



# The Contribution of Commonwealth- Accredited Organisations to Advancing the Commonwealth Charter

An Independent Study

October 2023



The Commonwealth



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# Foreword



**The Commonwealth is a vibrant family of 56 countries and 2.6 billion people that celebrates and gets its strength from its rich diversity. Accredited civil society organisations play a vital and cherished role in our collective endeavour to build a more peaceful, inclusive and sustainable Commonwealth.**

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Along with the governments of Commonwealth countries and the Commonwealth inter-governmental organisations, Accredited organisations are a key pillar of the Commonwealth as they all share a resolve to advancing the values and principles enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter, whose tenth anniversary we are celebrating this year. It is a fitting occasion, therefore, to recognise and appreciate the immense contribution that accredited organisations make, individually and collectively, in championing the causes they represent, while also overcoming a myriad of organisational challenges along the way.

Like the Commonwealth itself, the group of accredited organisations is diverse: some are large and well-resourced while others are run by volunteers on shoestring budgets. But what each of them contributes to strengthening the ties that bind the Commonwealth family is priceless. Every one of them has a compelling story to tell, which can be glimpsed in their annual reports, about their work and the impact that has had in improving outcomes related to education, health, equity, human rights, governance and even disaster response in the Commonwealth.

This first-of-its-kind study is an attempt to fill an important gap in our collective knowledge about the important but often under-appreciated role that accredited organisations collectively play in making the Commonwealth the most unique of international institutions. The qualitative and quantitative research underpinning the study is based on the information and data that is currently available, which, it must be noted, has its limitations. It is my hope, however, that the insights and value captured in this study will trigger a regular and systematic appraisal of the collective contribution and untapped potential of accredited organisations. Accredited organisations have done much to support Commonwealth countries, in the face of grave challenges facing our world, from the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, to the impacts of climate change. Partnership between the public, private, and non-profit sectors will be important for the Commonwealth to meet and overcome the numerous difficulties it will confront in future years.

The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC  
Secretary-General of the Commonwealth



# Acknowledgements

This study has been developed by a team led by Abhik Sen, Head of Innovation and Partnerships, Commonwealth Secretariat. Operational support on the project was provided by Catherine Muir and Anita Collins. The author of this study, Mr Vijay Krishnarayan, is an independent consultant who has previously served two terms at the head of the Commonwealth's agency for civil society – the Commonwealth Foundation. During a seven-year tenure from 2012 to 2019, he focused the organisation on strengthening people's participation in governance for development. He served as the Foundation's Deputy Director from 2006 to 2012.

The study, undertaken in a participatory and consultative way, has benefited immeasurably from the co-operation and support of many supporters of the Commonwealth who have generously shared their expertise, knowledge and insight. Sincere thanks to all of them and, in particular, to the interviewees and reviewers for this study that included current and former members of the Accreditation Committee of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Board of Governors and representatives of Commonwealth-accredited organisations who volunteered to serve on the Project Advisory Group (PAG), led by its Chair, Hon. Nontembeko Boyce, Speaker of the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature in South Africa.

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- Beth Kreling: Honorary Secretary of the Commonwealth Consortium for Education and Peter Williams
- Andrew Larpent: Chairman of The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing
- Peter Oborn: President of the Commonwealth Association of Architects
- Richard Rieser: General Secretary, Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum
- Mark Robinson: Chair of the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council
- Arif Zaman: Executive Director of the Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network

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# 1. Introduction

The contribution that Commonwealth-accredited organisations make in advancing the values and principles in the Commonwealth Charter is a key pillar of the Commonwealth system. To better understand and recognise the contribution accredited organisations make, and the value they add in addressing the shared concerns that bind the Commonwealth of Nations, the Commonwealth Secretariat's Innovation and Partnerships team commissioned this first-of-its-kind independent study to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the Commonwealth Charter, which serves as the anchor and guide for all accredited organisations.

This study is the beginning of a longer-term process to build a systematic and evidence-based understanding of the collective contribution and impact of accredited organisations. The study is also intended to draw attention to the potential of accredited organisations to play an even bigger part in supporting Commonwealth countries and empowering Commonwealth people in the future to overcome a growing and complex range of socio-economic and environmental risks.

The Commonwealth Secretariat commissioned a project to assess the collective contribution of Commonwealth-accredited organisations in advancing the Commonwealth's broader goals. The project came on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Commonwealth Charter ('the Charter') and provided a moment to take stock, with a view to building on strengths and improving future collaboration.

The Charter was seen as a means of assessing accredited organisations' contribution to the Commonwealth. Since 2015, the criteria for accreditation have been linked to the Charter and when organisations report on their annual activities to the Commonwealth Secretariat, they are asked about the ways they might have contributed to the Charter's particular clauses. While regular annual activity reports are required from individual accredited organisations, there had been no concerted attempt to assess the collective contribution that they make to the Commonwealth.

From the outset, this project has understood the Commonwealth to be an institution, comprising and shaped by many actors

(organisations and individuals), each with varying capacities and degrees of influence on the system. The commissioning of the study was an acknowledgement that the sum of the Commonwealth is more than its intergovernmental parts. The Commonwealth is an institution that comprises many constituents. Among these are the 87 organisations that are accredited to the Commonwealth. This project was conceived as an assessment of the collective contribution of the network, rather than a report card on individual organisations.

The assorted 87 organisations are diverse and can be grouped per Commonwealth Charter clause. This was part of the brief. A listing of the organisations (as of June 2022) grouped using an approximation of the particular Commonwealth Charter clause their primary goals suggest is included on Page 9. An informal distinction is sometimes made between those that are exclusively Commonwealth focused and those that have recognised the Commonwealth as a means of advancing their global advocacy ends.

A minority of the organisations are relatively well endowed. The majority operate on annual budgets of less than £50,000, but they all 'punch above their financial weight'. Not all of them identify as civil society organisations. There is also a subgrouping referred to as 'associated organisations' (AOs). These have a reach and structure that are governmental, quasi-governmental or represent other governance institutions, including parliaments and legislatures. The AOs derive their mandates from their memberships and have received high-level political endorsement from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) over the years.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The following organisations identify as AOs: Commonwealth Association of Tax Administrators (CATA), Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), Conference of Commonwealth Meteorologists (CCM), Conference of Postal Administrators (CCPA), and the Commonwealth Education Trust (CET).

The project was designed with a view to providing insights to help Commonwealth intergovernmental bodies and accredited organisations align their strategies and partnership plans and to better serve member countries. It was also seen as a resource for member countries, which themselves may have questions about the contribution of accredited organisations. The brief did not include the development of recommendations. Where conclusions or observations can be made based on evidence, these are highlighted in bold text.

This project is a first-of-its-kind attempt to collate and quantify the collective contribution of accredited organisations to the Commonwealth. The mixed-method approach that underpins this study relies heavily on the annual activity reports that are submitted by individual accredited organisations to the Commonwealth Secretariat, as required by the Commonwealth's Accredited Guidelines. Currently, there are no indicators, definitions or an agreed set of variables that might establish what that collective contribution may be. In turn, this means that there is no baseline against which a collective contribution can be gauged. This project can help initiate an inclusive discussion on what those benchmarks might be in the future.

While being cognisant of the fact that the methodology and data underpinning this study are not complete or perfect, this study builds a comprehensive picture of the ways that accredited organisations contribute to the modern Commonwealth. This was done by reviewing the reports filed by accredited organisations, inviting written submissions, and interviewing people that represent organisations or who have worked with them.

This report starts by defining terms and then recapping recent discussions about accredited organisations within the Commonwealth system. It then focuses on the Commonwealth Charter, looking at each of the 16 clauses and identifying how organisations are making a difference in advancing them. The report then reflects on the broader contributions that accredited organisations are making to strengthening the Commonwealth. The report concludes by placing accredited organisations in the context of a contemporary Commonwealth renaissance. The project has drawn on the goodwill of Commonwealth colleagues and these are acknowledged together with the assumptions that were made during the conduct of this work.

## Project Approach

It was determined that the project be conducted in a participatory and consultative manner. To this end, the principal stakeholder groupings were identified. These included the accredited organisations themselves, while a Project Advisory Group (PAG) was constituted to provide insights and act as a sounding board for this work. The PAG was designed to represent the diversity of accredited organisations in terms of geographical representation and sectoral interest.

Engagement with members of the PAG yielded the following observations on the project:

- it should seek to capture the undocumented and unquantified aspects of Commonwealth accredited organisation (CAO) contributions to the Commonwealth system;
- it should highlight the interactions between CAOs and Commonwealth ministerial meetings;
- it should flag the ways in which CAOs derive resources from outside the Commonwealth system;
- it should highlight ways in which CAOs innovate as they address challenges and constraints;
- it should show the ways that organisations (from different sectors) collaborate around particular themes (e.g., gender equality); and
- it is an ambitious programme of work and support will be needed to deliver its outputs.

