



2018

Biennial Report of the Commonwealth Secretary-General



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2018



The Commonwealth

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1

Introduction

Putting 'wealth' back into the
Commonwealth and the 'common'
back into wealth.



My first task as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth was to undertake a review and plan for radical reorganisation of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Our distinctive strength derives from being responsive to the needs of our membership, being able to convene and consult, and being a knowledge centre.

This report shows how the Commonwealth is stepping up in fresh ways and in new configurations to tackle a range of needs identified by member countries.

My 2018 biennial report on attainments and progress achieved in the preceding two years is being presented with something new: a companion website that tells the stories and introduces the people behind the results. This is entirely fitting in view of the emphasis throughout the period covered by the report on reform and renewal of the Commonwealth Secretariat, and on doing things in new ways in the Commonwealth more generally.

Visit the Biennial Report microsite:
<https://biennialreport2018.thecommonwealth.org/>

The microsite provides illustrative examples and stories of personal involvement in Commonwealth work. These convey in compelling ways the very positive difference our interventions and assistance make in the lives of the people and institutions of our member countries.

Most of all, the interlinked online format offers the options of taking a broad overview, or of finding out more about our work and its impact through interconnected layers of progressive disclosure, with graphics and videos that bring our results alive. This reflects our collective determination to adopt less compartmentalised approaches to serving the needs of member countries.

My first task as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth was to undertake a review and plan for radical reorganisation of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Our distinctive strength derives from being responsive to the needs of our membership, being able to convene and consult, and being a knowledge centre.

Drawing on these assets and abilities, we have moved forward with delivery of a range of important new initiatives

in the fulfilment of mandates delivered by Heads of Government and the responsibilities they entrusted to me.

During my first year in office, the Commonwealth's Climate Finance Access Hub opened for business. Its specialist advisers are now assisting government ministries across the Commonwealth. They are helping prepare bids to fund projects for climate change adaptation and mitigation, including the creation of greener technologies and the construction of storm defences. We also launched a Commonwealth initiative to identify and implement innovative and sustainable ways of tackling climate change and to bolster human security by using the regenerative model of development.

Just how necessary these interventions are has sadly become abundantly clear over recent months. We see mudslides and desertification in Africa, floods in Asia, storms in Europe, cyclones in the Pacific and unprecedented devastation caused by hurricanes in the Caribbean. These catastrophes have left thousands dead, displaced millions and destroyed entire economies. They demonstrate that we are dealing with harsh realities, not theoretical possibilities.

Building resilience and overcoming vulnerabilities applies in social, economic and political contexts as much as in relation to the physical environment and infrastructure. This report shows how the Commonwealth is stepping up in fresh ways and in new configurations to tackle a range of needs identified by member countries. Our 'Faith in the Commonwealth' initiative is an example of this.

**BUILDING RESILIENCE AND
OVERCOMING VULNERABILITIES
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The political values and principles of the Commonwealth Charter, including on separation of powers as expressed in the Latimer House Principles, remain a primary area of focus for the support I offer through my Good Offices, and my work alongside leaders to resolve conflict through engagement and dialogue.

The creation within the Commonwealth Secretariat of a Countering Violent Extremism Unit is already proving of immense value. Drawing together and disseminating collective Commonwealth experience and expertise can aid member countries in devising strategies to address underlying causes and drivers of extremism, and towards building more harmonious and cohesive communities on the foundations of respect and understanding.

Since I was appointed Secretary-General, I have often said that my focus is on putting 'wealth' back into the Commonwealth and the 'common' back into wealth. This depends on encouraging enterprise that creates employment and inclusive prosperity, which are the foundations for equitable development in which all can share.

We advance these through Commonwealth support for trade and economic empowerment, in particular by building on the 'Commonwealth advantage'. Similar and interoperable regulatory frameworks and legal systems greatly ease business, and they accelerate very substantially the rate at which member countries can reap the beneficial impact of this Commonwealth effect.

To capitalise on this, and as an early component of our Innovation Hub, we established the Commonwealth Office

for Civil and Criminal Justice Reform.

This provides ready access to toolkits and drafting assistance, with model laws and templates for legislative and regulatory reform on climate change, human rights and a wide range of other issues.

Our aim for this biennial report is to present a clear vision and narrative. Stories about the people behind our work or involved in delivering it help show in ways that can be readily appreciated the remarkable scope and impact of work undertaken or co-ordinated by the Commonwealth Secretariat. Our officers and staff work diligently and with great professionalism as a team to make a difference in the lives and livelihoods of the 2.4 billion people we serve.

Although our resources are constrained, which results in challenges of capacity, we remain alert and agile in responding to the individual and collective expectations of member countries. In a swiftly changing global context, we innovate and combine in practical ways to answer the entrenched and emerging needs of all the people of the Commonwealth.

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Reform and Renewal

The Commonwealth Secretariat has taken bold steps to become a dynamic organisation to serve and support its membership in the 21st century.

The ambition is to deliver even greater benefits to the Commonwealth's 2.4 billion citizens, working efficiently and sustainably through stronger partnerships.



Performance highlights

The Commonwealth Secretariat underwent a radical restructuring.

The new structure is aligned with the approved strategy. It is flatter, joined-up and oriented to delivery.

A system of smart portfolio management practices has also been established, with an emphasis on quality, professional project management and value for money.

The Commonwealth Secretariat entered a new era of reform and revitalisation in April 2016, based on a mandate given by Heads of Government to the Secretary-General at the time of her appointment.

The goal is to rejuvenate and reshape the Commonwealth as a vibrant and modern entity, which serves its membership more efficiently, effectively, economically and sustainably.

A series of affirmative and carefully co-ordinated actions has resulted in radical changes, tangible improvements and critical enhancements. This has helped raise the organisation's profile and visibility, as well as the impact of its work.

A new, outcomes-based, Strategic Plan to 2020/21 is in place. This provides direction and aligns the Commonwealth Secretariat's medium-term objectives with the Charter of the Commonwealth, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For the first time, the Commonwealth Secretariat has developed an annual Delivery Plan, setting out short-term targets and indicators of success. There are also guidelines for delivering, measuring and reporting outcomes, designed to enhance transparency.

Following approval of the Strategic and Delivery Plans, the Commonwealth Secretariat underwent a radical restructuring. The new structure is aligned with the approved strategy. It is flatter, joined-up and oriented to delivery. A system of smart portfolio management practices has also been established, with an emphasis on quality, professional project management and value for money.

At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2015 in Malta, Commonwealth organisations were directed to work more closely, and the Commonwealth Secretariat has created a joint space for selected organisations to come together for that purpose. This is fostering closer collaboration. The Secretary-General has started a structured and periodic dialogue with Commonwealth organisations to strengthen partnerships. This has helped create synergy and coherence in the delivery of services to members.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has delivered impressive results despite also running this ambitious reform and refresh programme. The Good Offices of the Secretary-General has been reactivated to play a diplomatic role, when required. The Commonwealth Secretariat's values-based work has helped strengthen institutions for governance and peace in member countries. It has signed up to the International Aid Transparency Initiative to make its work more transparent and accountable. Under this initiative, it has pledged to publish data on projects and spending on all items with a value of more than £500.

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to thrive in the areas of its comparative advantage, thought leadership and innovation.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is working closely with small and vulnerable states in the areas of resilience, climate change and debt management. It is supporting Commonwealth youth networks to maximise the potential of 641 million young people. It has established a virtual Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform to support Commonwealth countries in delivering access to justice and promoting sustainable development. This is achieved through toolkits and templates to develop best practice and guides, model laws, regulations, policies and institutional systems.

Partnerships have been agreed with international, national and regional organisations in both the public and the private sectors to leverage the Commonwealth Secretariat's modest resources.

It is venturing into new areas such as regenerative development to mitigate the effects of climate change. The development of the Commonwealth Blue Charter represents an opportunity to address ocean management and governance, drawing on the Principles of the Commonwealth Charter to create a five-point framework of:

1. Sustainable development and protection of the marine environment
2. Recognition of small and vulnerable states
3. Inclusion of young people and civil society
4. Human rights and dignity
5. Good governance, justice and peace

Tangible results

There has been a turnaround in the corporate management of the organisation. The Commonwealth Secretariat was in a difficult financial situation in 2016, and the membership was concerned over issues including outdated financial management practices, a pension deficit and chronic under-spending. New institutional practices have been introduced, resulting in:

- A leaner and more agile organisational structure, with less bureaucracy: The number of staff is down from 295 in June 2016 to 223 currently and the three deputy secretary-general positions are vacant – to be filled only as required for achieving organisational objectives. Each director has direct access to the Secretary-General, resulting in speedier decision-making.
- A joined-up organisation: The new structure breaks the old silos and has created more meaningful clusters. The Governance and Peace Directorate brings together the Political Division, Rule of Law, Public Administration and Good Offices under one roof, while the Economics, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate brings Youth, Health, Education, Climate Change, Economic Policy and Small States under one cluster. The Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate comprises Oceans and Natural Resources, Trade Policy, Trade Competitiveness and Hub and Spokes. The structure has allowed the directors to act as change



agents to break silos to deliver their directorate's commitments in the Board-approved Delivery Plan.

- An organisational structure better aligned with the Strategic and Delivery Plan that enhances accountability and hence the potential for delivery of expected results.
- An emphasis on delivering at scale: The way the Commonwealth Secretariat operates is also changing. In addition to delivering on agreed results, each division is expected to convert the knowledge and experience generated in implementing a policy/project into a toolkit. These toolkits are intended to help scale up successful experience in a cost-effective and expeditious manner. A catalogue of Commonwealth toolkits is being prepared.
- An emphasis on co-ordinated delivery: The Commonwealth Secretariat is introducing team targets for directorates to collaborate and jointly deliver

results. Incentives are now being provided to work across directorates. Most of the Commonwealth Secretariat's work requires a multi-sectoral approach and incentives for co-operation are being integrated into the performance management system. To ensure the Commonwealth Secretariat's work is informed by best practice, an Innovation Hub has been launched to generate, capture and catalogue innovations and best practices in the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth.

- A strong and effective monitoring and evaluation system: A new and revamped Performance Monitoring and Information System is in place to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of programmes, projects and policy deliverables. As part of a learning organisation, evaluations of country operations and projects are being undertaken to see what works and what does not. This learning is being fed back into operational cycles.
- Stronger financial management: The financial accounts of the Commonwealth Secretariat are in good order and a strong financial control system is in place. As a consequence, significant savings have been realised in procurement, travel and other operating costs – the so-called 'smart underspend'.

Despite prudent corporate controls and risk management, though, the challenge of dwindling financial resources remains.

The Commonwealth continues to reform at a fast pace. It is becoming even more valuable to its members and attractive to non-members. The Gambia

re-joined the Commonwealth family in February 2018. Another application for membership is at an advanced stage of consideration and indications of interest have come from five other countries.

Improving the Commonwealth's visibility with external audiences

During the period under review, the Commonwealth adopted a data-driven approach to measuring communication results and was able to demonstrate solid gains in visibility. The Communications Division now publishes a Monthly Visibility Report that tracks key performance indicators such as visitors to the organisation's website, traffic on the Commonwealth's social media channels and the amount of coverage the Commonwealth generates in mainstream media: newspapers, television and radio stations.

The strongest results have been in social media. The Commonwealth had 18,000 Twitter followers at the end of the last biennium. Today, it has more than 55,000 – up more than 300 per cent. Facebook results have been even stronger. At the end of the last biennium, 14,000 visitors 'liked' our pages on Facebook. Today, the Commonwealth has 67,000 'page likes' – an increase of nearly 500 per cent.

The Communications Division redesigned the organisation's website during the biennium, adding a dynamic mission statement to the top of the home page in order to place news about the Commonwealth in context. The redesigned site also includes a

look at the Commonwealth's work by member country and a timeline to provide historical context, holding key documents such as CHOGM outcome statements over the years. On average, the website receives 134,000 visitors per month. That represents an average increase in visitors of 13 per cent per month, year-on-year (comparing July 2017 with July 2016, for example).

News about the Commonwealth in newspapers and on radio and television surged after Patricia Scotland took office as Secretary-General. In her first 100 days, the Secretary-General organised summits to address climate change, tackle corruption and end domestic violence. She strengthened the Commonwealth's partnership with Common Purpose to listen to the voices of young people and established Commonwealth House, bringing the Commonwealth Games Federation, the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum together under one roof with the Commonwealth Secretariat. Today, there are an average of 1,000 articles per month about the Commonwealth in mainstream media, as measured by the independent company that monitors media on the organisation's behalf. That represents a year-on-year increase of approximately 20 per cent.

