civil society participation. He further noted that a CPF National Steering Committee will be constituted after CF staff visit this month.

Mr Nyamugasira mentioned that the idea was emerging for a pre-CHOGM/CPF activity such as a symposium for institutions of higher learning at Mbarara University in Western Uganda. Other similar initiatives were welcome.

Mr Nyamugasira finally recommended that the CPF should not stand alone but act as part of the other processes occurring in the region and further that the focus should be on the Forum's legacies. He stated that this CHOGM will be a case study of how a poor country can host a CHOGM without going bankrupt, and that issues of space and interaction with the country should make the Forum come alive.

Vijay Krishnarayan

Deputy Director, CF

New proposals for the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum

Mr Krishnarayan set out to talk through the proposed process that would take the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum (CPF) from Malta to Kampala. He noted that the CF had gathered a wealth of experience over the last fifteen years of organising the CPF under the wings of CHOGM and a lot had been learnt from this. The CF has carried out an extensive and comprehensive review of the lessons that had come out of Malta. He presented a paper entitled *Commonwealth Peoples' Forum: Review and Plan* (Appendix B).

Mr Krishnarayan observed that it would be useful to review the objectives of the forum, before discussing the process, noting that Henry Ford one of the world's greatest car manufacturers, said “if you are going to make a factory, it is best to first decide what it is you are going to make.” He cited five objectives of the Foundation for the Peoples' Forum as follows;

1. To influence what goes into the CHOGM;
2. To monitor and comment upon what goes out of the CHOGM;
3. To afford a space for reflection and comment on the programmes that the Foundation is developing and implementing;
4. To provide the space for civil society to come together from across the Commonwealth to discuss and debate the issues of the day and
5. To leave a legacy for the host civil society as it embarks on a process of developing or improving relations with government.

He cited some of the achievements of the Malta CPF where over 150 organisations and approximately 500 people participated in the plenary sessions and over 1,000 participants in the 41 workshops. There were a number of ‘firsts’ including the full inclusion of civil society (through the Civil Society Advisory Committee) in the implementation and conduct of the CPF, a very extensive pre-CHOGM consultative process, the round table with foreign ministers, valuable input from CSOs on climate change, civil society participation in the discussions on promoting Respect and Understanding and the first formal address to Civil Society from a Head of State at the CPF.

He then outlined areas identified by the Foundation for improvement, which included; coherently organising the business of the workshops; more clear linkages to the theme of the CHOGM; strengthening the identity of the CPF as an inclusive event representing the wide range of civil society that would like to participate; assessing the value and organisation of the exhibition with a possible consideration to contract its management to another organisation; encouraging more active participation of colleagues from ComSec in the substantive sessions; developing a communication strategy to improve the international coverage and improving the quality of the CPF outputs.

Accordingly, Mr Krishnarayan said that in the run-up to Kampala, the CF would build on the strengths it has developed and bring together the hosts, CSAC and the Commonwealth Associations in planning from the outset to make this activity a success. He also noted that the CF remained committed to organising a pre-CHOGM consultative process and would also be looking to work with ComSec to embed the Foreign ministers’ dialogue as part of the CHOGM agenda. Looking at the success of President Museveni’s address to the CPF in Malta, the Foundation would seek to have the host of the 2009 CHOGM address the CPF in Kampala.

Similarly, the weaknesses of the CPF needed to be addressed. He cited a need to deepen the civil society discussion on the issues, which in practice could mean a much smaller number of workshops to promote more substantive discussion. Each of these workshops would develop Statements rather than Communiqués all of which could then be submitted under a CPF Communiqué for consideration by Heads.

Mr Krishnarayan said that the CF wants to improve the quality of discussions and presentations made at the three existing key avenues for civil society engagement with governments which are; the Committee of the Whole; the presentation of Statements to the Heads, and; improving on the way in which the dialogue with Foreign Ministers is conducted.

Mr Krishnarayan then outlined the proposed format of the CPF (see table on page 4 of Appendix B). The CPF would move from an opening plenary, to specific workshops and then the drafting and presentation of its outputs to CHOGM. He noted that although only 4 workshops had been indicated in the table in the document, there could be as many as manageably possible.

He closed by noting that the management of the CPF would be key and related it “a cricket team”, which might have a team of stars, but if they do not play as a team the result is collapse. The management of the CPF would be coordinated to be inclusive and ensure high quality content of the output.

Richard Bourne

Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit (CPSU)

An analytical review of past civil society engagement in CHOGM and prospects for the future.

Richard Bourne noted that participants had heard very useful critiques of what went wrong at the CPF 2005 from Bernice Sam and Karen Brewer. He also drew the audience’s attention to an article by Daisy Cooper, formerly of the CPSU and now at ComSec, as a personal account of the Valetta CHOGM and CPF. The article could be found in this year’s Spring edition of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative’s Newsletter (www.humanrightsinitiative.org).

Mr Bourne outlined the confused expectations and problems as highlighted by governments and civil society, moving on to discuss the problems to the opportunities.

On the problematic side he raised the issue of organisations which have paid to attend the CPF but with the major intention of lobbying the CHOGM. He also noted that most of those who arrive at the CPF for the first time have a limited understanding of the Commonwealth and have exaggerated expectations of what the Commonwealth governments collectively, and the intergovernmental institutions working on their behalf can deliver. He raised the further issue of the local civil society of the host country, who are often under-engaged. He further observed that there is a huge number of civil society organisations who will never be able to afford to take part in a CPF. He suggested that the e-consultations be further strengthened to give more prominence to and consideration of the concerns of group.

On the government side, some governments, he mentioned have been seen to be hostile to civil society, which they see as anarchic or a threat. There has been some change in this with respect to service delivery NGOs in particular since the South East Asian Tsunami and the Earthquake in Pakistan. However, he noted that governments often have exaggerated expectations of what NGOs can achieve citing the Edinburgh Action Plan in 2003, where Education Ministers invested possibly greater hopes in the actions of civil society organisations than what could be realised.

