

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ON THE SYMPOSIUM

(Full report to follow)

GLOBAL HEALTH – NETWORKING FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

presented by the



**Commonwealth Dental Association
Commonwealth Nurses Federation
Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association
Commonwealth HIV/AIDS Action Group/Para55**

The Mediterranean Conference Centre
Valletta, Malta

Tuesday 22 November 2005
11.30 – 16.00 hours

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Supported by the Commonwealth Foundation

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Executive Summary

In the introduction to its 2005 publication *Breaking with Business as Usual: Perspectives from Civil Society in the Commonwealth on the Millennium Development Goals*, the Commonwealth Foundation has recognised that meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 will require accelerated effort, innovation and new ways of working. Considerable progress has already been made through the interventions of civil society organisations (CSOs). However, greater political will and commitment from governments is urgently needed to support CSOs, through the development of enabling policies and programs, increased allocation of resources and facilitation of innovative partnership arrangements, if the health-related MDGs are to be met.

The work of pan-Commonwealth associations of health professionals has increasingly focused on equitable access to treatment and care for HIV positive people and on the resourcing of health systems in the face of large scale health worker migration. While the logistical and social determinants of equitable access are varied and sometimes country specific, the complexities of health worker migration require improved and accelerated research across and within continents to enable the design of effective strategies to reduce the detrimental impact on already weakened health infrastructures. The collaboration between Commonwealth dentists, nurses, pharmacists and HIV/AIDS advocates to hold an interactive symposium in Malta during the Commonwealth People's Forum was designed to increase political awareness of these two major public health issues which threaten Commonwealth health and development.

Presenters at the Malta Symposium delivered powerful and informed messages providing delegates and organisations with insight and motivation for urgent action. Stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS is undermining prevention and treatment strategies, not only limiting patient access to medications but also minimising the potential of transmission reduction messages. Innovative care and long-term treatment models for the management of symptoms delivered through home-based palliative care by trained community health workers could assist resource-limited countries and provide culturally sensitive patient services. The global effects of health worker migration cannot be solved by nations in isolation. Global forces of supply and demand will require both developed and developing countries to become self-sufficient in training and retaining the numbers of health workers required to meet their needs without resort to foreign recruitment.

The Commonwealth can bring pressure to bear on the governments of nearly one third of the world's population. Effective and sustainable policy change in Commonwealth countries would make a significant contribution to achieving global MDGs by 2015. Commonwealth health professionals can advocate collaboratively to lobby national health systems to take action on reducing stigma, implementing long-term home-based care, and instituting workforce planning with the aim of attaining self-sufficiency in supply of healthcare workers.

Increasingly knowledgeable and networked communities will no longer accept inaction on the part of governments and healthcare providers.

Registration and Coffee

10.45 - 11.30 hrs

Session 1 11.30 - 13.00 hrs HIV/AIDS - Access to Treatment and Care

Welcome Address: Mr Winston Cox
Deputy Secretary-General, Commonwealth Secretariat

Chairperson: Dr John Hunt

European Vice-President, Commonwealth Dental Association

Access to Treatment and Care

Speaker: Dr Alice Welbourn

Chair, UK Board of Trustees, International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW)

Palliative Care

Speaker: Dr Richard Scheffer

Chair, Advocacy Committee of the UK Forum for Hospice and Palliative Care Worldwide

Panel Discussion

An interactive discussion between the speakers and audience

Chairperson: Dr E Grace Allen-Young

President, Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Jamaica

13.00 - 14.20 Break

refreshments provided for those attending

Session 2 14.30 - 16.00 hrs Migration of Health Workers - The Global Impact

Chairperson: Mrs Corinne Ward

European Board Member, Commonwealth Nurses Federation

A Developing World Perspective

Speaker: Professor Agyeman Badu Akosa

President, Commonwealth Medical Association; Director-General, Ministry of Health, Ghana

A Developed World Perspective

Speaker: Dr Richard A Cooper

Professor of Medicine, Leonard Davis Institute, University of Pennsylvania, USA

Panel Discussion

An interactive discussion between the speakers and audience

Chairperson: Dr E Grace Allen-Young

President, Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Jamaica

Commonwealth People's Forum

CSO Workshops 21-23 November 2005

Name of rapporteur: Dr E Grace Allen-Young
Date: 22 Nov 2005
Thematic area: Sustainable Development
Name of workshop: Global Health - Networking for Better Outcomes
Contact person: Dr E Grace Allen-Young
No. of participants: 180

Brief summary of the outcome of the workshop:

- 1) Women living with HIV/AIDS are stigmatised and face huge treatment access issues and related care problems. Concerted action is necessary to address these challenges to sustain life and improve macroeconomic development.
- 2) The integration of palliative care into government health policy and overall management of patients with AIDS is viewed as a priority.
- 3) Migration of health workers between developed and developing countries must be managed to ensure that personal professional goals are optimised without adverse effects on national health systems.