The Commonwealth's publications reached a wider audience during 2015–17. Downloads of publications, working papers and books, from the Commonwealth iLibrary increased from an annual rate of 65,000 annually to more than 100,000 today – an improvement of 54 per cent.



Malta 2015

3

Delivering on CHOGM 2015 Mandates

Good progress has been made on CHOGM 2015 mandates, reaffirming the commitment of the Commonwealth to take a leading role in the global response to major issues of our time, including climate change, sustainable development and violent extremism.



Performance highlights

- Launched the Climate Finance Access Hub. Seven advisers are now in post. Tonga and Nauru are next in line to receive advisers.
- Launched the Countering Violent Extremism Unit with a pilot project in the Caribbean, training to combat hate speech and a series of toolkits.
- Launched the Small States Centre of Excellence in Valetta, Malta.
- Published *The Judicial Resource Manual on Violence Against Women and Girls*.
- Held the first meeting of the High Level Group to review governance arrangements of the Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with several international organisations to formalise and deepen the Secretariat's working relationship with them.

Overview

Commonwealth Heads of Government convened from 27 to 29 November 2015 in Malta, where they addressed issues such as climate change, sustainable development, trade and investment, migration and countering violent extremism (CVE) and radicalisation. They also deliberated on safeguarding the interests of Commonwealth small states.

At the meeting, Heads gave specific mandates to the Commonwealth Secretariat to support member countries in responding to the priority issues discussed.

The Commonwealth has made significant progress towards achieving the agreed mandates. Key developments include the following:

- Seven advisers for the Climate Finance Access Hub are now in post, with expansions underway in Tonga and Nauru.
- The newly established Commonwealth CVE Unit began work with a pilot project in the Caribbean, training to combat hate speech and a series of toolkits.
- A soft launch for the Small States Centre of Excellence took place in Valetta, held by the Government of Malta in December 2017.
- The *Judicial Resource Manual on Violence Against Women and Girls* for the Asia Region was launched in November 2017.

- The first meeting of the High Level Group convened in February 2018 to review the governance arrangements of the Commonwealth Secretariat.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to work closely with other Commonwealth and international organisations. A number of memoranda of understanding (MoUs) have been drafted and signed.

Peace and security

Countering violent extremism

Heads welcomed the newly established Commonwealth Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Unit and mandated it to advance the Commonwealth's role in international efforts to counter extremism, especially through civil society networks and education.

The CVE Unit has undertaken successful visits to Trinidad and Tobago, Tanzania and Cameroon to help shape the development of its offerings to these and other member countries.

The Unit has also undertaken a successful pilot project, 'Portraits of the Caribbean', which brought together 22 young leaders from across the Caribbean in July 2017 and focused on developing strategic communications skills for young community leaders in the region. The project was aimed at developing both online and offline communications skills to support efforts to build resilience among vulnerable communities in the region.

The Unit participated in two further projects in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat's Youth Division and Council of Europe on countering hate speech and a student leadership programme with the Association of Commonwealth Universities. It has also undertaken dedicated CVE workshops and seminars, helping establish the Commonwealth as a credible actor in the CVE environment.

Civil paths to peace

Heads reaffirmed the relevance of Commonwealth solutions, including recommendations in the Commonwealth report, *Civil Paths to Peace*.

Schools engagement through Commonwealth Class to advance understanding of Commonwealth Charter values has been carried forward as a British Council project, advised and supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat. By the end of June 2016, 12,252 schools had been reached through face-to-face and online activities. By the end of March 2017, this figure had risen to 31,222 schools, significantly exceeding the 20,000 target.

The Faith in the Commonwealth project is being piloted in Kenya, Bangladesh and Trinidad and Tobago. This partnership between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Khalili Foundation addresses the conditions that lead to violent extremism and champions global citizenship education.

Migration

Heads underlined the importance of safe, orderly and regular migration, ensuring full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants, refugees and displaced persons.

Owing to budget constraints, the Commonwealth Secretariat was not able to prioritise work under this mandate. Progress was limited to convening a side event with the Government of Kenya on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2016; the Secretary-General's intervention during the UNGA High-Level Plenary Meeting on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and

Migrants, also in September 2016; and participation in a Senior Officials Meeting in February 2017, which followed up the 2015 Valetta Summit on Migration.

Good governance

The Commonwealth agreed to work together to strengthen international, regional and national responses to corruption, including through enhanced transparency and collaboration among law enforcement bodies.

The Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre in Botswana continued to deliver programmes to build capacity in anti-corruption agencies (ACAs) in Africa. Since its

launch, the Centre has benefited nearly 20 ACAs and trained nearly 7,000 personnel.

Programmes delivered by the centre cover:

- Leadership and management
- Practical skills for prevention and control
- Investigation, prosecution and professional ethics
- Monitoring and evaluation to measure and assess the impact of anti-corruption initiatives

The Commonwealth Secretariat, in partnership with the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre and South Africa's Special Investigation

NEW PARTNERS

1. Association of Commonwealth Universities	2017
2. The B Team USA	2016
3. Brunei Darussalam (Third Country Training Programme)	2017
4. Brunei Darussalam (Third Country Training Programme)	2018
5. Central Bank of Belize (funding) (Debt Management Unit)	2017
6. Cloudburst Foundation (Climate Finance Access Hub)	2017
7. Hub and Spokes Zambia	2017
8. Khalili Foundation (education)	2017
9. Malta (Small States Centre of Excellence)	2016
10. Omidyar Network USA	2016
11. The Royal Society Charity	2016
12. UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (CVE)	2017
13. UK Department for International Development	2017
14. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	2017
15. United Nations Environment Programme Small-Scale Funding Agreement	2017



Unit, organised a programme for 20 heads of ACAs in Commonwealth Africa in Pretoria in September 2017. This was aimed at helping heads of anti-corruption authorities better manage law enforcement agencies. The programme highlighted the quality of evidence required for a successful prosecution, and delegates discussed how to gather relevant and admissible evidence for successful prosecution of financial crimes as well as practical modes of confiscation, and asset recovery and forfeitures after successful prosecution of corruption cases. It also focused on leadership and management skills required to lead ACAs to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.

The Commonwealth Secretariat responded to a request by the Zambia Anti-Corruption Commission for a capacity development programme and advisory services to support anti-corruption efforts. The Commonwealth Secretariat also helped build anti-corruption capacity in Grenada through strengthening technical know-how and skills in corruption control. In Mauritius, the Commonwealth Secretariat worked

with senior management staff of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and senior representatives of other law enforcement agencies to strengthen leadership and supervision skills to combat corruption.

Climate change

Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub

Heads agreed the launch of the Climate Finance Access Hub to help Commonwealth small and other climate vulnerable states access climate finance with regional support.

The Hub, hosted by the Government of Mauritius, is now operational. Advisers are in post in Jamaica, Mauritius, Vanuatu, Antigua and Barbuda, Swaziland, Namibia and Barbados. The Hub is in the process of placing advisers in Tonga and Nauru.

Commonwealth Green Finance Facility

Heads welcomed the Commonwealth Green Finance Facility initiative to explore options for mobilising private finance to help fund sustainable infrastructure projects across the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Green Finance Facility is being overseen by the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Discussions were held with the International Finance Corporation and the UK's Department for International Development on completing the next stage feasibility analysis for the Facility. Resource mobilisation efforts are ongoing for the next phase of the work programme.

Trade

Commonwealth Trade Finance Facility

Heads welcomed the launch of the voluntary Commonwealth Trade Finance Facility, initiated in Malta to help augment trade and investment finance. They also welcomed offers of investment and looked forward to its early implementation.

Agreements between the Facility Administrator and the Facility Managers have been finalised. Pledges were made by India (US\$2.5 million), Sri Lanka (\$1.5 million) and Mauritius (\$1 million). Most of the donors have settled their official contributions. It is expected that the Commonwealth Trade Finance Facility will become operational from CHOGM 2018.

Small states

Commonwealth Small States Centre of Excellence

Heads recognised the added value that the Small States Centre of Excellence would bring to small states, and encouraged member countries to support the mobilisation of resources for the centre.

The Small States Centre of Excellence will be formally launched at the Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting on Small States during CHOGM 2018. The Government of Malta has worked in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat to establish the Centre. Malta pledged €100,000 plus in-kind contributions, while the Commonwealth Secretariat allocated £100,000 a year

in seed funding over three years. A technical adviser began a six-month project in Malta to operationalise the Centre in January 2017.

In December 2017, the Government of Malta held a 'soft launch event' for the Centre. They have also recruited a deputy director for the Centre and the technical adviser's contract has been further extended to ensure a smooth transition to full operationalisation.

Open-ended Ministerial Working Group on Small States

Heads affirmed the work of the Working Group to provide global advocacy and coordinate Commonwealth efforts on issues relating to small states.

The Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting on Small States will meet during CHOGM 2018. Outcomes of the meeting will guide global advocacy efforts on prioritised issues for small states.

Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group: A strengthened mandate

Recognising the important role played by CMAG in safeguarding the Commonwealth's fundamental political values, Heads encouraged CMAG to take further steps to implement the strengthened mandate agreed in 2011.

CMAG commended the Secretary-General's engagement with the political leadership in Zambia in August 2017, and noted the ongoing engagement of her Special Envoy to support Zambia's

efforts to address the challenges to its democracy while pursuing its development objectives.

Sustainable development

The Sustainable Development Goals

Heads encouraged special consideration to be given to the role the Commonwealth, through its Charter, can play in implementation of the SDGs. The Commonwealth should support member countries' efforts to obtain resources, technology and capacity-building so developing countries can achieve the SDGs.

The Commonwealth Secretariat initiated a new programme on Diaspora Investment, which responds to members' efforts on SDG 17.3 to mobilise additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources. The results of a Diaspora Investment Survey will be launched during CHOGM 2018. Based on the findings, the Commonwealth Secretariat will work with pilot countries to develop country-specific programmes to leverage diaspora investment.

A workshop was held in South Africa to validate the need for support and map the SDG data gaps and challenges for African small countries. Potential areas of interventions were identified. The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to work closely with the Commonwealth intergovernmental organisations, associated organisations and civil society and professional organisations. In October 2017, the Secretary-General hosted her regular dialogue with Commonwealth accredited

organisations, where she invited them to submit proposals for partnerships with the Commonwealth Secretariat in line with its new Strategic Plan 2017/18–2020/21. Proposals were received from 28 organisations and have been shared with directors for consideration in line with their Delivery Plans.

Long-term debt sustainability

Heads agreed that, in advancing the SDGs, the Commonwealth should provide continued assistance to member countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability, by means of technical advice on institutional strengthening, debt financing, debt strategy formulation and debt restructuring.

The Commonwealth Secretariat continued to provide assistance to member countries, including Cyprus, Barbados, Guyana, The Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago.

Since May 2016, the use of the Commonwealth Secretariat's comprehensive suite of eLearning tools has increased significantly. These tools are designed to facilitate capacity-building of debt management officials in the administration of external and domestic public debt, and the development of medium-term debt management strategies.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is rolling out a new generation of its ground-breaking Debt Recording Management System (CS-DRMS). Now called 'Meridian', the software incorporates advanced and improved functionalities to better address emerging debt management requirements while also taking advantage of the latest state-of-the-art technologies. Meridian is being piloted in five member countries in 2018.



Commonwealth–G20 collaboration

Heads stressed the importance of seeking to strengthen and broaden the Commonwealth's relationship with the G20.

To date, more than 100 officials representing over 50 Commonwealth and Francophonie countries across Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean have engaged directly with the G20 Development Working Group and members of the G20 through the Commonwealth–Francophonie–G20 dialogue.

The Commonwealth–Francophonie–G20 relationship has strengthened markedly in recent years, ensuring developing country perspectives are effectively communicated to the G20. This was heightened by two recent decisions by the G20: to align its agenda to better support the implementation of the SDGs and to enhance policy coherence across the G20 agenda.

In 2016, the outreach programme was designed to highlight some of the highest priorities of Commonwealth and Francophonie developing countries, while actively promoting the overarching themes of the Chinese G20 presidency of promoting inclusiveness and policy coherence.

A successful Commonwealth–Francophonie annual outreach meeting took place in October 2017. Argentina presented on the opportunities and challenges for the G20 during its presidency and reiterated the importance of outreach meetings with the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Secretariat will work to advance international advocacy on various issues, including the concerns of small states.



Blue economy

Heads highlighted the importance of conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resource for sustainable development, and welcomed the prospect of capacity-building partnership activities.