The consultant attended the conference organised jointly by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, the Commonwealth Association, the Commonwealth Foundation and the Round Table (Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs) held on 27 May 2022 entitled 'Is the Commonwealth Working?' This featured a session on the Commonwealth's networks.

The consultant also reviewed documents provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat, namely:

- The Guidelines for Accreditation to the Commonwealth (current as at 10 May 2022); and
- The Commonwealth Secretariat Partnerships Strategy (July 2018).

The consultant was primarily desk-based and took into account the views and perspectives of the diverse stakeholders and organisations that are members of the family of Commonwealth accredited organisations.

To animate the process of review, key informants were interviewed. Care was taken to ensure that these represented the diversity of accredited organisations: from those that are modestly resourced to those that are relatively well resourced; from those that have a civil society ethos to those that are closer to the state; from those that have been long associated with the Commonwealth to those that are relatively new; and from those based in the United Kingdom to those based in other Commonwealth countries.

The process also made provision for interviews with people who had worked in the Commonwealth system (for intergovernmental organisations) with accredited organisations. Finally, the project engaged with High Commissioners to the United Kingdom with an awareness of the accreditation process to gauge how Commonwealth member countries view accredited organisations. Each of the people interviewed agreed to participate as individuals not representing their employer or any other organisation.

Accredited organisations were also invited to make written submissions to the review. These inputs resulted in the identification of case studies for inclusion in the study.

In terms of key milestones, the draft final report was first presented to members of the Project Advisory Group. In turn, the draft was widely shared among the community of accredited organisations. The consultant received further written inputs from accredited organisations and these were considered before a final version was submitted to the Secretariat in February 2023.

The project period was punctuated by the Heads of Government Meeting, which was held in Kigali from 20 to 26 June 2022. While this preoccupied the entire Commonwealth Family, CHOGM 2022 provided an opportunity to showcase the work of CAOs and provided fresh insights from those that may not have participated in Commonwealth processes before.

This project has demonstrated that 20 years on, this remains the case. There are areas of Commonwealth activity where accredited organisations can and are leading the way, leveraging the Commonwealth brand and advancing the Charter.

## 2. Definitions

It is often said that the Commonwealth is an association of peoples as well as states. It is further asserted that the non-governmental Commonwealth predates the intergovernmental Commonwealth. The focus of this project is the domain of organisations that are not intergovernmental and yet attached to the Commonwealth because they have submitted to a process of accreditation. This requires that they individually:

- Commit to the Commonwealth's fundamental values and principles (as embodied, inter alia, in the Commonwealth Charter).
- Represent the true diversity of Commonwealth countries (e.g., in their governance and by demonstrating that they are active in at least three of the four Commonwealth regions). This does not apply to regionally accredited organisations.
- Demonstrate accountability and transparency (e.g., by reporting to their members and submitting annual reports for the Accreditation Committee).
- Are open to all Commonwealth members (i.e., open to eligible individuals, organisations or associations from other Commonwealth member countries).
- Have a track record (i.e., have been active for at least two years).

These criteria are set out in the Guidelines for Accreditation to the Commonwealth and the list of organisations accredited to the Commonwealth is listed on the Secretariat's website.

This project does not refer to this body of 87 organisations as 'Commonwealth civil society'. This is because some of those organisations do not recognise themselves as civil society organisations (either because their governance includes a governmental or parliamentary presence or because they do not identify with the advocacy activities often associated with the term 'civil society' in a Commonwealth context).

This project identified with the term 'Commonwealth Family'. This can be traced to the 2002 Coolum Declaration in which Heads of Government stated:

*We call on the many intergovernmental, professional and civil society bodies which help to implement our Commonwealth values, to join with us in building closer Commonwealth 'family' links and strengthening consultation and collaboration. We are convinced of the need for stronger links and better two-way communication and co-ordination between the official and non-governmental Commonwealth, and among Commonwealth NGOs [non-governmental organisations]. This will give Commonwealth activities greater impact, ensuring that every programme produces lasting benefit.*

The language of 'family' acknowledges the existence of a common bond – perhaps distant, taken for granted and hardly ever referred to explicitly. It also speaks to the ways that members of the family come together for a common cause – particularly in times of crisis or in response to a particular thematic need. The imagery of a family also allows for the existence of rivalries and tensions between members as they compete for the attention of those with influence or for scarce resources.

### 3. Recent History

The recent history of discussions between Commonwealth member countries regarding accredited organisations has focused on grouping them to enable better engagement with the intergovernmental Commonwealth. The importance of categorising the accredited organisations was recognised by the Commonwealth's Accreditation Committee during its 2019–2022 meetings. The Committee saw the need for a clearer and more transparent rationale for subgrouping accredited organisations as a means of improving the potential for programmatic partnerships.

The Committee heard that categorisation would highlight the expertise and diversity of accredited organisations, as well as their reach. The potential for categorisation to foster collaboration and synergy between and among organisations was also recognised by the Committee. Ultimately, it was felt that the High-Level Group's (HLG) review of the governance arrangements of the Commonwealth Secretariat<sup>2</sup> and the review of the Secretariat's Partnership Strategy might have implications for accredited organisations and decisions on categorisation were deferred.

At the end of December 2018, the HLG produced the second of its two reports. This recognised the significance of accredited organisations for the Secretariat's work and highlighted the growing awareness on the part of member countries of the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the intergovernmental Commonwealth and the broader Commonwealth Family. The report stated:

*Commonwealth organisations now represent a significant component of and continue to play a valuable role within the Commonwealth. Moreover, their work of empowering popular movements and networks and improving the quality of their inclusion is more closely rooted in the Commonwealth of peoples.<sup>3</sup>*

The HLG saw the particular value of accredited organisations in the way in which they contribute to the Commonwealth's democracy and governance agenda.

The HLG recognised that potential synergies between the Commonwealth Secretariat and accredited organisations were not being realised. The HLG's starting point differed from that of this study. The HLG's focus was the strengthening of the Commonwealth Secretariat. This study's focus is the strengthening of the Commonwealth as an institutional whole. The common ground is the understanding that the potential value of accredited organisations is not being realised. Changes in the way they are administered and partnered form the context for any effort to improve the operating environment for accredited organisations.

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2 At CHOGM 2015, Heads of Government mandated the Secretary-General to convene a high-level group (HLG) to review the Commonwealth Secretariat's governance arrangements to improve oversight, efficiency and transparency. This mandate was reiterated by Heads at CHOGM 2018, who asked foreign ministers to make decisions in response to the HLG's findings.

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3 High Level Group (2018), *Second Report of the High Level Group on the Governance Arrangements of the Commonwealth Secretariat*. London.



## 4. The Contribution of Commonwealth-Accredited Organisations to Advancing the Commonwealth Charter



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II signing the Commonwealth Charter at Marlborough House, London on Commonwealth Day, 11 March 2013

The Commonwealth Charter ('the Charter') was formally adopted in 2013. It is a consolidating and unifying document that sets out the institution's values and aspirations. It was conceived as a means of updating and melding the previous declarations that had come to define the institution's norms and parameters. It is a high-level document and does not provide the granularity of previous Commonwealth statements – for example, on the separation of powers, the elimination of discrimination, economic justice, or democracy and human rights.

When describing the reality of working within the parameters of the Charter, a member countries official said:

*The Commonwealth Charter is a high-level document. There is lots of room for each member state to take what they need from it and for some clauses, there is enough space to park a horse. The Charter provides a framework, but that is elaborated further by CHOGM mandates and then the strategic plans of the respective intergovernmental organisations. It is an amalgam*

*of these things that should be used to gauge the contribution that accredited organisations make to the Commonwealth.*

The Charter is sometimes invoked as a response to contemporary development challenges in the same way that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are. The Charter differs from the SDGs in some regards. For example, the Charter highlights the needs of small states with dedicated clauses, and it does not include a clause dedicated to climate change but rather refers to the broader challenges associated with protecting the environment.

It has been assumed that the Commonwealth Charter provides the basis for measuring the collective contribution of accredited organisations. There are two principal issues with this assumption. In the first instance, accredited organisations currently are not required to explicitly align themselves with 1 or more of the 16 clauses in the Commonwealth Charter.



Second, the Commonwealth Charter does not lend itself to quantification. This contrasts with the Sustainable Development Goals, with their accompanying suite of targets and indicators. These have enabled the Commonwealth Secretariat's Innovation and Partnerships team to track progress towards the delivery of Agenda 2030 in Commonwealth countries. The same cannot be done in relation to the Commonwealth Charter, which does not have its own yardsticks and milestones.