Mr Bourne said he thought there was coming to be more respect from governments for advocacy NGOs, recognising that they have a valuable bank of knowledge and that they can build consensus.

Mr Bourne raised the issue of the danger for CSOs at the CPF of creating a communiqué which becomes a lowest common denominator or which lacks sufficient follow up.

Moving onto opportunities, Mr Bourne said that the proposal for the CPF distributed by Mr Krishnarayan had possibilities, especially as it linked more clearly to the purposes of the Commonwealth governments when they meet at a CHOGM. However it posed risks in that those CSOs who were not interested in the themes of the CHOGM might not bother to attend the CPF and further that perfectly good ideas may not get discussed as they are not part of the CHOGM theme.

Mr Bourne strongly supported the idea of ComSec officials and national government joining CPF meetings as observers, but stressed that the Foundation should be as a facilitator at the CPF not as a policy body promoting any particular policy. He stressed that the dialogue with foreign ministers was valuable but that foreign ministers needed time to react to the CPF's suggestions at least 24 hours, conceivably even 48 hours. A process should be properly developed so that foreign ministers could then incorporate civil society ideas that they deem as valuable into the Heads' communiqué. Mr Bourne also suggested the setting up of round table meetings with small numbers of foreign ministers and small numbers of civil society representatives addressing particular issues.

On the issue of follow up, Mr Bourne stated that there should be some sense of the different degrees of timing (short term and longer term) necessary to satisfy civil society objectives. He warmly supported Bernice Sam's suggestion that there should be some reporting process which indicates to participants arriving at a CPF what the results of the e-consultations and national consultations were and what happened as a result of the proposals that went through the previous CHOGM and CPF.

To conclude Mr Bourne said he thought that the problems are not going to go away but the opportunities are quite real, a lot has been achieved and now is the chance to build on these achievements.

Discussion

- It was suggested that more should be made of the social opportunities at the CHOGM rather than just the formal interactions. It was suggested to try to open up the Foreign Ministers' reception to civil society.

- It was suggested that civil society engage more with the Business Forum.
- It was recommended that a reporting process on the achievements of governments and ComSec to hold them to account for the commitments made at previous CHOGMs be introduced at the CPF.
- It was stated that the exhibition at the CPF should be a ‘shop window’ for the CHOGM to give the people of the host country to engage in the CHOGM process, the Commonwealth People’s Village at Abuja was mentioned as a good example.
- It was pointed out that Ministerial Meetings are each very different in their format and in their opportunity, but that they can involve civil society participants in different ways.
- The Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements hosted at UNHabitat, was mentioned as an example of a Ministerial Meeting which has always been open to civil society and local governments. It was further proposed that Human Settlements, Urbanisation and Poverty be included as a theme of the CPF. This would help the Commonwealth review a goal set in 1999 being “adequate shelter for all, with secure tenure and essential services for every community by 2015.”
- It was suggested to encourage local communities to get actively involved at the CPF, including the galvanising civil society in the region.
- It was suggested to pronounce the CHOGM as ‘carbon neutral’.
- It was noted that opportunities can arise in ministerial meetings such as the Law Ministers’ Meeting where civil society representatives were involved giving presentations as if they were a delegation from a country.
- It was suggested that the Commonwealth adopt models for consultations similar to those held by United Nations departments where meetings are held for accredited NGOs and the departments give presentations on their individual programmes and NGOs can ask questions.

In response to the issues raised the following remarks were made;

David Kaleta reiterated that the document he distributed (Appendix A) was still very much a ‘work in progress’ and would be built upon.

Warren Nyamugasira suggested that well-planned field visits could be put into the programme, possibly between the workshops and the following plenary, linking the visits with some kind of activity to help the local society remember the CPF, once all delegations had left the country. He noted that discussions were already being held to convene symposia in conjunction with higher institutions of learning, in the run up to the CPF. He supported the suggestion that human settlements being addressed, noting that at the recently concluded Local Government Forum in Kampala, it was noted that by 2030, there will be more Africans living in urban rather than rural settlements. Therefore, efforts should be made to prevent the development of large scale slum dwellings.

Vijay Krishnarayan thanked colleagues for their feedback on the proposal, which would all contribute towards a much improved CPF. He noted that the proposals were not intended to curtail the discussions at the CPF, but rather present an opportunity to have the needed focus on the CHOGM theme. He acknowledged the point on the importance of the social space and noted that in the past the CF had made every effort to link the CPF to Commonwealth Business Forum, and that this would continue. On the exhibition, he stated that the proposals sought to manage it better and with substantial input from the host country. He supported the call for a preparatory ad hoc thinking group. He noted that in his paper there was reference to the CF investigating the feasibility of making the

CPF a carbon neutral event. He finally noted that at the end of the month the Foundation would be undertaking a mission to Uganda to take these ideas forward and any further suggestions on the paper were welcome before this visit.

Richard Bourne welcomed the assurance that the programme would not lock out the possibility for fresh ideas which could possibly emerge from the World Social Forum in Nairobi, from across the Commonwealth and from Ugandan civil society.

Working Groups

Group 1: *The CHOGM mandate on Promoting Respect, Faith and Understanding*

The working group covered three basic areas; presentations from the CF and ComSec outlining their work on Promoting Respect, Faith and Understanding; a discussion on existing relevant projects and a debate on issues surrounding the mandate.

