



# Commonwealth Youth Council General Assembly

St Pauls' Bay, Malta, 21-25 November 2015

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Provisional Agenda 7

CYC-GA (15) 7-1 CYCA

## **ARBITRATORS TO THE COMMONWEALTH YOUTH COUNCIL**

Malta  
November 2015

## **Arbitrators to the Commonwealth Youth Council**

### **Context:**

There shall be Arbitrators of the Council, nominated by the Executive of the Council and approved by a simple majority of the General Assembly, who shall arbitrate on issues relating to the Council, this Constitution and regulations made under it as they arise.

### **Nominations:**

In the CYC Executive Meeting on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November, nominations were discussed and put forward. These are as follows:

- **African region: Messeh Leone**
- **Aisa region: Shiromi Watshala**
- **Caribbean region: Timothy Ferdinand**
- **Pacific region: Harry James**

### **Arbitrators to the Council**

Pursuant to the Article 21 of the CYC Constitution, the Arbitrators shall:

- a) The Arbitrators shall consist of four (4) young persons (15 to 29 years of age, and with appropriate or knowledge of the CYC Constitution), each representing one of the Commonwealth regions.
- b) The Arbitrators shall not vote, nor be voted for, in the elections of CYC Executive. There shall be a moderator and secretary to the Arbitrators, agreed on, by consensus, or otherwise rotated annually, among the Arbitrators.
- c) The Stakeholders Panel and partners of the Council shall advise on the appointment of the Arbitrators.
- d) The Arbitrators shall be responsible for observing the general conduct of all elections, hear appeals and disciplinary cases referred to them by members and delegations, and shall help address issues concerning this Constitution, and judiciously advise the Council on appropriate course of action.
- e) The Arbitrators shall act as custodian of this Constitution, and shall help with registration and incorporation of the Council.

A CYC Arbitrator should be familiar with the CYC Constitution, should be familiar with the CYC structure, and should have been involved in the CYC activities.

## **APPOINTMENT PROCESS – ARBITRATORS**

1. Reference to CYC constitution : Article 21 ( 4/5)
2. CYC Executives met and agreed on criteria for Arbitrators including :
  - a. Must be 29 years of age
  - b. Must be knowledgeable of the CYC Constitution
  - c. Must be active and knowledgeable in the affairs of CYC ( 2 years minimum)
  - d. Must be recommended by the respective regional representatives (Regional balance)
3. Consultations with relevant partners were made
4. Background checks and interviews were conducted
5. 5 people were nominated but 4 nominees were approved by Executive (based on suitability)
6. Sent emails of notification to nominees
7. Nominations accepted, subject to approval of the CYCGA

## **CHECK LIST FOR THE NOMINEES**

### **1. Shiromi Watshala**

- Aged 26
- She has been CYC Special Interest Group Representative for 2 years and dealing with Constitution
- She was endorsed by the CYC Asia Regional Representative
- She will guide the arbitrators of the CYC operation due to her experience in the Executives ( institutional memory)
- She will bring women's voice and special interest groups to the arbitration process

### **2. Timothy Ferdinand**

- Aged 29
- He was part of the Drafting Committee of CYC Constitution
- He was part of the CYC Electoral Board in 2013 in Sri Lanka
- He was endorsed by CYC Representative for Caribbean and Americas
- He is the outgoing Chairperson of the Caribbean Regional Youth Council

### **3. Harry James Olikwailafa**

- Aged 28
- He has been CYC Pacific Regional Representative for 2 years and dealing with Constitution
- He was nominated by Pacific Regional Youth Council

- He will guide the arbitrators of the CYC operation due to his experience in the Executives ( institutional memory)

#### 4. Messeh Leone

- Aged 28
- He was head of the Drafting Committee of CYC Constitution
- He served the 1<sup>st</sup> coordinator at the CYC secretariat
- He has helped organise CYFs and Regional Youth Meetings across the four regions of the Commonwealth
- He has worked for the Commonwealth Secretariat ( can bring Commonwealth perspectives to the Arbitrators)
- He has been nominated by the CYC Regional Representative for Africa and Europe
- Born in Sierra Leone and now based in the UK ( can create a balance between Africa and EU region perspectives)
- He is a legal expert