For the purposes of this project, accredited organisations can be grouped according to each of the Commonwealth Charter's 16 clauses. This is represented in Appendix 1. The consultant reviewed the 87 organisations and assigned them to one of the Commonwealth Charter's clauses. It is acknowledged that the organisations group and regroup themselves without reference to the Charter. This may, for example, be for the purposes of making submissions to a Commonwealth ministerial meeting and is a dynamic process. There are two caveats that should be noted in relation to Appendix 1:

1. The process of grouping is based on the consultant's interpretation of the mandate of each organisation. It is therefore not 'official'.
2. Organisations that are principally focused on one theme usually engage with several issues. For example, while Rotary International might be described as being focused on sustainable development – Clause 9, it also works to improve access to healthcare – Clause 11 – and has peace and conflict resolution as one of its own seven areas of focus – Clause 3.

Accredited organisations do organise themselves to address particular issues, and these may respond to particular clauses in the Commonwealth Charter. These have included groupings on culture, education, the built environment, health, law and the media. The Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations (IFCO), set up by accredited organisations themselves, is not accredited to the Commonwealth but serves as an informal networking, knowledge sharing and partnership development platform that accredited organisations are welcome to join as members on a voluntary basis, which many have chosen to do. It convenes all accredited organisations on collective or shared concerns, as well as in clusters grouped by specific themes.

This is done through regular meetings, with a view to sharing information and developing new initiatives (for example, in early 2022, the accredited organisations formed the Children's Interest Group of Commonwealth Organisations as a 'cluster group'). IFCO also aims to strengthen the collective identity of accredited organisations, for example, by convening and making representations to the intergovernmental Commonwealth.

To assess the contribution of accredited organisations to advancing the Commonwealth Charter, the consultant assessed how each of its clauses has been addressed. It has been noted that accredited organisations do not organise themselves or their activities according to the specific clauses listed in the Charter. In addition, there are some clauses that have attracted more attention than others from accredited organisations. This is illustrated in data from the Commonwealth Secretariat's annual reporting process. Figure 4.1 shows the numbers of accredited organisations that reported activity in relation to each of the Commonwealth clauses during the year 2021–2022.

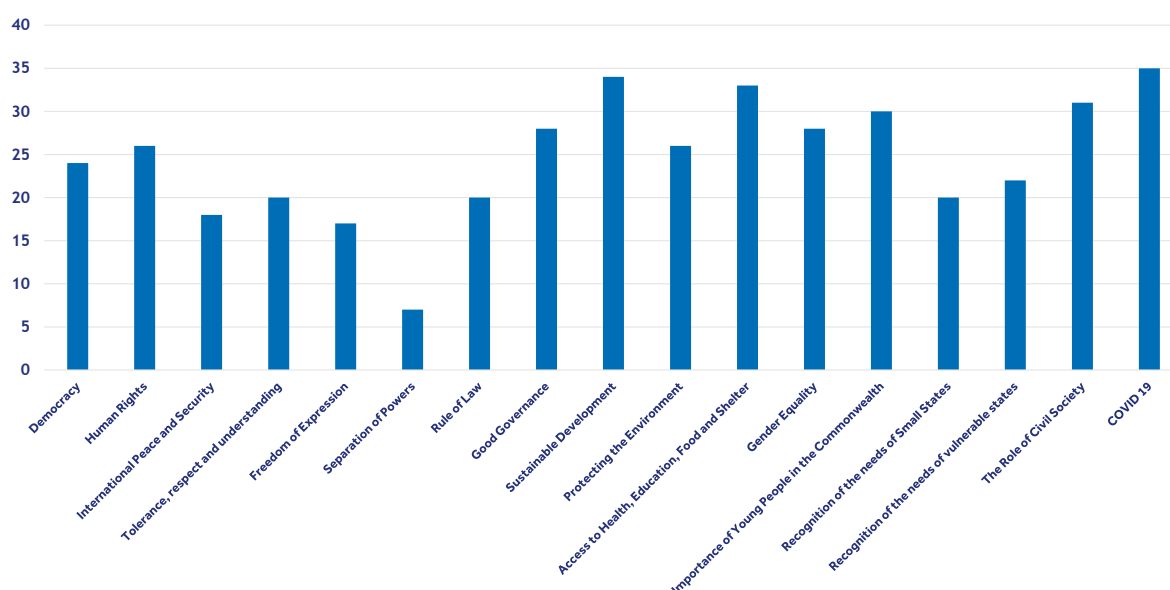
This figure shows that at least 20 organisations reported activity in the following areas of the Charter – democracy, human rights, tolerance, respect and understanding, the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development, protecting the environment, access to health, education, food and shelter, gender equality, importance of young people in the Commonwealth, recognition of the needs of small states and vulnerable states, the role of civil society, as well as COVID-19 development challenges.

Figure 4.1 also illustrates that while the aims and objectives of an organisation may suggest that it should be categorised as being focused on one particular clause of the Charter, in practice organisations respond to development challenges as they relate to their particular constituents.

## 4.1 Commonwealth Charter Clause 1 – Democracy

This clause provides a focus for some of the relatively better-resourced accredited organisations. These organisations complement the activities of the intergovernmental

**Figure 4.1. Number of organisations active per area of the Commonwealth Charter in 2021/22**



Source: Commonwealth Secretariat Annual Reporting Platform, available at: <https://cworg.thecommonwealth.io/>

organisations and some draw on their closer working relationships with parliaments and line ministries.

One high-profile manifestation of the Commonwealth's work in supporting democracy is through the observation of elections. The Commonwealth has been observing electoral processes since 1967, when it observed a referendum in Gibraltar. Since then, over 160 elections have been observed in nearly 40 countries. Commonwealth Observer Groups (COGs) work alongside citizen observer groups and other international organisations. COGs are independent and autonomous and are composed of eminent persons from a range of fields, including electoral commissioners and parliamentarians, and legal, gender, human rights and media experts. These colleagues are appointed in their individual capacities, but will often be put forward for consideration by an accredited organisation.

Organisations such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum help to deepen and embed a culture of democracy. They support the development of institutions and in doing so, help to define democracy as meaning more than the electoral processes. Accredited organisations

provide training and encourage exchange between elected representatives and those with the responsibility for administering democracy.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was established in 1911 and is now an association of over 180 legislatures (or branches) divided between 9 geographic regions of the Commonwealth. The CPA's mission is: 'To promote knowledge of the constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy, with particular reference to the countries of the Commonwealth.'

Accredited organisations have also helped to extend the way that democracy is envisioned in the Commonwealth. In 2005, at the Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Aberdeen, delegates endorsed the 'Aberdeen Agenda: Commonwealth principles on good practice for local democracy and good governance'. These principles provide a set of standards to promote healthy local democracy and good governance. The principles were initially developed by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and approved by its membership. The Aberdeen Agenda is now formally cited in the text of the Commonwealth Charter.

## 4.2 Commonwealth Charter Clause 2 – Human Rights

The Charter states that the Commonwealth is committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights covenants and international instruments. Many if not all accredited organisations would identify themselves as advocates for human rights in the context of the Commonwealth Charter. The Charter defines human rights in the broadest sense. There are differing interpretations, definitions and expectations in the area of civil and political rights within the diverse range of constituencies represented in the Commonwealth, ranging from sovereign member countries, governments to civil society. In this context, accredited organisations make an important contribution to the institution by offering an individual rights-based and citizen-centric perspective that must be taken into account by intergovernmental processes in the Commonwealth. The institutionalised platforms available to accredited organisations to engage with law-makers and policy-makers on related issues including, for example, at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, is a distinctive feature of the Commonwealth system that is appreciated by all. Yet in the eyes of some, there is room for improvement in the nature and quality of the engagement.

A representative from an organisation working on human rights noted:

*There was a brief period when civil society seemed to be treated with equality and accreditation was the means for access, but subsequently the space for intervention became more formalised, more restricted and so choreographed that accreditation itself seemed like a grace and favour privilege, more form than substance.*

They questioned whether any of the ideas that had been generated by civil society (e.g., the idea of a Commonwealth High Commissioner for Human Rights) had been taken on by what they termed 'the official Commonwealth'. They said: *'I think the only real thing (we have) done is to constantly hold the Commonwealth's feet to the fire on human rights. (We have) also supported all the major efforts to centre the Commonwealth in human rights.'*

## 4.3 Commonwealth Charter Clause 3 – International Peace and Security

Clause 3 of the Commonwealth Charter identifies key elements of international peace and security as including an effective multilateral system, disarmament and the absolute condemnation of all acts of terror. There are few accredited organisations working in this space, but there is evidence that a contribution has been made to encourage innovation and new thinking in this field – for example, in relation to profiling the role of women in peace mediation.

The Women Mediators across the Commonwealth (WMC) network and Conciliation Resources published a joint report, *Beyond the Vertical: What Enables Women Mediators to Mediate*, in 2021. The report identified the factors that contribute to the meaningful inclusion of diverse women in peace mediation. This followed joint research, which highlighted the diverse and important contributions to peace made by women mediators. The partnerships with Conciliation Resources and other agencies, including the London School of Economics, have been critical for this network, which was established in 2018.

