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## COP 26-Side Event:

# A Commonwealth Call for Action on Living Lands: Accelerating Action against Climate Change, Desertification and Biodiversity Loss Across the 3 Rio Conventions

3 November 2021; 15:00 - 16:00

Commonwealth Pavilion, UNFCCC Blue Zone, Scottish Event Campus, Glasgow

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## Background

The Commonwealth Secretariat has launched its work programme on the **Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands (CALL)** which aims to address the effects of unsustainable land use and increasing climatic extremes on food and water security, the destruction of soils, forests and biodiversity, and the associated negative impacts on social and economic livelihoods of people.

The Call to Action on Living Lands recognises the need for countries to work at the conjunction of biodiversity, climate change and land degradation to synergise the implementation of commitments agreed to under the Rio Conventions – United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Recognising the remarkable support behind the Living Lands work programme, the Secretariat has started consultations with member countries with the view to propose a **Commonwealth Living Lands Charter**. The proposed charter will strengthen the leadership role played by the Commonwealth in this space. It will also serve as an agreement among the 54 member countries to work towards sustainable land management by integrating the targets of the Rio Conventions with the support of the Secretariat and other financial institutions and developmental agencies. The Secretariat already has competitive advantage in convening collaborative partnerships with institutions working across the three areas covered by the Rio conventions.

This closed, high-level event will focus on establishing political consensus among the Commonwealth countries on the need to mainstream action around land and catalyse momentum behind the proposed Living Lands Charter ahead of the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. The event will take the form of a facilitated dialogue with statements from Commonwealth member leaders around some of the key issues that will be addressed by CALL. The Secretary General will moderate this event.

Invitations to the event will be restricted to high-level representatives of the Commonwealth and organisations like the UNFCCC, UNCCD and UNCBD who are critical to carrying this work forward.

## Objectives

The main objective for this side event is:

- Catalysing political momentum ahead of the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

In addition to the above, the event will contribute to:

- Establishing the leadership role of the Commonwealth Secretariat to coordinate resilient and sustainable land management in member countries by integrating the targets of the 3 Rio Conventions;
- Raising awareness of the Commonwealth Secretariat's work programme on Call to Action on Living Lands in support of the proposed Living Lands Charter; and
- Identify opportunities for joint action and synergy among Commonwealth member states and the Rio Conventions.

## Desired Outcomes

- Agreement among members of government on the advantages of integrative approach to implementing the 3 Rio Conventions;
- Unity among member country heads towards establishing a Charter around land; and
- Stronger partnerships and renewed commitment between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Rio Conventions to continue working collectively in the execution of the work programme of the Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands.

## Agenda

Timing	Item
<b>Inaugural Opening</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Moderator:</b> Dr Ruth Kattumuri, Senior Director, Economic, Youth and Social Development Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat</li></ul>	
<b>15:00 - 15:10</b> (10 mins)	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General of the Commonwealth</li></ul>
<b>15:10 - 15:40</b> (30 mins)	<b>Advancing Partnerships to Enhance National Development and Integrate the Rio Conventions Towards Achieving Climate, Biodiversity and Land Degradation Neutrality Targets</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• H.E. Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia</li><li>• Hon. Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda</li><li>• Hon. Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji</li><li>• H.E. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia</li><li>• H.E. Baroness Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General, Commonwealth Secretariat</li></ul>
<b>15:40 - 15:50</b> (10 mins)	<b>Closing Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. David Cooper, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNCBD</li><li>• Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary, UNCCD (Video)</li></ul>
<b>15:50 - 16:00</b> (10 mins)	<b>Vote of Thanks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General of the Commonwealth</li></ul>