Commonwealth Youth Council
Executive Report 2013/15

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1. From the CYC Chairperson

Our mission to empowering and engageing young people in sustainable development, democracy and the values of the Commonwealth

Our vision of a Commonwealth with an empowered and engaged young people, working for a better world

--CYC’s Mission and Vision Statements

Dear colleagues,

It’s been an incredible two years of both impact and real challenge. In our roles as Executives of the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC), we’re often asked what the CYC stands for and what are we doing for young people (some even erroneously questioned the relevance of the CYC). And that’s simple. We stand for a Commonwealth where every youth is supported and empowered and being able to contribute in building a better world. But instead of telling people what we stand for, it’s so much more powerful to show them - as we hope you’ll agree by the end of this report what the CYC has achieved in just 2 years amid limited or no resources. This report has not covered all the activities of the CYC, however, it bring to life vividly some highlights of the scope of CYC.

The establishment of the CYC in 2013 illustrates our shared vision and passion in advancing the cause of young people in the Commonwealth. As the largest and most diverse youth-led organisation in the world, CYC has provided a legitimate voice for young people from 53 countries across the
Commonwealth, representing 1.2 billion young people from Africa and Europe, Asia, Pacific, Caribbean and Americas.

Together, we embarked on a journey that started with high expectations and nervousness, but with the unflinching support of Commonwealth youth leaders, governments and partners, we are able to arrive at this inspiring destination despite the challenges along the way. It has been a great honour serving the CYC. We appreciate the opportunity to being able to contribute to the development and active participation of young people in the Commonwealth.

As the founding executives, our primary goal was to help lay a solid foundation for the CYC. Indeed we have made tremendous progress in building this foundation and transforming the CYC into a vibrant youth-led organisation. Not only setting the foundation, we were also able to deliver many projects that benefited the young people we serve. We helped raised the voices of the young people and supported them to be active citizens in their communities.

It’s a brilliant foundation to build on. But we are still a long way from being able to respond to all the needs and the demands of young people. We hope that the new breed of CYC young leaders will build on this achievement and help make the CYC a more stronger and vibrant organisation. So, as we look to the future, we need to embrace the challenges of evolving CYC into a truly global organisation. We must work together and unite in promoting the cause of young people in the Commonwealth. Moving forward, we would like to call on both state and non-state actors to invest more in young people and to support the CYC. We need your support and commitment. Among the partnership you seek, please turn to young people as co-creative partners in development. The Commonwealth theme for 2015, ‘A Young Commonwealth’, recognises the capacity, contribution and potential of young people, who play a vital role at the heart of sustainable development and democracy.

As young people, we are taking up our responsibility and playing our part to build a better world for everyone. The CYC is a mechanism for facilitating meaningful engagement of young people in decision and policy-making processes across the Commonwealth, as a corner stone in fulfilling the commitment made to young people in article 13 of the Commonwealth Charter on the importance of young people in the Commonwealth.

The nine CYC Executive members have plays a key role, providing leadership and representing our peers in a transparent and democratic process. The 2015 CYC General Assembly provides unique avenue for the first democratic transition of youth governance in the Commonwealth. The meeting brings together youth leaders from across the Commonwealth, and provides space for youth dialogue with the heads of governments and other important stakeholders in the Commonwealth.

As you reflect on the following pages of this report, please do bear in mind that none of it would have been possible without our generous supporters. If you’re one of them, thank you. We would like to thank everyone: young people, governments, the Youth Division of the Commonwealth
Secretariat and our partners who have all contributed to laying a solid foundation for the CYC in the face of enormous challenges.

We would like to pay special tribute to the government of Sri Lanka and government of Pakistan for their support to the CYC Secretariat. We are indebted to the government of Malta for hosting the 2015 CYC General Assembly of the Commonwealth Youth Forum, and creating a platform for a smooth transition to the new executives.

Of course, real progress can only be made by listening to the people who make our work possible - so please do contact us with any thoughts or questions you may have. In the meantime, we want to leave you with one, final thought. There had challenges and there are still challenges. It is not an easy journey, but we must learn the lessons and move forward. We must not give-up in the CYC. It’s a process, and we are moving forward. This is time to celebrate the success of the CYC. In just 2 years, we achieved a lot and created a respected platform for young people.

We know that, if we get it all right, in the next years we can make real difference in the lives of young people. The CYC is a legacy that will be remembered for generations to come. We should all be proud at this great achievement!

Thank you

Ahmed Adamu
Chairperson, Commonwealth Youth Council
2. INTRODUCTION

Of the nearly 3 billion young people in the world, about 2.5 billion young people living in developing countries. The Commonwealth’s 53 member countries have a combined population of more than 2 billion, of which more than 60% are under 30 years of age. Young people constitute a majority proportion of the population in many Commonwealth countries. This demographic imperative will result in the largest ever cohort of young people transitioning into adulthood.

In the Commonwealth, youth engagement and empowerment mechanisms are still at the developmental stage. You unemployment rates are relatively high in most Commonwealth countries, with significant regional differences and adverse consequences such as poverty, migration and diseases. There is lack of access to quality and relevant education, political disengagement and poor environmental health. Climate change, extremism and conflicts in member states pose a major setback to the development of young people, otherwise knows the ‘youth bulge.

For young people in the Commonwealth to realise economic, social and political ‘empowerment’, there should be opportunities, alternatives, pathways and mechanisms that facilitate their participation in the decision making processes as partners and stakeholders in development. The lack of a credible youth engagement strategy has also meant that there is a lack of standards and accountability for national youth structures. The nature and work of national youth councils vary significantly across the Commonwealth, and where national youth councils exist, they are often under resourced and insufficiently supported.

All the indicators point inexorably to the fact that young people will be exposed to greater challenges and inequalities than any other social group. Despite these challenges, the Commonwealth has made tremendous progress in empowering young people. The Youth Affairs Division (YAD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat, established in 1973 and known internationally as the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) assists Commonwealth member governments in the development and implementation of policy and programmes for the empowerment of their young people aged 15-29.
CYP focuses on areas of major political, economic and social importance to young people, based on mandates received from Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs) and Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meetings. The CYC, supported by CYP in partnership with youth development stakeholders, provides encouragement and guidance to member governments and other development organisations to create the optimum enabling environment for young people to participate as equal partners in development and democracy.

The establishment of the CYC is an added value to advancement of the cause of young people in the commonwealth. It’s essential that Governments across the Commonwealth consider young people as one of their most treasured assets to ensure future prosperity and growth of Commonwealth countries. National youth and regional councils and youth-led organisations have a significant role to play in the promotion of Commonwealth values and principles, hence they must be supported.

CYC Executives and Commonwealth Deputy Secretary General Ms Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba at a first planning meeting in London, March 2014.
3. THE COMMONWEALTH YOUTH COUNCIL

History

- 2010 - Pan-commonwealth Youth Caucus (PCYC) reviewed youth representation & forms CYC Constitution Committee;
- 2011 - Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (EPG) recommended that the CYC be the new umbrella/official voice for youth in the Commonwealth, to replace the PCYC;
- 2011 - Heads endorsed the EPG recommendation and request the Commonwealth Secretariat through the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) to lead consultation on the CYC Constitution;
- 2012/13 - CYP & PCYC held consultations with governments and National Youth councils in all 4 regions of the Commonwealth (Africa and Europe, Asia, Pacific, Caribbean and the Americas);
- May 2013 - Commonwealth Youth Ministers endorsed the CYC, paving way for first CYC General Assembly held at CYF in November 2013;
- 2013 - CYC working committee established to guide the development of the General Assembly process;
- The Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) was created to serve as a platform and voice for youth in the Commonwealth, with a view to address the challenges faced by young people in the Commonwealth;
- CYC acts as a coalition of National Youth Councils and other youth-led civil society and private sector institutions;
- CYC provides a global platform for young people; advocating for an enabling environment that facilitates the active participation and influence of young people in decision-making processes, and influence global agendas.
• The CYC was established in accordance with the terms of Article XIII of the Commonwealth Charter on the importance of young people in the Commonwealth.

WHO WE ARE

We are the legitimate and official voice for young people in the commonwealth. We are the largest and most diverse youth-led organisation in the world.

WHO WE SERVE

We provide a respected voice and assistance to young people and communities in 53 countries, representing 1.2 billion young people from across Asia, Pacific, Caribbean, Americas, Africa and Europe. We work with state and non-state actors to find lasting ways to improve the lives of young people in need.

WHY WE SERVE

Motivated by our fundamental believe in the empowerment of young people, we serve alongside local communities, youth leaders, state and non-state actors to improve the lives of young people. CYC serves all young people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender across the commonwealth.
HOW WE WORK

We work as a team of committed young people. The following people and groups mainly drive our work:

- General Assembly
- Executive
- Regional Delegations
- National Delegation
- Member Organisations
- CYC Secretariat

4. STRATEGY AND PLANS

In line with the mandate of CYC General Assembly of the Commonwealth Youth Forum held in Sir Lanka, 2013, the Executives, following extensive consultation with young people and member organisations across the Commonwealth developed the CYC strategic direction for 2013-2015. The plan was a culmination of a wide and extensive consultation, evaluation and review process.


The Strategic Plan was designed to implement the Resolutions and outcome documents of the CYC General Assembly of the Commonwealth Youth Forum. The Plan considered the Commonwealth Heads of Government Magampura Commitment to Young People, and it was guided by the CYC founding philosophy: PARTICIPATING to influence national and global policy agenda, PROTECTING the CYC and its member’s organisation and PROMOTING CYC work at a national and global level.
The Plan enabled the strengthening of youth-led mechanisms, platforms, opportunities and pathways for young people to engage politically and through social development interventions at national, regional and Commonwealth levels. Through the Plan, CYC was able to advocate for greater focus on young people participation in developing the SDGs framework, enhanced efforts towards employment opportunities for young people and supported the achievement of quality education for all. CYC helped mobilise and joined other stakeholders in addressing Social Cohesion and Reconciliation and Professionalization of Youth Work.
5. CYC Secretariat & Institutional Development

Mandate

"We acknowledge the importance of youth voice and youth-led development initiatives to promote young people’s key role at the centre of sustainable and inclusive development. Accordingly, we welcome the establishment of the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC). We recognise the CYC’s autonomous, youth-led status, and the value of its role as a recognised representative body within and beyond the Commonwealth. We appreciate the generous offers made to ensure that the CYC is resourced over the next two years to establish strong foundations, and to take forward its youth-led development agenda. In this context, we express our deepest appreciation for and welcome the Government of Sri Lanka’s offer to host the Secretariat of the CYC. We look forward to strong partnerships between the CYC, member governments, youth and relevant Commonwealth institutions. We receive with appreciation the recommendations of the inaugural CYC Executive Youth Forum…” (Magampura Commitment to Young People by Commonwealth Heads of Government).

What We Achieved

For the past years, we primarily focused on building the CYC and creating the frameworks, processes and guidelines required for the smooth functioning of the organisation, in effect creating the necessary foundation upon which future Executive Committees would rely on. The following were achieved:
- **CYC Secretariat**: In line with the Magampura Commitment to Young People (http://tinyurl.com/p7xece2) by Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Sri Lanka in November 2013, the Government of Sri Lanka agreed to host the Secretariat of the CYC. The CYC Secretariat was officially opened on the International Youth Day, Tuesday, 12 August 2014, Hambatota, Sri Lanka.

The Secretariat was furnished with a Commonwealth Information Centre, state-of-the-art conference facilities; library, large office space, IT and telecoms. Honourable GL Peiris, Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister of External Affairs, and Sudharshana Lakshmi, CYC Vice Chairperson - Policy and Advocacy, opened the Secretariat. The opening of Secretariat was attended by the Honourable. Dullas Alahapperuma, Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister of Youth Affairs and Skills Development, Hon. Mahinda Amaraweera, Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister of Disaster Management, Hon. Namal Rajapaksa, Member of Parliament, Mohamed Husni, CYC Vice Chairperson - Inclusion and Engagement, Sadham Zarjahan, CYC Vice Chairperson - Partnership & Resources, Kiziah Philbert, Africa and Europe- Regional Representative, Tharika Dileepani, Asia Regional Representative, Harry James Olikwailafa, Pacific Regional Representative, Shiromi Wathsala Samarakoon, Special Interests Groups’ Representative, Layne Robinson and Messeh Leone from the Commonwealth Secretariat. Young people and stakeholders from across Sri Lanka took part in the opening ceremony of the Secretariat.
CYC Staff and Working Committees: In line with the Constitution of the CYC, Standing Committees were established to support the Council in all technical operations and practical work within the Commonwealth youth constituency. A Membership Committee and Projects and Budget Committee were established. Standing Committee, represents each region of the Commonwealth.

With support from the Government of Sri Lanka and the Commonwealth Secretariat, CYC advertised and recruited staff members, who are based in Sri Lanka. The staff team is led by an Administrative Secretary and supported by the CYC Executive Office in London at the Commonwealth Secretariat. Monthly CYC executive meetings and regular staff meetings were held throughout the 2 years period. CYC also employed some part-time staff at its Secretariat as well as volunteers. Some of the CYC staff include: Mr Tilan Wijesooriya, Administrative Secretary, Ms Megara Tegal, Media Officer, Ms Prashani Dias, Programme Officer, Ms Sarah Natali Soysa, Programme Officer, Ms. Ruwini Kodippili,
• **CYC Executives and Youth Leaders Training & Strategic Planning Workshop in London:** Being the first CYC Executive Committee it was important that the foundations of the CYC are firmly established to ensure a sustainable future for the Council. The Commonwealth Secretariat agreed to provide technical and administrative support to the CYC in the first three years of its development. The orientation programme forms part of that technical support.