The CF noted that it's work in this area focused on promote inter-faith respect and understanding. The CF had started to work on the issue prior to the 2005 CHOGM mandate, with requests for this being made by a significant proportion of its members. It was noted that faith groups are a key element within civil society to which the CF wanted to extend its reach. In the run up to the 2005 CPF, on 24th November, the CF held a one day dialogue on Faith and Development from which a recommendation was made to establish a Multi-Faith Advisory Group. This group would advise the CF on the role of Culture and Faith in development and in promoting social cohesion. It would also give advice on the development of a focussed programme of activities that the CF could support in the development of a better society. This work was seen to be related to the CF's earlier work, in the 1990s, of investigating people's views on what constitutes a good society and good governance. Freedom from conflict was one of the factors identified as a critical element of a good society.

In addition, it was recommended that CF commission a feasibility study on the role it could play in strengthening communities, preventing conflict and promoting social cohesion. The provisional findings of this study, which is yet to be completed, suggest that the CF's role should focus on promoting multi-faith involvement in development and local initiatives rather than faith identities. The CF is also seeking to identify case studies, draw out lessons from them and share them around the Commonwealth. The CF is also in the process of drawing up a long-list of potential advisors for the Multi-Faith Advisory Group and would welcome recommendations for suitable candidates.

ComSec's work in this area, on the other hand, focuses more broadly on creating more respectful and understanding relationships between communities. ComSec noted that ethnic identities and faith were indeed factors that can cause inter-communal tension along with exclusion, marginalisation, poverty, inequality and lack of opportunity. Throughout the Commonwealth however, there are examples of harmonious relations between different communities, much as there are areas with major challenges. The hope is that this work will have a practical focus. A possible request from the 2007 CHOGM, where ComSec's report on the issue will be submitted, would be for toolkits that communities can use to promote respect and understanding, extrapolating from examples of harmonious community relations. In carrying out this work, ComSec proposes to undertake a consultative and genuinely representative process within the Commonwealth as a whole. ComSec will take advantage of the range of Ministerial Meetings to provide an opportunity to discuss this issue. (A summary of the Preliminary Terms of Reference on the CHOGM Mandate on Promoting Respect and Understanding is attached as Appendix C).

A range of additional existing studies and projects which could possibly complement this mandate, were mentioned which included

- a) The Commonwealth Council for Education Administration and Management, which is conducting a comparative study of the role of the leaders in schools in promoting citizenship and community understanding through informal means. This study uses

case studies of schools in participating countries with significant minority student populations. This research which began in October/November 2005 is planned to be finished by December 2006, with a report ready for publication by June 2007. A potential audience could be the Kampala CHOGM and;

- b) The Royal Commonwealth Society which is working on a range of projects bringing young people from diverse backgrounds together to explore meaningful cooperation around multi-faith and conflict issues. The theme of Commonwealth Day 2007 is likely to be based around the theme of Respect and Understanding. This momentum could be used to push the issues forward.

Existing networks and forums such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and the Commonwealth Clubs in Schools were cited as further possible avenues for promoting inter communal respect and understanding.

General debate around the topic drew up a range of issues for consideration including the following;

- How one's identity is constituted and the general acknowledgement that there should be a right to define and prioritise the different elements of one's own social identity as opposed to having it defined and prioritised by others.
- It was noted that religious institutions are not necessarily NGOs and that they will not put aside their beliefs and message to do development work. Therefore there is a need for serious consideration of how the Commonwealth endorses or works with faith groups.
- It was expressed by many discussants that the sociological, economic and political causes of social tensions were the most significant roots of conflict and violence and that these should not be ignored.
- It was noted that the most marginalised, often women and the impoverished, are not necessarily the most vocal in declaring their predicament.
- It was suggested that the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) could provide input towards a toolkit based on its work looking into poverty and marginalisation.
- It was recommended that studies should made should put an emphasis on building mechanisms for mediation and reconciliation across the Commonwealth.
- Should the Commonwealth focus on the rights of religious minorities or minority rights in general?
- It was noted that the secular should not be excluded from studies on promoting faith and understanding and further that the definition of secular varied from different perspectives. In general though, secularists, humanists should be represented as well
- It was mentioned that the Education, Gender and Youth Ministerial Meetings should address these issues.
- It was suggested that a key theme could be identifying or promoting interdependence between different communities.
- It was recommended that business be involved in the discussion.
- The question was raised as to how this work could secure sufficient funding.

Group 2: *A shared roll-out, monitoring and evaluation strategy for the Commonwealth Gender Equality Plan and planning for the WAMM 8*

This working group had the following guiding questions:

1. How should civil society participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Plan of Action (PoA)?
2. What does civil society see as the key issues for the 8WAMM agenda (in the context of the 4 PoA areas for Commonwealth action)?

3. What mechanisms exist for facilitating Civil Society participation in the implementation and monitoring of the PoA (at the national level, through ComSec and CF)?
4. What does civil society recommend as the key entry points/processes for linking 8WAMM and CHOGM?

A presentation was given outlining what the PoA is and how it can be used as a tool for CSOs to hold governments accountable. The presentation also provided a global context for the PoA proposals for moving it forward faster.

Two important issues came out of the Commonwealth PoA Monitoring Group in conjunction with the ComSec Gender Section:

1. Harmonizing the reporting system of all work on gender so that this is more 'in line' with UN and other international reports.
2. Indicators for measuring achievements in the implementation of the PoA.

Indicators will have to be endorsed by the 8WAMM but there is need to find a way of ensuring that time is not lost, since 8WAMM will be held in 2007 and the PoA is for the period 2005-2007. The Monitoring Group on the PoA is working on these indicators.

Regarding civil society participation at 8WAMM, civil society is present in the monitoring group, and will attend national and regional consultations as well as participate in e-consultations in the run up to the meeting. Civil society will play a role in disseminating information on the PoA and will be given ample time at 8WAMM, to participate in dialogue.

Key issues raised for the 8WAMM agenda:

- Gender-based and related violence.
- A review of progress of the implementation of the Commonwealth Plan of Action.
- Failure of achieving the Millennium Development Goal on Education for 2005.
- Globalisation and its relationship with increasing of the burden of poverty on women.
- The increasing role of women as leaders (the number of women in decision making positions is 30% at all levels) and looking at how the women leadership contributes to gender equality. A number of civil society organisations for example are now led by women.