Delivery of legal and technical advice on blue economy implementation is ongoing. Measured progress has been made in the development of ocean policies, regulatory frameworks and finalisation of maritime boundaries.

A draft Commonwealth Blue Charter was shared with member countries in December 2017. Collation of feedback is taking place and will be shared with Heads at CHOGM 2018.

Youth

Empowering young people

Heads reiterated their commitment to empowering young people as partners and agents of change. They agreed to continue supporting youth-led approaches that add value across the Commonwealth, and to promote, support and work in partnership with the Commonwealth Youth Council, as well as regional and national youth bodies.

A Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Task Force has been convened to monitor progress on the CHOGM mandates and other commitments made at ministerial meetings that refer to youth development. Members of the task force include Uganda (chair), Ghana, Malta, Fiji, Samoa, The Bahamas, Saint Lucia and Jamaica.

Individual member countries have provided direct support to Commonwealth Youth Council programmes and priorities. These include the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, which hosted the Council's 'I Am Able' conference for persons with disability; Malaysia hosted the Council's intergenerational conference; and Jamaica hosted the Caribbean Regional Youth Summit for leaders and government officials. The Government of Seychelles hosted a COP23 preparation and training programme for youth leaders in partnership with the Climate Change Network.

The Ninth Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting took place in Kampala, Uganda in August 2017.

Youth ministers supported and endorsed the launch of *A Commonwealth Youth Mainstreaming Policy Guide* developed by the Commonwealth Youth Programme and called for all governments to mainstream youth priorities across all stages of policy-making and public spending and to ensure they are integrated with national development and sustainable financing strategies.

Youth ministers supported the launch of policy recommendations emanating from a 35 country-based line study of youth work in the Commonwealth. Youth ministers endorsed the research/policy document, *Youth Work in the Commonwealth*, in keeping with the mandate; member countries have started to action the policy recommendations to make strengthen efforts to professionalise youth work. The Government of Malta will host the next Youth Work Conference in 2018 to track progress in this area.

Youth ministers supported the launch of the Commonwealth Alliance for Youth Work Associations as a major action to empower youth workers in the Commonwealth; this will promote youth work policy and assist member countries to professionalise youth workers.

20 higher education academic institutions in member countries are working with ministries of youth to deliver youth work training at a Bachelor's level to senior officials, young people and stakeholders. The Commonwealth Consortium for Youth Work will last from 2017 to 2021.

Youth ministers have sent statements to Heads when considering the CHOGM mandate going forward. These include a request for national development plans and government policies to include clearly defined and appropriate commitments for investment in youth.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

Gender and the SDGs

Heads reaffirmed their conviction that gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls should be mainstreamed into development. They also reaffirmed their commitment to prioritise gender equality in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and within the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Gender mainstreaming as one of the cross-cutting outcomes of the Strategic Plans is being pursued through the monitoring and evaluation systems and processes of the Commonwealth

Secretariat, mainly through gender-sensitive project design and project monitoring.

There are also targeted programmes to pursue gender equality and SDG 5. These include a project to support small states in data collection and analysis through measuring the economic costs of violence against women, which was launched in Seychelles in December 2017.

Other programmatic interventions include work on tools to support the judiciary to provide access to justice for women, to end violence against women and girls, to end child marriage and forced marriage and to increase the participation of women in politics and election monitoring.

Child, early and forced marriage

Heads encouraged co-operation with regional and global efforts and concerted action at the national level to develop responses and strategies to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and female genital mutilation.

The *Judicial Resource Manual on Violence Against Women and Girls for the Asia Region* was launched in November 2017. External funding is being sought to disseminate and implement this.

The Commonwealth Secretariat convened a side event in Kigali, Rwanda, in partnership with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to assess the impact of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in implementing the Kigali Declaration to prevent and eliminate CEFM. This has led to greater understanding of the capacity of NHRIs and the challenges they face.

COUNTRY SITUATIONS

Belize: At the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting, ministers were requested to include a reference in the CHOGM communiqué to the Commonwealth's support for a resolution of the territorial dispute with Guatemala through the International Court of Justice.

Guyana: Foreign ministers reaffirmed the Commonwealth's support for Guyana's territorial sovereignty in the dispute with Venezuela. Foreign ministers noted Guyana's preference for judicial settlement through the International Court of Justice.

Cyprus: Heads welcomed renewed efforts under the United Nations Secretary-General's Good Offices Mission.

At the Commonwealth Law Ministers meeting in Nassau, The Bahamas, in October 2017, ministers mandated the Commonwealth Secretariat to compile best practice in addressing child marriage for dissemination across the Commonwealth.

Women's Forum

Heads agreed the Women's Forum should become an integral part of future CHOGMs following the success of the inaugural event.

The theme for the Commonwealth Women's Forum 2018 is 'An Empowered Future for Women and Girls'. The Forum will focus on the following:

- Women in Leadership
- Women, Peace and Security
- Women Empowered in Their Communities
- Empowering the World Around Her – the Path to 2030
- Women's Economic Empowerment

The Forum is being organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with the CHOGM 2018 host.

Health

Universal health coverage

Heads called on the Commonwealth to support stronger policies for universal health coverage, and to address the increasing burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is reviewing and analysing funding mechanisms, including the effective use of aid and the mobilisation of domestic resources. The Commonwealth Secretariat is also developing position papers on pooled Commonwealth procurement of essential medicines, vaccines and health technologies.

A study is being undertaken into the prevalence and effectiveness of a co-ordinated, health facility-based response to violence against women and girls.

The Commonwealth Secretariat developed a Health Protection Toolkit presented to ministers in May 2016 and supported Sierra Leone's efforts to strengthen surveillance systems,

through the placement of an expert at the Ministry of Health and sanitation for two years.

Movement of Commonwealth citizens

Movement of Commonwealth Citizens Working Group

Heads recalled the importance of easier movement between member countries of the Commonwealth for legitimate and temporary reasons in order to benefit from stronger economic, official and cultural co-operation.

A progress report will be submitted to Heads at CHOGM 2018, as requested.



Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation

Heads agreed that the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) should continue its efforts in accordance with the Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan, continuing to secure new and innovative sources for funding for Commonwealth mutual technical exchange and support.

Progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the CFTC Review Report presented to the Board in June 2016.

A formal three-year agreement was reached with the UK, the Secretariat's largest funder on CFTC funding, to cap its contributions at 30 per cent in 2017/18 and 25 per cent thereafter. There has been an improvement in pledges, year-on-year, and most

member countries are no longer in breach of Abuja Guidelines, which outline the policy for countries that have not contributed to the Commonwealth Secretariat's funds. A 'member in arrears' does not benefit from technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat and cannot attend CHOGM.

It is expected that the High Level Group will consider the issue of sustainable funding of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Governance

High Level Group

Heads mandated the Secretary-General to convene a High Level Group to review the full governance arrangements of the Commonwealth Secretariat, to ensure that its governance is streamlined and integrated in order to improve oversight, efficiency and transparency.

A project director to lead the Independent Secretariat started work in December 2017 and the research/liaison officer began in January 2018. The first meeting of the High Level Group took place in February 2018. The High Level Group will deliver an interim report to CHOGM 2018.

Commonwealth collaboration

CHOGM Education Forums

Heads asked the Commonwealth of Learning, related intergovernmental organisations and the Commonwealth associated organisations to consider organising an education forum at future CHOGMs.

A decision was taken not to hold a separate education forum at CHOGM, and to focus instead on the 20th

Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, which was hosted by Fiji in February 2018.

Collaboration and partnerships

Heads underscored the need for a greater level of collaboration among accredited Commonwealth organisations, and also encouraged co-operation with the UN.

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to work closely with the Commonwealth Foundation and Commonwealth of Learning, as well as the nine associated organisations and 76 civil society and professional organisations. Organisations have participated in Ministerial Meetings and will participate in CHOGM processes.

Key achievements since CHOGM 2015

- The establishment of Commonwealth House in June 2016 to bring together Commonwealth organisations in the same location to create a collaborative, dynamic and innovative way of working. The Commonwealth Local Government Forum, Commonwealth Games Federation and the Royal Commonwealth Society all moved into the renamed building.
- Rotary International, the Commonwealth Youth Council, the Commonwealth Youth and Gender Equality Network and the Youth Division established a partnership on a mentorship scheme for young women in the Commonwealth.
- The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, the UK Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights and the Commonwealth Secretariat collaborated on the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference on the Rule of Law and Human Rights.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat convened the first ever Commonwealth Women Leaders' Summit in July 2016, bringing together women leaders from governments, businesses and civil society from across the Commonwealth.
- A Commonwealth high-level conference 'Tackling Corruption Together' took place in London on 11 May 2016. The summit brought together global leaders from civil society, business and government. President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria gave the keynote speech and speakers included Prime Minister Joseph Muscat of Malta, Jose Ugaz of Transparency International and Mo Ibrahim, Founder of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, which assesses the quality of governance in African countries.





Governance and Peace

At a time of unprecedented global uncertainty and unrest, the Commonwealth has reaffirmed its commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It has sought to bring peace through conflict resolution, and to counter violent extremism by helping communities to come together regardless of race, religion or political affiliation.



Performance highlights

- Observed elections in 14 member countries.
- Launched the Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform (OCCJR).
- Launched the Commonwealth Countering Violent Extremism Unit.
- Helped 17 National Human Rights Institutions to adopt the St Julian Declaration on Climate Justice.
- Created the Cybercrime Network to help member countries to exchange knowledge and information relevant to the investigation and prosecution of these offenses.
- Launched the Africa and Caribbean regional networks for Public Procurement and Internal Audits.
- Convened the Tackling Corruption Together conference that brought together over 500 leaders from civil society, business and government.

Secretary-General's Good Offices

The Secretary-General's Good Offices offers support to member countries, upon request, to defuse political tensions and prevent conflict by assisting countries to resolve internal differences through dialogue, mediation, persuasion and moral authority. Through the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, the Commonwealth supports Zambia-led political dialogue efforts in the country.

Professor Ibrahim Gambari is Nigeria's former Minister of Foreign Affairs, an African elder statesman and a senior UN diplomat. In July 2016, the Secretary-General appointed him as Commonwealth Special Adviser on Political Dialogue to Zambia. Professor Gambari is working with national

stakeholders to establish mechanisms to promote national cohesion, tolerance and conflict prevention and resolution. His mission is intended to foster an inclusive, time-bound, constructive political dialogue that culminates in a roadmap for reform ahead of the 2021 general elections.

Professor Gambari's engagement has received widespread commendation, including from the president and the leader of the opposition, the chair of the Electoral Commission of Zambia, civil society and Zambian High Commissioner to London HE Muyebe Chikonde. However, the Secretary-General's Good Offices has established a strong grounding from which to support peacebuilding efforts in Zambia.

Elections

Deploying election observers is one way the Commonwealth Secretariat promotes democracy. The Commonwealth Secretariat also offers practical assistance to electoral commissions and provides hands-on training to election officials. To date, the Commonwealth Secretariat has deployed teams of observers to 150 elections in nearly 40 countries. In the 2015–17 period, the Commonwealth oversaw elections in 14 member countries. Observers offered straightforward and unbiased recommendations on how to improve the credibility and transparency of the electoral process.

The Commonwealth Election Professionals Initiative continues to work alongside election officials throughout



SECRETARIAT SUPPORT TO VANUATU ELECTORAL OFFICE

The Commonwealth Secretariat is working with the Vanuatu Electoral Office to reform its electoral system. In 2016, a Commonwealth Observer Group in Vanuatu made recommendations for reform. These included a new electronic system to register eligible voters. To help with their implementation, the Secretariat deployed electoral expert Michael Clancy.

Mr Clancy says Vanuatu's democracy shares many similarities with other Commonwealth countries in the Pacific. There are a few unique characteristics when it comes to election day, though.

'Voters are given a pad with small pages in it, and each page has the photo and name of the candidate,' he says. 'The voter removes the page with the candidate they wish to vote for and seals it in an envelope, and places the envelope in the ballot box.'

In 2016, a Commonwealth Observer Group reported on the general elections there. This was led by former Prime Minister of The Bahamas Hubert Ingraham. His group urged the electoral office to make certain changes – in his words, to undertake a 'continuous voter's registration process; develop an electronic and alphabetical register; provide for photographic voter identification; and remove deceased persons from the register'.

Mr Clancy explains: 'The existing register had many duplicate entries due to people moving from one province to another and re-registering.' This weakness meant that up to 50,000 additional ineligible names, including deceased persons, had been wrongly registered during previous elections.