The orientation and strategic planning session took place in London from 9-19 March 2014. CYC Executive members as well as the Commonwealth Youth Network coordinators and Co-Chairs of the 9th CYF took part of the training. The orientation and strategic planning meeting was designed to ensure that CYC executive’s members: Agree on the general strategic direction of the CYC; Updates on the current global youth development issues and priorities; Understand the work of the Youth Affairs Division and the other Commonwealth bodies to ensure synergy and avoid duplication; Understand the CYC constitution and the roles and functions of the CYC structures; Discover the potential partnerships that could enhance the work of the CYC; and Work together as a team to deliver a clear programme of work.

This strategy and capacity building meeting was also held in 2015, where CYC executives and heads of the youth networks came to London and participated in the Commonwealth week events and activities. The CYC executives used this opportunity to re-strategize its commitments and establish partnership networks.

The CYC Executives also attended the Commonwealth observance as organised by the Royal Commonwealth Society, and some CYC members were selected to speak at the occasion. CYC Directory and CYC Chairperson’s speech were published in the Commonwealth Observance Book.
- **CYC Executives and Staff Training & Strategic Planning Workshop in Sri Lanka:** Following the training in London in March 2014, a second orientation and strategic planning session was held in Sri Lanka from 9-15 August 2014. The CYC Executive members, the CYC Secretariat Staff and Regional Youth Council representatives took part in the training. This second orientation session built on the programme of work completed March 9-19, 2014 in London, UK.

The primary purpose of this programme was to officially sign the MOU agreement.
between the CYC and the Government of Sri Lanka and to officially open the CYC Secretariat Building in Hambantota. Whereas the first London session was primarily about introduction to the Commonwealth, its divisions and stakeholders, the Sri Lanka session focused on the implementation of the Strategic plan and orientation of the CYC secretariat staff in preparation for service. Specifically, the orientation and strategic planning meeting was designed to ensure that CYC executive’s members and the CYC secretariat staff: Agree on the general strategic direction of the CYC at this stage; Deepen their understanding of the Commonwealth; Deepening their understanding the CYC constitution and the roles and functions of the CYC structures; Agree the administrative procedures and processes with new CYC Staff; Discover the local and regional potential partnerships that could enhance the work of the CYC; and Work together as a team to deliver the a clear programme of work.

- **CYC Incorporation:** The Council was incorporated as a limited company by guarantee with the Companies House on 5th December 2013, in the United Kingdom with registration number 8804079. CYC has submitted the mandatory Annual Returns Report, as well as the Account Reports to the Companies House. This is in line with keeping with the assessment of companies’ performance and cash flows.

- **CYC Bank Accounts:** To maintain CYC’s financial autonomy, a separate account was opened with Barclays Bank in the United Kingdom. This lends credence to CYC’s accountability and transparency measures in managing with funds and projects.

- **CYC media and communication:**
  CYC launched its website at www.commonwealthyouthcouncil.org or www.commonwealthyouthcouncil.com

  Facebook at www.facebook.com/commonwealthyouthcouncil) & Twitter (@ official_CYC), generating over 10,000 followers.

  CYC monthly newsletter with updates on CYC activities shared with member organisations and partners.

  CYC featured in the Royal Commonwealth Society Magazine, profiling the work of the CYC.

  CYC introductory video on CYC website, at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XkRHHFP0bE
Commonwealth Youth Development Stakeholders Panel: In line with the article 19 of the CYC constitution, which mandated the CYC to establish the Commonwealth Youth Development Stakeholders Panel, which is accorded with the status of “Affiliated Observer” for the purpose of enabling the CYC or its committees and subsidiary bodies to secure expert information or opinions from persons having special competence on youth development issues. The CYC executives nominated the following members for this panel subject to their acceptance:

Chairperson of the Stakeholder Panel:
Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat

Secretary of the Stakeholder Panel:
CYC Chairperson

Members of the Stakeholder panel
1. Head of Youth Programmes, Youth Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat
2. Helen Jones, Director, Youth Affairs and Education Programmes, The Royal Commonwealth Society
3. Ahmad Alhendawi, UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth
4. Ravi Karkara, Senior Advisor Strategic Partnership and Advocacy to the Assistant Secretary-General UN and Deputy Executive Director UN Women.
5. Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba, Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat from 2008-2014
6. Dr. Ernest Hilaire, UK High Commissioner for Saint Lucia

CYC Arbitrators: The CYC constitution authorised for the establishment of 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 a CYC Executive Meeting on Saturday 14th November, 2015 nominations were discussed and put forward. These are as follows:

- African region: Messeh Leone
- Asia region: Shiromi Watshala
- Caribbean region: Timothy Ferdinand
- Pacific region: Harry James
• **CYC electoral Board:** The CYC electoral board nominations are an integral part of the wider CYC democratic process. In this context, ahead of the 2017 elections, The Electoral Board shall be composed of a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of four (4) members including the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer will be nominated at the CYC General Assembly in 2015.

**Nomination:**
At the CYC Executive Meeting held on Saturday 14th of November 2015, CYC returning officer nomination was discussed and put forward as follows:

Mr. M.H. Mohamed Husni - Returning Officer Nominee

**Recommendation for the future**

• Pending agreement with the Government of Sri Lanka needs to be followed-up, and possibly reviewed.

• There is need to employ more staff to support the work of the CYC.

• Orientation and Strategic Planning workshop for the CYC executives, staff, network coordinators and national/regional youth council leaders is relevant, useful and need to be continued and expanded.

• Invest in media and communication for the CYC to be able to reach out to its diverse youth community across the world.
6. Recognizing and Engaging Young People in Participatory Governance, Policy, Partnerships and Resources Mobilization

**Mandate**

Young people are empowered, engaged, harmonised, recognised and involved in democratic national and regional youth led structures, and other youth-led/focused organisations and networks, working to address issues affecting young people and their communities.

**Working with diverse partners**

CYC partnered with and recognised—individuals, youth councils, youth-led organisations, companies, governments, and local and international organisations—powerful ways to impact the lives of young people in need. These partnerships were used to leverage all sources funding efficiently and keep the CYC running.
What We Achieved

• Commonwealth Youth Awards for Excellence in Development Work: CYC supported and served as member of the Adjudication Panel for the Commonwealth Youth Awards for Excellence in Development Work. Sixteen extraordinary young people from across the Commonwealth were shortlisted for the prestigious 2015 Commonwealth Youth Awards for Excellence in Development Work.

The awards recognise outstanding young people under 30 whose development projects and programmes have had significant impact on their communities, countries and across the globe. The regional finalists from countries in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean, were chosen for their work in diverse fields such as the environment, gender equality, education and youth entrepreneurship and empowerment. In addition to a cash prize, trophy and a trip to London to meet Commonwealth leaders, winners were given the opportunity to develop valuable networks and contacts. The Youth Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat funds the award.
Queen’s Young Leader Award: CYC participated in the Queen’s Young Leader Award, which recognises and celebrates exceptional people aged 18-29 from across the Commonwealth, who are taking the lead in their communities and using their skills to transform lives. Winners of this prestigious Award received a unique package of training, mentoring and networking, including a one-week residential programme in the UK during which they collected their Award from Her Majesty The Queen.

With this support, Award winners are expected to continue and develop the amazing work they are already doing in their communities. The CYC supported the QYLA programme and shared the information with its members. The CYC Chair attended the official reception and award presentation ceremony in Buckingham palace in the presence of the Her Majesty the Queen. The CYC Chair also spoke to the pioneer recipients of the QYLA at the Commonwealth secretariat, and explained to them about the CYC and how they can contribute to the work of the CYC.

Commonwealth Young Achievers Book (CYAB): The first ever Commonwealth Young Achievers Book (CYAB) is a compilation of success stories of many active and brilliant young people from across the Commonwealth nations who have impacted their communities and the lives of many. Individual stories will inspire others and encourage them to be more proactive. Book will be launched in Malta at the CYC General Assembly 2015.

Commonwealth Youth Honorary Award: This Award recognises Commonwealth leaders and organizations working toward youth engagement, political and civic participation at Regional and National levels. Awards will be presented in Malta at the CYC General Assembly 2015.

Commonwealth Week: CYC supported and contributed to both the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth Week events. Young people, schools, communities and civil society
organisations celebrate Commonwealth Week, every year in March. The occasion is marked across the Commonwealth with a range of activities - including a multi-faith observance at Westminster Abbey in London on Commonwealth Day. The 2015 Commonwealth theme is ‘A Young Commonwealth’. It recognised the capacity, contribution and potential of young people, who form over 60% of the Commonwealth’s population, and the vital role they play in nation building.

Funding from the Government of Pakistan and Sri Lanka: CYC raised $100,000 from the Government of Pakistan and £17,000 from government of Sri Lanka. The Commonwealth Secretariat also provided £10,000 in addition to ongoing administrative and operational support to the CYC. CYC executives travelled to Sri Lanka and held strategic partnership meetings with key stakeholders in Sri Lanka to mobilise resources for the CYC. These meetings were facilitated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development in Sri Lanka.

Regional Youth Councils: supported the establishment of the Caribbean Regional Youth Council and sponsored the CRYC’s video project “Someone once told me”. The link to the video is here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1gBXEkwDkk. CYC also continued with engagement, information sharing and partnership with Pacific Youth Council, youth bodies in Asia and Africa. CYC invited the president of the African Youth Union as keynote speaker at the Africa Regional Youth Ministers Youth Leaders Forum, in Cameroon (date). Efforts are underway to create or strengthened regional youth councils in Africa and Asia.

Partnering with Young Politicians including Members of Parliament: Engaged with young Sri Lankan politicians including Members of Parliament at the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies in Sri Lanka during

Commonwealth week 2015
the opening of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Facilitated by the National Youth Services Council of Sri Lanka, the meeting created a platform for open discussion between the CYC and young leaders in Sri Lanka and how working together can help shape the future of the Commonwealth.

- **World Youth Foundation:** CYC supported and partnered with the World Youth Foundation in organizing the International Workshop on Climate Change on the theme “Youth Action on Climate Change” held from 21st - 24th of May 2015, in Melaka, Malaysia. The Meeting provided a platform for effective partnerships with youth, youth-led organizations, youth organisations, youth ministries and relevant stakeholders to further strengthen inclusive youth participation in the decision-making processes and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

- **Engaging Commonwealth Leaders:** The Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting (CHOGM) in Colombo, Sri Lanka in November 2013 included youth dialogue sessions in its agenda where the then newly elected CYC executives had interactive session with the heads of governments from the 53 Commonwealth nations. It was on this meeting that the CYC executives presented officially to the heads of government the youth declaration that emanated from the 9th Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) in Hambantota, Sri Lanka, and further discussions around the specified youth development areas were made.

Youth discussion with Heads of Government covered Commonwealth-wide issues identified by young people, including Post-2015 Development Agenda, Professionalization of Youth Work, Well-being and Economic Growth, Education, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Generating Quality Youth Employment, Reconciliation and Social Cohesion etc. The Heads of governments congratulated the then new executives and promised to support the council. Subsequent to this meeting a strong commitment was specifically mentioned in the outcome document of the CHOGM as titled magampura commitment to young people.

The CYC also held meetings with the Commonwealth Secretary General in London, to advocate for the needs of young people.
Meeting with Her Majesty the Queen: during the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth week celebrations, the CYC executives met with the Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty the Queen of England. In these two meetings, the CYC executives briefed Her Majesty about the activities and achievements of the CYC. The CYC Chairperson also met Her Majesty the Queen during the ceremony for the Queen’s young leaders award at the Buckingham Palace.
Engaging HRH Prince of Wales, and Prince Charles: As part of strategic and familiarisation meetings, the CYC executives met with the Prince of Wales, Prince Charles in his Residence in London, and discussed about potential partnership areas and support to the young people in the Commonwealth through the Prince’s trust and foundations. CYC representatives also met the Prince during the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Sri Lanka, November 2013.

- Engaging the Prime Minister of Malta: The CYC Chairperson met His Excellency, Dr Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of The Republic of Malta at a roundtable meeting during his visit in London, in July 2014. The CYC Chairperson shared thoughts on how young people see the Commonwealth and what are some of the options to keep it relevant in the future. Discussion during this meeting centred on the Future of the Commonwealth as Young people at the centre of a values-based Commonwealth as well as the role of civil society in sustainable Commonwealth.
- **CYC General Assembly and CYF Planning Meetings:** CYC alongside the Youth Division of the Commonwealth met in Malta to strategise and agree on the overall structure of the forum and the specific responsibilities of the partner organisations. The potential venues and accommodations were sighted and recommendations were made. Some strategic visitations to the Malta government officials including a visit to the Minister for Youth Development. Several planning meetings were held as build up to the Forum.
Commonwealth Youth Development Index: CYC supported and contributed to the development of the Commonwealth Youth Development Index, a measurement tool for future progress and achievement of the work and common goals of youth-led structures. The Commonwealth Youth Development Index (YDI) measures the status of young people in 170 countries around the world. The index gauges youth development according to 15 indicators that are grouped into five key domains: Education, Health and Well-being, Employment, Civic Participation and Political Participation. The YDI aims to inform policy-makers and raise public awareness about the key opportunities and barriers to improving youth development in the Commonwealth. It also acts as a data advocacy tool, highlighting the importance of gathering national level statistics on key indicators of youth development. The YDI is one of the many youth focused initiatives of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP). It was commissioned by the CYP and developed and produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace.