On linking 8WAMM to CHOGM 2007:

- Communiqué from WAMM to CHOGM.
- Participation in the 'Committee of the Whole' and the CPF.
- A meeting after 8WAMM to ensure the issues from WAMM go to CHOGM.
- Ensuring interaction with the media to help with creating linkages.
- Ensuring WAMM and CHOGM are part of the agenda of regional group meetings.
- Mechanisms for civil society participation through ComSec and CF meetings to review progress and plan together.

The issue of resources for Civil Society's participation in Ministerial Meetings was raised. An example was given of companies which could respond well to enhancing women's role as leaders of communities.

Group 3: *Towards a Commonwealth Plan of Action on Climate Change*

The group noted the strong political commitment by Commonwealth Heads of Government to climate change issues, as demonstrated by the outputs of the CHOGMs in Malta and Abuja and the Gozo Declaration of vulnerable small states.

Regarding the scoping study, the group noted the focus on adaptation rather than mitigation, but also noted the “grey area” between the two concepts. The group recommended including education and training in the study and involving Commonwealth Associations in the study.

Regarding the consultation process for the development of the Plan of Action, the group noted the tight timeline for consultation. It suggested that respondents are requested to take the main climate-change issues and to prioritise them. The group requested a multi-sectoral approach, not just obtaining responses from individual sectors. It also recommended starting the consultation with a simple explanation of the climate-change issues and possible impacts, and it recommended involving grassroots and vulnerable communities and civil society in general.

Regarding the contents of the Plan of Action the group recommended the inclusion of education for professionals in climate-change issues, it recommended the linking of adaptation to disaster reduction, and it recommended that a research area should be the development of criteria for climate-change issues. A need was identified for more professional knowledge for example in links with communities and the public. It was recommended to use communications networks to drive forward the climate-change agenda.

The group strategy supported the concept of **a carbon neutral CHOGM.**

The group recommended continuing as a virtual group for further collaboration.

Group 4: *The fragility of health care in Commonwealth developing countries: human resource scarcity, vulnerable groups in society and young carers*

A presentation showed that there were the fewest health workers in the areas of highest disease prevalence. Furthermore there was a significant migration of healthcare workers from underserved areas to the well-served developed countries.

Some 6 Commonwealth Associations¹ have submitted a document on migration to ComSec to be presented to Health Ministers in Geneva. (A copy of this document is attached)

The group agreed that there has to be all-round strengthening of health systems in the developing countries.

Managing migration is only one component of the complex issue of delivering adequate healthcare in developing countries in order to achieve the health related Millennium Development Goals.

Governments should take a holistic approach to retaining professionals by; investing in their health care workers, showing national leadership in developing training opportunities, improving working conditions and remuneration, providing an appropriately equipped health and safety environment and good schooling for the children of health professionals.

There is a need for better utilization of existing services, by improving on distribution for example between rural and urban areas and increasing the efficiency of the current workforce.

Civil society partners should help to increase the awareness of their own governments so as to better inform the planning, management and implementation of complex health care systems and structures.

There is a need to strengthen public-private partnerships so as to attract private investment into the sector.

¹ CMA, CNF, CDA, CPA, Para 55, BMA, and RCN

Strengthen local training of health care professionals especially in the developing countries. The role of civil society in this instance could be encouraging bilateral twinning or exchange agreements. Commonwealth civil society organizations should partner with national member associations in these fields.

Pressure should be put on governments to implement international treaties for example those on recruitment codes and human rights. In this regard, civil society should work with human rights organisations for global advocacy.

Financial institutions monitoring the monetary situation in developing countries should try not to ask for cuts in health care, so as not to cause unnecessary hardship.

ComSec is requested to organize a one day consultation with the civil society to provide feedback on the Commonwealth Health Ministers' meeting.

Plenary discussions

Deepening dialogue and improving communications at these civil society consultations

Alexandra Jones thanked the group presenters and then moved onto the final stage of the afternoon's proceedings. She expressed the intention to take the opportunity to focus on deepening the dialogue in these consultations. She noted ComSec and CF thought that they have come a long way in improving these consultations, since they were introduced after the Coolum CHOGM. Nevertheless they recognise that the proceedings can always be improved.

Mark Collins thanked Ms Jones and asked participants for their advice. He expressed satisfaction in the turnout at the consultation and the participation in the discussion and asked for reflections, feedback and advice for future consultations:

- One participant congratulated the CF and ComSec for the way in which they conducted the consultation. She noted that they had gone back to the original idea of all talking about issues which they are all concerned with. This was lost at some point along the way but it seems to have been retrieved and it is hoped that this continues.
- It was recommended that e-consultations should be more systematic both for these meetings and for ministerial meetings.

Mark Collins commented that e-consultations would only work if civil society networks worked as well and that networks were informed well in advance of such consultations so that they were as fully functional as possible. He thought that everyone really needed to work to improve the depth and the breadth of these consultative exercises.

- One participant raised the issue funding and why it was never on the agenda and suggested that research be put into the how UN and other similar bodies fund processes of soliciting deeper and wider views.

Mark Collins responded that the scope of opportunity for the CF's mandate to be pursued is well beyond the funds available. The Foundation has restructured itself into three departments: Governance and Democracy, Sustainable Development and Culture and Diversity and is actively seeking strategic partnerships and other potential sources of finance.

Alexandra Jones mentioned that the agenda for the day's meeting was based on suggestions from participants and that it was envisaged that this would continue to be the case.

- One participant expressed a negative comment that the consultation was 'very presentation heavy', but a positive statement about the practical and inclusive nature of the workshops.

Mark Collins acknowledged that finding the balance between plenary sessions and workshops was something to address further.