## 4.4 Commonwealth Charter Clause 4 – Tolerance, Respect and Understanding

The watchwords included in Clause 4 of the Charter are 'dignity' and 'diversity' and there is also a significant emphasis on religious freedom. There is common agreement that the Commonwealth Games is the institution's most popular showcase. This was substantiated by the Royal Commonwealth Society's 'Commonwealth Conversation' project, which was published in 2011 and is the largest public consultation on the Commonwealth to date.

The Commonwealth Games Federation was established more than 80 years ago and recognises the power of sport to bring together a third of the world's population. The Federation invokes the Commonwealth's narrative on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It locates its

own values of humanity, equality and destiny in Commonwealth values. The Federation also recognises its role in renewing the Commonwealth and manifesting its continuing relevance. The Commonwealth Games demonstrates its capacity to innovate and does so in a way that embodies the spirit of Clause 4 of the Commonwealth Charter. For example, at the Birmingham 2022 Games, for the first time, more medals were awarded to women than men and it saw the largest-ever programme that integrated para-athletes.

Other organisations have identified sections of society that face discrimination or are under-represented in Commonwealth processes. In this regard, they can be said to be focusing on human dignity, such as the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum. The Commonwealth Equality Network was accredited in 2017 – responding to this section of the Commonwealth Charter.

Religion has not featured prominently in the list of accredited organisations. The Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding, which reported its findings in 2007, highlighted the importance of supporting civic voices beyond faith-based organisations. There are only two accredited organisations that explicitly name a faith in their title: the Commonwealth Jewish Council and Muslim Aid.

## 4.5 Commonwealth Charter Clause 5 – Freedom of Expression

The Commonwealth Journalists Association is a voluntary professional association for journalists throughout the Commonwealth. Established in 1983, it campaigns for free, bold and honest journalism across the Commonwealth. The CJA brings journalists working in print, broadcasting or online closer together.

Clause 5 of the Charter cites free and responsible media as enabling peaceful and open dialogue. The Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA) has invoked this clause and worked with other organisations (accredited and otherwise) to advance freedom of expression in the Commonwealth.

In 2016, in response to its members' concerns regarding the rising incidence of acts of violence against journalists and erosion of legal protections for freedom of expression, the CJA started to develop a set of principles, drawn from existing Commonwealth commitments in the Charter and other declarations, for the role of the media in good governance. In 2017, the Secretary-General, Patricia Scotland, spoke in favour of distinctive Commonwealth principles on the media consistent with international human rights law. The CJA and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies then formed a Working Group on Media and Good Governance with the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, the Commonwealth Legal Education Association, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (UK). The Commonwealth Secretariat participated as an observer. In 2018, the working group published the first Commonwealth Principles on Freedom of Expression and the Role of the Media in Good Governance ('the Media Principles'). In 2021, law ministers mandated the Commonwealth Secretariat to set up an expert working group of member country representatives, which reviewed and partly revised the Media Principles. In November 2022, when law ministers met in Mauritius, they thanked the accredited organisations for their valuable contribution in developing the draft Media Principles, unanimously adopted the revised Principles, and recommended them to Commonwealth Heads.

## 4.6 Commonwealth Charter Clause 6 – Separation of Powers

Making clear a distinction between the roles of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary is a hallmark of any Commonwealth democracy. Accredited organisations have been instrumental in helping the institution to establish norms in this regard.

In 1998, a group of parliamentarians, judges, lawyers and legal academics (under the aegis of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Commonwealth Legal Education Association, the Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association, and the Commonwealth Lawyers' Association – the Latimer House Working Group with the Secretariat's inclusion) drafted guidelines that provided an operational manual of good practice regarding the Commonwealth's

fundamental values and the commitments contained in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration and Millbrook Commonwealth Action Programme.

The guidelines were further refined and endorsed by Heads at the Abuja CHOGM in 2003 as the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles on the Accountability of and the Relationship between the Three Branches of Government. These principles provided a framework for the implementation of the Commonwealth's fundamental values of democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. They became a hallmark of Commonwealth values, as noted by Heads at the Valletta CHOGM in 2005. This was the first time that accredited organisations had co-operated with ministers to come up with a set of principles agreed by all. This was also the first evidence of the contribution made by accredited organisations to the advancement of the Commonwealth's fundamental values.

In the 2008 foreword to the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles on the Three Branches of Government, the then Commonwealth Secretary-General, Kamallesh Sharma, stated: Ten years ago – cajoled, inspired and actively assisted by four exceptional Commonwealth organisations – we produced the first Guidelines, at Latimer House in Buckinghamshire. Here, I pay tribute to our Commonwealth Lawyers Association, our Legal Education Association, our Magistrates and Judges Association, and our Parliamentary Association, for their part in this great enterprise.

The Latimer House Working Group was subsequently commissioned by the Secretariat in 2012 to develop a toolkit (including training modules), which included a *Facilitators' Guide*. A *Practitioners' Handbook* was developed as a means of promoting awareness and dialogue among stakeholders within member countries on accountability, transparency and the separation of powers between the three branches of government. This was drafted with inputs from the executive committees of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Commonwealth Lawyers' Association, the Commonwealth Legal Education Association, and the Commonwealth

Magistrates' and Judges' Association. The working group continues to work with the Secretariat to promulgate the Latimer House Principles.

## 4.7 Commonwealth Charter

### Clause 7 – Rule of Law

Accredited organisations have worked hard to shape the Commonwealth's norms on the separation of powers as a central tenet of the institution's commitment to the rule of law. They have also been active in deepening the capacity to observe the rule of law in Commonwealth countries. The principal means of doing this has been to support the development of the legal profession, discourse and education.

The Commonwealth Lawyers' Association (CLA) was established in 1986 to maintain and promote the rule of law throughout the Commonwealth by ensuring that an independent and efficient legal profession serves the people of the Commonwealth. CLA's history is rooted in the development of the Commonwealth Law Conference (CLC). The first Commonwealth and Empire Law Conference was held in London in 1955. The CLA now holds a biennial Commonwealth Law Conference (CLC). The CLC brings together legal practitioners to debate current issues affecting practice and the profession, exchange views and experiences with colleagues, and to get up to date with the latest commercial products and services. The CLA has also established four Regional Hubs (in the Americas, Africa, Europe and Australasia) to broaden and promote its work.

A group of organisations (both accredited and non-accredited) have come together to form the Commonwealth Legal Forum. The Forum comprises the Commonwealth Legal Education Association, Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association, Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel, Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies, International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, and the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (which includes the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law). Meetings are also attended by representatives from the Commonwealth Secretariat who work





on the rule of law. The Forum facilitates exchange and the sharing of news on issues relating to each organisation's efforts to further the rule of law in the Commonwealth. The accredited organisations within this grouping actively engage with the biennial Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting.

#### 4.8 Commonwealth Charter Clause 8 – Good Governance

The Charter makes explicit reference to rooting out systemic and systematic corruption. The Commonwealth's work in this area had been characterised by the convening of Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies on a regional basis to share expertise, innovations and lessons learned in combatting corruption and promoting good governance. This would see accredited organisations (notably Transparency International) provide occasional inputs.

Transparency International was particularly active in pressing for the Commonwealth to be more active in this field. Commenting on the outcomes of the 2015 Heads of Government Meeting, it highlighted the reference in the CHOGM Communiqué to the role of the Commonwealth in advocating anti-corruption efforts.

Further impetus was provided when the 'Tackling Corruption Together' conference was convened in 2016. It 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 preceded the Anti-Corruption Summit: London 2016, hosted by the Prime Minister of the United

Kingdom, at which practical measures to expose and drive out corruption were agreed upon by governments.

Interviewed for this project, a former staff member at Transparency International stated:

*The Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council helped the Secretariat get the Tackling Corruption Together conference off the ground. This also benefited from the credibility and specialist knowledge that Transparency International (TI) had previously been accredited, but none of the staff at the time knew when that had happened, and they were unaware of what accreditation meant. By making them aware of their accreditation and drawing on my relationships from having worked there personally, they were able to see real advantages to accreditation, like Tackling Corruption Together, and the advocacy spaces provided as part of the biennial CHOGM programme.*

#### 4.9 Commonwealth Charter Clause 9 – Sustainable Development

Critics of the Charter point to the balance of clauses being weighted towards governance matters rather than development, with Clause 9 being a catch-all. It includes reference to pursuing inclusive growth, conserving natural ecosystems and promoting social equity.

An example of the way in which accredited organisations have responded to this clause can be seen in the formulation of a Commonwealth agenda for sustainable urbanisation. With nearly half of the projected increase in the world's urban population

to 2050 forecast to be in the Commonwealth, the need for member countries to come together to tackle the challenges of climate change and rapid urbanisation, especially in the context of the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, is apparent.