#### ARBITRATORS PROFILE



##### **Ms. Samarakoon Wathsala (Asia)**

Shiromi is a global youth activist who has won an international recognition and anchored her good work within the Commonwealth countries. She is a youth activist, a researcher, a youth parliamentarian, a mentor, an instructor and most specifically the Representative for Marginalized and Special Interest Groups of the Commonwealth Youth Council.

Shiromi was born as the eldest of the family in Pannila, Sri Lanka. At the age of 10 years, she passed the government Scholarship Exam and was able to enter Yashodara Devi Girls College, Gampaha. She completed her higher education specializing in Demography at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. As a part of her studies, she was able to learn about key population issues, marginalized communities and other excluded population in the world. She conducted several researches on marginalized communities and worked on national and international policy papers on youth. Currently Shiromi is reading for her masters' degree in Public Administration at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

She started her endeavor in community development as a volunteer years ago which eventually turned her into a mature youth activist. With her academic and practical knowledge in youth development, Shiromi was selected to the Sri Lanka Youth Parliament as a senator in 2013. It was a platform for her to raise her voice on national youth issues.

Later on, she got the opportunity to represent the country in several instances as a youth delegate. She participated for the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2013, South Asian Summit on Youth and Human Rights 2014, World Conference on Youth 2014, World Youth Assembly 2014, Youth Wing and Women Wing of the International Conference on Asian Political Parties 2014, Youth Dialogue with the Commonwealth Heads of the Governments 2013 and she was invited for a Youth Dialogue with His Royal Highness Prince Charles in 2014. She participated as a youth panelist in number of instances and Co-chaired India—Sri Lanka – UK Youth Dialogue 2015. She contributed in Magampura Declaration of Youth 2013, Colombo Declaration on Youth 2014, Drafting National Youth Policy Sri Lanka and Drafting the National Youth Health Policy Sri Lanka.

Based on her understanding on the socially excluded, marginalized youth issues, Shiromi was nominated to the Commonwealth Youth Council by the National Youth Services Council Sri Lanka. After a competitive election, Shiromi was elected as the Representative for Special Interest Groups of the First Commonwealth Youth Council during the Commonwealth Youth Forum which was conducted parallel to the Commonwealth Heads of the Government Meeting. 2013. She was responsible in representing and implementing projects on Marginalized, socially excluded youth in 53 Commonwealth States who requires a special attention on behalf of the Commonwealth Youth Council, during her tenure of two years.

Shiromi co-founded the First Physically Challenged Cricket Team in Sri Lanka. Recognizing how youth with disabilities are excluded in social development, she initiated the concept of physically challenged sports as a source of empowering youth with physical challenges. The cricketers were used as role models in empowering the disable youth and were participated in number of local, national and international cricket tournaments. Meanwhile she contributed in organizing the India Vs. Sri Lanka First Ever Series of Cricket for Physically Challenged 2014. Currently she works as the secretary of Physically Challenged Sports Organization Sri Lanka.

Shiromi organized panel discussions on youth issues to involve young people in representing their views, while contributing in policy discussions. She organized Commonwealth Day Celebrations, Commonwealth Awareness Programs, workshops etc. She initiated India Sri Lanka Youth Exchange Program for the youth coming from rural areas while creating a space for them to explore the world and to contribute in global understanding for sustainable development in post 2015 development agenda.

Shiromi is a mentor of the Queen's Young Leaders program, the coordinator of the marginalized and special interest youth of the Commonwealth Youth Network Sri Lanka, District coordinator of the Lanka Youth Organizations network Sri Lanka, Secretary for Media and Information of Divisional Federation of Youth Clubs Attanagalla 2014 and the Disciplinary Committee Member in 2015 , Member of Children and Youth International and Member of the Working Group on UN Major Group for Children and Youth and World Humanitarian Summit. She is good in public speaking, project management, leading, event coordination, researching, report writing, and data analysing. Currently she is working on conducting a national conference on Youth with Disabilities.