World Conference on Youth, Sri Lanka, 2014. The CYC hosted a side event at the conference, entitled “The big open debate on post 2015 development goals”. The Chairperson of CYC, Mr. Ahmed Adamu made presentation on the session Achieving Good Governance & Accountability at #WCY201. CYC also met with some key strategic partners, and held discussion with the government of Sri Lanka regarding in relation to the CYC secretariat. While in Sri Lanka at the World Conference on Youth 2014 May 2014, CYC organised side meeting with the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, and discussed the Global Youth Challenges.
and Opportunities. CYC informed the Envoy about the need to ensuring that young people are empowered and supported to participate meaningfully in the political decision-making processes and to take forward youth-led initiatives that contribute to Sustainable Development Goals.

- **1st Global Forum on Youth Policies, 28-30 October 2014, Baku, Azerbaijan**: CYC contributed to the 1st Global Forum on Youth Policies. CYC Chairperson, Mr Ahmed Adamu was a speaker at this event. The First Global Forum on Youth Policies brought together and sought to engage a broad diversity of youth policy leaders, experts and professionals. This included ministers and directors, activists and volunteers, researchers and young politicians—to name just a few of the occupational profiles in the youth sector—who discussed, engaged, explored and shaped youth policy in the interactive setting of the Forum. The Forum called for a set of universal guiding principles that should be upheld by any government while creating and implementing youth policies and culminated with the adoption of the co-conveners Commitments. Meeting was convened by a broad institutional partnership including the Office of the Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe (COE) and hosted by the Government’s Ministry of Youth and Sports in the framework of Azerbaijan’s Chairmanship of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers. Technical support provided by the team of youthpolicy.org.
The Commonwealth Foundation: CYC met the Foundation in order to broaden the scope for partnerships, opportunities, and advancement of youth development agenda, had a productive meeting with senior officials of the Commonwealth Foundation. The meeting which was facilitated by the Commonwealth Youth Programme, provided the opportunity for both organizations to share their activities and programmes, with a view to exploring potentials for joint-collaboration, in support of young people in the Commonwealth.

The meeting focused on Commonwealth Youth Council’s potentials in helping to enhance youth-led projects, awareness and capacities of youth organisations to access funding from the Commonwealth Foundation’s grant programme; the promotion of national and regional youth participation in policy and decision makings; and the effective participation of youth in tracking the post-2015 consultations and recommendations from Commonwealth member states and institutions.

The meeting was attended by the Director of the Commonwealth Foundation, Vijay Krishnarayan, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Youth Council, Ahmed Adamu, Deputy Director of the Commonwealth Foundation, Myn Garcia, Director of Youth Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat, Katherine Ellis, Programme Manager of the Commonwealth Foundation, Diana Atungire-Ocaya (the order is presented as in the picture below). Messeh Leone from the CYC Secretariat was also present.

The Commonwealth Foundation commended CYC’s work, particularly the Youth Campaign Again Election Violence (Y-CAEV) project, as a model for youth engagement in participatory governance across the Commonwealth, which is a key focus of the Commonwealth Foundation.
Recommendation for the future

- Encourage national and regional youth led structures/organisations/networks to focus on addressing issues of poor democracy, elections, gender, youth crimes/violence, justice, peace building, health/HIV/AIDS, and climate change.

- Ensure establishment of democratic youth-led structures at national and regional levels. Pan-Commonwealth youth networks and platforms should be strengthened and synchronized.

- Popularise and disseminate Commonwealth Youth Development Index across the Commonwealth and world at large. Encourage governments and non-governmental organisations to use the index as a tool to measure progress on youth and in policy design.

- Follow-up with the Commonwealth Foundation, with a view to establishing a grant programme specifically focusing on youth projects.
7. **Youth and Sustainable Development Goals**

**Mandate**

The post-2015 development agenda is crucial to young people, who will be its heirs, custodians and champions. We acknowledge the call of Commonwealth Youth Ministers and Youth Leaders for a specific, stand-alone goal on youth empowerment and participation, and youth-specific indicators on all relevant goals. We also acknowledge the recommendations from Commonwealth Education Ministers on education targets for the post-2015 framework (*Commonwealth Heads of Government’s Magampura Commitment to Young People*)).

Special efforts should be made to ensure that the voices of marginalized young people - those with disabilities, girls and young women, key affected populations, migrant youth and indigenous youth - should be heard to ensure that they are not left behind.

CYC and delegates at World Youth Conference in Sri Lanka discussing the SDGs
To recognise youth as partners in development and mainstream the concerns of young people in all aspects of planning, implementation and evaluation of the Post 2015 Development agenda.

**What We Achieved**

- CYC contributed to a number of meetings and policy discussions around the Post-2015 agenda and facilitated youth participation in such platforms and processes.

- CYC supported and contributed a number of important meetings including 4 Commonwealth Regional Youth Ministers Meeting that created the interface and interaction between young people and governments/policy makers/stakeholders on Sustainable Development Goals.

- CYC launched SAY YES TO YOUTH campaign to mobilise and engage youth, in partnership with YAD and youth networks/organisations to advocate for a stand-alone goal on youth development and integrated youth targets for all Sustainable Development Goals.

- CYC supported and contributed to the World Conference on Youth 2014 May 2014, Sri Lanka. The CYC acted as an observer member of the International Youth Taskforce of the World Conference on Youth. CYC promoted the theme of Achieving Good Governance & Accountability and Peace Campaign. The hosted the Side Event at the World Conference on Youth titled “the big debate” on the Say Yes to Youth Goal Campaign. CYC engaged in meaningful and effective media advocacy and campaigns reaching out to millions of young people across the Commonwealth with messages on post-2015 development agenda, youth empowerment and employment, youth participation in governance, and civic participation.
CYC Chairperson and UN Youth Envoy

- CYC contributed to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum from the 2-3 February 2015 United Nations Headquarters, New York, on the theme: ‘Youth Engagement in the Transition from MDGs to SDGs: What will it take?’ The meeting brought together youth from across the world, governments and stakeholders from NGOs, UN system. The Forum discussed ways in which young people can and are helping to manage the shift from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also addressed ways to ensure that the needs and priorities of all youth are at the centre of the future development agenda and its implementation. H.E. Mr. Martin Sajdik, President of the Economic and Social Council, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Ms. Gabriela Rivadeneira, President, National Assembly of Ecuador; and Ms. Thandiwe Chama, International Children’s Peace Prize Winner 2007 and co-founder of KidsRights Youngsters AND Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth opened the Forum.

CYC also supported a side event and engaged Commonwealth Network of UN Youth Delegates at the ECOSOC Youth Forum to advance the Say Yes to Youth campaign at high-level policy forums.
Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms Sudharshana Lakshmi with CYC representatives, Mr Messeh Leone at the UN-ECOSOC Youth Forum, New York, 2015

Commonwealth UN Youth Delegates, at the UN-ECOSOC Youth Forum, New York, 2015
CYC contributed to the Organisation of African Youth’s High Level Youth Policy Dialogue on SDGs held in August 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting aimed at gathering and strengthening political commitment for governments to support prioritising investment in youth development in the post-2015 era. The meeting cultivated into recommendations made by young people and created political goodwill for African countries to champion the youth agenda at the intergovernmental negotiations (September 2014-September 2015).

African Youth’s High Level Youth Policy Dialogue on SDGs held in August 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya

CYC contributed to the Commonwealth Experts Meeting on 19 to 20th June 2014, at Commonwealth Secretariat in London. The meeting brought together experts from the Commonwealth, United Nations, regional intergovernmental organisations and civil society, as well as leading academics and young people. Hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat with input from UN-Habitat and UNDESA, the Expert Group Meeting reviewed targets and indicators that measure the social, economic and political empowerment of young people globally, while assessing progress and challenges to data collection. The aim being to agree a framework to help governments and donors target finite resources and monitor the effectiveness of policies that impact young people.
CYC supported the Youth-led Review on the UN High-Level Panel Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The meeting took place on Friday, 28 June and was convened by Commonwealth youth leaders keen to give their feedback on a report and process that will be crucial to their futures. In our recommendations, they said it was not enough to assume the inclusion of young people within the proposed development goals and called for a youth-specific goal and youth-specific targets to ensure that young people are not left behind. Over 30 participants attended the meeting, and were joined by Commonwealth Secretary-General Mr Kamalesh Sharma, Mr. James Alawi, Policy and Outreach Manager - Post 2015 in the Office of the UK British Prime Minister and Ms Katherine Ellis, Director of Youth Affairs at the Commonwealth Secretariat. Recommendations were shared with Commonwealth leaders, Post 2015 Taskforce, UN system, UN Youth Envoy and other stakeholders.
Youth-led Review on the UN High-Level Panel Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda Meeting

- CYC supported the Commonwealth Youth Task Force for Post-2015’s advocacy position paper which shared with state and non-state actors in the Commonwealth and globally. It was also shared with member states, youth organisation, NGOs and other stakeholders advocating for a specific goal on youth development and integrated youth targets for all goals in the post 2015 framework.

- CYC established and supported the Working Committee on post-2105 headed by Vice chairperson for Inclusion and Engagement and Vice Chairperson for Policy and Advocacy to propose targets to the relevant decision makers for inclusion in the Post-2015 framework.

- CYC facilitated strategic partnerships with Commonwealth institutions and other international bodies including United Nations system for stronger collaboration, legitimacy and knowledge building identified on the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Contributed to a joint taskforce with European Youth Forum on Post-2015 sustainable development Agenda. A joint meeting was held in London to design activities and advocacy strategy for youth engagement in the post-2015 agenda.

CYC and European Youth Forum
Recommendation

- CYC to advocate for the SDGs information to be accessible to young people using multiple languages (ethnically, inter-generationally and non-academically), and further support Commonwealth Youth Development Index and other youth-related indices for tracking progress, and the potential of engaging young people in collection of better and more data.

- Engage the Commonwealth Secretariat to establish a youth-specific Commonwealth SGDs Monitoring and Evaluation Group, comprising of Commonwealth Youth, Ministers from member states, the Commonwealth Secretariat, Civil Society Organisations working with Youth, and independent experts that ensures member states maintain and provide support to facilitate youth participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of the SDGs.

- Develop projects and provide grants funding to youth leaders to engage and contribute to the implementation of the SDGs.
8. Education - Fit for Purpose

**Mandate**

Young people of access to new technologies and information, including connectivity through social media and ICT curriculum in schools, to effectively communicate and mobilise paid employment opportunities, engage in development initiatives, and build higher expectations of themselves and their communities. ICT can be an effective instrument for rural and small state empowerment, making isolated communities a meaningful stakeholder in the global community (Commonwealth Heads of Government’s Magampura Commitment to Young People).

Youth of the Commonwealth recognise that educational outcomes for young people are directly related to the amount member states invest in quality education; skills based training and ICT (9th Commonwealth Youth Forum and 1st CYC General Assembly Declaration).

Commonwealth youth supported to effectively access and participate in the development and implementation of education policies and programmes.

**What We Achieved**

- CYC supported and worked with Commonwealth Students Association (CSA) to influence education policy at Education Ministers Meetings in the Bahamas. CYC Vice Chairperson for Policy and Advocacy sat on the planning taskforce. The 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) took place in The Bahamas from 22-26 June
2015. The theme was ‘Quality Education for Equitable Development: Performance, Paths and Productivity’.

- CYC supported the Commonwealth Orchestra Education project, with a focus on school children in London. The programme was aimed to inspire a generation of children in schools on the importance of education and youth-friendly educational approaches/programmes.

- CYC supported young people to be involved in educational activities, including the Yes to Youth Goal campaign - which helped raise the issues of youth education in SGDs - to speaking out for young people at important Commonwealth and international events, to helping ensure young people were part of decision making.

- CYC supported the State Ministry of Youth Affairs and Human Wing International in Sri Lanka and organised a panel discussion under the theme of “Youth Rights and Young Commonwealth”. The event was held in 26th March at the Auditorium of the State Ministry of Youth Affairs with the participation of young professionals, youth leaders, youth parliamentarians, university staff and students, representatives from government, non-government and civil society organizations, affiliated youth organizations etc.

Recommendation for the Future

- CYC continue to support the Commonwealth Students Association (CSA) and Commonwealth Scholars to participate and influence education policy at Education Ministers Meetings and other programmes.

- CYC support youth to meaningfully engage and contributing to Educational for all Initiative (EFA).

- CYC support ‘Best practice’ resources pertaining to building relevant and purposeful school curriculums, vocational education and training institutions toolkit.

- Support structures for monitoring the development, reformation and implementation of all Government educational programmes and policies (particularly scholarships, fellowships, internships, youth exchange programmes, academic research), with systems to also inform youth of these opportunities.

- CYC support marketable and practical skills-building opportunities through accredited Technical, Vocational Educational Training (TVET) that builds on youth skills, especially to cater to the economic needs of the country.

- CYC support entrepreneurship education programmes to support both urban and especially rural communities.

- CYC help tackle the disparity between member states of the Commonwealth in regards to access to education by all groups of young people.
• CYC consider education curricula of member states of the Commonwealth, which are vary largely in regards to the inclusion and use of Technical, Vocational Educational Training (TVET).

• CYC focus on education that considers practical skills for all groups of young people benefit the economic needs of member states and entrepreneurship as a sustainable alternative for young people.
9. Generating Quality Youth Employment

**Mandate**

The young people of the Commonwealth recognise the importance of skills development, including vocational and technical skills training, and its potential to enhance their access to quality employment.