As part of preparations for the Kigali CHOGM in 2022, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Commonwealth Association of Architects, the Commonwealth Association of Planners, and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum came together on this theme. They joined with the Rwandan Ministry of Infrastructure, the Rwandan Ministry of Local Government and The Prince's Foundation. They drew on support from other Commonwealth organisations, along with governmental, professional and technical partners, to develop and promote a Call to Action on Sustainable Urbanisation in the Commonwealth.

To complement the Call to Action, a Good Practice Platform was set up, to profile innovative and collaborative initiatives for sustainable urbanisation in the Commonwealth. In 2020, the partners facilitated a series of online webinars, which encouraged exchanges on interdisciplinary and multisector collaboration to address climate change, rapid urbanisation and recovery from COVID-19.

When the CHOGM convened in 2022, the partners generated significant momentum behind the initiative. Heads of Government included a Declaration on Sustainable Urbanisation in their suite of outcome statements. While the Declaration did not mention the accredited organisations that had done much of the groundwork on the issue in preparation for CHOGM, reference was made to the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Initiative – the name of the programme that was conceived by the accredited organisations.

In a written submission to this project, a spokesperson for one of the organisations that worked on the Declaration stated:

*While the success of the Call to Action and the Declaration will of course ultimately need to be judged by their impact on the ground, recognition of the issues together with a commitment to action is a necessary prerequisite and so the importance of the Declaration should not be underestimated. Experience to date has demonstrated the power of the Commonwealth to bring together diverse*

*stakeholders around a demonstrably important subject of common concern and the following are considered to have been among the factors which have sustained the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Initiative: 1) a clear focus on a critical issue which is of concern to many member states and resonates with the objectives of the Commonwealth Charter, 2) the collection and presentation of evidence to demonstrate the need for action, 3) the development of an inclusive multi-sector alliance together with a shared narrative and theory of change, 4) persistence and commitment, 5) advocacy and the engagement of a broad constituency, 6) high-level support from both senior Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth stakeholders.*

## 4.10 Commonwealth Charter Clause 10 – Protecting the Environment

Clause 10 of the Charter speaks to the importance of the natural environment to sustained human development and the importance of collective action to address the pressing threats posed by climate change. This area of work has been the focus for increased levels of Commonwealth activity, and this has been led by the intergovernmental Commonwealth.

There are well-established accredited organisations working in this area. Their work can be characterised as enabling exchange between professionals and encouraging academic exchange in their respective fields. For example, the Commonwealth Geographical Bureau promotes interaction among geographers in universities and related institutions in Commonwealth countries and shares its members' scientific research with policy-makers at workshops and conferences.

The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy project was launched in 2015 with an appeal to Commonwealth member countries to contribute areas of indigenous forest to be preserved in perpetuity to mark Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's lifetime of service to the Commonwealth. Her Majesty said of the project: 'This and other initiatives are a practical demonstration of the power of the Commonwealth, working as a group, to effect real change for generations to come.' The project is led by The Royal Commonwealth Society, in partnership with the organisation Cool Earth and the

Commonwealth Forestry Association, with the aim of eventually linking all Commonwealth countries in a canopy of sustainable forest conservation initiatives for future generations. Since its launch, more than 35 Commonwealth countries have dedicated forestry projects or are planting new forests, with more countries in the process of finalising their submissions.

The Commonwealth Forestry Association (CFA) was established in 1921 and has maintained a reputation for world-class science and excellence in forestry practice. It publishes the respected and peer-reviewed forestry journal, the *International Forestry Review*, and a regular newsletter. The CFA enables exchange and networking among its professional members and organisations. It also promotes career development using a range of awards, such as the Queen's Award for Forestry, the Young Forester Award and the Young Scientist Research Award. In addition to its programme of training events and workshops, the CFA also implements projects. The CFA provides the secretariat for the Standing Committee on Commonwealth Forests, which comprises representatives of all the forest departments in the Commonwealth. The Committee provides a unified voice on forestry matters to governments and international meetings and organises the Commonwealth Forestry Conference, which takes place every four years.

Protecting the environment has also been taken up as a theme by organisations that do not have a specific focus on related issues. In the lead-up to the Conference of the Parties (COP)26, held in 2021, Rotary International submitted a joint proposal for a high-level roundtable discussion on mangroves. It invited Commonwealth ministers for the environment to attend, as well as a number of Commonwealth NGOs, including the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council and representatives from UN agencies – for example, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) – and academic experts. Following the event, Rotarians have established mangrove projects in more than 16

Commonwealth countries, funded by Rotary Global Grants in excess of US\$600,000. It is anticipated that this will pave the way for collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat's Blue Charter Team. A follow-up event at COP27 is also being planned.

The Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC) was established in 1970 to promote all aspects of human ecology – the process of inquiry into the patterns and process of interaction of humans with their environments. This has seen CHEC make interventions on climate change, food and water security, and urban resilience. CHEC also has Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

It has been observed that there are no accredited organisations that focus specifically on the issue of climate change. A member country representative said:

*There are gaps in provision, with some sectors being poorly represented among accredited organisations. There is not an organisation that is focused on climate change and too few working on trade or the concerns of small states.*

It has been suggested that this might be addressed by enabling a more proactive approach to recruiting organisations to become accredited to the Commonwealth so that they can help address pressing issues or gaps in areas of expertise.

#### 4.11 Commonwealth Charter Clause 11 – Access to Health, Education and Shelter

Clause 11 of the Charter highlights some of the development issues where the Commonwealth has an established track record, in health and education, while there has been relatively less activity on food and shelter. The intergovernmental Commonwealth's programmatic presence in education is focused and taken forward primarily by the Commonwealth of Learning. Commonwealth ministerial meetings on education (held triennially as a standalone conference – and second only to CHOGM in scale for Commonwealth ministerial meetings) and health (held annually in the wings of the World Health Assembly) have provided focal points for accredited organisations to come together, engage with other organisations and



provide inputs to ministerial policy statements. The focus provided by ministerial meetings has encouraged accredited organisations to come together in groupings to help shape agendas and make submissions to these Commonwealth policy forums.

The Association of Commonwealth Universities oversees the co-ordination and promotion of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Programme (CSFP). The CSFP is funded by individual governments and universities, for study within those countries or institutions; and the CSFP endowment fund – a central fund that enables students from all over the Commonwealth to study at universities in low- and middle-income countries. Since its inception in 1959, more than 38,000 scholars have benefitted from the CSFP.

The Commonwealth Consortium for Education (CCfE) was established by a group of accredited organisations to co-ordinate their efforts on behalf of Commonwealth education, to co-ordinate their work and provide a collective mechanism for interaction with ministries and official Commonwealth organisations. It is the largest sectoral grouping of Commonwealth associations, with a relatively formal structure (including a constitution and provision for annual subscriptions). The group includes 17 civil society organisations in full membership. These vary considerably in size, for example:

- The Commonwealth Association of Science, Technology and Mathematics Educators (CASTME) advances science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. It is particularly focused on the culturally situated lifelong learning of girls and women and their understanding of everyday science, maths and engineering. It runs an annual awards scheme and produces a triannual newsletter. It has a UK-based board of trustees, with regional groups in Africa, Asia and Europe and no paid staff.
- The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) has over 500 member universities in 50 countries across the Commonwealth. Its network covers more than 10 million students and over 1 million academic and professional staff. The ACU's

strategic plan, 'The Road to 2030', sets out its priorities for higher education in the Commonwealth, which include contributing to meeting the SDGs, widening access and inclusion, and improving international mobility and recognition of qualifications. It has more than 100 staff and a budget of more than £1 million.

CCfE also includes the Commonwealth Teachers Group, which operates under the 'umbrella' of Education International, does not have Commonwealth accreditation and has several million teachers in membership globally.

Commonwealth governments in the Caribbean came together with the Commonwealth Teachers Group of Education International (and the Commonwealth Consortium for Education) to develop the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol. This was adopted by ministers of education in September 2004. It aims to balance the rights of teachers to migrate internationally with the need to protect the integrity of national education systems, and to prevent the exploitation of the scarce human resources in developing countries.

CCfE's primary role is as a co-ordinator (for example, through the production of a well-respected calendar of Commonwealth education-related events and a directory of education stakeholders). It also undertakes project work. In 2018, it commissioned an independent report on the place of education in the Commonwealth and the extent of existing co-operation. This was published on the eve of the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Fiji and was intended to stimulate constructive dialogue on how educational collaboration could be encouraged and strengthened through partnerships. In its submission to this review, the CCfE highlighted the difficulty of working on education in the Commonwealth without counterparts at the Commonwealth Secretariat's Marlborough House headquarters.