Main recommendations (not more than 3). These recommendations should link to the main theme of the day or the theme relevant to the workshop:

Governments are urged to work with civil society to:

- a) Provide equitable access to appropriate treatment and care for people living with HIV/AIDS, especially women and children, and to palliative care for the terminally ill;
- b) Attain self-sufficiency in their healthcare workforces;
- c) Ensure that strategies are developed for recruiting, training and retaining healthcare workers.

What are the implications of the recommendations for partnerships between the government and the civil society organisations?

Strengthened networks between health professionals, improved communication between health groups and their respective governments, and international collaboration on global health issues.

What are the implications of the recommendations for the Commonwealth?

Recommendations would contribute to achieving some of the MDGs, strengthening of healthcare systems, reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS, reducing the adverse affects of the migration of healthcare professionals and improving the economies of Commonwealth countries.



**Communiqué of the 2005 Commonwealth People's Forum
On the occasion of a dialogue with Commonwealth Foreign Ministers
Malta, 26 November 2005**

We, the members of civil society and the representatives of peoples' organisations in the Commonwealth at the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum, from 20 to 25 November, in Malta:

share a deep concern that we live in an unequal and unjust world of economic growth for a few countries, growing inequality in many countries, continued deprivation in less developed countries, and a world where human security is under unprecedented threats from increasing militarisation, unjust trade and growing intolerance.

We believe that poverty denies the right to live in dignity and is the result of unequal and unjust power relationships among and within countries, communities and families. The poverty "curtain" must be removed.

We consider it a moral and political challenge to live in a world where 50,000 people die every day from poverty related causes, where more than a billion people live in poverty and an estimated 8,000 people die of HIV/AIDS every day. There is unprecedented expenditure for war and militarisation. While some countries have made overdue increases in Official Development Assistance, many lag behind, and the international community is falling further and further behind in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, making achievement by 2015 increasingly unlikely. The eradication of poverty means meeting the challenges of the debilitating cycle of the debt trap, trade injustice, insufficient aid, lack of aid accountability and effectiveness, failing governance, and conflict over natural resources and ideologies.

We will promote and strengthen networking and solidarity among the peoples of the Commonwealth and network with governments and different sections of the Commonwealth including the Youth Forum, the Business Forum and Commonwealth Associations to advance sustainable development, human rights and democracy.

We affirm that cultural diversity, pluralism, gender equity and tolerance are crucial to attain social and political stability, democratic governance, economic growth, human security and peace.

We are the first generation in human history with the resources to eradicate poverty globally.

¹ There were 623 participants from 36 countries taking part in the three plenary sessions at the Commonwealth People's Forum. The 41 workshops involved more than 1,300 participants.

Within this context, we:

Recognise the urgent need to eradicate poverty, attain gender equity and justice, and realise the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals.

Reaffirm the role and responsibility of civil society organisations and people, in advancing freedom, human rights, social and economic justice, and sustainable development, with particular attention to the needs of women, people with disabilities, excluded and marginalised people

Emphasise the obligatory role, responsibility and accountability of the state to respect and protect human rights for all people and to realise and promote all aspects of social and economic justice and sustainable development

We call on Commonwealth governments to consider the following key recommendations,² which emerged from the 14 national civil society consultations, the discussions of the Committee of the Whole, the e-consultation and the deliberations of the Commonwealth People's Forum in Malta, **to:**

I. Civil society and Governance

1. Commit to a process to monitor the implementation of CHOGM statements and provide a formal report back to the next CHOGM, including an assessment by civil society;
2. Create enabling political and legal conditions to ensure the participation of people's and civil society organisations in governance, advancing democracy, sustainable development and human rights;
3. Heed the strong call from Commonwealth youth to be involved in all levels of decision-making that affect their lives;
4. Ensure diplomatic leadership in enhancing the participation of civil society in multilateral organisations, including the United Nations and multilateral economic institutions, and support the Commonwealth Foundation in programming which promotes this objective;
5. Commit more financial resources to strengthen the effectiveness of the Commonwealth Foundation, appreciating its role in developing partnerships between civil society and governments and in strengthening networking among civil society and cultures across the Commonwealth;

II. Democracy and Human Rights

6. Ensure that states respect, promote and protect the enjoyment and full realisation of all human rights, including freedom of association and expression, for all people and ensure that human rights norms are not compromised for security or migration management reasons;
7. Ensure that the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group investigates and reports whenever democratic freedoms and human rights, including the freedom of association, the right to free collective bargaining, the right of expression and to due process in law are violated by the deliberate action of the governments of the respective states;

² A detailed report of all the findings of the Commonwealth People's Forum will be found in a report to be published by the Commonwealth Foundation.