Mr Clancy worked with the Vanuatu Electoral Office to fix these errors. Most importantly, he refined and tested a new electronic system of registering eligible voters. In addition, he helped officials strengthen operational plans for upcoming provincial polls. He assisted them in providing training for staff and developing an election procedures manual. He also offered to advise them in the event of a future national referendum on political and constitutional reforms.

He says he is confident the changes will help instil greater confidence in the integrity of the democratic process. 'The voters in Vanuatu have great trust in the work of the Vanuatu Electoral Office but this could be eroded if systems and procedures are not continually evaluated and improved.'

He adds, 'The job is very satisfying because I am able to bring my electoral experience of working in many different countries to assist in developing plans and procedures. The staff of the Vanuatu Electoral Office and the people of Vanuatu are very welcoming and great to work with.'

According to Father Charles Vatu, Vanuatu's Principal Elections Officer, the Commonwealth's assistance has helped the electoral commission 'become more proactive and efficient'.

'Having someone like Michael with extensive experience in electoral process is very beneficial to the Vanuatu Electoral Office now and in the future. Vanuatu is a young country that is still developing its democracy. With the help from the Commonwealth and others we will see Vanuatu's democracy become stronger and stable.'



Helen Pankhurst speaks at Marlborough House.

member countries. Launched in 2013, the initiative is delivered through the Commonwealth Electoral Network. The latter connects electoral commissions in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, Europe and the Pacific. The programme is an exemplar of multilateral Commonwealth co-operation. It has a global reach and influence, made possible through the financial support of the Australian government.

So far, the initiative has benefited nearly 100 junior election officers in more than 40 countries. These officers have received regional training and attended professional development events. They have gained valuable knowledge through peer-to-peer learning and online networking, all made available through the programme.

The Government of Australia has announced an AU\$1.5 million extension to the funding of the Election

Professionals Initiative. This means the programme will continue for at least another three years. Small island states in the Caribbean and the Pacific will be among those to benefit.

Commonwealth Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform

The Commonwealth Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform (OCCJR) was launched in July 2017 to support member countries in tackling the legal issues associated with challenges such as violence against women and girls, gender discrimination, corruption and climate change. The OCCJR also assists members in delivering access to justice and sustainable development through

the creation of fair and effective national laws, helping them enhance policy-making and legislation.

One example of this is the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles Toolkit on separation of powers, which was developed in close co-operation with the Latimer House Working Group. The toolkit sets out clear steps to ensure the Principles are implemented.

The OCCJR has also created the Commonwealth Secretariat's Legal Exchange, a knowledge portal that includes a database of statutes and Commonwealth model laws that have been digitised, categorised and cross-referenced, making it easier for governments and law ministers to access and download.

The OCCJR is focusing at present on supporting countries to strengthen and establish law reform entities, using

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

In July 2017, taking advantage of the Commonwealth Youth Games in The Bahamas, the CVE Unit worked with the Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network in a week-long training programme for 22 young leaders from around the Caribbean. The aim was to equip them with new skills and tools to enhance their own campaigns to build community resilience and counter extremist messages.

One of the participants, Micah Goodin from Belize, described the programme as an 'eye-opening and empowering' experience. 'I feel fully equipped to do my part in countering violent extremism. When I return to my country, what I'll be looking to do is share what I've learnt with other youth leaders and stakeholders in youth development work so they can lead positive, successful social media campaigns,' he said.

Another of the participants, Terez Lord from Trinidad and Tobago, welcomed the opportunity to connect with other community activists. 'Now that I am equipped with these useful tools, I intend to fully utilise them to promote the greater good in my country and the Commonwealth, by extension.'

'If communities come together and unite regardless of race, religion, political affiliation or sexual orientation, there is very little space for violent extremism to penetrate,' said Zanda Desire from Saint Lucia. 'There is reduced tension, increased understanding, and this leads to more respect and tolerance in the long run, which will definitely prevent violent extremism.'

the new Commonwealth Guide to Law Reform, which has been completely rewritten and updated.

Countering violent extremism

The Commonwealth CVE Unit began operations in January 2017, as mandated at CHOGM in 2015. The Unit has successfully developed a new CVE Strategy for the Commonwealth based on extensive consultations with a wide variety of experts and stakeholders. The strategy identifies specific and relevant activities. It draws upon existing expertise and best practice among member countries and the broader Commonwealth family.

The UK pledged £5 million – £1 million per year for five years – towards the Unit. In 2017 the project received further backing from Australia. In November the Secretary-General and the Australian High Commissioner, Alexander Downer, signed an MoU. Under its terms, Australia commits to providing A\$2.5 million over four years to support the Unit's work.

Strengthening national human rights institutions

The presence of an NHRI compliant with the Paris Principles is one of the proposed indicators for the attainment of SDG 16. The Commonwealth Secretariat works to establish and

strengthen members' NHRIs through direct technical assistance and the sharing of best practice.

Outcomes of NHRI collaboration included 17 NHRIs adopting the St Julian Declaration on Climate Justice at a Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI) side event at CHOGM 2015, which committed them to taking tangible action on climate justice in the context of discharging their mandates to protect and promote human rights.

The first CFNHRI Strategic Plan (2016–19) was agreed, with NHRI focal points appointed to develop an Action Plan for each of the eight priority areas. A CFNHRI website was launched to facilitate information-sharing.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference on the Rule of Law took place in London in January 2017,

convened by the Commonwealth Secretariat, together with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the UK Joint Committee on Human Rights and the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. The event was attended by parliamentarians from 12 member countries committed to strengthening the protection of human rights and the rule of law.

The Commonwealth Secretariat provided technical assistance to Samoa's NHRI, the Office of the Ombudsman, which is leading the country's first national public inquiry into family violence. The inquiry will help strengthen the systems in place to protect the human rights of the Samoan people. The public inquiry is due to conclude in June 2018.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is supporting Grenada to establish an NHRI, sharing technical human rights expertise and providing assistance. This support has included a two-day dialogue in St George's with local ministries and institutions to encourage adherence to international best practices, while garnering support to participate in the NHRI establishment process.

Ending child, early and forced marriage

Ending CEFM is a crucial step towards achieving girls' rights across the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Charter and commitments made by Commonwealth Heads of Government reflect a clear mandate for member countries to make efforts to prevent and end CEFM.

Currently, 43 per cent of women in the Commonwealth are married before they reach 18 years old. This amounts to more than 44 million 20 to 24 year olds who were married as children.

Approximately 8.8 million women in the Commonwealth are married as children annually. This equates to 24,000 girls every day, or 17 girls every minute.

The Kigali Declaration of May 2015 is a commitment by NHRIs and members of the CFNHRI to end CEFM.

At CHOGM 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat convened a special session on child marriage at the inaugural Women's Forum and launched the Commonwealth Champions against Child Marriage, a network of survivors who are taking forward advocacy initiatives at the national, regional and Commonwealth levels.

In partnership with the African Union (AU), the Commonwealth Secretariat delivered two sessions at the first African Girl Summit held in Zambia in November 2015, focusing on the role of traditional leaders and that of men and boys. In September 2016, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the AU jointly held a Capacity-Building Training for Religious and Traditional Leaders and Parliamentarians on Ending Child Marriage in Africa, in Addis Ababa.

The Commonwealth Secretariat strengthened collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), contributing to the delivery of an Expert Meeting on the Impact of Existing Strategies and Initiatives to Address Child, Early and Forced Marriage in Geneva in October 2016. The report of the workshop was presented at the 35th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in June 2016. The Commonwealth Secretariat and OHCHR jointly hosted a side event during the session, highlighting the empowerment of NHRIs as an impactful strategy to end CEFM.

7,000 PERSONNEL

HAVE BEEN TRAINED AT THE
COMMONWEALTH AFRICA
ANTI-CORRUPTION CENTRE.

President Buhari of Nigeria speaks at the Tackling Corruption Together Conference.



Combating international organised crime

Tackling cybercrime is a high-priority project and at the heart of the Commonwealth Secretariat's work on transnational crime. The Commonwealth Secretariat has been working with member countries and international partners to ensure a co-ordinated response to prevent and develop resilience to cyber-attacks. Actions commonly identified in national strategies include passing new legislation and increasing the capability of law enforcement, prosecutors and judiciary.

In this regard, the Commonwealth Secretariat has undertaken several programmes to help member countries tackle cybercrime.

- One of its flagship projects is the multi-stakeholder Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative (CCI), which comprises approximately 40 international organisations and member countries. This is designed to extend support to member countries, through a range of committed international partners, including civil society organisations and stakeholders, so as to have in place the appropriate legal frameworks complemented by attendant investigative, technical, enforcement and prosecutorial capabilities. The programme helps maximise resources and avoid duplication in technical assistance delivery.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat has a Council of Europe Cybercrime Convention (the Budapest Convention)-inspired model legislation that it uses to help countries review and update their legislation. The model law is currently under revision to ensure coverage of new modes of offending, such as revenge porn, online child sexual abuse, racial and xenophobic materials, etc., as well as inclusion of some innovative procedural provisions to make co-ordinated cross-border enforcement possible.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat has also, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other international partners, supported the capacity development of member countries and created a Cybercrime Network, made up of criminal justice practitioners in East Africa and the Asia/Pacific regions, for exchange of knowledge and information relevant to the investigation and prosecution of cybercrime-related offences.
- In 2016, the Commonwealth Secretariat, under the auspices of the CCI conducted needs assessments in five Caribbean countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago. The findings informed a regional action plan adopted that has been adopted by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The Commonwealth Secretariat, the Organization of American States and CARICOM are members of the Steering Committee for the implementation of the regional plan of action.
- In late 2016, the Commonwealth Secretariat under the auspices of the CCI worked in collaboration with the Organization of American States and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association-UK Chapter to deliver a pan-Commonwealth cybercrime



Marlene Malahoo Forte,
Attorney General of Jamaica,
speaks at the Commonwealth
Law Ministers Meeting.

awareness programme for parliamentarians in the Africa, Asia/ Pacific and Caribbean regions of the Commonwealth. The programme was sponsored by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

- The Commonwealth Secretariat under its cybercrime programme has been investigating the emergence and proliferation of crypto currencies and the likely abuse of these in the laundering of funds of illicit origin, financing of terrorism and organised crime. The Commonwealth Secretariat issued a report on the likely impact of these currencies in 2015. Sequel to this, it has commissioned another expert group to explore the possibility of developing a regulatory framework to stymie the likely abuse to which crypto currencies are prone. The group will be meeting in early May 2018.

Public sector governance

The Commonwealth Secretariat works with national authorities to uphold transparency and accountability in public services. Special emphasis is paid to strengthening administrations and financial management systems in small and less developed countries.

During the period under review, countries that received technical assistance through the long-term CFTC included Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Botswana, Guyana, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Sierra Leone.

Inaugural regional Public Procurement and Internal Audit Networks were established in Africa and the Caribbean. These provide a forum for developing and sharing best practices. A

procurement toolkit produced by the Caribbean network will be rolled out to members. A Professional Exchange Network for Risk Management and Internal Audit was established for Africa.

Anti-corruption

Commonwealth member countries benefited significantly from the Commonwealth's Anti-Corruption Programme and ACAs realised tangible capacity improvements. These benefits ranged from the adoption of financial investigations for all corruption-related investigations to the development of Strategic Plans for ACAs and amendments to members' anti-corruption acts.

Strong regional and local ownership was demonstrated by co-funding from the Governments of Botswana and Grenada and co-sponsored participation of ACA staff by the majority of African and Caribbean Commonwealth agencies.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

In **Antigua and Barbuda**, the Commonwealth Secretariat assisted with significant improvements to the government's oversight of public financial management. These included the establishment of an Internal Audit Unit with a website to facilitate the transparent publication of audits. This helped modernise and strengthen public procurement. The Commonwealth Secretariat assisted in the delivery of a Policy Delivery Unit in the Cabinet Office supported by a CFTC policy adviser and supported a Knowledge Management Initiative, including an online policy data bank.

In **Botswana**, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development invited the Commonwealth Secretariat to support the implementation of enterprise risk management across the country's public services. The aim is to enhance the public sector's ability to manage uncertainty and to consider how much risk to accept as it strives to increase stakeholder value and service delivery.

The Commonwealth Secretariat supported the **Cook Islands** in implementing improved performance management practices. These will help develop best practice human resource management policies and strategies.

Guyana strengthened its internal audit system to expand to cover an additional six line ministries.

In **Mauritius**, the Commonwealth Secretariat assisted the government in developing the Civil Service Reform Strategy.