In 2009, the health professional associations accredited to the Commonwealth formed the Commonwealth Health Professions Alliance (CHPA). The eight-member organisations considered that by working together they could better represent and support health professionals in Commonwealth countries and promote high standards of care and equity in access to care for Commonwealth peoples. In 2020, the group changed its name to the Commonwealth Health Professions and Partners Alliance (CHPPA). The name change reflected the membership better (it includes groups of professionals as well as advocacy groups) and the group's intent to be more inclusive.

The CHPPA has been active in the wings of the Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting and started to convene virtual Commonwealth Civil Society Policy Forums (CSPF). These forums are held annually to prepare recommendations for presentation to Commonwealth Health Ministers Meetings. In preparation for the 2021 CSPF, and against the backdrop of COVID-19, the grouping, led in this instance by the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association, conducted a survey of Commonwealth countries to identify the barriers to medicine and vaccine access and the factors influencing these. Of the 149 responses, nearly 60 per cent of respondents indicated that access to medicines and vaccines was a significant barrier to effective and equitable patient care. The survey also highlighted the disproportionate impacts in

Africa, the Caribbean and Asia compared with other Commonwealth regions. It found that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated poor access to medicines and vaccines, with more than 78 per cent of survey respondents stating that access had been at least moderately affected by the pandemic. The survey helped to inform five recommendations that were presented to the 33rd Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting and were referenced in the outcome statement.

The Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation (CNMF) was founded in 1973, bringing together national nursing and midwifery associations across the Commonwealth. The Federation sees a healthy, well-educated and well-informed population as essential for democracy and development. In this regard, it explicitly references the Commonwealth Charter. Its work is predominantly in-country, with nursing and midwifery professional and industrial organisations, regulatory bodies, and the principal nurse or midwife in the Ministry of Health. This results in activities that educate to improve health and well-being; strengthen professional bodies; and partner with Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth bodies. CNMF is active within the CHPPA.



## 4.12 Commonwealth Charter Clause 12 – Gender Equality

Clause 12 locates gender equality and women's empowerment as essential elements of sustainable development and as basic human rights. Traditionally, Commonwealth-accredited service organisations (e.g., Soroptimists, Corona Worldwide and the Commonwealth Countries League) had been most active in this sector. This started to change with the advent of triennial Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meetings, which provided a forum for wider civil society engagement and advocacy. This was given sharper focus with the adoption of the Commonwealth Plan of Action (PoA) for Gender Equality 2005–2015. The PoA made provision for inputs to the monitoring of progress by civil society organisations. The Commonwealth Women's Network was an active advocate for civic inclusion in Commonwealth gender equality processes at that time. The introduction of the Commonwealth Women's Forum, held in the wings of CHOGM since 2015, has provided additional advocacy space for accredited organisations.

The Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network (CBWN) was established in 2002 as a joint initiative of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the predecessor to the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council. CBWN works to break down gender barriers and encourage women to start up and grow their own businesses. The Network aims to support women through the process of growing their businesses or their development and progression in corporate roles. The specific objectives for the Network include:

- increasing opportunities for women to trade internationally in the Commonwealth – for example, by advocating for women's participation in multilateral trade missions;
- designing, developing and delivering training for women in the Commonwealth to succeed in business and in international trade – for example, by partnering in support of training on digital literacy for girls; and
- celebrating and signposting talent recognising women's achievements in business in the Commonwealth – for example, by advocating for gender-inclusive trade at CHOGMs.

## 4.13 Commonwealth Charter Clause 13 – The Importance of Young People to the Commonwealth

Clause 13 of the Charter reflects the often-quoted statistic that 60 per cent of the Commonwealth's population is under the age of 30. Yet (as is the case with Clause 12 in relation to women's organisations and gender equality) there are relatively few accredited organisations that are dedicated to young people. There are organisations that are dedicated to developing young leaders and these have links with the British Royal Family (the Association of Commonwealth Leader's Conferences, the Queen's Commonwealth Trust and the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation).

The Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (CYEC) was established as a charity under English law in 1970 and provided a focus for activities in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat's Youth Programme – including encouraging broader participation at the Commonwealth Youth Forum. It also maintained an archive that documented the history of young people's cultural relations in the Commonwealth. This transferred to the University of London's Institute of Commonwealth Studies. In 2015, CYEC became a subsidiary charity of the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS).

The incorporation of the CYEC provided the impetus for further youth work at the RCS, alongside other initiatives such as the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition (the world's oldest international schools' writing competition). The RCS now operates the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Programme. The programme was launched in 2020 in partnership with the organisation Clarion Futures, to provide opportunities for young Commonwealth citizens (aged 18 to 25) to share their thoughts, ideas and experiences on key global issues and develop social action projects. The RCS also provides the secretariat for the Commonwealth Youth Gender and Equality Network (CYGEN), which was established in 2015 as a youth-led and focused network. CYGEN actively promotes and supports the meaningful inclusion of youth voices on gender equality issues in local, national, regional, Commonwealth and international agendas.

#### 4.14 Commonwealth Charter Clause 14 – Recognition of the Needs of Small States

Clause 14 of the Charter addresses the concerns of most Commonwealth member countries (33 of the Commonwealth's 56 member countries are small states) and the specific development challenges that they face. The Pacific Island Association for NGOs (PIANGO) stands out as one of a minority of accredited organisations that are headquartered outside the UK. When the organisation was first accredited to the Commonwealth in 2007, there was some discussion as to whether a regional organisation could apply for such status. The organisation was accredited and in October 2022 was in the process of applying for re-accreditation.

PIANGO grew from the increased networking among Pacific Island NGOs that started in the late 1970s. It acknowledged the need to address the legacy of both French and British colonialism in the Pacific region. Established in 1991 (with support from the Commonwealth Foundation as well as other development partners), PIANGO works through a network of national umbrella organisations in a variety of governance terrains and in a context where physical distance makes communication difficult. PIANGO's primary role is as a catalyst for collective action, to facilitate and support coalitions and alliances on issues of common concern, and to strengthen the influence and impact of NGO efforts in the region. The organisation's activities include information sharing, capacity building, relationship strengthening and supporting quality performance in the NGO sector.

Other accredited organisations have responded to Clause 14 of the Charter in their programmes. For example, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) established a Small Branches network for small jurisdictions (defined as national and subnational jurisdictions with populations of less than a million inhabitants) within its network to identify their needs and requirements in parliamentary strengthening, development and co-operation. Since 1981, the CPA has held an annual CPA Small Branches Conference for Parliamentarians to enable co-operation and exchange.

Clause 14 makes explicit reference to resilience and small states. Resilience is a development construct that the Commonwealth has helped elaborate. The Commonwealth Local Government Forum has picked up the theme in its programming and will make it the focus of the Commonwealth Local Government Conference in 2023.

#### 4.15 Commonwealth Charter Clause 15 – Recognition of the Needs of Vulnerable States

Clause 15 addresses the need for immediate assistance to vulnerable countries and makes specific reference to least developed countries (LDCs). Of the 42 LDCs currently listed by the UN, 14 are Commonwealth countries (one in Asia, three in the Pacific and ten in Africa). The project found that there are no accredited organisations focused exclusively on aiding LDCs. In times of disaster, the Commonwealth can add its voice to calls for aid and relief and the intergovernmental organisations are able to respond. This project did not find evidence that accredited organisations were engaged substantively in this area.

#### 4.16 Commonwealth Charter Clause 16 – The Role of Civil Society

Clause 16 references civil society organisations as partners in promoting and supporting Commonwealth values and principles. The very existence of accreditation is evidence that civil society has an acknowledged space in the Commonwealth's processes (while noting that not all those accredited define themselves as a civil society organisation).

CIVICUS is a global alliance of 12,000 civil society organisations and activists in more than 175 countries. It is dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society. CIVICUS was established in 1993 and, since 2002, has been headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, with additional hubs across the globe.

A representative from the Commonwealth Foundation (the intergovernmental Commonwealth's agency for civil society) stated:



*The Foundation has an interest in the conditions for civil society across the Commonwealth and has worked with CIVICUS (the World Alliance for Civil Society) to adapt their global index of civic space for use in a Commonwealth context. CIVICUS is accredited to the Commonwealth, but this was not a determining factor for the Foundation in choosing a partner. More important was CIVICUS' clear expertise in this field and the innovative way the organisation quantified national conditions for civil society.*

A representative of CIVICUS stated that:

*CIVICUS aims to ensure that the Commonwealth features in its programming. The convening of International Civil Society Week (ICSW) was held in Fiji in 2017. This saw almost 700 delegates from 115 countries meet at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. This was an opportunity to connect and highlight strategic objectives at a location in the Global South. This also requires a range of non-governmental partners – so that the agenda is not filtered or refined by a host government. Convening the ICSW in Fiji enabled CIVICUS to deepen its relationship with PIANGO (which anchored the event), another Commonwealth accredited organisation.*

## 5. The Broader Contribution of Commonwealth-Accredited Organisations to the Commonwealth

Reflecting on the contributions that accredited organisations make to advancing the Commonwealth Charter, the project has identified patterns that can be traced across the individual clauses.