³ The Committee of the Whole is a preparatory committee for the CHOGM bringing together government and civil society representations, assisting the Commonwealth Secretariat.

8. Undertake immediate steps, including legal, educational, social or cultural, to stop violence against women and girls;
9. Convene annual meetings of Commonwealth Labour Ministers, together with representatives of trade unions, employers' associations and civil society organisations to promote respect for and implementation of ILO core labour standards and to enhance employment opportunities and decent jobs, particularly for poor and marginalised people;
10. Establish a Commonwealth Expert Group on policing to develop guidelines on training, accountability mechanisms, legal regimes and professional support to ensure democratic policing;
11. Recognise the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees and cease the use of administrative detention, except where non-custodial measures have proved ineffective;
12. Take immediate legal action and establish policies to ensure the rights of migrant workers, and the rights of workers in the unorganised sector;

III. Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals

13. Commit resources and establish appropriate policy and programme frameworks to ensure the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, with appropriate interim targets, doing so within a human rights framework, utilising the potential of ICTs, with the active participation of civil society in decision-making and implementation;
14. Work together to increase the quantity and quality of aid, in order that developed countries meet the 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) target by 2015, or before, with appropriate interim targets, while ensuring that aid is not diverted from poverty eradication and human security;
15. Promote and guarantee women's rights, sexual and reproductive health, women's leadership, participation of women in the process of governance and development and increase budget allocations for these purposes;
16. Recognize the critical implications and impact of climate change for all humanity and particularly for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and mandate the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation to prepare a programme of action on climate change, involving consultation with civil society and other sectors;
17. Urgently ensure adequate budgets to guarantee the right to free, quality, universal schooling, with a priority for girls, and further strengthen the Commonwealth Education Fund, encouraging twinning relationships between schools in the Commonwealth. Promote respect for diversity, pluralism, human rights, gender equity and tolerance for all cultures and beliefs through quality education;
18. Recognise that one in six Commonwealth people live in slums and that adequate shelter, with secure tenure and access to essential services, is vital to the achievement of all the MDGs, including those on poverty, education, and health. Ensure that planning for slum upgrading and sustainable urban development is a cross-cutting issue within poverty reduction and national sustainable development strategies. Pay special attention to the need for sustainable rural as well as urban livelihoods;
19. Ensure the human right to health care for all, devoting adequate resources to ensure universal, free and sustained quality access to treatment for all those infected by and affected by HIV/AIDS, especially women, children and older persons, and immediately substantially scale up international support for the treatment as well as prevention of HIV/AIDS;
20. Create opportunities for young people to discuss issues of health and sexuality, and empower them to assist in all areas of health education, including HIV/AIDS;

21. Take the necessary legal, social, educational and cultural steps to stop stigmatisation and discrimination against people infected by and affected by HIV/AIDS;
22. Remove from trade and intellectual property agreements any obstacles to access, supply and distribution of affordable quality generic drugs;
23. Advance agreement among Commonwealth governments on migration of health and education workers with the objectives of meeting national needs and self-sufficiency;
24. Recognise the vulnerability of small island developing states to natural disasters and economic globalisation and ensure appropriate policies and adequate resources for their sustainable development;
25. Initiate steps to develop a common action plan to address and mitigate natural disasters in the countries of the Commonwealth;
26. Pay particular attention to the legitimate aspirations of young people to sustainable livelihoods, through access to education, ICTs and adequate training in entrepreneurship;

V. Economic Justice

27. Work together to abolish unjust trade practices that perpetuate poverty, and, within a framework that assures national food security, abolish agricultural subsidies by richer countries and dumping of goods in poor countries;
28. Cease policies, whether national, bilateral or on the part of multilateral institutions which bring about the privatisation of basic services such as water, sanitation, health and education; and ensure effective delivery of quality public services, which are universally available, accessible and affordable, and ensure democratic accountability of service providers;
29. Assure increased democratic public policy space by removing conditionalities on the part of the IMF, World Bank and WTO;
30. Work together to achieve the cancellation of all debts of the less developed countries;
31. Convene annual meetings of the Commonwealth Trade Ministers and civil society representatives to promote trade justice and sustainable development.

We acknowledge and appreciate the space provided by the Commonwealth for civil society organisations to participate in the CHOGM. As representatives of civil society, we will continue to be committed to strengthening our networking and alliance building processes in order to improve our internal democracy, transparency and accountability.