Support the replication of Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (CAYE) of the model to build young entrepreneurs’ networks in all regions of the Commonwealth (Commonwealth Heads of Government’s Magampura Commitment to Young People/ 9th CYF Youth Forum).

**What We Achieved**

- CYC supported opportunities for youth empowerment, employment and entrepreneurship for Commonwealth youth at the Regional Youth Ministers Meetings.

- CYC supported the replication of CAYE the model to build young entrepreneurs’ networks in all regions of the Commonwealth at the education Ministers Meeting. This has resulted in the Commonwealth supporting the establishment of CAYE in the Caribbean, East Africa in addition to Asia.

- CYC Provided grants for youth organisations to implement initiatives, which tackle youth unemployment. 5 organizations have been shortlisted from across the 4 region of the Commonwealth.

- CYC advocated for more funding and support to young entrepreneurs as well as more job opportunities for the young people. This was achieved through dialogue with Heads of Government and high level government officials as well as the media.

- CYC contributed to the African Youth Summit, Kigali, Rwanda: Ahmed Adamu-Chairperson, Commonwealth Youth Council attend that meeting and delivered a statement on Entrepreneurship as key driver for economic growth”. Youth from over 40 African countries took part in the meeting and discussed their contribution to the development of their countries.

The Summit which was held under the theme; “Self-reliance for Africa provided a platform to share knowledge in line with entrepreneurship, good governance, creativity and innovation. Recommendations were submitted to member states in Africa for action.
• CYC supported Commonwealth Youth Award of Excellence presented by the Commonwealth Secretariat to recognise young entrepreneurship in the Commonwealth.

• CYC supported the Youth Citizenship Entrepreneurship Competition 2014 with Goi Peace foundation (Ahmed)

• CYC supported Commonwealth Youth Enterprise Forum, Glasgow, 2014.

• CYC contributed to the 33fifty Commonwealth Youth Leadership Programme.

**Recommendation for the future**

• CYC to establish at least 5 Commonwealth Youth Development Centres for Innovation & Entrepreneurship to be in Commonwealth regions, (with programmes for ICT, renewable energies, and conference/meetings facilities).

• CYC to support a programme to encourage countries and companies investing in youth start-ups and providing access to capital for young people.

• CYC to support Commonwealth youth meaningfully engaged and contributing to relevant stakeholder organisations and other employment programmes and consultations.

• CYC to support a programme to ensure education and learning curriculums that empower entrepreneurship and facilitate entrepreneurial thinking.

• CYC to engage member states support programs to enable students to receive academic recognition for internships, volunteering and relevant extra-curricular activities in order to increase their employability.
10. Reconciliation and Social Cohesion

**Mandate**

Address concerns over the vulnerability of our young people to involvement in crime and to the illicit use of narcotic drugs. To take concerted action to protect them from such dangers and harness their energies in constructive ways (Magampura Commitment to Young People by Commonwealth Heads of Government)

Support youth to seek and take opportunities to build a peaceful world. Moving towards global citizenship, having shared values and regenerating community efforts in ensuring mutual understanding and respect for each other are key priorities. Reconciliation is part of the pathway to social cohesion.

**What we achieved**

- CYC partnered with Commonwealth Youth Sport for Peace and Development Network engage in Reconciliation and Social Cohesion initiatives.
- CYC supported Sri Lanka and India to promote social cohesion at country level, sharing best practices through a database of such practices. Projects focused on helping disability through sport.
- CYC supported a pilot Youth Campaign Against Election Violence in Nigeria. Amid rising concern about the increasing loss of lives of young people during the electioneering processes in some Commonwealth nations, CYC engaged in a rigorous grassroots
campaign aimed at sensitizing, raising awareness and promoting peace and tolerance during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

- CYC supported the 18th International Conference on South Asian Political Parties, which was held in Sri Lanka 18 -21 September 2014. Participated for the Opening Ceremony, Youth Wing and Women Wing of the International Conference on Asian Political Parties representing CYC.

- CYC partnered with and supported in the Commonwealth Youth Music Competition for Peace in partnership with the Commonwealth Youth Orchestra, using music to promote peace and reconciliation.

- CYC supported side event on Peace promotion at the side event of the World Conference on Youth.

- CYC launched Youth Vibez weekly radio programme on Magic FM in Grenada, promoting peace and promoting sustainable development within the Commonwealth.

Recommendation for the future

- Support the Nelson Mandela Youth Award on reconciliation and social cohesion

- Support Commonwealth Youth Concert for Reconciliation and Social Cohesion to be held at the Commonwealth Youth General Assembly.

- Engage member states to review their school curriculum and include topics of history, culture, citizenship, diversity, language and religion that promote reconciliation and social cohesion.

- Advocate with each Commonwealth member states to establish democratically elected National Youth Council that abides by Commonwealth values.

- Support a youth-led working group to promote reconciliation & social cohesion, and to advocate for peace and unity in the Commonwealth, based on the Commonwealth values of democracy, development and diversity.

- Establish accessible database of best practice and policies on Reconciliation and Social Cohesion.
• Engage member states to place the existing Commonwealth report ‘Civil Paths to Peace’ at the forefront of all reconciliation & social cohesion programmes.

• Replicate Say No To Elections Violence campaign to other Commonwealth countries.

• Support youth leaders to commemorate Rwanda to Genocide and support to other Commonwealth countries affected by war.
11. Professionalisation of Youth Work

Mandate

Promote professionalisation of Youth Work in the Commonwealth. Support to youth work practitioners to ensuring safer and healthier lives of young people and recognition of Youth Work as a profession.

What We Have Achieved

- CYC supported the Commonwealth youth and stakeholders to engage in the Commonwealth Youth Work Week and invited some to contribute and share their experiences at regional youth ministers meetings.

- CYC supported youth organisations to engage in sharing information and be part of the Commonwealth Youth Work Week.

- CYC contributed to the Commonwealth Youth Workers Award. CYC alongside high Commissioners and Commonwealth officials took part in the selection committee
for Award Winners.

- CYC advocated for more youth workers to be professionally trained and upgrade their skills through the application at the University of the West Indies online campus in Grenada, currently eight (8) young persons are pursuing their Bachelor degree in Youth Development.

**Recommendation for the future**

- Support Commonwealth Youth Programme to facilitate the establishment of National Youth Workers’ Associations.

- Support Commonwealth Youth Programme to establish a pan-Commonwealth Youth Workers’ Association as an umbrella structure.

- Supports the establishment of a youth workers’ network.

- Advocates for an increase in the number of countries and universities providing recognised courses on youth work.

- Provide training and grants to youth workers to engage in community projects that will make a difference in the lives of the young people they serve.
12. Cross-programme

Mandate

In line with the theme for the 2013 Commonwealth Youth Forum, ‘Inclusive Development-Stronger Together’, the young people of the Commonwealth called for “special efforts [...] to ensure that the voices of marginalized young people - those with disabilities, girls and young women, key affected populations, migrant youth and indigenous youth - should be heard to ensure that they are not left behind and able to access education, health etc.

Promote gender equality and ensure that programmes and project activities consider gender relevance at every stage, with the aim of avoiding reproducing discrimination on the grounds of gender, and to promote equality between women and men.

What We Achieved

- CYC supported gender sensitisation programmes which particularly address the harmful consequences of violence against women, men and children.
• CYC supported Youth and Women & Girl’s Empowerment, 8 March 2014, London.

• CYC supported and promoted the need for greater focus on empowerment of girls and women in Commonwealth countries at the 2014 International Women’s Day celebrations of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.

• CYC in its recommendation to the UN High-Level Panel Report on the Post-2015 Agenda noted that collective efforts to leave no one behind should incorporate special treatment for special interest groups.

• CYC contributed to the Commonwealth Youth Gender and Equality Network (CYGEN) forum held in Malta from the 13-17 May 2015. The Royal Commonwealth Society convened young experts on a range of gender issues from over 20 countries in Malta for the forum. The network released its statement of priorities and recommendations for the Commonwealth at the close of the forum, with a focus to promote gender equality in the Commonwealth.

• CYC supported the Commemoration of 2013 World Aids Day: A video message was prepared and sent out by the CYC Chairperson in commemoration of the day. See video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tCS_SNel-U

• CYC partnered with the Scout Association of Grenada in recognising the Commonwealth Day 2015 by organising a flag raising ceremony to promote and recognise the contribution of the young people of the Commonwealth.

• CYC partnered with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development to organise a panel discussion on “Youth rights and young Commonwealth” in order to celebrate the 2015 Commonwealth Day in Sri Lanka. The young panellists got a space to raise their voices on youth rights and how they can contribute to sustainable Commonwealth.
CYC also organised Youth awareness programme on CYC and Commonwealth values in Sri Lanka in partnership with the Commonwealth Youth Network in Sri Lanka.
13. Special Interest Groups & Issues

- CYC supported Sri Lanka to establish a cricket team for youth with Physical challenges in Sri Lanka. The programme was implemented in partnership with the International Cricket Council for Physically Challenged (ICCPC), Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skilled Development Sri Lanka and the Human Wing International.

- CYC supported India vs. Sri Lanka Series of Cricket for Physically Challenged, with a focus to highlight their rights and to showcase their talents and abilities.

- CYC Representative for Special Interested supported the Physically Challenged Cricket Council to organise the Premier Asia Cup for Physically Challenged 2014 in Agra, India.

- CYC partnered with the National Youth Services Council and Audacious Foundation, India to organise a Youth Exchange programme between Sri Lanka and India. Youth Leaders from rural areas in both countries were selected to share and exchange their cultures, sports, skills and experiences with their colleagues in both countries.
• CYC contributed to a TV programme on London Live on 23rd July 2014 to highlights the issues LGBT. What’s the Commonwealth doing for young people was the topic for discussion. Mr Messeh Leone of the Commonwealth Youth Council, talked about the Commonwealth and its relationship with young citizens to protect the rights of marginalised groups.

• CYC contributed to the 9th UNESCO Youth Forum in Paris from the 26th and 28th October 2015. The Forum brought together 500 youth leaders from all over the world to focus on issues related to Climate Change and the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. CYC Chairperson, Mr Ahmed Adamu attended the Forum and contributed to the development of the Youth Outcome document on Climate Change. CYC’s contributions were facilitated by the Commonwealth Youth Network on Climate Change.

• The CYC Chairperson spoke at the sessions entitled: “African Youth Combatting Climate Change and Promoting Peace”. He talked about the history, structure, scope and mandate of the CYC as well as how the participants can join the CYC. Ahmed met with Alexander Schischlik, Chief of the UNESCO Youth and Sport Section, Ethics, Youth and Sport Division in order to explore partnership potentials.

• Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network (CYCN): CYC supported CYCN to contribute to the International Workshop on Climate Change “Youth Action on Climate Change” (IWCC) held in Malaysia organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia, Commonwealth Youth Council, Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO, Pembangunan Pertanian Melaka SdnBhd, TenagaNasionalBerhad and various other agencies.

• Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network (CYCN) Expert Group Meeting on Climate Change. CYC supported the Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network to organise an expert group meeting with the support of the VC of Inclusion and Engagement together with the YAD.
• CYC/YAD supported the Commonwealth Young Lawyers Moot Competition. The programme was held from 25 to 27 June 2014. The law students from Africa were given a fictional case involving armed conflict and the exploitation of young men, women and girls. The competitors were tasked with drafting briefs and making oral presentations as part of either the defence or prosecuting team. Legal arguments centred on whether the accused was guilty of crimes such as genocide and sexual slavery, as well as the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, established by the 1998 Rome Statute.

• The three-day tournament, which simulated the proceedings of the International Criminal Court (ICC), was held in London at the Commonwealth Secretariat’s headquarters, with a final round hosted by the United Kingdom Supreme Court. The judges included leading international legal experts and jurists from courts such as the International Criminal Court, Special Court of Sierra Leone and High Court of Uganda. The Winners: Ms Irene Itol, Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, Ms Muchinda Mumba, University of Zambia, in Lusaka, Zambia, Mr Muhavi Mugambi, Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. The Rule of Law Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat organised the programme.
14. Regional Meetings

The Commonwealth Secretariat’s Youth Division has periodically brought together Ministers responsible for Youth to agree on the priorities for young people in its member states. The input of youth into development of those priorities is key to the sustainability of youth development policy implementation in the regions. Every effort is made towards securing the inclusion of youth by facilitating such forums as a precursor to the various Ministerial meetings.

At the 8CYMM, Ministers agreed to hold regional meetings in the midterm between four-yearly CYMMs, to assess the progress made on CYMM outcomes, share best practices and consult on regional priorities impacting the youth development sector. CYC partnered with the Commonwealth Secretariat and youth organisations and convened the CYMMs in all four Commonwealth regions in 2015.

The Youth Leaders Forum provided the opportunity to youth leaders to engage each other on issues of regional and global youth development challenges and opportunities, especially relative to the new Sustainable Development Goals. Youth leaders discussed and prioritised policy issues that were important to their member states and region as a whole. Issues and challenges critical to youth in the Commonwealth as per the respective regions were brought forward and realistic recommendations were agreed and presented Ministers Meeting.