### **Mr Harry James Olikwailafa (Pacific Region)**

Harry James is passionate about creating initiatives to ensure, enable and empower young people to become good citizens, with change starting within communities and giving hope to lives. Currently, Harry is the elected President of the Honiara Urban Youth Council newly formed in 2011, and also secretary of the Pacific Youth Council a Regional Youth led Organization that represent the all National Youth Councils in the Pacific region and the Commonwealth Youth programme

Regional Youth Caucus member for Solomon Islands.

Prior to this, he worked as a Technical Youth volunteer in various programs and activities of Government ministries and departments, NGOs and local youth groups. Through his contribution to the youth development in Pacific region he was honor to receive an Award from the Deputy Secretary General of Commonwealth, Mrs. Mmasekgoa Masire- Mwamba at the 8<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Youth Minister's Meeting in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. He also a Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award Recipient after received his Award from HRH Prince of Cambridge, Prince William during his Queen Diamond jubilee visit to Solomon Islands on September 2012. He was also a regional finalist of the Commonwealth Youth Award 2014 and the Solomon Islands National Youth Award 2014 for his leadership and community work. Currently he undertakes studies at the University of South Pacific, Solomon Islands campus doing Diploma in Leadership, Governance and Human Rights. Harry is the outgoing CYC Regional Representative for the Pacific.



### **Mr. Messeh Leone (Africa Region)**

Messeh Leone is a UK based Sierra Leonean activist, journalist and philanthropist. He began his secondary education at the Government Secondary Technical School in Freetown and later moved to the Sierra Leone Grammar School. He attended the University of London International Programmes and the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom where he studied law. He has worked for the Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance in Sierra Leone and the Old Square Law Chambers in the United Kingdom.

At aged 14, Messeh helped establish, and was elected president of the Children's Forum Network (CFN), a Children's Parliament in Sierra Leone. Messeh became a leader among the young generation in Sierra Leone – promoting peace and championing human rights. He chaired children's inputs to the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. He also helped in the formation of the Sierra Leone Voice of Children Radio – with support from the United Nations. Messeh was the leading child rights campaigner who presented the child rights agenda to the President of Sierra Leone and advocated tirelessly for the enactment of the Child Rights Act, adopted in 2007. Messeh

founded the Young Leaders Networks in Sierra Leone, and served as its first Chief Executive.

Messeh has held positions with various national and international organisations. He has worked as expert advisor and consultant for the World Bank, European Union, World Vision, British Council, and International Centre for Transitional Justice, War Child UK, UNICEF, and other United Nations bodies. He has traveled to many countries across the world speaking at high level conferences including serving as keynote speaker at the European Union Presidency Summit Human Rights Meeting in Stockholm, Slovenia and a panelist alongside the United Nations Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict at the UN Human Rights Council Meeting in Geneva, UNHABITAT World Urban Forums in Brazil, China etc.

Messeh has worked for the Commonwealth Secretariat in London and served as the first coordinator for the Commonwealth Youth Council. He was a member of the drafting committee for the Commonwealth Youth Council Constitution. He also co-founded the Commonwealth Youth Climate Network. He has helped organise the Commonwealth Youth Forums of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. He contributed greatly to youth inputs to the UN Sustainable Development Goals including serving as Youth Representative at the Post-2015 High Level Panel (HLP) meeting in London engaging with the UN Secretary-General's Panel of Eminent Persons on Post-2015 Development Agenda, co-chaired by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, and it includes leaders from civil society, private sector and government.

Messeh is the Chief Executive Officer for RightsWay International and, has recently founded the **NewCommonwealth.org**, a pan-Commonwealth organisation, devoted to independent research, innovative policy solutions and actions on the Commonwealth Charter.