- One participant mentioned that it was good to meet the new team at the CF. He found the morning's session to be very useful. However he felt that participants were cut off a bit prematurely by time limitations, which prevented them from fully discussing some of the issues.
- It was suggested to hold more focussed civil society consultations in the run up to the individual ministerial meetings

Mark Collins said that he felt that a more rigorous routine of information prior to ministerial meetings was being developed. What had struck him that there was a slight danger in making assumptions about who is interested in particular ministerial meetings, therefore in the run up to Ministerials all should be notified and given the opportunity to decide whether they would like to be involved in influencing them. The work that David Kalete was doing was moving in this direction.

Dr Collins concluded by finally thanking all hosts in ComSec, colleagues from the CF and all civil society participants, especially those who had travelled long distances to be there. Moving towards the Kampala CPF, in particular, he stated that it was the CF's aim for the event to be as inclusive as possible, with all participants feeling that they have been given every opportunity to take part.

Great appreciation was also given to Sharon Robinson, who recently retired from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Appendix A

**Review of Civil Society Participation in Commonwealth Ministerial Meetings
April 2006**

Commonwealth Ministerial Meetings and Dialogues with Senior Officials	Extent to which meeting format supports civil society participation	Extent of civil society participation at last meeting	Emerging substantive partnerships or programmes	Plans for the improvement of civil society engagement at next meeting
<p>Education Ministers a) 15 CCEM, Edinburgh, October 2003</p> <p>b) Mid-Term Review Meetings in 2005 e.g. Asia-Pacific Region Fiji, March 2005 & Caribbean Bahamas, July 2005 and Africa & Europe Sierra Leone, November 2005</p> <p>e) 16CCEM, South Africa, December 2006</p>	<p>Roundtable session with Ministers & “Parallel Symposium” event for Civil Society, which issued statement to Ministers in time to influence Ministerial communiqué</p> <p>Mainly Ministers meeting in plenary</p> <p>Mainly Ministers meeting in plenary but will include breakout sessions where (self-selected) representatives of civil society will join Ministers in round table discussion. Civil society (and academia and private sector) “stakeholders’ forum” will run in parallel to Ministerial meeting in same venue. (there will also be a Teachers’ Forum and Youth Forum). Stakeholders’ Forum delegates will also attend official receptions with the opportunity to mix informally with Ministers</p>	<p>CAs and NGOs as accredited observers</p> <p>Some language from “parallel symposium” statements has been adopted in Ministerial communiqué</p> <p>Commonwealth Teachers Grouping and Consortium represented at meeting</p> <p>A few local civil society observers e.g. in Sierra Leone Action Aid made a presentation to Ministers</p>	<p>Continued collaboration with Consortium for Commonwealth Education</p>	<p>As in 16 CCEM</p> <p>Hope to use 16CCEM to establish “focus groups” for on-going consultation with Civil Society, private sector, teachers and youth</p> <p>ComSec and Foundation (CF) are engaging on observers and planning process for Stakeholders Forum</p>
<p>Finance Ministers</p>	<p>The CFMM is a 1-2 day meeting held annually in the lead-up to the autumn meetings of the international financial institutions. Civil society input comprises: providing a paper for ministers as one of the official meeting documents (all documents are also placed on ComSec’s website four weeks before the meeting); 5 CSOs are accredited to the meeting, able to observe the special theme session only; CSOs</p>	<p>In September 2005, civil society presented its statement to ministers, which was very well received and noted in the communiqué. Ministers thanked the CSOs for their work in raising important issues related to the MDGs. The breakfast meeting was well attended.</p>	<p>CSOs involved in CFMM have participated in other EAD programmes. In addition, CSOs report that as a result of participating in CFMM, it is easier for them to work with their finance ministries. For example, in 2005, Uganda used the Commonwealth CSO MDG report,</p>	<p>Building on processes already in place</p> <p>There is also close collaboration between the CF & ComSec. The Foundation normally organises at least one CSO preparatory meeting, usually resulting in a report and substantive statement or publication. EAD helps to develop the programme and</p>

	present a statement to ministers during the session on the meeting theme and subsequent discussion; a civil society-ministerial breakfast meeting where issues are discussed; and there are opportunities for discussion during tea breaks and lunch.	In April 2006, CSOs participated in the HIPC Forum (see below).	<i>Breaking with Business as Usual</i> , as the key document for an important CSO/ministerial meeting.	provides speakers
Foreign Ministers	<p>A one-day meeting of foreign ministers is held each year in the wings of the UN General Assembly in New York. CSOs may submit papers which are available to delegates.</p> <p>Since the 2005 CHOGM, opportunities have opened up and are being experimented for civil society engagement with foreign ministers at CHOGM e.g. the round table dialogue that was held just prior to the Malta CHOGM retreat.</p>	At the 2005 CHOGM, civil society made a statement to foreign ministers in plenary during the pre-CHOGM meeting. In addition, there was a special half day foreign ministers-civil society roundtable.	<p>Roundtable dialogue proved successful and it was proposed to do it again at the Uganda CHOGM.</p> <p>As a result of the interactions with foreign ministers, Commonwealth Heads of Government requested Commonwealth organisations to find ways in which the outcomes of the Commonwealth Peoples Forum (CPF) could be integrated into the 2005 CHOGM communiqué and mandates.</p>	<p>CF and ComSec collaborate closely on CHOGM processes and events.</p> <p>Need to plan for more civil society input in this meeting.</p>
Health Ministers	A one-day Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting takes place each year prior to the annual World Health Assembly. About 10 CSOs, mainly Commonwealth health-related associations, are accredited to the meeting as observers and participate in the roundtable session. CSOs also submit a paper on the theme of the roundtable which is included as a meeting document.	<p>There was no CSO participation in the 2005 roundtable, because of time constraints. The Commonwealth Dental Association hosted a reception for Ministers and CSOs which was well received.</p> <p>In 2006, a group of 5 health related CAs prepared a statement which was presented at the Geneva Health Ministers' Meeting.</p>	Commonwealth associations (CAs) & their members in Commonwealth countries are involved in several ComSec health programmes. The recent work on retention and recruitment of health professionals has benefited from collaboration between ComSec & CAs. Other CSOs are also involved in ComSec health programmes.	<p>Plans are in place for improved opportunities for CSO participation in the 2006 roundtable.</p> <p>Need to further develop and deepen collaboration between ComSec & CF. Currently CF participating in the ComSec/CAs planning meeting.</p>
HIPC Forum	Six CSO representatives normally participate in plenary sessions at the annual HIPC Forum. CSOs present their statement in plenary and make further plenary inputs at each session.	The CSO inputs and statement to ministers and were well-received.	CSOs report that relations with their finance ministers have improved as a result of their participation in the HIPC Ministers Forum. The CSO input has provided insights on which other Commonwealth work will be based.	CF organises a CSO consultation prior to the HIPC Forum and supports CSO input with ComSec assistance.
Women's Affairs Ministers (WAMM)	WAMM meets every four years with civil society participating as follows:	There was extensive civil society engagement in the	All ComSec and CF programmes related to implementing the	Under discussion ComSec and CF