The meetings highlighted agreements binding Commonwealth member states to their responsibility in addressing youth development, most recently being the Magampura Commitment to Young People agreed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2013, and the 8th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting. The meeting also noted the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) 2006-2015 which by extension connects to the UN’s World Programme of Action on Youth (WPAY) and the new Sustainable Development Goals.
AFRICA REGION CYMM Youth Leaders Forum

The 1st Africa Region CYMM Youth Leaders Forum was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from the 8-10 February 2015, on the theme: ‘Young People Building a Stable and Sustainable Future’. The Government of the Republic of Cameroon, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Youth Council and the National Youth Council of Cameroon supported the meeting. Youth Delegations from 15 member countries attended the AR-CYMM, of which ten were led at ministerial level. Countries Present at Youth Leaders Forum: Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia. Delegates included Ministers, senior government officials and youth representatives from Commonwealth countries of the Africa region, as well as youth development stakeholders and experts.

The meeting took place months before world leaders agreed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015-2030 at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). This gave delegates the opportunity to reflect on the negotiations process for the SDGs in the context of youth development priorities for Africa. In recognition of the important role of young people as partners in building a stable and sustainable future, delegates considered recommendations submitted by the Young Leaders Forum of the AR-CYMM, particularly on gender equality, peace and security, and health and wellbeing of young people.

The Youth Leaders Forum provided young people with a platform to debate issues and prepare recommendations for ministers. They identified insecurity caused by terrorism and health-related disasters such as Ebola as two of the main barriers to future development in the region.

Youth delegates produced their own statement and called for peace, more jobs, a greater role in decision-making, and for leaders to turn policy into action. Ministers endorsed many of these recommendations in their final statement. They made a number of commitments in a statement to advance youth development across the region with a view to giving young people better support and resources to help them tackle the serious challenges such as Ebola and the rising threat of terrorism.
Mr Deodat Maharaj, Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, who facilitated discussions alongside Cameroon’s leadership, described the meeting as “coming at a critical time” as world leaders are on the cusp of setting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He noted that, “young people must be at the centre of the new development framework - they must be given a voice”.

Mr. Kiziah Philbert, Representative for Africa and Europe at the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC), underscored the importance of youth leadership and called on the youths to be united. Mr. Jean Marc, President of the Cameroon Youth Council, moderated the Youth Forum.

The keynote address came from Miss Francine Furaha Muyumba, President of the Pan African Youth Union (PYU), on the theme ‘Young People, Building a Stable and Sustainable Future; Challenges and Prospects for Youth Leadership and Engagement in Africa’. According to her, the future of Africa is under threat and various self-interest groups to fight against each other are manipulating young people.

**ASIA REGION CYMM Youth Leaders Forum**

The Asian Regional Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting- Youth Leaders Forum was held in New Delhi, India, from the 27and 28July 2015. The meeting deliberated
on the ‘Youth Participation at the heart of sustainable development’. The Government of India, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Youth Council supported the meeting.

The AsR-CYMM Youth Leaders Forum brought together youth representatives from across the Asia region. The Forum also provided the opportunity to young people to focus and deliberate on regional and global youth development challenges and opportunities, especially important in the lead up to new global post 2015 development framework being agreed.

AsR-CYMM prioritised policy issues that are relevant and important to member states and to the region in particular. Youth leaders engaged with ministers, senior government officials, youth representatives and select youth development stakeholders from the eight Asia Commonwealth member states of Bangladesh, Brunei, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

At the Youth Leaders’ Forum, delegates recognised need for youth to be treated not just as partners but as effective contributors in decision-making and implementation of the national and regional sustainable development agenda. The need for the inputs of young people to not only be desirable but also be indispensable to policy making. Delegates noted the importance of setting up of national and regional nodal councils/alliances that can fill the void by facilitating the Asian youth to have a voice. The aim is to skillfully use this collective voice to make a positive impact in global hierarchies and institutions.
The meeting follows the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka, at which leaders vowed to put young people at the heart of policy-making for sustainable development. The resulting Magampura Commitment to Young People focused on renewing efforts to develop and empower young people, and on tackling issues such as joblessness and lack of meaningful voice.

All eight-member countries from the Commonwealth Asia region attended the AsR-CYMM, of which five were led at the Ministerial level. Delegates included Ministers, senior government officials and youth representatives, as well as youth development stakeholders and experts.

In recognition of the important contribution of young people as partners in regional and national development, delegates considered recommendations submitted by the Youth Leaders Forum of the AsR-CYMM, particularly on decent employment, entrepreneurship and skills development, professionalising youth work, peace building, strengthening national youth participation structures, and developing and implementing National Youth Policies.
Ahead of the meeting, Katherine Ellis, Director of Youth Affairs at the Commonwealth, said: “This generation can make an enormous contribution to national development, with the right prioritisation and investment. It is essential that their voices be heard and that government decision-makers have the right policy tools available to them. By sharing national experiences and working collaboratively, policy-makers will be putting the commitments of their leaders into action.” Ms Ellis notes that the meeting is taking place at a time when the Commonwealth Youth Programme is undergoing a period of renewal, which will result in a new operating model.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Joint Secretary of Youth Affairs for India, Mr L K Gupta, signalled the great potential of the region’s youth population. “Over 60 per cent of the world’s young people in the 15-24 year age group live in Asia, most of them in Commonwealth member countries. It is a great opportunity for these countries to develop and empower their young people and effectively leverage this enormous youth force for development.”

Youth delegates expressed their deep appreciation for the financial and in-kind contributions from the Governments of Pakistan and Sri Lanka in support of the Commonwealth Youth Council. CYC Vice-chairperson-Policy and Advocacy, Ms Sudharashana Lakshmi (India), CYC Vice-chairperson-Inclusion and engagement, Mohamed Husni, Asia Regional Representative, Tharika Dileepani (Sri Lanka were at the meeting to and made important contributions to the meeting.

Ms Anoka Primrose Abeyranthe from Sri Lanka; lawyer, social entrepreneur and sustainable development advocate, presents the keynote address at the opening ceremony of the Youth Forum.
Pacific Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting Youth Leaders Forum was held Apia, Samoa on the 1st September 2015. The theme of the meeting was: ‘Youth as Partners in Sustainable Small Island development’. The Commonwealth Youth Council, in partnership with the Government of Samoa, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Samoa National Youth Council for organised the event. The meeting brought together youth leaders from Australia, Fiji, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Youth delegates deliberated on significant issues of national and regional youth development such as youth employment, climate change, youth participation in national, regional and global development and youth work Profesionalisation. Youth leaders committed to supporting the Youth Ministries and stakeholders in the implementation of the outcomes of this meeting by mobilising the young people at all levels of society to engage effectively as partners for national development.

In their Samoa declaration, the governments also considered recommendations submitted by the youth leaders in relation to fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship, professionalising youth work, and strengthening national youth
participation structures. Ministers committed to a coordinated regional approach to youth-centred development, as well as to the implementation of the Pacific Youth Development Framework, which covers key youth policy areas such as youth education and employment; health; governance and participation; and environmental action. Ministers also resolved to work together to strengthen national youth policy frameworks and action plans across the region, and to provide greater support for the Pacific Youth Council and national level youth platforms.

The issue of climate change loomed large in the discussions, with Ministers heeding a call by youth representatives at a parallel Youth Leaders’ Forum to recognise young people as champions of climate change action.

The Ministers agreed to “foster a culture of youth entrepreneurship” by including entrepreneurship skills curricula in both formal and non-formal education and training institutions. They also pledged to encourage and strengthen labour mobility schemes and establish national and regional networks in the mould of the Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs.

Ministers noted the resource constraints faced by youth-led and youth-serving organisations, especially National Youth Councils, student associations and the Pacific Youth Council, and agreed to provide greater support for building their capacity through legislation, financial assistance and/or other measures, and to facilitate access to decision makers. Ministers agreed greater support for the Pacific Youth Council and other Regional Youth Platforms and agreed to assist the young people by exploring possible sources of technical and financial support, and access to decision makers.

Hon Jimson Fiau Tanangada, Minister for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs in the Solomon Islands, said: “It has been important for us to all meet and work together this week to empower our young people. The opportunity to share examples of good policy and programmes creates a domino effect. It has also been encouraging to note the youth leaders' assurances that they want to partner with us. As Nelson Mandela said, ‘We must use time wisely and forever realise that the time is always ripe to do right’.”

The Youth delegates expressed their appreciation to the Ministers of the partnership to the Commonwealth Pacific Region for their participatory approach and genuine partnership and noted that they look forward to a continuation of this inclusive and mutually beneficial relationship and the implementation of the agreements made.
Following the Pacific Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting and Youth Leaders’ Forum, Samoa plays host to another major youth event: the V Commonwealth Youth Games. Up to a thousand young Commonwealth athletes aged 14-18 will compete for 107 gold medals in nine sports over five days from 5-11 September 2015.

Harry James Olikwailafa, Pacific Regional Representative of Commonwealth Youth Council, one of the organisers of the Youth Leaders’ Forum, said: “The theme of the Pacific Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, ‘youth as partners in sustainable small island development’, speaks volumes for the greater need to engage young people. “The youth forum provided an opportunity to share and discuss issues faced by young people and provided a great opportunity for leaders and young people to listen to each other and meaningfully engage to find better solutions to youth challenges,” he said. The CYC Pacific Regional Representative, Harry James (Solomon Island) moderated the meeting.
Caribbean Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting Youth Leaders Forum was held in St. John’s, Antigua and Barbuda on the 28 April 2015. The meeting focused on them of: ‘Youth Participation at the heart of national and sustainable development’. The Caribbean Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting Youth Leaders Forum was convened by CYC in partnership with the Antigua ambassadors Youth Corp, the Commonwealth Secretariat and hosted by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda. Countries Present at Caribbean Youth Leaders Forum: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago.Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, and Turks and Caicos also attended and endorsed the targets. Youth Leaders from across the Caribbean region and Canada attended the meeting and deliberated on fundamental issues of regional and global youth development issues and also to reflect on the negotiation process for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the context of youth development priorities for the Caribbean. Delegates issued a Youth Declaration and Plan of Action for Youth Development in the Caribbean Region and Canada.

Delegates noted that governments have been reluctant to allocate the required resources to youth development, consequently negatively affecting the efficiency of youth Ministries and departments across the region and their ability to respond to the growing needs of youth. We learned from previous meetings that setting goals is a crucial step. With goals, we have something to strive for. Without them,
we have no way of measuring our successes and failures in our efforts to put Youth Participation at the heart of National and Sustainable Development.

Commenting ahead of the meeting, Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Deodat Maharaj said: “The Caribbean has one of the youngest populations in the Commonwealth, with more than 60 per cent of people aged 29 years or under. This makes this generation an enormous asset to the region’s development - not just tomorrow, but today. We recognise that young people are playing a vital role in strengthening communities and championing democratic processes, leading and delivering change. But many also face challenges related to unemployment, climate change, health issues or conflict. Young people are feeling the squeeze in the labour market, may lack the capital to start a business, or can be shut out of democratic decision-making”.

Antigua and Barbuda’s Minister of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development, the Honorable Samantha Marshall, stated: “It is my hope that this summit will inspire young men and women to grasp the opportunity presented to speak of the issues that confront them and get involved in youth mainstreaming.” The Minister added: “The meeting holds great importance relative to Antigua and Barbuda Commonwealth ties, signaling a very high water mark as the attendees will take stock of current trends in youth development.”

Timothy Ferdinand, Chairperson of the Caribbean Regional Youth Council, a member of the Commonwealth Youth Council, said: “This meeting will help to strengthen relationships between Youth Ministries and youth organisations and will enhance youth participation in decisions about issues that affect young people in the Caribbean.”

CYC Caribbean Regional Representative, Royden Beharry (Grenada) chaired the meeting. And the keynote address was delivered by Mr Michael Joseph, President of the Antigua & Barbuda Red Cross Society. Joseph is the first person under the age of 30 to be elected as president of the Red Cross during the more than 150-year history of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
15. Inclusive Membership Engagement

CYC is committed to engaging, involving and advocating for young people within the Commonwealth. The CYC facilitates and supports the work of youth-led initiatives across the Commonwealth. We partner with relevant stakeholders, organisations and individuals to represent and empower young people in the Commonwealth.

In accordance with Article 7 of the CYC Constitution, membership in the Council is open to representative and democratic youth-led organisations from Commonwealth member countries, with a broad-based membership and wide coverage, consisting of young people (15 to 29 years of age), regardless of their race, ethnic origin, caste, colour, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, special needs, socio-economic status, marital status, language, religious belief or political opinion, unless the Council decides otherwise through a resolution of the CYC General Assembly.

Membership of CYC provides a wide array of benefits, focused on empowering all young people across the Commonwealth to have a say and be heard. Joining CYC as a member provides organisations with various opportunities such as:
**Full Membership shall:**

- be represented at official CYC sessions and events by National and Regional Delegations, with clearly specified voting rights,
- recommend and support candidates for, and vote in elections for the various offices of the Council, through their Delegation to the Council,
- have full speaking rights at Council events,
- network and lobby to expand their contacts and knowledge base and explore possible partnerships and joint ventures with various stakeholders,

**Affiliated Observers shall have the opportunity to:**

- attend the Council’s General Assembly and other international conferences and events as observers,
- make written and oral statements at these events by invitation,
- organise side events by invitation, and network and lobby to expand their contacts and knowledge base, and explore possible partnerships and joint ventures with various stakeholders
- recommend and support candidates from Member organisations for election to the various offices of the Council, but shall have no voting rights

**Membership**

As per Article 7.3 of the CYC Constitution, the requirements for obtaining Member status in the Council shall include but are shall not be limited to the following:

a) The organisation’s objectives and activities shall be relevant to the work of the Council;

b) The organisation shall have been in existence (officially registered) for at least one year before the General Assembly at which it shall be considered for member status;

c) The organisation shall have democratic and transparent governance and decision-making mechanisms, where young people have a majority voice in the organisation’s decision-making; and

d) The members of the organisation shall agree to support or participate in the work of the Council.
National Youth Councils from Commonwealth member countries that meet membership requirements are granted automatic Member status in the Council, and shall take part in the consultations and decisions of the Council. Furthermore, the Council admits member delegations from Commonwealth Overseas Territories and other countries interested in the values and objectives of the Commonwealth, or with ties, or affiliated, to the Commonwealth.