St Vincent and the Grenadines revised its draft Public Service Act, which will include a code of conduct for public servants.

In **Sierra Leone**, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development adopted a new Enterprise Risk Management Policy.

UNODC, Transparency International and the African Development Bank have been partnering with the Africa Anti-Corruption Centre for practical programming to benefit ACAs.

The Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre (CAACC) in Botswana continued to deliver capacity-building programmes to ACAs in Africa. In partnership with the African Development Bank and Basel Institute on Governance, and Transparency International, the Centre organised courses on Managing Exhibits and Proceeds of Crime; Financial Investigations and Asset Recovery;

Combating Corruption and Fraud in Procurement; Corruption Prevention and Investigations; and Effective Monitoring and Evaluation of Anti-Corruption Programmes and Projects.

An independent evaluation of the CAACC found that 'Commonwealth member states have benefited significantly from the programme and tangible capacity improvements have been realised by the anti-corruption agencies.' In addition, 80 per cent of ACA representatives surveyed considered the courses to have significantly expanded their knowledge, while 68 per cent reported making significant changes to

their work after returning from CAACC courses. These changes ranged from the adoption of financial investigations for all corruption related investigations to the development of Strategic Plans for ACAs and amendments to members' anti-corruption acts.

The Commonwealth Secretariat organised a forum for heads of ACAs and integrity commissions in Africa and the Caribbean to peer review reports/strategies and share transferable experiences. Over 70 officials attended the Caribbean meeting, while 100 officials participated in the Africa meeting.

In partnership with South Africa's Special Investigation Unit, the Commonwealth Secretariat organised a high-level capacity-building programme in September 2017 in Pretoria, for heads of ACAs in Commonwealth Africa. The programme highlighted the quality of evidence required for successful prosecution of financial crimes as well as practical modes of confiscation, and asset recovery and forfeitures after successful prosecution of corruption cases.

The Commonwealth Secretariat responded to a request by the Zambia Anti-Corruption Commission for an in-country programme in November 2017 to equip integrity committee members with the skills to carry out corruption prevention functions. The Commonwealth Secretariat also developed a new Strategic Plan for the Zambia Anti-Corruption Commission to enhance organisational efficacy.

A programme on Effective Management for Achieving SDG 16 (to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies) took place in November 2017 for the Integrity Commission, law enforcement agencies and public sector organisations in Grenada.

In December 2017, the Commonwealth Secretariat conducted leadership training for senior staff of anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies in Mauritius. The training was part of an integrated programme of activities around International Anti-Corruption Day and included a forum with the Council of Religions in Mauritius and the launch of a best practice guide for attorneys.

The Commonwealth Secretariat also finalised the development of a Code of Conduct/Ethics for Members of the National Assembly in Mauritius to strengthen public accountability and political credibility.

The Third Commonwealth Caribbean Regional Conference of Integrity Commissions and Anti-Corruption Bodies was held in Jamaica in April 2017, which accepted Grenada's offer to host a Training Centre for Commonwealth Caribbean Anti-Corruption Agencies.

In June 2017, the biennial CAACC conference in Malawi provided an important opportunity for lesson-sharing and networking. At the conference, ACAs had the opportunity to pilot a 'Mapping Relationships' tool to analyse the performance of CAACC and exchanges of learning. Outcomes demonstrated that the most active agencies both in visits and in hosting were Botswana, Tanzania, Malawi and Mauritius. By example, lessons from Ghana's visit to Tanzania shaped the implementation of Ghana's Anti-Corruption Strategy and Plan; Sierra Leone's visit to Tanzania facilitated the development and institutionalisation of the Services Charters by their ACA; and Uganda noted that a platform

TACKLING CORRUPTION TOGETHER

The Tackling Corruption Together conference in May 2016 brought together more than 500 leaders from civil society, business and government, who set out their commitments to end impunity, prevent corruption, empower victims and support activists. President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria gave the keynote speech and speakers included Prime Minister Joseph Muscat of Malta, Jose Ugaz of Transparency International and Mo Ibrahim, Founder of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, which assesses the quality of governance in African countries.

The event was hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership with Transparency International, Thomson Reuters, Omidyar Network, the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council, The B Team and ONE.

The conference took place ahead of the first international Anti-Corruption Summit in London, at which a package of practical steps to expose and drive out corrupt practices was agreed.

A survey of participants found 94 per cent agreed the conference met its objective of reinforcing anti-corruption as a shared agenda across business, civil society and government. Moreover, the Summit Communiqué welcomed the Commonwealth Secretariat's commitment to mainstreaming anti-corruption.

was created for sharing knowledge between the two institutions. Mauritius's Independent Commission on Anti-Corruption agreed to help operationalise the newly established Anti-Corruption Commission of Seychelles on a *pro bono* basis. The Commonwealth Secretariat led the initial arrangement in bringing the agencies together.

Judicial independence

The Commonwealth Secretariat aims to build more effective, efficient and equitable public institutions through its work to promote human rights, the rule of law and judicial independence, and transparent and accountable public administration.

How judicial officers are appointed, disciplined and removed from office is at the heart of judicial independence. In order to promote good practice consistent with the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles, the Commonwealth Secretariat has produced a model law on judicial service commissions. The model law will serve as a benchmark against which jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth will be able to compare, contrast and improve constitutional, legal, institutional and practical arrangements for judicial appointments and disciplinary processes.

The model law was drafted in accordance with instructions given at four regional consultative meetings attended by senior judges and organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat. It was presented at a meeting of Commonwealth Law Ministers in The Bahamas in October 2017.

The Commonwealth Secretariat continued to support judicial independence initiatives in member countries. In Bangladesh, where the magistracy as an independent institution was established barely a decade ago, capacity-building was provided on judicial independence to 39 magistrates and judges of subordinate courts.







5

Trade, Ocean and Natural Resources

Trade between countries provides a pathway to prosperity, creating employment and opportunities for sustainable development.

The Commonwealth has made significant contributions towards fostering the right conditions for trade to thrive, particularly between member countries, by leveraging our shared language, legal and administrative systems.



Performance highlights

- Relaunched the Commonwealth Trade Ministers' Meetings.
- Recognised by UNCTAD for our lead role in building momentum to secure a new WTO agreement on addressing harmful fisheries subsidies.
- Worked with 25 Commonwealth countries to identify New Products New Market schemes for export diversification.
- Established the Commonwealth Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises Association.
- Strengthened and enhanced the capacity of government ministries through the successful Hub and Spokes programme (now in its second phase).
- Helped 11 countries to negotiate maritime boundaries.
- Started development of the Commonwealth Blue Charter.

International trade policy

Inclusive growth and economic development are promoted across the Commonwealth through trade, to advance Commonwealth values in global development and financing decisions.

After the global trade slowdown caused by the 2008 financial crisis, intra-Commonwealth trade and greenfield investment is on track to exceed US\$1 trillion by 2020, while proactive policy measures by the member countries

can trigger even greater gains. In 2017, cumulative intra-Commonwealth greenfield foreign direct investment was estimated at US\$700 billion, creating 1.4 million jobs through 10,000 projects.

Commonwealth trade ministers met in London in March 2017 to consider areas where the Commonwealth can strengthen collaboration to deepen intra-Commonwealth trade and investment. Ministers noted with concern the slowdown in global trade and the rising tide of protectionism. They emphasised the need for the

Commonwealth to provide support for strengthening the multilateral trading system.

Ministers directed the Commonwealth Secretariat to convene officials responsible for trade to develop pragmatic and practical options to increase Commonwealth trade and investment.

During the period under review, Commonwealth trade policies gained traction internationally. The Commonwealth Secretariat was recognised by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

COMMONWEALTH TRADE MINISTERS MEETING

In March 2017, the Commonwealth Secretariat, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council, hosted a two-day meeting of trade and investment ministers.

In his opening speech, Liam Fox, UK Secretary of State for International Trade, noted the importance of strengthening intra-Commonwealth trade, not just for economic reasons but also from 'a moral dimension... Liberation from poverty and the sharing of prosperity are both achieved by the same policy of free and open trade in a liberal, rules-based system.'

Ministers welcomed the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat and its continued support to members on their effective integration into the global trading system, the establishment of the Small States Trade Finance Facility in Malta, the provision of technical assistance through the Hub and Spokes Programme and the ongoing trade competitiveness programme.

The meeting drew heavily on the Commonwealth Secretariat's 'Commonwealth advantage' work and explored options to increase intra-Commonwealth trade and investment, particularly taking into account the special needs of small and vulnerable states.

The Secretary-General pointed to the '19 per cent trade advantage within the Commonwealth' and encouraged ministers to consider 'how the global trade landscape can be changed in favour of that advantage and the particular factors that drive and differentiate intra-Commonwealth trade and investment be improved'.

Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Jamaica, described the meeting as 'an excellent two days', enabling Commonwealth members to come together as a family and remember the commonalities of legal systems, cultures and language, despite diversity in levels of development and geographic spread. Recognising these commonalities highlights the potential for opportunities going forward, she said.

(UNCTAD) for its lead role in building momentum to secure a new World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement on addressing harmful fisheries subsidies, including issuing a joint statement on the regulation of fisheries, signed by more than 90 countries.

Commonwealth trade positions advanced between members, propelled in part by the UK's decision to leave the EU and supported by timely Commonwealth Secretariat research into the Commonwealth trade advantage, outlined in the *2015 Commonwealth Trade Review*.

2016/17 saw unprecedented engagement by Commonwealth members, with 50 of 52 participating in trade policy discussions and capacity-building. This included delegations from 30 member countries attending three regional forums to prepare consensus positions for effective engagement in the WTO's 11th Ministerial Conference in 2017 (Vanuatu November 2016, Mauritius May 2017, Saint Lucia June 2017); 25 member countries receiving technical support from the new trade adviser in the Geneva Small States Office; and 44 member countries attending the Trade Ministers' Meeting.

Trade competitiveness

The Commonwealth Secretariat provides technical assistance to member countries to improve their trade competitiveness in global markets. Recognising the limited size of the domestic market in many member countries, there is a strong focus on export development, with interventions targeted at the national level and, where requested, escalated to the regional and international level.

Thirty member countries attended three regional forums to prepare consensus positions for effective engagement with the WTO's 11th Ministerial Conference in 2017 (Vanuatu in November 2016, Mauritius in May 2017, Saint Lucia in June 2017).

The Commonwealth Secretariat provided significant technical support to improve members' trade competitiveness in global markets at the request of their ministries. Six members (Jamaica, Botswana, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, India and Nigeria) and the East African Community saw key results, including finalised trade competitiveness strategies and action plans.

Other programme highlights include the following:

- 25 countries collaborated with the Commonwealth Secretariat to identify New Product New Market schemes for export diversification.
- Strategy support to assist India's integration in global value chains saw the identification of 71 new product market combinations, with the potential to increase exports by US\$2 billion.
- The Commonwealth Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Association was established, hosted by India.
- A new regional design studio offering skills training to boost production and exports of finished leather goods in Eastern and Southern Africa was launched, giving African leather technicians an opportunity to enhance their skills. The model will be developed across East Africa.

Hub and Spokes II

The Hub and Spokes II programme is an innovative Aid for Trade initiative that supports the development of

INAUGURAL SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES TRADE SUMMIT

The first India–Commonwealth Small and Medium Enterprises Trade Summit took place on 29–30 June 2017, attended by almost 100 participants, including senior representatives of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, industry associations and exporters and importers from India as well as South Asian and African countries.

The resulting Delhi Declaration is a 10-point Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Co-operation Framework to support intra-Commonwealth trade and investment.



trade capacity in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) regions. This joint programme of the European Union, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the ACP Group Secretariat and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie is now in its second phase with a programme budget of €9.5 million.

Under the programme, trade advisers – the 'spokes' – strengthen and enhance the capacity of government ministries, while regional trade advisers – the 'hubs' – provide assistance to major regional organisations. The initiative helps participating countries develop and implement trade policies and agreements that both reflect national priorities and are effective in a global trading system.

Since 2013, under the Hub and Spokes II programme, a network of 29 advisers has been embedded in more than 20 countries throughout the Commonwealth and ACP regions.

More than 3,500 trade professionals across ACP regions have benefited from expert training on trade policy issues, including non-tariff barriers, technical barriers to trade, trade in services and trade facilitation. National trade policy frameworks have been formulated for Malawi, Palau and Kenya, and trade policies have been implemented in Solomon Islands and Fiji.