	CSOs may observe the proceedings (up to 50); a special CSO-ministers dialogue takes place in plenary where 1 in 5 speakers is a CSO; workshops; a CSO forum & partners' forum in which civil society participates; and CSOs are consulted on the proposed programme of the meeting at least a year in advance of the meeting.	2003 WAMM. CSOs participated in the development of the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender Equality and in all aspects of the Ministerial Meeting. In the lead up to WAMM, a CSO representative from each region of the Commonwealth was identified as a member of the Gender Reference Group and continued as a member of the Gender POA Monitoring Group.	Gender POA involve CSOs. In some countries, CSOs have been able to use the Gender POA as a means of dialoguing with governments and collaborating in programmes.	collaborate closely on the processes for CSO participation and events. CF generally oversees/organises the CSO events and ComSec ensures CSO participation in the formal proceedings, with CF supporting CSOs in this work.
Youth Ministers	There is no formal opportunity for CSOs to participate in CYMM. However, since national youth councils are a major constituency of the Commonwealth Youth Programme's work and since CSOs form the majority of membership in youth councils, CSO voices are heard during the processes leading up to the ministerial meeting. However, in some countries, the national youth council is not fully independent from government.	None	The Commonwealth Youth Programme involves many CSOs in its work, many of whom have been identified through the national youth councils.	Under discussion
Law Ministers	A few Commonwealth associations are accredited to CLMM as observers. ComSec has commissioned some CAs to provide key background papers and present them in plenary. A meeting of Senior Law Officials is held in the year between the CLMMs where CAs participate more fully.	Very little	The ComSec Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division works closely with law-related Commonwealth associations in many of its programmes including implementing the Latimer House Guidelines. The Foundation is supporting this work.	Under discussion

General observations

7. It is clear that the space for CSO engagement has been growing each year.
8. Where ComSec and the Foundation have had a side by side approach in working towards the involvement of civil society in these meetings, the process has worked better and where the Foundation has been actively involved, there have been more and better quality opportunities for CSOs to interact with the ministerial meeting processes. We will be seeking to build on this.
9. Where CSOs are organised in consortia and interest groups e.g. the Commonwealth Consortia on Education and the CSO Economic Justice Group, collaboration with Ministerial Meetings is more effective.

10. The best model is where both CSOs and CAs are involved – not just CAs. We should seek to cross connect these
11. The format of the meeting determines the potential for meaningful civil society participation. Meetings dominated by plenary sessions and set pieces offer little, while those with a scope for roundtables, workshops and small groups offer more. There is also a mutual need to carefully prepare and plan for quality for civil society intervention in these meetings. While it is difficult to identify all the substantive follow-up partnerships and programmes, it is clear that where the Ministerial meeting processes have had effective CSO input, the follow-up collaboration with CSOs is better.
12. Funding is an issue. Only where the Foundation has provided substantial funding has there been substantial CSO participation in ministerial level processes.

Appendix B.

CHOGM Mandate on Promoting Respect and Understanding:

Terms of Reference

This CHOGM Mandate is a broad, topical, sensitive and important exercise, in which there is and will be much interest internally and externally. Indeed other organisations are already active on this theme in their own right and/or in response to the CHOGM focus on it. It is a subject which has been under discussion in the UN and other fora for some time and on which much has been written.

Terms of reference (TOR) are needed: to structure the work; as background documentation for consultations and consultants; and as a proposal with which to approach possible funders. The TOR will be the basic building-block document, and will itself evolve as the consultations proceed.

The conceptual and practical starting point for this exercise should be:

- (i) there is an enormous amount of work that has already been done on these themes in a variety of different international fora; we should not reinvent the wheel
- (ii) identify how the Commonwealth can add value and play to its existing strengths and advantages
- (iii) build on the basis of the Commonwealth's agreed fundamental underlying values.

The theme of promoting respect and understanding is potentially very wide in scope. The work which ComSec undertakes in the next year and a half should not seek to be all things to all people but rather, bearing in mind the considerations (i)-(iii) above, should take a more specific and rigorous focus, and should aim to produce one or two specific outputs/outcomes before the 2007 CHOGM. The consultations will be extensive and will involve many sectors and all Commonwealth regions, and will seek to include many different perspectives from around the Commonwealth, and to generate support and 'ownership' for the final report and other outputs.