**Affiliated observers:**

As per Article 8.2 of the CYC Constitution, the requirements for obtaining Member status in the Council shall include but are shall not be limited to the following:

a) The observer organisation’s objectives and activities shall be relevant to the work of the Council;

b) The organisation shall have been in existence (officially registered) for at least two years before the General Assembly at which they shall be considered for Observer status;

c) The organisation shall have democratic and transparent governance and decision making mechanisms, where young people have a majority voice in the organisation’s decision-making; and the members of the organisation shall agree to support or participate in the work of the Council.

The Commonwealth Youth Development Stakeholders Panel (referred to as the ‘Stakeholders Panel’), are accorded the status of ‘Affiliated Observer’, for the purpose of enabling the Council or its committees and subsidiary bodies to secure expert information or opinions from persons having special competence on youth development issues.
What We Achieved

- In accordance with Article 17 of the Constitution, the Commonwealth Youth Council established a Membership Committee in 2014 to coordinate membership affairs. As noted in Article 9 of the Constitution, the Membership Committee is responsible for approving Members and Affiliate Observers of the Council. Importantly, the Executive selected Committee members from all Commonwealth regions to ensure equal representation.

The Committee comprised of the following:

1. Mohamed Husni (Chair)
2. Vanessa Picker (Secretary/ Australia)
3. Komezusenge Daniel (Coordinator/ Rwanda)
4. Hussen Riyas (Maldives)
5. Christina J K Giwe (Papua New Guinea)
6. Senel Wanniarachchi (Sri Lanka)
7. Wendell Bertrane (St. Lucia)
8. Karl Bugeja (Malta)

- CYC support the Committee to meet regularly through online mediums to discuss progress and to revise the membership strategy.

- Membership Committee agreed upon the membership application process and created the relevant online systems and web forms for applications. Organisations wishing to join the Council as either Members or Affiliated Observers were able to apply by using the official Membership Application Form, which is available online via a webform and the CYC website.

Applicants were required to submit:

- Copy of constitution/charter and/or statutes/by-laws and amendments to those documents (in accordance with Articles 7.3 and 8.2 of the CYC Constitution).
- Copy of certificate of registration (in accordance with Article 7.3 and 8.2 of the CYC Constitution). If your country does not require registration, please provide other proof of existence.
- Organisational structure/chart, detailing the governance and decision-making structures of the organisation.
- Copy of most recent financial statement and annual report.
- Copies of recent publications, articles, reports and other material to showcase the relevance of the organisation’s activities/programmes.

- CYC membership committee has also created an overarching strategy to raise awareness about memberships and to continuously grow the membership base. To date, this has largely involved online mediums such as email campaigns, social media campaigns, regular newsletters and flyers.

- In addition to defining the criteria and creating the relevant online processes/systems, the CYC Membership Committee also designed and created various marketing materials, including flyers for each membership type. These marketing materials have assisted with raising awareness about CYC memberships and promoting the benefits of each membership category.

- As a result of the implementation of the marketing campaigns, CYC received 535 membership applications to date. CYC continued received interest regarding memberships and regular applications.

**Approval Process**

The chart below clearly outlines the approval process, which has been created and implemented by the CYC Membership Committee. Importantly, the approval process involves careful consideration and verification of each membership application. The verification process is incredibly important, given that members receive several rights, upon membership approval. Thus, due to the large number of applications received, the practical difficulties (e.g. relying on small committee of volunteers) and the importance of proper verification, the membership committee is still verifying the 535 applications received.
Next Steps and Recommendations for the future

Given the importance of thorough verification, the membership committee is currently in the process of receiving supporting documentation from each of the applications. With the support of regional representatives, the Committee will assess the supporting documents alongside applications, in order to ensure that each approved organization meets the requirements set out in the CYC Constitution. Once we have verified the organisations, we will forward a list to the General Assembly.

We recommend the following:

1. That a Resolution should be passed at the General Assembly in Malta, to allow applicants to become provisional members if they are assessed as meeting the membership requirements in-between General Assembly’s. This will allow them to benefit from certain rights within a more reasonable timeframe.

2. The following members of the Membership Committee should continue on in the work of CYC membership Committee, in order to ensure continuity.

   - Ms Vanessa Picker (Secretary)
   - Mr Komezusenge Daniel (Rwanda)
16. Engagement With National and Regional Youth Councils

It’s important to maintain a positive relationship with regional and national youth councils in order to strengthen the overall capacity of the CYC, and for the purposes of mutual recognition, partnership and programme, design and delivery. Thus, the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) believes in the collaboration and engagement between the National Youth Councils (NYCs) which have been granted automatic Member Status in the Council, and the Regional Youth Councils (RYCs) to support and facilitate the voice of young people in the Commonwealth.

In supporting youth councils, CYC undertook a number of projects including but not limited to the following:

- CYC supported National Youth Delegates to the Commonwealth. National Youth Councils played an immense role by way of participating in the Joint Committee which was an inclusive, transparent and accountable body responsible for selecting the Youth Delegates. As NYCs are the
representative voice of youth in their respective countries in addition to the Ministries responsible for youth, it was recognised as vital to get their expertise.

- CYC supported Regional Youth Councils participate in the Regional Youth Regional Youth Ministers Meetings Leaders Forums in Africa, Asia, Pacific, Caribbean.

- CYC supported Regional Youth Councils as part of the International Task Force of the Commonwealth Youth Forum in Malta. They were consulted throughout the process and their views and recommendations integrate in the planning to ensure an inclusive and engaging CYC and Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) 2015.

- CYC supported the creation of Regional Dialogues at the CYF 2015. This is to amplify and re-kindled the regional voice of young people at such important international gathering of youth leaders.

This encapsulates why the office of Vice Chairperson for Inclusion and Engagement believes in the partnership between NYCs and RYCs as imperative, for it assists in finding youth-led solutions for the youth problems that exist in each Commonwealth country as well as the smooth functioning of the Commonwealth Youth Programmes.

However, that is not to say that the engagement with all NYCs and RYCs across the five regions was not a challenging task due to practical issues. Yet the said office continued in its engagement which contributed to a stronger relationship. Despite the said challenges it should be noted that the office of Inclusion and Engagement was able to physically visit and engage with NYCs and youth-led bodies in the following countries during his tenure.

- Malta
- Malaysia
• Singapore
• Sri Lanka
• United Kingdom

Understanding these constraints to engage with both types of Youth Councils across the five regions, it was decided to initiate a robust online engagement hub, “Your Voice at CYC” (www.yourvoice-at-cyc.org), as a solution to the existing issue, which would bring together NYCs and RYCs into one platform where it is proposed that all stakeholders could engage effectively in future activities with the CYC.

That being said, the office of Inclusion and Engagement also believes it would be important to create more opportunities in future to engage and visit NYCs in person in order to not only advocate the implementation and localising of the outcome document of the CYF 2015 but also to enable greater impact within the Commonwealth. As for RYCs which are independent, autonomous and democratically elected, CYC believes that these Councils should continue to support and facilitate the voice of young people in their respective regions.

There is need to explore more opportunities to engage with NYCs/RYCs by the Commonwealth Secretariat and other stakeholders through their existing initiatives.
17. Commonwealth Youth Networks

As the official voice of the young people of Commonwealth, it is important for CYC to work with different thematic youth networks in order to amplify positive change by catering to national/regional/global development. Therefore, working in line with the tasks of the office of Vice Chair for Inclusion and Engagement, measures were proposed for a stronger collaboration with the Commonwealth Youth Thematic Networks which includes the following but not limited to;

- Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network
- Commonwealth Students Association
- Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Working Group
- Commonwealth Alliance for Youth Entrepreneurs

The Commonwealth Youth Networks were in place at the time of the establishment of CYC in 2013, and were engaged in driving youth-led organizations towards achieving their respective goals. The Youth Affairs Division (YAD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat saw the need of integrating both in order to make youth development activities more inclusive and meaningful. The expertise of each Thematic Youth Network was thus readily accepted as their role and impact in the development sector have been immense.

CYC organised a number of official meetings with the Commonwealth Youth Network Coordinators in order to discuss and explore opportunities to strengthen the partnership, to understand the work of the Commonwealth Youth Networks as well as to recognize the role each could play by providing their respective thematic expertise for the betterment of youth development activities. The Following Planning meetings were held:
a) Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network (CYCN) Coordinator - Mr. Jean Paul Affana.

The Vice Chairperson for Inclusion and Engagement supported the Youth Network by assisting in development of the activities of CYCN. While details pertaining to the expert group meeting to be held in London were discussed, provisions of possible opportunities in participating Climate Change Summits by CYCN members were also addressed at this forum.

The CYC has included CYCN to speak at the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2015, on the Environmental Agenda and provide a space to showcase their work has also been granted.

b) Commonwealth Youth Human Rights & Democracy Network Coordinator - Mr. Bongani A Simelane

Key discussion points with regard to this meeting were woven around in understanding the role of Commonwealth Youth Human Rights and Democracy Network, as well as their initiatives and previous Human Rights training programmes in the Commonwealth region. Discussions also resulted in organizing prospective training programmes with the assistance and guidance of the CYC. Further collaboration and support in terms of working with the Network and their future initiatives were also discussed.

c) Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Working Group (CYSDP) Coordinator - Mr. Carl Konadu

With the introduction to the Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Working Group and their previous initiatives, a discourse was initiated on how to incorporate their work into the CYC agenda while also finding a space for a possible role of CYC in supporting their work; especially in the form of a celebration in April to commemorate the Sport for Development
and Peace International Day. CYC also expressed their interest in working with the SDP division in terms of promoting sports for peace and development in the Commonwealth.

The VC for Inclusion and Engagement as the focal point for CYC membership and Commonwealth Youth Networks, along with the Network coordinators discussed the proposed manual/guideline for Commonwealth Youth Networks which is to be drafted with the support of the Commonwealth Secretariat. This manual is expected to standardize and outline the role of the Youth Networks within the organization which would be beneficial to all stakeholders in the long run. Thus the offer instigated by the Commonwealth Secretariat was welcomed by all network coordinators.

The VC for Inclusion and Engagement also emphasised the importance of incorporating the Thematic Networks leading up to the Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) especially in formulating the CYF policy outcome document. Furthermore, preparations to hold thematic consultative groups comprised of the representatives from all Thematic Networks to support and provide inputs for the outcome document have been made. An open request was also made with regard to how the respective networks could assist the biennial Commonwealth Youth Forums in outlining the policy documents.
18. Your Voice @ CYC

The CYC created the ‘Your Voice @ CYC initiative’. The realisation behind the structure of “Your Voice @ CYC” is to lead from the front on what the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) profess, in order to promote constructive youth engagement in a global platform. Youth led organisations and individuals from commonwealth countries could exercise this space to enable criticism, improve strategies and work towards the betterment of the CYC community.

Along with the online initiative, to create additional physical space for youth engagement in an offline platform, the CYC - office of the VC for Inclusion and Engagement has proposed to carry out events that would sustain the above mentioned concept. The main prospect in creating an offline platform is to reach out to a larger group of youth and take the discussions to a step further and closer to realization of youth issues.

Youth participation and engagement with governments at the decision making level can be understood using the different forms of youth engagement. Thus the overall objective of this robust online engagement hub is to increase opportunities to engage with the CYC which would enable the youth from Commonwealth to integrate more with their respective governments.

‘Your Voice @ CYC initiative’ aimed to achieve the following goals:

- **Goal 1**: To provide an all inclusive overview of the activities carried out by the CYC.

- **Goal 2**: To create an interactive platform for constructive youth engagement among the youth of the commonwealth.

- **Goal 3**: To introduce a separate commonwealth youth member engagement hub different from that of a public/static website.
• Goal 4: In moving forward with the initiative of an online youth engagement hub, it was proposed to introduce offline events that would sustain both forms of youth participation.

• Goal 5: To increase and facilitate National Youth Councils/Regional Youth Councils/National Youth Delegations/Regional Delegations’ engagement with the CYC and assist CYC in their operational tasks.

With the approval received by the Executive of the Commonwealth Youth Council, the VC for Inclusion and Engagement proceeded with We Are Designers a well renowned design studio located in Colombo, Sri Lanka in implementing the online engagement hub.

This engagement hub constitutes the below mentioned features in the vision to draw the online youth participatory culture to a new direction. It is also expected to resolve many CYC operational issues such as membership recruitment and inclusive youth engagement which will bring together young voices from all five regions into one virtual platform.

Clustering of the platform was done based on three key areas which integrates the core idea of the engagement hub.

• Explore us - The Commonwealth & CYC
  What is Your Voice @ CYC
  CYF/CYC General Assembly
  News Update

  Explore us predominantly captures the overall view of The Commonwealth, CYC, Your Voice @ CYC and the CYF/CYC GA. Apart from that the viewer is given the opportunity to engage with CYC via its news updates and be informed of its latest activities.

• Join us - Member Organizations
National Youth Delegates
Youth Councils
Youth Networks

This section primarily is to engage with member organizations and promote increased interaction with them while calling upon other interested parties to join the CYC family.