Other highlights include the following:

- Trade officials in Jamaica received training in September 2017 on the country's trade in services commitments under the General Agreement on Trade in Services, the EU Economic Partnership Agreement and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.
- Lesotho's national trade adviser engaged individual private sector operators to enhance their understanding of the regional and global market opportunities that can benefit the country.
- Advisers in the AU Commission provided technical support in the drafting of the AU Free Movement Protocol.
- At the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), advisers facilitated national consultations geared towards training and sensitising public and private sector stakeholders on the OECS Customs Union and trade facilitation reforms, and understanding the guiding principles and procedural requirements for the OECS Customs Union and Free Circulation of Goods Regime.



- Tonga's National Trade Policy Framework (draft) validation process, with stakeholders drawn from the public and private sectors, civil society and academia, was completed in May 2017, with the framework submitted to Cabinet for approval.

The Hub and Spokes II programme entered its consolidation phase in May 2017, with a completion date of February 2019.

Ocean and natural resources

The Commonwealth Secretariat assists its member countries to sustainably manage their natural resources, in the ocean and on land, by offering governments legal and technical support to develop policies and laws and strengthen national institutions.

For 11 countries supported to negotiate maritime boundaries, 4 boundaries were successfully agreed in 2016/17. In Antigua and Barbuda, the maritime boundary with France was formally adopted, while Vanuatu and Solomon Islands signed an agreement on their respective boundaries. Maritime boundaries were also signed between Saint Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines, and between Saint Lucia and Barbados, and formally adopted at the CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting (July 2017).

A total of 11 countries were helped to establish policies and frameworks to promote and support the sustainable management of natural resources. New national oceans policies were adopted by The Bahamas and Vanuatu.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's broader ocean governance remit continued to expand, in particular relating to work on the blue economy.

This included co-authoring a major blue economy report and developing an assessment of the status of the blue economy in the Caribbean with the World Bank.

A proposal to create a Commonwealth Blue Charter of principles for sustainable ocean development was welcomed by governments and partners at the UN Ocean Conference in June 2017.

The Commonwealth Blue Charter would apply to ocean governance the 16 principles and values of the Commonwealth Charter and lay the foundations for Commonwealth countries to share technical expertise and knowledge in order to realise their ocean-related commitments. Particular focus will be on the SDGs, especially SDG 14, which concerns the ocean.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, UNCTAD and the International Oceans Institute delivered informed



assessments of oceans economy and trade issues by convening an international event in Geneva in May 2016 – a significant contribution towards implementation of the trade-related aspects of SDG 14.

CFTC technical assistance to the Cook Islands helped the Ministry of Mineral and Natural Resources improve sustainable management and development of seabed mineral resources. This facilitated the first national tender for seabed minerals in national waters and approval to carry out minerals exploration across 70,000 km². Investment opportunities are now being explored.

Guyana has made a big step towards reform of its petroleum sector through the development of a new Petroleum Commission Bill, which is now in the advanced stages of stakeholder consultation. Guyana is also seeking to establish a Sovereign Wealth Fund

to reinvest oil and gas revenues. The Commonwealth Secretariat has advised the country's Ministry of Natural Resources on the legislative and institutional reforms since 2013, and Commonwealth Secretariat legal and economic experts advised on draft legislation for the fund.

The previous year, 2015/16, had also seen significant progress. The Commonwealth Secretariat provided support to 15 members to develop their management of maritime and other natural resources. This work included a draft minerals policy for Botswana and stakeholder consultation; supporting a successful negotiation outcome for upstream exploration operations by a company in Jamaica; providing advisory support concerning investor proposals for upstream exploration activity in offshore Seychelles; and drafting a renewable energy policy for Namibia.

A PROPOSAL TO CREATE A COMMONWEALTH BLUE CHARTER OF PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE OCEAN DEVELOPMENT WAS WELCOMED BY GOVERNMENTS AND PARTNERS AT THE UN OCEAN CONFERENCE IN JUNE 2017.



A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, holding a young child. The child is wearing a patterned shirt. They are standing outdoors in front of a light blue building. A large, stylized green number '6' is overlaid on the right side of the image. The bottom half of the image has a green background with white text.

6

Youth and Sustainable Development

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 lies at the core of Commonwealth work on economic and social development. To create a sustainable future, the Secretariat is empowering young people to bring their energy and vitality to political and development processes.



Performance highlights

- Launched the 2016 Commonwealth Youth Development Index.
- Recognised as a global leader in the use of sport to help advance sustainable development.
- Conducted research in the Caribbean and Africa regions on how to enhance women's political participation and leadership.
- Established the Small States Centre of Excellence in Malta.
- Initiated a diaspora finance work programme, focussed on increasing diaspora capital transfers to support economic development in member countries.
- Established the Climate Finance Access Hub to help small and vulnerable countries access international sources of climate finance to realise their sustainable development goals.
- Developed new state-of-the-art public debt management software, Meridian, to help member countries better address emerging debt management requirements.

Social policy

Enabling policy environment for youth empowerment

Young people are primary stakeholders in and contributors to the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. The Commonwealth Secretariat aims for young people to be more integrated in political and development processes. It delivers support to members to improve their youth policy environments and empowers young people to participate effectively in the spheres of development that have an impact on them.

The launch of the Youth Development Index (the YDI 2016 report), which charts the social, political and economic situation for young people in 185 countries, generated significant interest and became a focal point for considerable regional and national activity. The United Nations Development Programme recognised the YDI report and asked for it to feature in the next Human Development Index and Report, and to further collaborate with the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The report was used by Australia to develop a national-level YDI. Pacific and Caribbean youth ministry and national statistics office officials received training and used the YDI toolkit to inform regional and national plans for monitoring SDG progress.

Four countries adopted new national youth policies with Commonwealth Secretariat support. Saint Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis and Dominica received CFTC technical expert assistance, while Solomon Islands used the Commonwealth Secretariat's

methodology and evidence-based approach through its drafting process. New Zealand launched its National Youth Work Association supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Malaysia adopted youth work as a priority in its national youth policy. Jamaica's Professional Association of Youth Workers became a registered civil society organisation, and new competency standards in youth work were operationalised. Sri Lanka's Youth Workers Association revived past policy commitments to professionalise youth work, while Sri Lanka and India developed youth worker courses and outcome frameworks for the assessment of youth work practice through support provided to their professional youth work bodies.

Youth engagement and empowerment

An independent evaluation of the Commonwealth Youth Programme concluded in February 2017. This found strong consensus that the Programme had achieved significant impacts in youth development within the Commonwealth, and globally within certain aspects of its work.

The Commonwealth Secretariat continued to support the 10 Commonwealth youth networks, which cover more than 948 youth organisations and 1,100 youth leaders, to participate effectively in national and regional initiatives to achieve the SDGs and to bring the youth perspective into international development and decision-making. Highlights include the launch of the pilot Commonwealth Young Women's Mentorship Scheme to empower future women leaders.

Newly established networks included the Commonwealth Youth Health Network, endorsed by health ministers,

and the Commonwealth Youth Human Rights and Democracy Network. The Commonwealth Secretariat also re-launched the Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network as part of a youth peace-building initiative supported by the UK's Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

The Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network launched 16 National Chapters and conducted advocacy training and peace-building workshops in these countries across the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Youth Council and the Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network jointly designed and developed the Blue Green Economy Toolkit and the Small Islands Developing States Youth Advocacy Toolkit. The toolkits were used to train youth leaders from Small States on how to engage with the COP22 processes and how to lead action on climate advocacy.

Strengthening health and education systems and policy

The Commonwealth Secretariat focuses on the translation of global policies and discussions around universal health coverage and non-communicable diseases into practical national implementation. This is even more relevant in light of the global agenda to achieve the SDGs and targets on health by 2030.

Health

Direct assistance to members has been affected by financial cuts, reduced staff capacity and internal strategic shifts. Limited resources have been directed to pan-Commonwealth advocacy.

At the Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting in Geneva in May 2017, ministers reaffirmed their commitment to universal health coverage as a critical component of sustainable development; a key element of reducing social inequities; a building block to health security; and an essential component in the response to the urgent multi-sectoral challenges of global security, including the multiple causes of anti-microbial resistance and the epidemic of violence.

Ministers welcomed the development of the Commonwealth Health Systems Framework and Health Protection Toolkit. This identifies countries' prioritised needs towards universal health coverage and health security through the control of communicable diseases, emergency preparedness and environmental health.

A Non-Communicable Diseases Framework was developed in partnership with the Healthy Caribbean Coalition in Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

A CFTC technical assistance project to Sierra Leone's Ministry of Health & Sanitation in the aftermath of the Ebola virus outbreak contributed to a pilot Electronic Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response System, as well as the implementation of Community-Based Surveillance in six districts after a successful pilot in three districts of the country. About

8,400 community health workers from nine districts have been trained in Community-Based Surveillance.

Education

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to support members to align their national education policies towards the delivery of the SDGs, guided by the Nassau Declaration and the Nassau Declaration Action Plan.

At the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CEEM) held in The Bahamas (June 2015), ministers reinforced the centrality of education for building resilience and preparing the next generation of Commonwealth citizens to contribute positively to the social, environmental and economic development of their communities. Ultimately, ministers highlighted the pivotal role that education has in achieving sustainable development and driving the SDGs. Given this and following the recommendations made at the 19th CEEM, the Education Section of the Health and Education Unit within the Commonwealth Secretariat has developed a Curriculum Framework for the SDGs to support member countries in addressing all 17 SDGs through education and learning.

This framework guides countries in defining their contextual needs and the basic requirements related to knowledge, skills and competencies that must be demonstrated or acquired in order to achieve the SDGs through education, and within the current or evolving policy contexts.

The 20th CEEM took place in Nadi, Fiji, in February 2018. Alongside the meeting, students, teachers, civil society representatives, higher education

leaders, youth representatives and other stakeholders conducted an Integrated Partners' Forum to foster increased collaboration among the various groups, each of which has an important role to play in supporting Commonwealth countries to achieve the SDGs.

Members also welcomed the consultative development of the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework, which aimed to ensure national education delivery focused on equity, lifelong learning, workforce planning and relevance to the skills and jobs of the 21st century.

CFTC technical assistance to the Ministry of Education in Mauritius concluded with the delivery of the Mauritian Higher Education Bill 207, which included the establishment of an independent Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency.

Promoting the SDGs through sport

Commonwealth stakeholders have consistently championed the potential for sport to contribute to human and social development and promote respect and understanding. On this basis, the Commonwealth Secretariat is mandated to support member countries to strengthen the use of sport to advance sustainable development. The Commonwealth Secretariat's achievements in these areas have resulted in the Commonwealth being recognised as a global leader in this field of work.

The inclusion of a sport-related outcome in the Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan underscores the Commonwealth's commitment to Sport for Development and Peace (SDP).



Since the Eighth Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting in August 2016, the Commonwealth Secretariat has delivered or facilitated capacity-building and consultation workshops for sport policy officials, sport sector leaders and representatives from related policy areas in Australia, The Bahamas, Bangladesh, Botswana, Mauritius and Zambia and at the Commonwealth Secretariat headquarters in London.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has provided technical assistance to member countries in support of developing and strengthening national SDP policy and strategies, including:

- **Mauritius:** The Commonwealth Secretariat supported the Ministry of Youth and Sports with the development of a national Sport for All Strategy. Implementation of this strategy is strengthening health and wellbeing and promoting social cohesion in Mauritius. Based on this plan, the 2017/18 National Budget of Mauritius allocated dedicated
- **Zambia:** A review of the monitoring and evaluation system of the national sports policy helped strengthen alignment with national development priorities and the SDGs. This has assisted in strengthening the contribution of Zambia's revised sport policy to promoting physical and mental health and supporting education, boosting employment prospects and improving social cohesion.
- **Botswana** is using sport to promote gender equality through the production of national guidelines and implementing a strategy for gender mainstreaming in sport. More than 100 officials, sports leaders, athletes and coaches from national sporting groups have taken part in gender mainstreaming workshops delivered by the Commonwealth Secretariat.
- **Bangladesh:** The Commonwealth Secretariat supported the Bangladesh Ministry of Youth and Sport to undertake consultation and analysis to support the development of a strategy to use sport in youth development and peace-building in the country. A broader review will follow, aimed at aligning the national sport policy with the Seventh Five-Year Development Plan and the SDGs.

The Commonwealth Secretariat was invited to join the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Permanent Consultative Council of the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport, following recognition of its publication *Contribution of Sport for Development and Peace to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

Gender mainstreaming

The Commonwealth Secretariat prioritises gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, both through direct programming and support to members and by means

of a commitment to ensure gender is mainstreamed across the organisation's portfolio. Funding cuts led to the prioritisation of gender programme resources under the Violence Against Women and Girls work stream.