The focus of ComSec's work should be on 'community': creating more respectful and understanding relationships between communities and building bridges between them at local, country and global levels. Factors which can create intercommunal tensions include exclusion, marginalisation, poverty, inequality and lack of opportunity; ethnic identity and faith are two additional dimensions, but will not dominate or be the main focus of our work. Nevertheless the research to support this work should include the interfaith dimension. The solutions to be sought are ways sustainably to engender respect, understanding, tolerance, acceptance of diversity, restraint, engagement and inclusion. Our focus will have a strong youth and gender component, and will draw on the Commonwealth's fundamental values of human rights, liberties and democratic societies. This focus would also complement well the work already being undertaken by the Commonwealth Foundation to form a multi-faith advisory group, following the dialogue on faith and development which it convened at the Malta CHOGM, and the two initiatives should work very closely together. It would also be complementary to the Foundation's earlier work on citizenship, and with civil society more broadly.

As we proceed with our consultations, inevitably some individuals/organisations may argue that the scope of ComSec's work should be broadened, in order to take in their particular interest, perspective or agenda into account. Nevertheless it will be important that the work retains focus, clarity and 'bite', based robustly on the key considerations at (i)-(iii) above.

The work will be practical in focus and intended outputs. It will draw on practical assessments of the causes of extremism and intolerance, and on examples from around the Commonwealth, from within Commonwealth countries, of policy measures or practical actions have been successful in building harmonious communities and reducing extremism. There are within the Commonwealth some countries that have been very effective in developing harmonious multicultural societies and community relations; from these examples our work could aim to distill what appear to be the necessary preconditions/ ingredients for sustainable respect and understanding. Conversely, many member countries wrestle with the problems of marginalisation in different sectors and levels of their

societies. Whilst some of these problems may be specific to certain countries, others may be common, shared problems; and/or the solutions may offer scope to be applied to other situations. This work will go beyond national boundaries and consider the causes of and solutions for extremism and intolerance that transcend national borders. There are doubtless many lessons that can be learned from these examples and experiences, and shared through the vehicle of this project, building on the Commonwealth's established capacity to act as a forum of trust for open and honest dialogue.

The practical outputs will include a report (perhaps 50-60 pages) for consideration of Commonwealth Heads at the 2007 CHOGM. They could also include: a more academic/analytical volume of, perhaps, ten essays/ articles on 'community' and 'marginalisation'; some kind of toolkit or handbook for the use of Commonwealth governments; and education programmes on citizenship.

Appendix C:

Commonwealth Foundation Commonwealth Peoples' Forum: Review and Plan From Valletta to Kampala April 2006

Introduction

Experience has shown that planning for the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum (CPF) needs to start well in advance. In the aftermath of the 2005 CPF at Malta, the Commonwealth Foundation is ready to start planning for the next Forum to be held in Kampala in November 2007 drawing on lessons learned. This paper summarises several separate reviews of the 2005 CPF and sets out a proposal for new arrangements for Kampala 2007. The paper draws on:

- Internal Commonwealth Foundation discussions on the organisation and outcomes of the CPF;
- Feedback from CPF participants based on their responses to a Commonwealth Foundation evaluation questionnaire;
- Feedback from contractors that provided inputs on communications and event management to the Commonwealth Foundation;
- Feedback from the Commonwealth Foundation's Civil Society Advisory Committee (CSAC), which was instrumental in the planning and execution of CPF 2005
- Published reports on the CPF from civil society and other observers;
- Discussions held with some Commonwealth Associations that took an active role in organising workshops at the Malta CPF

CPF Objectives

The CPF is an important part of the Commonwealth Foundation's programme, on the basis that it meets the following objectives:

- To ensure that civil society across the Commonwealth can express their views to Heads of Government and influence the decisions made at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM);
- To monitor and comment upon implementation of CHOGM decisions and Commonwealth goals;
- To gather feedback from partners that can inform the Foundation's own work;
- To network, discuss and debate issues of the day, understand each other's work and build partnerships;
- To provide civil society in the host country with a legacy that will strengthen its capacity to achieve Commonwealth goals.

In achieving these objectives, the CPF must be run in the most efficient and effective way and make the best use of the Foundation's resources.

Achievements of CPF 2005

CPF 2005 took place over a five day period, from 21 – 25 November, with its main base at the Malta Conference Centre in Valletta. Its programme combined various elements including plenary sessions, workshops, an exhibition and a field visit to Gozo. Approximately 500 people attended the plenary sessions, with about 1,350 people cumulatively attending the 41 workshops. There were some notable achievements including:

- The full integration of the CSAC in the Steering Committee responsible for the planning and execution of the CPF, which further enhanced civil society ownership of the activity;
- The facilitation of a preparatory process leading up to the CPF, including national consultations and an e-conference, which broadened Commonwealth civil society engagement in the CPF and inputs to CHOGM;
- The provision of a sound platform from which civil society could engage with CHOGM (for example via the roundtable with Foreign Ministers);
- The Foundation gained valuable inputs from participants that informed the development of new projects on faith and development and climate change;
- The first time that a head of state engaged formally with civil society at a CPF, when President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda addressed a special session.

Improvements Needed

The critical review of CPF 2005 highlighted several areas where improvements are needed:

- The diversity and scale of the workshops made their organisation and coordination difficult, and constrained the development of a coherent CPF agenda linked to the CHOGM priorities
- The strength of the CPF as an inclusive pre-CHOGM arena for civil society discussion was diminished by parallel civil society activities
- The contribution of the exhibition to the CPF objectives was not clear and it proved difficult and costly to organise
- The involvement of the Commonwealth Secretariat in the CPF's activities was *ad hoc*, and depended on the inclination of individual staff members
- Some Commonwealth Associations felt that they were peripheral to the running of the CPF and the outputs it developed
- The CPF did not achieve the international communications coverage that such a significant gathering warrants and the Foundation gained little in terms of profile in return for its investment
- Substantive outputs from the CPF were not consistent with the overall costs.

