COMMONWEALTH YOUTH COUNCIL

PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN 2015/2017

“Inculcating Global Values Towards a Young Commonwealth”

“No-one is born a good citizen, no nation is born a democracy. Rather both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth, severs its lifeline…”

- Kofi Annan
Introduction

Inculcating Global Values Towards a Young Commonwealth

The proposed Strategic Plan 2015/2017 is an important phase towards realizing a empowered Commonwealth Youth Council. Endorsed in 2011, with an inaugural executive in 2013 the Commonwealth Youth Council is a global platform that mainstreams young peoples ideas and action in creating a better global environment for youths.

Emboldened by the great strides made in the last 2 years, the proposed strategic plan reaffirms the commitment of the Commonwealth Youth Council to a vision of empowered and engaged young people working for a better world. This plan is premised on a progressive and inclusive Commonwealth Youth Community that shares a common commitment towards building a better world for all youths.

The proposed plan was guided by the Strategic Plan 2014/2016, which focused on engaging and empowering young people. The strategic outcome looked at young people being more integrated, valued and enabled to contribute to the political, social, economic and environment agenda. The next 2 years are expected to be challenging with continued uncertainties in the global economy, societal change and political shifts.

Moving forward, the proposed strategic plan provides a critical platform for the Commonwealth Youth Community to make vital policy shifts and invent new approaches to address new and existing challenges. Driven by the Commonwealth values, in the space of the next two years the Commonwealth Youth Community will transition to a sustainable, transformative and inclusive society.
Key Strategic Thrusts

We have defined eight strategic thrusts to help Commonwealth Youth Council stay ahead of the challenges and opportunities of the rapid-changing global and political landscape. These thrusts aim to comprehensively address the end-to-end needs of the Commonwealth Youth Community.

1. **Enhancing inclusive development towards an equitable society** (Social Cohesion)

2. **Promoting global values, peace & reconciliation within the Commonwealth & the world.** (Peace & Security)

3. **Strengthening global youth empowerment for all.** (Youth Policy & Youth Work)

4. **Enabling Quality & Inclusive Education** (Quality & Inclusive Education)

5. **Re-engineering social entrepreneurship to support global economies** (Youth Entrepreneurship for Economic Growth)

6. **Accelerating Commonwealth Youth Employability** (Decent Employment)

7. **Pursuing green growth for sustainability** (Protection of Natural Resources/Climate Change)

8. **Building Disaster Resilient Communities** (Disaster Risk Reduction, Resilience & Recovery)
Game Changers

We have also identified six game changers, which are innovative approaches to accelerate the development and implementation of the strategic plan, that once successfully applied will influence the trajectory of youth development and empowerment throughout the Commonwealth.

1. **Inclusion;** recognizing heterogeneity that exists at all levels.

2. **Engagement;** allowing participation & ownership to deliver the goals of youth development & empowerment.

3. **Potential;** unlocking potentials with productivity investments.

4. **Empowerment;** uplifting developing countries & strengthening global/local institutions.

5. **Collaborations;** enabling industry-led initiatives & private-public partnerships.

6. **Action;** translating innovation & ideas to growth.

Cross Cutting Sessions

1. Adding Global Value.... #WhatNext?

2. Role of Young People in Achieving the SDGs

3. Commonwealth Charter: Article 12... #WhatNext?

4. Climate Change – A peace & security issue
KEY FOCUS AREAS

POLITICAL

Enhancing inclusive development towards an equitable society. (Social Cohesion)

The Commonwealth Youth Council will be committed to ensuring equitable opportunities for all segments of the society in line with the Sustainable Development Goals/ Post 2015 Development Agenda. All member countries will benefit from better access to quality education & training, better employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Some of the key initiatives include:

**Uplifting Vulnerable Communities:**

The CYC will focus on outcome-based support and productivity-linked support to communities of developing countries. This includes programmes on entrepreneurship, skills training, and technology adoption.

**Target Segments:**

The CYC will strengthen institutions with integrated support systems; implement youth leadership & entrepreneurship programmes; increase female participation; improve child care and child protection and enhance employment and training for persons with special abilities (disabilities).