### 5.1 Agenda setting

One of the most important contributions that accredited organisations have made and continue to make to the Commonwealth is in defining new areas of concern for the institution or taking forward dialogue on sensitive issues. These issues may eventually be taken up and internalised in the form of programmes of the intergovernmental Commonwealth or they may shape the activities of accredited organisations through advocacy or delivery.

This happens to the best effect when there is a clear and open pathway for engagement with

Commonwealth intergovernmental processes. This was the case with the development of the Commonwealth Principles on Freedom of Expression and the Role of the Media in Good Governance. These were initiated by a specialist grouping of accredited organisations, further developed in concert with an expert working group convened by Rule of Law Division at the Commonwealth Secretariat and approved by the 2022 Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting for submission to leaders at the 2024 Heads of Government Meeting.

Where ministerial meetings make space to receive civil society inputs, accredited organisations can make a meaningful contribution. This has been seen in relation to Commonwealth health ministers, education ministers, youth ministers, women's affairs ministers and law ministers.

One of the main reasons that organisations choose to apply for accreditation is so that they can gain access to Commonwealth ministerial meetings. There is a convention that allows for the attendance of accredited organisations at most (but not all) Commonwealth ministerial meetings. The apex Commonwealth meeting is the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). In practice, this meeting is a collective of various meetings that are recognised as part of the official CHOGM programme. These include four forums: the Business Forum, the People's Forum, the Women's Forum and the Youth Forum. Accredited organisations are active at each of these forums. Statements from the forums can be included as part of the suite of outcome documents from a CHOGM. Foreign ministers also have an opportunity to engage with accredited organisations at a roundtable discussion, which has also become part of the CHOGM programme.

Commonwealth organisations make inputs to the CHOGM through the Committee of the Whole (COW). The COW is an important mechanism in setting the CHOGM agenda. At the 2018 and 2022 CHOGMs, accredited organisations worked collectively under the auspices of the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations (IFCO) to submit a summary statement with recommendations on each of the CHOGM themes. The drafting process for the statement involved subgroups and consultations on each theme. The statement provides a focus for discussion at the COW and demonstrates the active engagement of the official Commonwealth with accredited organisations and civil society.

The Commonwealth does not have a track record of convening ministers on every subject on a regular basis and the format of some meetings does not allow for time to be set aside for civil society inputs. Where a ministerial process does not exist, accredited organisations can advocate for one to be established. This can be seen, for example, in relation to calls for a Commonwealth ministerial meeting on the rights of children. In a similar vein, the Royal Commonwealth Society and Plan UK started working together in 2010 to raise awareness of women's rights issues, including early and forced marriage (EFM) in the Commonwealth. In 2011, they co-authored two reports on the issue and worked together to get EFM included in the 2011 CHOGM Communiqué. This helped set an agenda for the Commonwealth and led to the convening of a Commonwealth Roundtable on Early and Forced Marriage in 2013.

There is a sense that the quality of the interaction between accredited organisations and the intergovernmental Commonwealth organisations could be improved. It is felt by some that this would help enhance the contribution that accredited organisations can make to the Commonwealth. In the first instance, this could be facilitated by providing more information to accredited organisations about who the lead person is on a particular area that might benefit from inputs from accredited organisations. A member country official stated:

*There are capacity constraints – but these are not always defined in terms of staff or finances. In some cases, a lack of information on the way that the Commonwealth works can be inhibiting. It is hard enough for desk officers to find out which (Commonwealth) staff member is leading on an issue. It is going to be harder for a newly accredited organisation to navigate. This suggests a need for more resources (staff) in the Partnerships Team dedicated to supporting collaboration with accredited organisations. Websites and portals will only go so far in enabling collaboration and greater involvement.*

A spokesperson from an accredited organisation stated:

*What is needed are mechanisms that enable meaningful dialogue and exchange between and among Commonwealth organisations. The structures in place at present are focused more on managing relationships than enabling action.*

*There needs to be a better balance between seeking governmental approval and agreement on one hand and mobilising for implementation on the other. Accredited organisations are on the implementation side of the equation. This would be helped if there was a greater investment in the infrastructure for Commonwealth implementation. There is too much emphasis on regulating organisations rather than facilitating their engagement in delivery.*

## 5.2 Inclusion

As a complex institution that encompasses diverse political cultures, it can be appreciated that different parts of the Commonwealth respond in various ways and at different speeds to issues of the day. In 2010, Michael Kirby, a member of the Eminent Persons Group that had been established by the Port of Spain CHOGM to advise Heads on Commonwealth reform, spoke at the Royal Commonwealth Society about human rights. He made specific reference to the need for the Commonwealth to address the human rights aspects of sexual orientation. He felt that the Commonwealth was out of step with other global human rights institutions and that unless this was rectified, 'The future of the Commonwealth will be imperilled.'

The 2010 Commonwealth Senior Officials of Law Ministries Meeting (SOLM – a precursor to the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting) saw the first-ever discussion about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights in an intergovernmental setting. In the run-up to the 2010 SOLM, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association prepared a paper on decriminalisation, which was presented to delegates for information.

Civil society organisations had started to make use of the Commonwealth's informal channels on this issue. The Commonwealth People's Forum in Kampala (2007) and Port of Spain (2009) both referred to the decriminalisation of same-sex relationships. The groups that attended those meetings began to coalesce – facilitated by the UK-based organisation, the Kaleidoscope Trust. This trust was established in 2011 to work with activists, parliamentarians and governments to put an end to sexuality and gender-based discrimination, and to influence policy change across the Commonwealth.

This led to the establishment of The Commonwealth Equality Network (TCEN).

This network of Commonwealth civil society organisations works to challenge the inequalities faced by LGBT+ people. In 2017, TCEN became the first and only LGBT+-focused organisation to be accredited by the Commonwealth. This decision was endorsed by the Commonwealth Secretariat's Board of Governors and means that TCEN can access Commonwealth ministerial meetings and participate in policy consultations. These efforts by accredited organisations over a considerable period of time have enabled the Commonwealth to register LGBT+ rights as a policy issue informed by voices that were previously unheard.

Most accredited organisations are based in the UK, which raises questions about the extent to which they are themselves inclusive. Accredited organisations are responding to this critique. A spokesperson from the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) stated:

*CHRI has three offices – Accra, London and New Delhi. Being based in the Global South gave the organisation access to a wealth of examples of good practice that were relevant. This has helped foster dialogue with national governments. For example, CHRI produced a report entitled 101 Things About the Police, with a view to helping processes of police reform in East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda). The report was picked up by counterpart organisations working in-country which used it to shape their advocacy on the issue. The disadvantages faced by CHRI are countered by virtue of having an office in London. Further, COVID-19 had the effect of putting more processes online and that helped improve access all around. There is a disadvantage to not being based in London in that it is not possible to call on desk officers or participate in brainstorming gatherings – which is one of the strengths that stem from the Commonwealth's relative informality.*

This contribution highlights the ways in which the use of technology to bring accredited organisations together, accelerated during the pandemic. This enabled organisations to engage more widely and dynamically with their members and others across the whole Commonwealth. This had a democratising effect and helped to address the critique that many accredited organisations were only able to draw on inputs from representatives in the UK.

It has also been noted that the requirement (as stipulated by the current Accreditation Guidelines) for newly accredited organisations to demonstrate that they have a presence in several Commonwealth regions – a stipulation originally motivated by a desire to encourage more diversity – may be having the opposite effect. This requirement may now be dissuading organisations active in the Global South and based in only one of the Commonwealth's regions from applying for accreditation. There are regional organisations that have expressed an interest in accreditation (e.g., the Pacific Island Association of NGOs), but this is not common.

### 5.3 Self-critique

Accredited organisations have an important role to play in critiquing and challenging the Commonwealth's prevailing narratives and norms. This can help to broaden the Commonwealth's policy agenda through voices that are less heard.

The Commonwealth's messaging emphasises the role of young people in advancing the Charter: there is a well-established youth programme and the Youth Forum is an established feature of the CHOGM programme. There are also frequent references to the fact that 60 per cent of the Commonwealth's population is under the age of 30.

The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing was formally accredited in 2017. It advocates for the human rights and dignity of older people and for an all-age friendly intergenerational Commonwealth. It challenges institutional ageism in the Commonwealth and aims to speak for the 40 per cent of the population of the Commonwealth that is not categorised as young. For example, in 2018 it published a research report on *Ageing in the Commonwealth*, arguing that: 'With its exclusive focus on youth, the Commonwealth is ignoring the demographic time bomb of ageing populations.'

The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing is also affiliated to the Global Alliance on the Rights of Older People (GAROP), for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing is the only organisation in the Commonwealth that works for older persons and for an intergenerational approach to Commonwealth affairs. Like many accredited organisations, it operates on a voluntary basis with no paid staff.