Proposal for Kampala 2007

The Commonwealth Foundation remains committed to supporting a high profile civil society programme in the wings of CHOGM. However, the lessons from CPF 2005 must be incorporated so that objectives are achieved and resources are deployed optimally. The Foundation therefore proposes a new model for CPF 2007, which builds on strengths and addresses weaknesses:

Building on Strengths

The Commonwealth Foundation will continue to sponsor, lead, and execute the CPF. It will be delivered drawing on the skills and resources of Commonwealth Foundation staff, the Civil Society Advisory Committee, and the Steering Committee (once it is formed). A new mechanism is required to ensure that staff and CSAC work alongside each other to deliver the programme with clearly defined and agreed roles and responsibilities.

The Commonwealth Foundation will continue to support and facilitate a pan Commonwealth process of civil society dialogue and interaction, drawing on national, regional and international processes that will culminate with the Committee of the Whole.

The Commonwealth Foundation will work with the Commonwealth Secretariat to ensure that the successful dialogue between Foreign Ministers and civil society representatives initiated in Valletta, is embraced as a standing item in the CHOGM.

The Commonwealth Foundation will approach the head of state of the host country for CHOGM 2009 (Trinidad and Tobago) with an invitation to address a special session of CPF 2007.

Addressing Weaknesses

The Commonwealth Foundation will initiate discussion with interested civil society partners (including Commonwealth Associations) from a range of sectors (e.g. Gender, Youth, Labour, Human Ecology, Education, Human Rights and Health) to investigate the feasibility of a CPF that provides an opportunity for deeper civil society discussion on key sectoral issues. This would see a smaller number of workshops (as opposed to more than 40) each with its own steering group, and producing its own sectoral communiqué that could be presented to CHOGM as part of a package under a CPF banner.

Each sectoral workshop would also be invited to address the CHOGM theme from its own perspective, and these points from the workshops would be drawn together in a shared thematic communiqué to be prepared with representation from all the workshop steering groups as well as the CSAC and CPF Steering Committee.

The Commonwealth Foundation will initiate discussions with the host country and appropriate companies to investigate the feasibility of contracting out the running of the CPF exhibition.

The Commonwealth Foundation will initiate discussions with the Commonwealth Secretariat through its Political Affairs Division (PAD) to improve liaison so that civil society reports and inputs to CHOGM are enhanced. The Foundation will also hold discussions with Divisions and Programmes to encourage substantive Secretariat participation at the CPF.

The Commonwealth Foundation will develop a communications plan for the CPF, which identifies key messages, audiences and media. It will also ensure that communication planning for the CPF starts well in advance and is fully integrated into other aspects of preparation for Kampala.

The New Model

Based on this analysis the Commonwealth Foundation will lead and sponsor a process of civil society participation that culminates with the Commonwealth Peoples’ Forum on the eve of CHOGM 2007 in Uganda. It will include the following elements:

- 1) A series of national consultations and a pan Commonwealth e-consultation on the CHOGM theme will be sponsored by the Foundation. The outputs from these consultations will be synthesised and presented to the Committee of the Whole (CoW). This will aim to ensure that the CoW considers civil society concerns and that key messages are referred to in the development of the draft communiqué.
- 2) The CPF will comprise a mix of plenary sessions and thematic workshops:
 - It will open with a plenary session that will focus on a number of presentations and discussions on the CHOGM theme.
 - A series of concurrent workshops on key themes will then take place over a two day period. Those workshops will spend a proportion of their time focussed on the CHOGM theme.
 - After the thematic workshops the CPF will reconvene in plenary. Rapporteurs from each of the workshops will give substantive feedback to the plenary.
 - Each workshop will also appoint a representative to participate in a committee that will draft a communiqué for submission to CHOGM. This communiqué will address the specific CHOGM theme and will draw on the thematic workshops and other sources as needed. It will be submitted to Heads together with brief reports from each of the thematic workshops.
 - Each workshop will also appoint a spokesperson to take part in the proposed Roundtable with Foreign Ministers at the end of CHOGM.

Eve of Day 0	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Opening Ceremony	Plenary	Theme workshop 1 (e.g. Health)	Plenary and close	Drafting of inputs to CHOGM	Present inputs to CHOGM	Round table with Foreign Ministers	
		Theme workshop 2 (e.g. Education)					
		Theme workshop 3 (e.g. Human Rights)					
		Theme workshop 4 (e.g. Trade)					
Exhibition							

- 3) In consultation with the host nation, commercial operations will be invited to tender for the running of the exhibition. The contract will emphasise the need to make space for civil society organisations. Only organisations with a proven track record in this field will be invited to tender.

Management of the CPF

The Commonwealth Foundation will convene two committees to manage and administer the CPF:

An organising committee will include representation from the Foundation's CSAC, the host country and organisers of the thematic workshops that wish to be involved. This committee will have primary responsibility for planning and implementing the CPF.

A technical committee will include the organisers of each of the workshops. They will come together to ensure that the workshops are of a similar quality, that they each spend some time addressing the CHOGM theme and that reports of a high quality are produced.

In addition, each of the thematic workshops will have its own organising committee drawing representation from each of the organisations involved. These committees would be responsible for developing the content of each workshop and its rapporteurs.

The Foundation will support the attendance at the CPF of civil society delegates that have played an active role in the consultation process. It will also provide some support to participants at the thematic workshops that take place.

The Foundation will investigate the feasibility of running the CPF as a carbon neutral activity. Discussions will be held with advisers that have expertise in this area to identify the practicality of incorporating specific "neutralising" elements to this project.

Conclusion

This paper sets out a vision for an improved CPF 2007, which achieves key objectives and makes the best use of the Commonwealth Foundation's resources. This vision can only be achieved through a collaborative approach that draws on the combined capacities of the Foundation and civil society partners. Discussions are required with those partners in April and May 2006 as a precursor to the Commonwealth Foundation's first planning visit to Uganda for CPF 2007. This will see the Commonwealth Foundation present plans for the CPF to the Government of Uganda and mark the first step in official planning for Kampala.