**Balanced Growth:**

The CYC will embark on transforming developing countries by working to create employment opportunities, enhancing developed-developing linkages increasing access to youth resources across the Commonwealth. Respective Country Youth Councils will be empowered by the CYC to support and implement youth initiatives in their local community.
KEY FOCUS AREAS

POLITICAL

Promoting global values, peace & reconciliation within the Commonwealth & the world. (Peace & Security)

The Commonwealth Youth Council acknowledges the importance of good values in maintaining global peace. We believe in delivering the following initiatives that will promote better wellbeing and maintain peace among the countries and the world as a whole:

**Peace Youth Award**

The CYC will identify individuals who take initiatives in promoting peace and efforts on reconciliation/social cohesion. This Youth Award will recognize the individuals as peace ambassadors in their respective countries/region.

**Global Values Festival**

The CYC will organize regional festivals that will organize values driven activities, which will include cultural activities, social initiatives & advocacy roadshows.

**CYC Peace Volunteer Collaboration**

The CYC will work with institutions that advocate peace and improve the lives of people around the world to provide volunteer opportunities to work directly with communities on pressing issues with insights of international experience, cross-cultural understanding and even learning of a foreign language. These collaborations can be from a range; in the government, nonprofit, academic and private institutions.
KEY FOCUS AREAS

SOCIAL

Strengthening global youth empowerment for all. (Youth Policy & Youth Work)

As we move towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (Post 2015 Development Agenda), it is important that youths are enabled to take up responsibility in monitoring and implementing the SDG’s. This would also see a proactive involvement in good governance and participation in policy-making discussions. Some of the initiatives include:

SDG Task Force & War Room:

The CYC is determined to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (Post 2015 Development Agenda). This task force will come up with metrics to monitor the development goals. War Rooms will also be initiated to involve participation from all groups and effectively deliver contents of the development goals.

CYC Country Secretariats

The CYC will work towards having Country Secretariats to help support youth activities locally. The secretariats will work with their respective regional directors in promoting CYC initiatives within the local community. Youth campaigns can be effectively advocated through the local secretariats.

CYC Summer Camps

The CYC will organize a summer camp regionally, seeking participation among the Commonwealth countries. The summer camp will envision areas of leadership, social empowerment activities to address local issues & cross-cultural exchange.
KEY FOCUS AREAS

SOCIAL

Enabling Quality & Inclusive Education.
(Quality & Inclusive Education)

The CYC realizes the need to accelerate human capital and one of the means is by education. Thus, we need to ensure that each and everyone are accessible to quality education. The CYC will promote quality and inclusive education through the following initiatives:

Commonwealth Education Think Tank
The CYC will bridge connections with the Commonwealth Student Associations & Commonwealth Scholars in participating with education policy makers to contribute to better education policies. Policy dialogue between countries and across a range of education stakeholders contributes to developing and implementing effective education policies. It is essential that these policies are discussed in the broader political arena and connected to other sectors and policy issues, such as employment, health, finance and family, among others. CYC will develop a mechanism to facilitate dialogues through consultations, research and knowledge-sharing platforms.

Awareness Campaigns
Increased advocacy efforts help to accelerate progress towards the achievement of quality and inclusive education for all by holding the commonwealth community to its commitments. The awareness campaigns can be done in communities whereby issues of education are most pressings. This would include governments, multilateral and intergovernmental agencies, civil society, parliamentarians and the private sector. Also, CYC will identify ambassadors to advocate for good education. Campaigns can also be organized in conjunction with International Days (World Teachers’ Day, International Literacy Day).
KEY FOCUS AREAS

ECONOMY

Reengineering social entrepreneurship to support global economies.
(Youth Entrepreneurship for Economic Growth)

It is important to catalyze the entrepreneurial ecosystem within the Commonwealth, bringing together the abundant resources from partners and communities alike, and to develop entrepreneurs of enduring, high growth startups that will make a positive impact at a regional or global scale. The CYC will have a social entrepreneurship secretariat that will facilitate social entrepreneurship with the following mandates:

Create And Support An Entrepreneurial Community

The Secretariat will support and foster strong communities where entrepreneurs are able to easily connect and share their ideas and solutions with each other.

Enhance the Startup Ecosystem

The secretariat will work towards releasing an academy for startup education, seed accelerator programs and provide qualified entrepreneurs with regional and global exposure.

Expose & Inspire!