- Engage with us -Regional Hub
  - Inclusive Campaign
  - Have Your Voice @ CYC Heard
  - Online Consultation Forum

As the term “Engage with us” denotes, this section is the most important item of the virtual hub promulgating the essence of the website. This section opens up the opportunity to all youth in Commonwealth to engage with CYC via its inclusive and engagement campaigns, and consultation forums.

However, further improvements can be anticipated in future in order to meet the growing needs of the Commonwealth youth ahead of the CYF/CYC GA 2015 and post-2015 Development Agenda.
The Commonwealth Youth Forum was established in the year of 1997 at the Edinburgh Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) where a range of commonwealth initiatives were developed. Amongst the most discernible was the forum created by the pan-commonwealth to represent the voice of youth in the hope of making the development process more equitable and inclusive. Thus far, there have been nine Commonwealth Youth Forums with the last one being held in Sri Lanka in year 2013. In moving forward with the said initiative, the Youth Forum held in Sri Lanka established the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC), with the intention of creating a representative body for the 1.2 billion youth in the Commonwealth.

The role of Commonwealth Youth Council has been immense since its inception and this year, the 10th Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) 2015 and the 2nd CYC General Assembly (CYC GA) are for the first time organized by the CYC with the collaboration of the Youth Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of Malta.
As the mandate of the CYC - VC for Inclusion and Engagement revolves around supporting and implementing measures to promote membership activities within CYC, the three co organizers were by default recognized as co-conveners of the CYF 2015; whilst the office of VC for Inclusion and Engagement also became the co-chair of the international taskforce of the Youth Forum for year 2015. In addition, under the directives proposed CYC received the permanent co-chair position for future Youth Forums.

This year the Youth Forum is held in parallel to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). More than 250 representatives of national youth councils, youth bodies, youth organizations as well as youth leaders, youth workers, young professionals and experts from across the Commonwealth are expected to attend the forum. The theme of the youth forum is scheduled as “Adding Global Value...#WhatNext?”

To stimulate the future by engaging and inculcating their perspectives in the present at a global forum is the prime task of this theme. It is believed that the forum will penetrate the young people’s minds to view the physical and virtual factors that affect them as real issues in this post 2015 development era.

Apart from the formation of CYC in 2013 there was also a unique creation to the Youth Forum, which saw the establishment of the General Assembly which has since been considered to form part of the CYF.

The 2015 General Assembly is being co-chaired and co-convened by, the representative body of 1.2 billion young people in the commonwealth, the Commonwealth Youth Council.

**International Task Force**

The Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) called in nominations for the International Youth Task Force (IYTF) in year 2014 which is responsible for the successful organization of the CYC General Assembly and the
Commonwealth Youth Forum 2015 in Malta under the supervision of the three co-chairs. They have been therefore endorsed by the three co-conveners and their roles include the following but are not necessarily limited to:

- Delivery of the General Assembly and the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2015.
- Development of the agenda for the Forum.
- Development of programme and events.
- Prepare and facilitate all programmes.
- Send and accept delegate nominations, and send correspondence related to the assembly/CYF on behalf of CYC executives and the relevant partners.

**Planning Meetings**

The International Task Force together with the members from the Commonwealth Secretariat took the initiative in attending the planning meetings which were held in March and May 2015 respectively, to discuss matters in relation to the successful organization of the Commonwealth Youth Forum/CYC General Assembly (CYF/CYC GA) 2015. The delegation which attended the initial meeting in Malta, apart from planning for the CYF/CYC GA 2015 identified programmatic areas/structures and overall strategy of the forum, where the theme of the forum was also finalized. In addition to that an official visit was also made where the delegation was received by Anglu Farrugia, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Parliament of Malta.

The delegation attended consisted of Mr Layne Robinson, Head of Youth Programmes Section Youth Division, Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Affairs Division; Mr Messeh Leone, Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Affairs Division; and from the International Taskforce, Mr Mohamed Husni, Vice Chairperson of the Commonwealth Youth
Council responsible for Inclusion and Engagement; Ms Sudharshana Lakshmi, Vice-Chairperson of the Commonwealth Youth Council responsible for Policy and Advocacy; Mr Timothy Ferdinand, Chairperson of the Caribbean Regional Youth Council; and Mr Jean Paul Brice Affana Affana, Co-ordinator of the Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network. Accompanying the International Taskforce at the visit was Mr Christopher Formosa, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Youth Forum Organising Subcommittee.

To further consolidate the efforts of the successful organization of CYF/CYC GA 2015 an additional planning meeting was held with the participation of all members of the International Task Force in Malta, during the month of May 2015. Significantly, the official launch of the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2015 also took place in parallel to this meeting, with the inauguration of the social media campaign entitled #whatnext?. The aim of the campaign is for young people in Commonwealth to have their say on what issues should be tackled by the Commonwealth during the biennial summit.
Launch of CYF 2015 - A Unique Approach

With the establishment of the CYC in 2013, for the first time in history, the group of young, expert individuals in the executive will come together in co-convening the Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF)/ CYC GA 2015, in collaboration with the Government of Malta and Youth Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Herein after, the CYC is also requested to represent the 1.2 billion young people in the Commonwealth, being one of the largest and most-diverse youth led organizations in the world, as the permanent co-chair of the youth forums to come. The launch of CYF 2015 with its new face, would also be an exciting development because for the first time, CYC has strongly urged its member organizations such as the National Youth Councils to select their National Youth Delegations through an open call, which would be transparent and inclusive of the youth living in each country. Hence it can be believed that this inclusive engagement would be a key factor in the success of this year’s forum.

Apart from that, the theme of the CYF 2015 which is, “Adding Global Value...#WhatNext?” - the question #WhatNext?, speaks of the need for creating clear action pathways in finding solutions to the challenges facing the Commonwealth.

It addresses the concern that, very little implementation of recommendations takes place at the requisite levels to recognize significant change and create impact within the commonwealth. This concern if not addressed will also lead to the ultimate questioning of the relevance of the commonwealth to the lives of the people. ‘#WhatNext?’ serves as a platform where youth will raise qualitative ideas on the change that is needed in approaching sustainable youth development through effective action by stakeholders; and challenge youth leaders to consider what the next steps are for overcoming the most pressing challenges facing young people across the Commonwealth.
Role of International Task Force Co-Chair

In keeping with the given mandate, this year, CYC nominated the Vice Chairperson for Inclusion and Engagement for the position of International Task Force Co-Chair, who will represent the CYC in the Taskforce. The main task of this position was to create the International Task Force to overlook the prime obligation which was the successful delivery of the CYF 2015. In this regard the office of Inclusion and Engagement provided leadership and strategic guidance; and also created a 7 member International Task Force which constituted 5 committees. The 5 committees are as follows;

- Programme Committee
- Delegation Committee
- Policy Draft and Outcome Committee
- Logistics Committee
- Media and Communications Committee
The Co-chair is also responsible in meeting the following overall objectives leading up to the CYF 2015.

- Provide a platform for young people to set and manage their agenda and contribute to development and democracy work in the Commonwealth;
- Demonstrate and celebrate the role and contribution of young people in promoting democracy and development;
- Promote meaningful cultural exchange and cooperation among youth across the Commonwealth;
- Explore new opportunities for young people in the Commonwealth through effective partnerships and resource mobilization;
- Provide an opportunity for young people to contribute to the Commonwealth wide agendas and priorities including contributions to the CHOGMs.
- Creation of a strengthened coordination structure/mechanism with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Operation Hub of the CYC in Sri Lanka as to ensure smooth progress in the run-up to the CYF 2015.

A Unique Programme and Inclusive Youth Participation

In realising the value of telescoping 2030 today, a unique programme has been introduced to the CYF 2015 with the theme of “Adding Global Value…#WhatNext?”. This rhetoric proposes individuals to rummage their souls in order to find answers to the burning issues in each of their countries. With that, it was highlighted that unlike making recommendations, this year the CYF should look into making constructive proposals in order to address and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Apart from that, the CYF 2015 has allocated space for regional dialogues to be held, to discuss best practices and ways of implementing the final outcome document of the CYF 2015 at each regional level. Interestingly,
this is the first time a move as such, which gives all concerned to customize and make use of the final document has been implemented in the history of Commonwealth Youth Forums.

In addition to the unique programme catered to the participants of the CYF 2015, it must be noted that the call for National Youth Delegates this year has been inclusive by way of carrying out an open call. Each Commonwealth member country was given the opportunity and task of choosing their representative youth delegates through a process which was transparent and accountable to the youth residing in their respective countries. For more details on the National Youth Delegate Programme see chapter 6.

Unlike the past forums, CYF 2015, has also granted space for the participation of more observers including youth from those residing outside of Commonwealth territories in order to make the forum and outcome document inclusive and meaningful which is expected to be symbolic of the power of youth in the face of development.
What is a National Youth Delegation?

Article 16.1 of the CYC constitution articulates that a National Youth Delegation is an ambassadorial unit established by each Commonwealth member country to ensure that young people are being effectively represented at Commonwealth activities/forums including the Commonwealth Youth Forum/Commonwealth Youth Council General Assembly. It is proposed that the national youth delegation should reflect both the participation and interests of young people from all sectors of the youth population.

This year the specialty of the programme is that unlike past years, National Youth Delegates (NYDs) are mandated with a set of clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Their role entails all delegates to localize and implement the outcome document of the CYF 2015 in their respective countries and to be the change makers. The National Delegation also automatically becomes part of the relevant Regional Delegation thus being the representative voice of youth at the regional level in order to regionalize the outcome document. Furthermore, in accordance with Article 21 of the CYC constitution the term of office of a National Delegation and Regional Delegation is construed as two years.

How to Select National Youth Delegates?

Importance of a Selection Process

As the main role of the National Youth Delegates is to be the official voice of the young people of their respective countries to the Commonwealth, for the first time CYC developed a clear selection process with the assistance of CYC staff under the supervision of the CYC executives and advocated for a transparent mechanism to select the most suitable and high-caliber National Delegates.
Method of Selection

The CYC was instrumental in designing a clear structure to select the National Youth Delegates and henceforth have advised the Commonwealth countries to establish a Joint Committee. The Joint Committee is hosted by the Ministry responsible for Youth Affairs and the official National Youth Council, in collaboration with the CYC. As the first step to this selection process, it is recommended that the Committee be transparent and accountable, thus the CYC has outlined the following members to be in the panel.

- Representative/s from the Ministry responsible for Youth Affairs;
- Representative/s from the National Youth Council (if a recognized National Youth Council is in existence); if no National Youth Council/Body exists, a representative group of youth leaders should be invited to participate in the process, in consultation with the CYC.

Once the Committee is established, an application form based on the criteria provided by the CYC is finalized. By way of an open call in order to ensure that it reaches all youth in the country, nominations are called in. Finally after the screening process and interviews, the selected two official delegates should be informed and endorsed by the CYC.
21. CYC Partnership Grants Initiative

The CYC launched the partnership grants initiative in 2015 and allocated funds to sponsor youth-led organizations to implement youth development projects in their communities. The grants are aimed to provide support to young people in both rural and urban communities and to become active participants in their societal development and to improve their well-being and in line with its overall mandate and strategic objectives.

CYC called for applications from youth-led organizations in the Commonwealth during the period from 26th May 2015 to 16th June 2015. CYC received 32 applications from 14 countries of the Commonwealth. 29 applications were considered who met the requirements. 55% of the applications were from the African region, 31% from the Caribbean and Americas, 13% from the Asian Region and no applications received from the Europe and pacific Regions.

The grants proposals were mainly focused in 5 thematic areas of the CYC Strategic Plan. These include: Education & Skills, Youth in the Post 2015, Employment & Enterprise, Youth Engagement & Governance, and Reconciliation & Social Cohesion.

Applicants were ranked based on the factors such as Relevance to CYC Strategic Plan / Thematic Area, Target Audience, Duration of Project, and Availability of Alternative sources for funds. The Committee comprised of Mr. Ahmed Adamu (Chairperson of CYC), Mr. Tilan M Wijesooriya (Administrative Secretary of the CYC Secretariat), Ms. Shiromi Samarakoon (CYC Executive for Special Interest Groups), and Mr. Ali Ehtsham (Member of CYC Committee on Programs and Budgeting). 4 strong proposals from across the Commonwealth were selected. Winners were awarded GBP 2500, subject a resolution of the GA in Malta.

The following The 4 successful youth-led organizations were awarded:

- Kangema Youth Group, Kenya (Project Title: Community Youth Apprenticeship)
- Laureate Foundation, Pakistan (Project Title: Economic and...
Social Integration of the Youth

- National Youth Council, Mauritius (Project Title: Dynamic Youth Programme)
- Young Women/Men of Purpose (YWOP/YMOP), Jamaica (Project Title: Realize, Embrace and Achieve your Purpose - REAP)

Monitoring and Evaluation

It was suggested to appoint a monitoring team consisting of 3 - 6 members from National Youth Councils in the relevant country, the relevant selected youth-led organization, and a youth expert designated by the CYC. The monitoring team is responsible for submitting bimonthly progress reports (in every two Months) and a final report upon the completion of projects to the CYC.

Recommendation for the future

- Strict adherence to timeline for this project is recommended
- The monitoring team should be appointed as soon as possible
- The comprehensive project proposals, registration certificates, referee / reference letters, and bank account details can be seen here: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B1tLpjnrqk2ZblBGUHgyMFVTd1E
22. Financials

2013/15 Financial Highlights

CYC’s objective for financial liquidity and reserves is to operate in a prudent range of stability, while recognizing the imperative of distributing maximum funds to mission as quickly as possible. CYC’s financial strengths need to be enhanced, to enable continuity of the good initiatives and commitments. CYC appreciate and thank all its donors especially, the government of Pakistan and Sri Lanka as well as the Commonwealth Secretariat. CYC was able to raised funding amounting to around £93,000.00.