Positive examples of gender mainstreaming include:

- Support provided to incorporate gender into Botswana's Sports Policy
- The production of a Commonwealth checklist on gender and elections, aimed at improving reporting during election observations

The Commonwealth Secretariat's trade publication, *A Handbook on Regional Integration in Africa: Towards Agenda 2063* (March 2017), has gender as a prominent focus, emphasising the role of women in both formal and informal trade and including recommendations for equality in regional trade.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is collaborating with the AU to directly engage with political parties in Commonwealth Africa to promote and enhance women's political participation and increase the number of women in political leadership.

The project will further seek to engage with African regional institutions including the East African Community, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is also working to enhance women's political leadership in the Caribbean region. This work will review how political parties and election management bodies encourage and foster women's political leadership, and to strengthen the capacity of these bodies and political parties to support increased women's political leadership and participation.

Economic policy and small states

The Commonwealth Secretariat advocates for international policies and mechanisms to strengthen the resilience of small and vulnerable states. This includes climate financing issues and effective participation of small states in international decision-making processes through the Small States Offices of New York and Geneva.

Building resilience in small states

Global advocacy for the needs of small and vulnerable states continued to be prioritised, with targets achieved in engaging small and vulnerable states in advocating for their priorities in international forums.



Youth Leaders Forum delegates at the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in Uganda.

PROMOTING SDGs THROUGH SPORT

Dinesh Gajendran believes in the contribution of sport to transforming communities. Having grown up on a farm in India, he founded the Audacious Dreams Foundation, a grassroots, youth-led organisation. This uses SDP programmes to empower rural youth in India. Around 20,000 young Indians benefit from this foundation each year.

Dinesh served as the Asia Regional Representative for the Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Network (CYSDP) Working Group until August 2016. He had worked with the group since 2014. During 2015–17, the CYSDP grew tremendously, adding new team members from across the multicultural Commonwealth. In 2016, yourcommonwealth.org interviewed Dinesh.

I started as a sportsman and coach in India in the indigenous game, Kho-Kho, [and] then became a grassroots SDP activist. I am most proud of establishing the Audacious Dreams Foundation, which uses sports as a tool to empower young people in rural India. I also founded a United Nations Children's Fund Sport for Development initiative, Challenge India – Empowering Young People with Sports and Experiential Learning – which aims to promote higher-quality education, reduce school dropouts and improve gender equality using themes of civic citizenship and global understanding. I have also had the pleasure of participating in the Beyond Sports Summit and Awards.

'As I come from a grassroots background, CYSDP has given me the opportunity to contribute at a high level, influencing policies that affect the SDP sector and meeting with decision-makers, ministers of government and key stakeholders. I participated in CYSDP's 2014 Annual General Meeting, which created an outcome document that was endorsed by Commonwealth sports ministers. I also contributed to the Commonwealth Sport and Post-2015 Forum, and the Commonwealth Sports Breakfast 2016 with Heads of Governments.'

The Commonwealth Secretariat published two reports that generated considerable interest and debate. *Achieving a Resilient Future for Small States: Caribbean 2050* was followed by *A Sustainable Future for Small States: Pacific 2050*. Both reports focused on critical areas that can catalyse change, including governance, non-communicable diseases, information and communication technology and climate change.

The establishment of the Small States Centre of Excellence in Malta also progressed, with the placement of a technical adviser in January 2016. In collaboration with officials from the

Government of Malta and the Small States team, the technical adviser has advanced work in the following areas:

- Organisational design
- Tailoring information and communication technology platforms
- Engaging experts for capacity-building solutions
- Fostering strategic partnerships

The Centre became fully operational at the end of 2017.

The work of the Commonwealth Secretariat in advocating for the sustainable development needs of small and vulnerable states has been

recognised at a number of global events, including the UN's Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and the World Bank Small States Forum in Lima, Peru.

In addition, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Heads received significant recognition during COP21 in Paris. Commonwealth Secretariat funding enabled a coordinator to travel to COP21 and support the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) pavilion during the negotiations. This allowed the Commonwealth Secretariat to use the AOSIS pavilion to raise the profile of its work and hold a side event.

Improving financing for development

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to focus on advocacy to improve small states' access to finance. Small states are disproportionately exposed to economic and climatic shocks. Domestic finance is insufficient to address their needs, but access to traditional sources of external finance is constrained by their vulnerabilities. Amid a growing need for new funding mechanisms, the Commonwealth Secretariat is strengthening the case for options including diaspora, climate and disaster finance.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has initiated a Diaspora Finance Work Programme, focused on increasing diaspora capital transfers to support economic development in home countries. The initial phase involves research, analysis and scoping to better understand diaspora investment potential.

Three Regenerative Development forums took place in collaboration with the Cloudburst Foundation to discuss innovative approaches to tackling climate change. As a result, regenerative development is being linked to climate finance through the work of the Climate Finance Access Hub.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has also been advocating for the implementation of a Multilateral Debt Swap for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation scheme, involving creditors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is seeking global consensus for an enhanced approach to disaster risk management, helping small and vulnerable states build the capacity to

both anticipate and effectively manage the growing frequency, severity and costs of adverse external events.

The Debt Resilience Strategy Framework

The Commonwealth Secretariat is developing this framework to help member countries prepare for unforeseeable exogenous shocks. It will incorporate the following policy areas: Business Continuity Planning; debt sustainability levels; medium-term debt strategy with cost-risk analysis including worst case scenarios; contingent liability identification and management; funding accessibility; and supporting legal frameworks. The Commonwealth Secretariat is also considering re-establishing the Commonwealth Debt Sustainability Forum and the adoption of a set of Commonwealth Debt Sustainability Principles to strengthen commitment to fiscal resilience across member countries, particularly in the Caribbean.

Addressing harmful regulation

The 2015 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting sought members' views on the content of a possible Commonwealth international tax work programme aimed at increasing the voice and participation of Commonwealth developing countries in discussions and negotiations on international tax matters and co-operation. As a result, the Commonwealth Secretariat has been working with a number of its small state members to help them to engage with and understand the implications of the current international tax and regulatory environment. To this end, the Commonwealth Secretariat has established a programme of research

to support the production of policy notes and briefs to assist member governments. The Commonwealth has also been supporting the development of tax networks between like jurisdictions.

Most recently, the Secretariat held a side meeting of its small states with international financial centres at the 2017 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Global Forum on Tax Transparency to provide a platform to discuss the EU Tax Blacklisting Process and its implications for Commonwealth member countries. This process sought to list jurisdictions that had failed to meet certain tax standards, in order to encourage compliance. The list was finalised and published in December 2017. Commonwealth members' perspectives on the EU Blacklist were presented by the Secretariat through an intervention delivered at the OECD Global Forum Plenary.

Global advocacy of small states

The Commonwealth has long been recognised as a champion of small states. Over four decades of work has put the Commonwealth at the forefront of policy research and global advocacy for such states. Thirty of the Commonwealth's member countries are small states, mostly with populations of around 1.5 million or less.

The Commonwealth Secretariat provides advocacy, policy advice and technical assistance to promote the interests of small states, working with both national governments and a wide range of international institutions and intergovernmental organisations, including the UN and the World Bank, to benefit the development of small



states. It also works with regional organisations such as the Pacific Forum and the CARICOM Secretariat as well as AOSIS and the Small States Network for Economic Development on issues affecting small states.

The Geneva and New York Small States Offices continued to support the participation of resident member countries and regional bodies in international forums, as well as providing a base for members to receive support and capacity-building.

The importance of the Small States Offices was underlined when the Secretary-General visited both offices within the first month of taking office. The Secretary-General announced the establishment of a Commonwealth Group of Permanent Representatives for Geneva and New York, chaired by member countries, mirroring the informal group of Commonwealth High

Commissioners through the Small States Offices. The purpose of the Commonwealth Group is to strengthen the community of High Commissioners and Permanent Representatives of the Commonwealth through the Small States Offices.

The new permanent trade adviser in Geneva is in position and working with member countries, and Commonwealth Secretariat-based human rights advisers provided support through the sessions of the Human Rights Council.

Capacity-building in small states

The Commonwealth Secretariat remains committed to supporting improved capacity for social development across the Commonwealth's small states, although financial constraints have affected progress.

OVER FOUR DECADES OF WORK
HAS PUT THE COMMONWEALTH
AT THE FOREFRONT OF POLICY
RESEARCH AND GLOBAL
ADVOCACY FOR SMALL STATES.

The Commonwealth Secretariat remains committed to support the functioning and the operationalisation of the Small States Centre of Excellence. The Commonwealth Secretariat and the Maltese Government are providing seed capital for the initial running of the Centre. However, the Centre will eventually need additional financial resources to be sustainable over the long term, both from members and from key development partners.

The CFTC's Technical Assistance Unit provided support to strengthen economic capacity in the Office of the Minister of Finance and National Planning in Tonga.

The CAACC, hosted in Botswana, provided technical support and capacity-building to 18 African ACAs. Altogether, 154 ACA staff received capacity-building.

The Commonwealth Climate Change Programme

Access to climate finance

The Climate Finance Access Hub, based in Mauritius, was set up in 2016 and is now operational, with six national advisers. An online platform to facilitate communication between

the Central Hub, national advisers and the Commonwealth Secretariat has been established. Demand for the Hub has been demonstrated through requests from more than half of the Commonwealth's small state members.

Below is a snapshot of some the Hub's early achievements:

Jamaica

- A National Climate Finance Strategy has been compiled; Project Development Guidelines and a Green Climate Fund (GCF) Operational Manual have been developed; and a Climate Change Division monitoring and evaluation plan related to climate finance

CLIMATE FINANCE ACCESS HUB

The Climate Finance Access Hub is the Commonwealth Secretariat's response to the ongoing and future threats of climate change to our member countries. The Hub's primary aim is to help small and vulnerable countries access international sources of climate finance. This funding helps them adapt to climate change, mitigate its effects and realise their sustainable development goals. Bilal Anwar, who is managing the Commonwealth Finance Access Hub, said, 'I envision the Hub evolving into an entity that offers its services through an expanded network, which facilitates co-operation between developing members to build their capacity to access international sources of climate finance. To do so, the Hub will help countries create bespoke national projects and programmes which are eligible for climate finance.'

The idea of the Hub took shape at CHOGM 2013. Following their mandate to develop it, we carried out in-depth consultation with 40 member countries. This was to make sure the Hub would be relevant to their needs and complement other climate finance initiatives. CHOGM 2015 then gave the go-ahead, and the Government of Australia pledged AU\$1 million to support the initial implementation.

At its launch in November 2015, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, acknowledged its importance:

'The flow of international climate funds for small island developing states and least developed states, which are the most vulnerable to climate change, has remained problematic. The Hub will assist in unlocking existing and new climate funds for urgent adaptation and mitigation.'

The Hub has already had requests for help from 16 Commonwealth members – 7 in the Caribbean, 4 in the Pacific and 5 in the African region – accounting for over half of the Commonwealth small state members. To meet this high level of demand for assistance, the Hub needs more funding. The mobilisation of additional resources is key to sustaining its delivery.



flows has been designed. These are expected to improve climate finance programming and improve its monitoring.

Mauritius

- Institutional mechanisms have been strengthened to increase the scale of climate finance for the implementation of the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution. In addition, processes to manage climate change-related projects and facilitate implementation of GCF readiness support programmes have been strengthened.
- Two climate finance proposals have been submitted to the African Development Bank for funding, namely 'Enhancing National Food Security and Resilience to Climate Change: Development of Germplasm Improvement Strategies for Climate Change Adaptation' and 'Enhancing National Food Security and Resilience to Climate Change: Improve Disaster

Risk Preparedness and Management through the Development of Agricultural Decision Support and Early Warning System'.

Vanuatu

- Budgetary tracking systems for climate mitigation and adaptation flows in sectoral planning and budgets have been developed. In addition, a Climate Finance Roadmap is underway.

Namibia

- Training was delivered on how to draft climate finance proposals, access funds and on programme management.

Law and climate change

The Law and Climate Change Toolkit was launched at COP23 in Bonn in November 2017. It was created by the Commonwealth Secretariat's OCCJR, in partnership with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Environment Programme. The toolkit is

designed to help countries implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The pilot version will consist of an online database of laws in two areas, namely overarching climate change laws and energy laws. The provisions of these laws are classified and tagged at article level, which means that the toolkit enables the user to search very precisely for specific legal approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Monitoring and surveillance tools

The Commonwealth Secretariat is developing a portfolio of projects, training and capacity-building activities to support member countries most at risk of climate change through access to technical data and surveillance applications on climate change using satellites, autonomous systems (e.g. drones) and Remotely Operated Vehicles. These tools can be deployed remotely and therefore offer the potential for a step change in how countries can collect, access and manipulate data. End user uptake is often a challenge for the research consortia.