The CYC Social Entrepreneurship Community intends to create a series of educational content about how startups are playing a significant role in solving real problems in the world, and reveal the entrepreneurs who are driving these innovations. These role models will promote entrepreneurial interests among youths within the Commonwealth.
ECONOMY

Accelerating Commonwealth Youth Employability (Decent Employment)

The CYC takes seriously the concerns on youth unemployment rate; it is crucial that a mechanism is designed to improve work productivity and call for more job opportunities that require skilled workers. Technical & Vocational training will be focused to shift towards industry-led programmes to produce the skilled talents to meet industry needs. The quality of trainings will be benchmarked to develop talents with both the knowledge and skills, ethics and morality, to thrive in a globally competitive and dynamic environment. Key initiatives are:

Technical & Vocational Training

The CYC will partner with industries to provide skill trainings to youths throughout the Commonwealth. These partnerships will be across the entire value chain from student recruitment, through to curriculum design, delivery and job placement. The technical and vocational training keep youths well informed of the opportunities the trainings can provide and view the trainings as an attractive pathway.

Seed Grant Competition for Start-ups

The CYC will instill the start-up culture among youths by organizing a competition for start-ups. The seed funding will enable youths to initiate start-up ideas. The winners of the competition will be matched with corporate leaders who would help to mentor the start-ups/ invest in them.
KEY FOCUS AREAS

ENVIRONMENT

Pursuing green growth for sustainability
(Protection of Natural Resources/ Climate Change)

As we approach the globalized era, green growth has become more important than ever. Most countries globally are grappling with the challenge of balancing a growing population and demand, with a natural environment that is increasingly under stress. In the global context of increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, adopting green growth is now an imperative. CYC’s is committed to renew and increase its commitment to the environment and long-term sustainability. The approaches will be centered at the following initiatives:

Roundtable on Climate Change

CYC will host a series on roundtable to address climate change issues, which will result in a declaration that will be submitted to the Commonwealth Head of Government on their views, ideas and solutions on climate change.

“Save Our Environment” Roadshow

CYC will organize a campaign that would advocate green growth trajectory in the respective countries. Four aspects of the roadshow will be on the need for reduction on detrimental impact of socio-economic activities, promotion of natural capitals including forested areas, biodiversity and water resources as well as its ecosystems, is valued and sustainably managed; protection of development gains thus ensuring wellbeing of people across generations and energy efficiency in line with awareness of renewable energy.
KEY FOCUS AREAS

ENVIRONMENT

Building Disaster Resilient Communities
(Disaster Risk Reduction, Resilience & Recovery)

Disaster Risk Reduction is a systematic approach to identifying, assessing and reducing the risks of disaster. It aims to reduce socioeconomic vulnerabilities to disaster as well as dealing with the environmental and other hazards that trigger them. A focus on resilience means putting greater emphasis on what communities can do for themselves and how to strengthen their capacities, rather than concentrating on their vulnerability to disaster or environmental shocks and stresses, or their needs in an emergency. It is important that youths work hand in hand with the community to ensure initiatives planned fits the need of the local community.

Disaster Knowledge & Education Awareness Campaign

Disaster relief campaigns play an important role in educating youths and the public in the appropriate measures in handling disaster events. The proposed local secretariats can collaborate with skilled individuals to carry out activities that help develop disaster resilient communities.
Some of the proposed activities include:
• Public awareness, knowledge and skills
• Information management and sharing
• Education and training
• Instilling cultures, attitudes, motivation
• Learning and research

CYC Local Emergency Response Team

The establishment of a local response team will expose youths to an environment of challenges but will inculcate life values that would mold them to become community centric youths. The team will be also strategizing crowd-funding recovery efforts with support of the Commonwealth Youth Council.
Commonwealth beyond 2015

The proposed strategic plan not only marks the culmination of a 2-year journey towards a Stronger Commonwealth; it also sets the stage for the next horizon of growth. Post the proposed strategic plan will be to raise the bar higher on the Commonwealth Youths development prospects along the four dimensions, namely social, political, economy and environment.

The vision is for all the Commonwealth Society that has progressive economies, inclusive development and transformative societies within a sustainable environment. The Commonwealth community will be able to participate in and benefit from the growth of the Commonwealth and rise to an elevated stage of empowerment. We will also see plural societies be passionate stewards of the environment and no longer see environmental protection as a trade-off to a strong economy, making the world a beautiful place to live for all.

These aspirations are neither exhaustive nor conclusive, but are intended to set in motion the prospect for further engagement and serious deliberation. Essentially, the Commonwealth Youth Council envisions a strong sovereign institution that is progressive and inclusive and where people treasure unity and celebrate diversity.

“ We come from different backgrounds and ethnicities, and speak many languages. But we speak with one voice – that of wanting a better future for our generation. It is the voice of hope, of solidarity. It is the voice that says we are one. “
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