Detail of financial breakdown is attached to this report.
23. Concluding Recommendations

An Inclusive CYC General Assembly

- Engaged and encourage member states and support the participation of representative youth leaders to attend and contribute to shaping policy in the Commonwealth. Need to establish MoUs and funding agreement with member states to guarantee participation of youth delegates from all Commonwealth Countries.
- Flexible visa process for delegates from developing countries needs to be considered and implemented.
- Allocate funding to delegates from developing countries or marginalised groups to be able to attend the GA.
- Countries who have not adhered to the transparent process and those who had to face time constraints would have to re-select their NYDs within 6 months after the completion of the CYF 2015 - by the 25th May, 2016.

Regional and National Youth Councils and Commonwealth Networks

- Support Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) in engaging and uniting youth organisations in the Commonwealth.
- Strengthen communication and coordination mechanisms between youth networks, youth ministries and the Commonwealth.
- Continued to provide monthly progress reports on CYC activities to all NYCs and member organisations and create ways to fully engage them.
- Better coordination between the Commonwealth Youth Networks and CYC.

Focus on the Strategic Plan

- Do not reinvent the wheel -the existing Strategic Plan must be reviewed and continued.
Avoid or minimise diversion from the Strategic Plan or not engage in programmes that are not in the Strategic Plan

Commonwealth Engagement

There is a strong need for continued technical support from the Commonwealth, and work to establish a formal MOU and engagement structure.

CYC Secretariat

Recruit more staff
Secure a permanent secretariat
The CYC constitution need to be amended

Partnerships

Encouraged continued collaboration and strong partnerships across the region by the Commonwealth Secretariat, Regional Youth Council, National Youth Council, and other regional and international partner organisations, to ensure strong development outcomes for young people.

Funding and Resources

There is strong need to establish a dedicated fund raising team and consult grant experts to help in developing proposals for the CYC.
Member states to commit some voluntary funding to the CYC.
Engage private sectors and philanthropists to invest in youth through the CYC.

**CYC Engagements**

- The expertise of the past Executive members, Arbitrators, Stakeholders panel, must be harnessed to benefit the Council. Regular meetings and engagement is key, perhaps and alumni.

**Training**

- Incoming elected Executives to be supported on 3 months training in host to develop skills and project plans.
- Incoming Chairperson of the CYC to be supported with a part-time consultancy to work closely with the Commonwealth to ensure effective and engaging partnership.
- Training for regional and national youth councils leaders
Ahmed Adamu: Chairperson, Commonwealth Youth Council
Email: ahmadadamu1@gmail.com
He was elected on November 12, 2013 as the first Chairperson of the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC), which is the largest youth-led organisation in the world, representing over 1.2 Billion young people from across the 53 Commonwealth nations worldwide. He represented his country in many international and commonwealth youth programmes, and was the pioneer Chief Whip of the Nigerian Youth Parliament. Ahmed was an International expert at United Nation’s Global Forum on Youth Policies; Member, Policy Strategy Group, United Nations’ World We Want; Member, International Panel of Judges for Youth Citizen Entrepreneurship Competition; Observer member, International Youth Task force for 2014 World Conference on Youth; Member, Advisory group panel on 50th Anniversary of the Commonwealth Secretariat. He was the Nigerian youth observer at the ECOWAS parliament, and the founder and pioneer president of the League for Democratic Youth. Ahmed was a member of the Katsina state executive council committee on youth development, he also served as the secretary of the Nigerian constitutional review consultation committee, and was the founder and president of Oil and Gas scholars club. He is the founder and president of Katsina Debate Club, publicity secretary of Civil Liberties organization, Katsina branch, secretary of integrity club, among so many other past leadership responsibilities and experiences. Currently, he is pursuing his PhD in Economics at Newcastle University, United Kingdom; He is a University Lecturer, also a member of many international and national professional organizations. He published and presented many international and national academic papers, and participated in several international and national academic conferences. He published a book titled “Comparative Assessment of Petroleum Sharing Contracts in Nigeria”. He was honoured as the African Achiever of the year for 2015, he was also honoured as an inspirational Nigerian by Those Who Inspire Ltd. He received award of excellence from the League for Democratic Youth, and was also awarded as the most influential student union leader by the National Economics Students Associations (NESA). Ahmed is one of the most influential youth leaders in the world. Being in this position he met with many global leaders and travel wide, he has recorded numerous achievements under his leadership as the CYC Chairperson. He is blessed with a son and a wife.
Mohamed Husni (Sri Lanka) Vice Chairperson – Inclusion and Engagement
Email: husni.commonwealth@gmail.com

Mohamed Husni, 26 years old, is the elected Vice Chairperson (Inclusion and Engagement) of first ever Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) which serves as the official and representative voice of 1.2 billion young people and provides a framework for youth-led development initiatives in the Commonwealth. He has more than 10 years of experience in environment focused activism, youth development and policy work, who has also initiated and implemented numerous projects & campaigns with high school students, youth organizations and civil society institutions in both nationally and globally. Husni is a ‘British Council International Climate Champion’ and in 2011, he was selected as a ‘British Council Global Changemaker’ for his significant track record as a community activist and a volunteer. He was also a Rotaract Past President and an Action Partner of Oxfam International Youth Partnerships (OIYP) managed by Oxfam Australia. He has officially represented Sri Lanka, British Council and the Commonwealth at many high-level meetings & regional/global strategic discussions on Rio+20, Inclusive Youth participation & Post-2015 Development Agenda and made significant contributions at a young age.

He was also one of the National Delegates of Sri Lanka to the UNCSD; Global Youth Representative at the Post-2015 High Level Panel (HLP) meeting in London with UN Secretary-General’s Panel of Eminent Persons on Post-2015 Dev. Agenda; Youth Rep.& Panelist at the UNDESA/ILO/UNEP Expert Group Meeting on "Green Growth & Green Jobs for Youth"; as well as the Youth Delegate to the UN ECOSOC Youth Forum 2014. Husni served as the Post-2015 National Consultations Officer of United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in Sri Lanka for two years (2013-2015), which includes his role as the Project Manager of UNV research publication on "Youth Volunteering for Development & Peace in Sri Lanka". In March 2015, he was appointed as the Co-chair of the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2015 to be held in Malta in parallel to the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting (CHOGM). He will also lead the Rotary International’s Youth body, ‘Rotaract’ in Sri Lanka & Maldives in year 2016-17 in the capacity of the District Rotaract Representative for Sri Lanka & Maldives.
Sadham Zarjahan (Sri Lanka) Vice Chairperson – Partnership & Resources

Email: zsadham@gmail.com

Sadham Dhikran Zarjahan; a Sri Lankan who was born in 1991 February 20th. He started his voluntarily work since he was 10 years. He followed B Eng Mechatronics program at University of Wolverhampton. He is an investor, an Engineer, Youth worker and professional football player. He was selected for the 6th World youth Congress as delegate which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on June 4th to 13th 2012. He was appointed as Chairperson for International Youth Council Sri Lanka Chapter and he has made contributions in organization's partnerships polices and youth developments policies as chairperson of International Youth Council Sri Lanka Chapter. He also one of the Executive Committee members of Professional Youth Workers Association of Sri Lanka which is working under Youth affairs and skills development ministry and Commonwealth Youth Program. He was a Sri Lankan Youth Ambassador for Annual Youth Assembly at United Nations which was held in New York, USA during August 7th to 9th 2013

Sudharshana Lakshmi (India) Vice Chairperson- Policy and Advocacy

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Sudharshana Lakshmi is much passionate in Governance & Public Policy, holds an M.A. degree from the School of Governance and Public Policy at Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD), Sriperumbudur, India which is the first of its kind in South Asia for youth development. She was appointed as a Country Representative for youth by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India in 2012. Recognising her competence to serve the community, she was awarded Gold Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award in 2007. At present, she is one of the advisors for Asia Youth Council for providing strategic policy and advocacy inputs for its sustainable functioning. To her credit, she had represented a number of international and national forums for policy discussions and advocating the mainstreaming of youth development work
Kiziah Philbert (Kenya) Africa and Europe Regional Representative
Email: philbertkizy@gmail.com
Kiziah is Currently Pursuing Masters of Science in Diplomacy and International Relations, he holds a Bachelors degree in Business management, Finance and Banking Major and a minor in Marketing and Entrepreneurship. He also holds a diploma in community development and social work. Currently Philbert is the founding President Sponsor a Child Kenya and CEO Hunger Below Zero. A cofounder and Vice President of Africa Youth Charter and a One Young World Kenyan Ambassador. He has had several live dialogues with H.E Dr. Kofi Annan most recently being on Youth Unemployment, Sustainable development, Elections and Democracy. He is the founder and CEO of independent community Bank PesaPedia which aims to assist, empower and enable street children, AIDS Orphans, sex workers and marginalized groups gain financial freedom.

Tharika Dileepant (Sri Lanka) Asia Regional Representative
Email: tharika.dileepani@gmail.com
Tharika is a passionate young leader joined the Commonwealth family as the Deputy Regional Youth Caucus Representative of Sri Lanka for the Commonwealth Youth programme. She did an excellent job as a member of the Youth Led Task Force for the Commonwealth youth Forum 2013 to bring all youth leaders across The Commonwealth to a place where they can raise their voices against various issues. She was a member of the task force for the Asia Regional Commonwealth Youth Ministers’ Meeting (AsR-CYMM) in India. She was the chairperson of the Young leaders’ forum of AsR- CYMM which opened up an equal platform for young persons from Asia to exchange their thoughts with Ministers and senior officials. She is an active member of many functioning organizations in Sri Lanka which work toward youth development and a former senator of Sri Lanka Youth Parliament. She holds a bachelor’s degree in physical science and following her masters in Analytical chemistry at University of Colombo. She works as a business analyst for a reputed private company in Sri Lanka.
Royden Anthony Kyle Beharry is currently the Regional Youth Ambassador for the Americas, Canada and the Caribbean and holds the position of Senior Project Officer at the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Religious Affairs in Grenada.

He has a major responsibility in ensuring that all of the Nation’s Youth Programmes are effectively executed. Under his leadership, the Chantimelle Crusaders, an organisation he founded went on to receive the First Caribbean bank Unsung Heroes award and national recognition for their role in Youth development.

Mr. Beharry is an excellent networker who remains committed and extremely passionate about the advancement of the Commonwealth Youth agenda. At present he is a pursuing a Bachelor Degree in Youth Development Work at the University of the West Indies.

While Marketing, Management and political science sits heavily on his heart, he chose to accomplish the degree in an area which allow for the development of one’s country’s greatest asset - our young people. While this is a longer route of his studies it will allow him to remain competitive and viable across a number of fields and opportunities available throughout many sectors and facets of a country.

At Mac Donald College, he was the Head Boy among all the prefects geared at providing leadership to both the prefects and students but also represented the institution at many seminars, forums and meetings. With his passion for youth and community development he now holds the position of Chairman of the Chantimelle Crusaders Youth Organisation, Chairman of the St. Patrick Youth Committee.

Harry James Olikwailafa (Solomon Islands) Pacific - Regional Representative

Email: harryjames662@gmail.com

Harry is a youth worker and Secretary of the Pacific Youth Council. Former Solomon Island youth representative to the Commonwealth. Harry is a recognized volunteer and committed young person dedicating his time to working with young unemployed people, those involved in anti-social behaviours and gradually succeeding in rallying nearly 100 young people to be engaged in youth activities especially the Duke of Edinburgh Award in his community.
Samarakoon Wathsala (Sri Lanka) Special Interests Groups-Representative

Email: shirouoc@gmail.com

Shiromi Wathsala Samarakoon is an energetic, ambitious youth worker from Sri Lanka who has anchored her work within national and international levels. She graduated from the University of Colombo specializing Demography and currently has engaged with her master degree in Public Administration and Management. Shiromi is the Representative for Special Interest groups of the First Commonwealth Youth Council established in 2013. As the representative for special interest groups of the Commonwealth Youth Council Shiromi is responsible in representing the voice of marginalized and special interest youth of the Commonwealth. She organized and facilitated several youth exchange programs while creating a space for rural youth to engage in international youth activities. Organizing international sports programmes for youth with disabilities, Commonwealth Day Celebrations, Awareness Programs and Panel Discussions are some of the activities initiated during her tenure at the Commonwealth Youth Council. She has done a considerable work in promoting Commonwealth in national and international level.

Shiromi has been committing for the society from grass root to the international level for years. Especially she does number of programs engaging with her local community focusing on youth in the areas of youth empowerment, leadership, sports and culture. She is a mentor of the Queen’s Young Leaders Program and also was a former senator of the second Sri Lanka Youth Parliament. She Co-Founded and works as the Secretary of Sri Lanka Physically Challenged Sports Organization, Secretary of Human Wing International, International Coordinator of Kite Sri Lanka Organization, Coordinator for marginalized and special interest groups of the Commonwealth Youth Network of Sri Lanka, Disciplinary Member of Attanagalla Divisional Federation of Youth Clubs. Shiromi as the co-founder and the secretary of Sri Lanka Physically Challenged Sports Organization has contributed to make a remarkable change in her local communities while removing negative image of the society on people with disabilities.
Ahmed Adamu and Messeh Leone reviewing the inauguration speech in Sri Lanka in 2013.

THANK YOU!