Developing a Regenerative Development approach to climate change

This programme takes a human security approach towards climate change, with a focus on factors with an impact on the security of people's livelihoods – local economies, food, environment and health. Factoring climate impacts (flooding, hurricanes, storms) into human security enable a more holistic model of Regenerative Development in the face of climate change.

Debt management

Innovative approaches to capacity-building

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Debt Management Unit, through its Public Debt Management Programme, supports member countries' efforts to effectively manage their debt portfolios.

In accordance with the mission of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the SDGs, the programme aims to strengthen the policy framework, institutional and legal arrangements, institutional capacity and management information systems to support prudent and effective debt management in member countries.

Delivery of the programme is through advisory support, capacity-building and provision and support of public debt management systems.

Highlights included Cyprus and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar adopting the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording Management System (CS-DRMS), which is now used by a majority of Commonwealth members. This system comprises a core recording

module and various toolkits that assist over 40 countries that use the system to effectively manage various aspects of their debt portfolios. In recent years, an interactive graphical dashboard has been included to enable debt managers to view critical aspects of a country's debt portfolio at a glance. Another recent addition is the data quality tool that measures the quality of the data that has been recorded and recommends corrective actions to be taken. Debt managers also make use of a debt strategy tool within the system, known as 'Management Tools', that allows them to assess the impact of various economic scenarios or lending decisions on their debt portfolios; and they can at the 'press of the button' export data in the format required by the World Bank and IMF's statistical reporting databases.

A new e-learning tool was rolled out across Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean, with 164 debt managers already trained in domestic and external debt management and debt recording in CS-DRMS.

Institutional reforms in public debt management

During September 2016, the Commonwealth Secretariat's Debt Management Unit conducted a technical assistance mission at the request of the Government of Guyana, to assist in the improvement of the legal framework to govern public debt management.

In The Bahamas, development of the domestic debt market transferred bond issuance responsibilities from a private investment bank to the Central Bank, which resulted in substantial cost saving to the government. The Central Bank of The Bahamas established a Central Securities Depository, while reforms in

various regulatory frameworks will lead to improved and more efficient access by the government to domestic resources to meet its funding requirements.

Fiji implemented Commonwealth Secretariat recommendations in reopening its infrastructure bonds, a critical first step towards developing market liquidity, as it facilitates consolidation of government securities and creates a large bond size, boosting trading and reducing costs to the government.

A number of other countries agreed to improve their public debt management, including Malta, Trinidad and Tobago and Sri Lanka.

New public debt management recording system: Meridian



Since September 2015, work has been ongoing to deliver a new public debt management system that is more technologically advanced and includes additional tools to cater for the evolving needs of countries: the Commonwealth Secretariat's Debt Management Unit has developed a new public debt management system, called Meridian. The new system incorporates advanced and improved functionalities to better address emerging debt management requirements while also taking advantage of the latest state-of-the-art technologies. Meridian is now available on a pilot basis to selected countries and will be released to all clients from January 2019.







Transparency and Smart Spending

The Commonwealth Secretariat has embarked on wide-ranging restructuring to enhance its ability to meet the expectations of member countries at a time of financial constraints, taking steps to safeguard the delivery of vital programmes while securing value for money for the people of the Commonwealth.

A photograph of a fisherman in a small, dark boat on a body of water. The fisherman is wearing a dark cap and is pulling a large, white fishing net. The net is partially submerged and has some fish visible inside. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is not visible. The image is partially obscured by a large, magenta-colored geometric shape on the left side of the page.

Performance highlights

- Work programmes consolidated into three directorates.
- Improved internal systems, particularly in Finance and Human Resources.
- Revised travel policies to produce significant savings.
- Implemented International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATA) reporting, publishing all transactions valued at more than £500.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's achievements should be seen in the context of a difficult financial environment. Even as the global economy recovers from the financial crisis of a decade ago, member countries continue to feel the headwinds of an unprecedented downturn in global trade. Inevitably, their economic uncertainties have had an impact on the financial position of the Commonwealth Secretariat, which relies on contributions from members, including voluntary contributions.

Within the period since the last biennial report, the Commonwealth Secretariat's actual core funding of £39.7 million had declined to £37.9 million by the 2016/17 financial year. It is expected that there will be a further decline in core funding

to £32.3 million in the 2018/19 financial year. This represents a significant reduction from £51.9 million in 2012/13.

The decline is essentially in the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC), which is reliant on voluntary contributions from member countries. Assessed contributions to the Commonwealth Secretariat Fund and the Commonwealth Youth Programme are unchanged year-on-year.

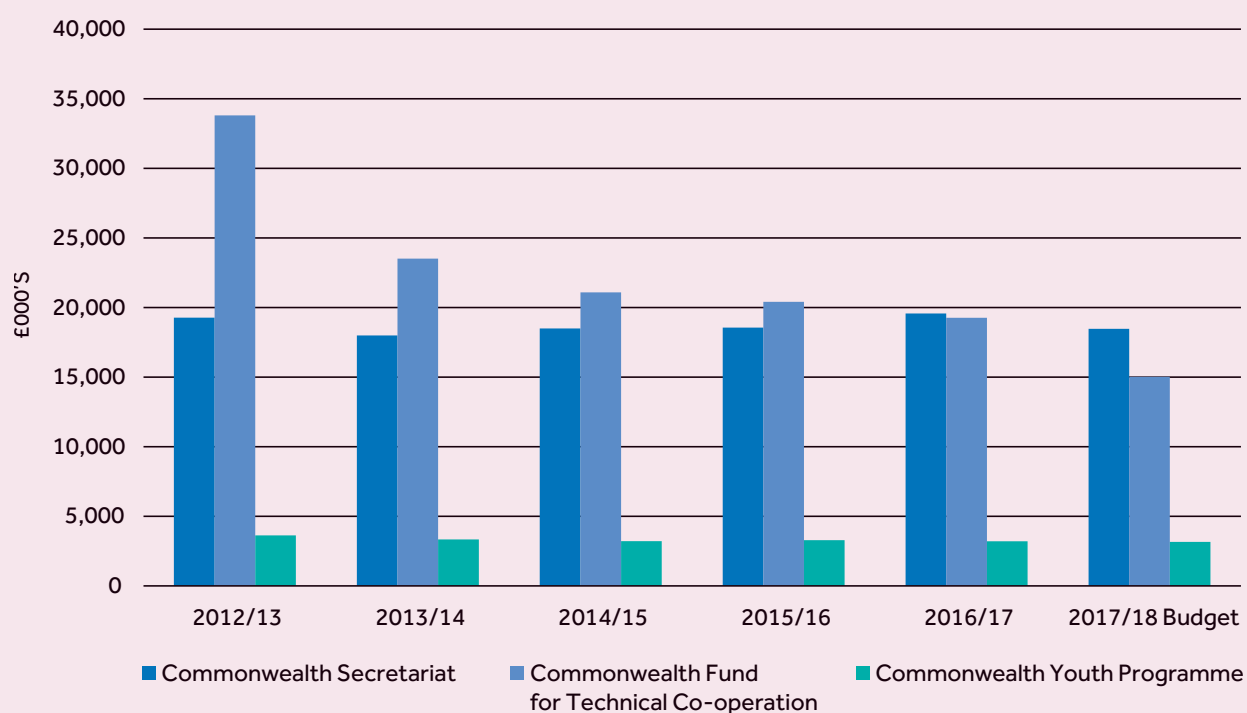
In this regard, 62 per cent of budgeted income for 2017/18 is from assessed contributions and 38 per cent is voluntary. This represents a reversal of the situation six years ago (2012/13) when 63 per cent of income came from assessed contributions and 37 per cent was voluntary.

While every effort has been made to examine spending to identify savings and efficiencies, this has also necessarily resulted in some retrenchment in terms of programme delivery. In addition, there has been a drop in the Commonwealth Secretariat headcount from 295 in June 2016 to 223 currently.

In response to the evolving financial situation, the Commonwealth Secretariat has embarked on a Reform and Change Plan to create an organisational structure better placed to provide support to member countries within current budgetary arrangements.

The plan includes actions in three key areas:

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT TOTAL INCOME BY FUND



6. Restructuring

- Consolidated into three programme directorates
- De-layered, including the freezing of three deputy secretary-general posts
- Headcount reduction through redundancies and attrition

7. Corporate areas

- 2017/18 budget was finalised and agreed significantly earlier
- Continuing programme of system improvement, particularly in finance functions and human resources
- Focus on value for money, with improved procurement procedures

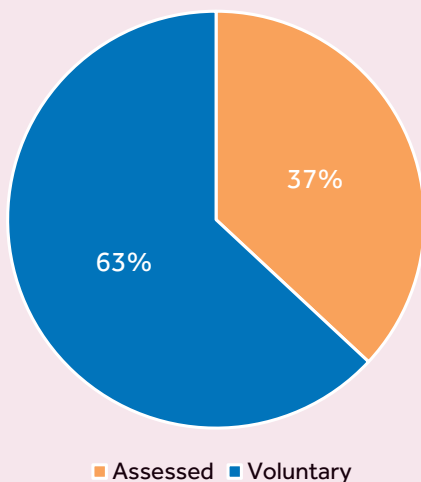
- Revised travel policy, producing significant savings
- Improved information technology resilience
- New website

8. Transparency

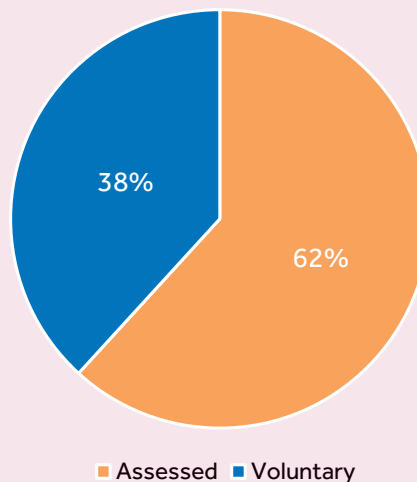
- Publishing all monthly transactions with a value of more than £500
- Quarterly International Aid Transparency Initiative reporting since November 2017
- Annual accounts published five months earlier

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT COMBINED INCOME, ASSESSED AND VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

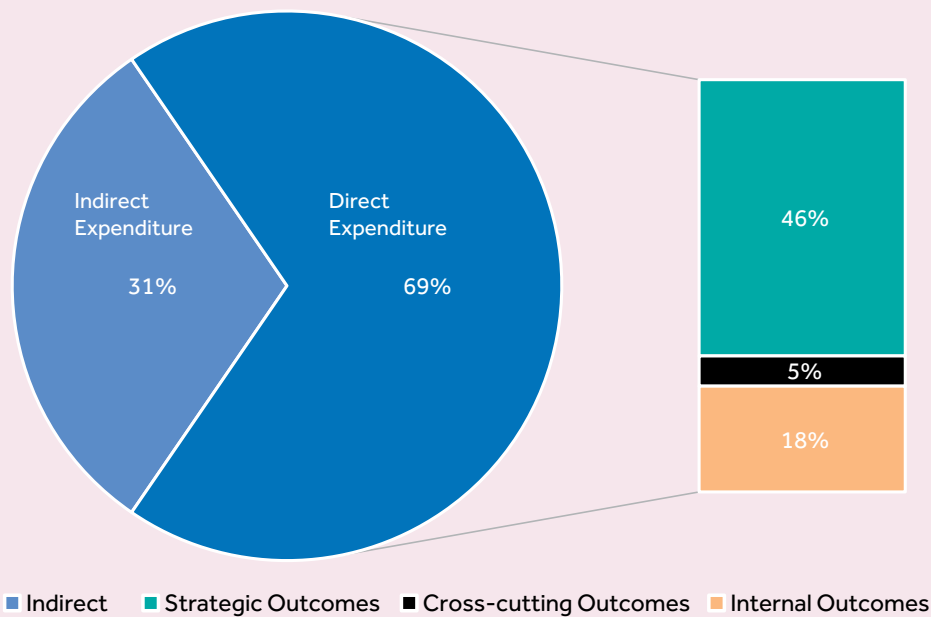
Actual Income 2012/13



Budget Income 2017/18



COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT COMBINED
2017/18 BUDGET EXPENDITURE





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