## 5.4 Visibility

In 2009–2010, the Royal Commonwealth Society undertook a project to gauge the Commonwealth's profile and reputation. It was a rigorous process, which entailed opinion polling in seven Commonwealth countries, surveys of 1,200 people in more than 40 countries, and collating over 2,000 submissions. No such project has been undertaken since. The results made the final project report uncomfortable reading. It found, inter alia, that only a third of people polled could name a Commonwealth activity. Those that could, cited the Commonwealth Games. Recognition of the Commonwealth was greatest in Canada and the UK and lowest in India and Malaysia.

That initiative found that where the Commonwealth is going to touch people's consciousness, it is likely to be as a result of the efforts of an accredited organisation. Prime among these is the Commonwealth Games Federation. The Commonwealth's intergovernmental processes rarely touch the lives of its citizens in any immediately obvious or tangible way.

Aside from the global visibility for the Commonwealth that comes with the Commonwealth Games, accredited organisations can also serve to establish or maintain a Commonwealth presence where the intergovernmental Commonwealth cannot. This includes instances where a member country has been suspended 'from the Councils of the Commonwealth'. Since the establishment of

the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group in 1995, at least four member countries have been suspended from and subsequently readmitted to the Commonwealth.

The continued presence of accredited organisations (through the membership of affiliates) helped to maintain a connection between the suspended countries and the Commonwealth. To cite another example, accredited organisations have continued to maintain peer-to-peer links with colleagues in Zimbabwe following its exit from the Commonwealth in 2003.

## 5.5 Reach

The annual activity reporting mechanism enables the Secretariat to track the scale and scope of individual accredited organisations. This reveals the extent of their membership, the countries that they serve and the size of their budgets. This in turn demonstrates the extent to which organisations can extend the reach of the Commonwealth – complementing programmes and projects being delivered by the intergovernmental organisations, often bringing to bear specialist technical knowledge or being able to mobilise particular groups of stakeholders.

The associated organisations in particular (but not exclusively) can add considerable heft to the implementing capacity of the intergovernmental Commonwealth. A spokesperson from an associated organisation stated:



*One of the products of the collaboration between associated organisations was the joint submission they made to the Kigali CHOGM. This was a response to the High-Level Panel statement, which recognised the distinction between associated organisations and other accredited organisations. The submission aimed to convey to Heads of Government the potential resource available to the Commonwealth through its associated organisations. It was designed to broaden the understanding of the Commonwealth's implementation capacity beyond that of the Secretariat, which is often seen as the only organisation able to respond to the mandates that come from Heads of Government. This is a continuing process, but associated organisations are now considering how they can respond to the outcome statements from the Kigali CHOGM.*

When asked about the distinction between associated organisations (AOs) and other accredited organisations, another spokesperson from an associated organisation stated:

*The important distinction, I think, is the closer relationship that AOs have with governments and legislatures. This relationship enables AOs to complement work being done by the other accredited organisations. Some of the best examples of advocacy stem from AOs working in concert with other accredited organisations. For example, the Latimer House Working Group brings together AOs and other accredited organisations.*

In view of the membership of several of the associated organisations, there could be significant opportunity in a more defined approach

to implementation, taking advantage of the reach of the AOs. The mandate for delivery and implementation at country level often sits with specific ministries, city or local government, or defined organisations, and the Commonwealth could move to better reflect the nature of delivery by convening more partnerships to implement the mandate contained in the Charter and Strategic Plan.

Accredited organisations report on their memberships in different ways – some in terms of individuals, others in terms of chapters or affiliates. Reports supplied to the Commonwealth Secretariat for 2021 show that some organisations have memberships in the hundreds of thousands. The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers records 280,000 individuals as members and the Chartered Insurance Institute has 125,000. If membership is defined in terms of organisational affiliations, then CIVICUS has nearly 4,000 members and the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies has more than 2,000.

In terms of touching people's lives, the Commonwealth is more likely to be present through its accredited organisations than its intergovernmental processes. Membership of a Commonwealth accredited organisation or participation in their programmes represents a significant opportunity for individuals to engage with and commit to the Commonwealth.

The activities of those members are spread throughout the Commonwealth. The annual reporting mechanism records the countries where accredited organisations claim to be working. For

**Table 5.1. The eight organisations reporting annual expenditure on Commonwealth activity in excess of £1 million.**

Rotary International	£55.6m
Sight Savers International	£53.2m
Chartered Insurance Institute	£35.7m
Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League	£4.1m
The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers	£4.0m
Towards Zero Foundation	£3.3m
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association	£1.8m
Association of International Accountants	£1.6m
Association of Commonwealth Universities	£1.2m
<b>Total expenditure of eight accredited organisations in Commonwealth countries reported in 2022</b>	<b>£160.5m</b>

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat Annual Reporting Platform, available at: <https://cworg.thecommonwealth.io/>

2021, the reports show that organisations are most active in the following countries (in order – top nine): the UK, Australia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. This list includes all but one of the first members of the Commonwealth. The countries where accredited organisations are least active are (in order – least first): Nauru, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Maldives, Eswatini, Brunei Darussalam, St Kitts and Nevis, Mozambique, and Vanuatu. This highlights a deficit in the Pacific Islands, as well as other small states.

To highlight this issue, a former member country representative stated:

*Civil society organisations are relatively agile and can be more responsive. They are not encumbered in the same way that governments and intergovernmental organisations are. Accredited organisations can work without being filtered by governments. They can use the legitimacy conferred by their Commonwealth accreditation to work in a direct way. Whether with nurses or parliamentarians, they can apply their specialist knowledge to issues of local concern. The Commonwealth's solidarity with countries and communities that are faced with specific challenges is very valuable. Accredited organisations can help in this regard. When they do this, they are carrying the Commonwealth brand – making the institution of the Commonwealth more visible and ensuring the relevance of the organisation. The awareness of the Commonwealth in ... the Pacific is low. The lack of a Commonwealth's physical presence is a problem in the region.*

## 5.6 Finance

In terms of expenditure, the 2021 and 2022 returns to the Commonwealth Secretariat's annual activity reporting mechanism show that some organisations can draw on considerable financial flows. In 2021, the combined expenditure of Commonwealth-accredited organisations amounted to more than £175 million. The largest spends were reported by SightSavers International (formerly the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind), which estimated its annual expenditure in Commonwealth countries as £100.6 million, and the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League, which reported its annual expenditure at over £4.5 million.

In these cases (and that of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation), royal patronage or charter are significant hallmarks.

This pattern of combined expenditure being dominated by fewer than ten of the accredited organisations was repeated in the figures for 2022 (while noting that at the time of writing, just over a quarter of organisations had not filed an annual return). Overall expenditure was reported as £109 million, with the eight organisations able to report spending of more than £1 million set out in Table 2.

This shows that in 2022, the (more than 50) remaining organisations together reported a combined expenditure of around £5 million. In 2021, of the 70 organisations that filed a return, more than half reported annual expenditures of less than £50,000. This highlights the fact that most accredited organisations are small or micro-sized operations in terms of finance.

The accredited organisations can bring additional capacity to Commonwealth programmes, but the picture is mixed – with a minority being very well resourced and supported. While the majority of accredited organisations do not have access to finance, they are able to mobilise voluntary effort. This has not been quantified but is likely to represent a substantial contribution to the Commonwealth. What is more significant than their income is the way that accredited organisations carry the Commonwealth brand to specialist groups (from accountants to vets), with the potential to mobilise them in support of Commonwealth values and principles. This is of particular value in areas where the intergovernmental Commonwealth does not have specialist knowledge in-house.

## 5.7 Partnerships

As significant as the quantum of resources that accredited organisations can bring to the delivery of Commonwealth programmes, is the value of the relationships that these organisations can draw on. For example, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum has a strategic partnership with the European Union dedicated to supporting the representation and capacity development of local government.

Many of the accredited organisations are modestly resourced and for many, this means that working in partnership is a necessity. These

partnerships may be among and between accredited organisations, such as the collaboration to develop the Commonwealth Principles on Freedom of Expression and the Role of the Media in Good Governance. Accredited organisations are increasingly looking to partner with counterparts outside the Commonwealth system. The Royal Commonwealth Society and Commonwealth Forestry Association have worked with a non-accredited organisation to take the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy initiative forward.

The international charity, It's a Penalty, initiated the CommonProtect project to advocate for improvements in child protection in the Commonwealth, particularly against child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA), working in partnership with Commonwealth accredited organisations. These include the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work. Since October 2018, the partnership has leveraged nearly £1 million worth of pro bono legal support to map the child protection laws of 21 Commonwealth countries and make recommendations.

It is recognised that the intergovernmental Commonwealth has a role to play in convening partners and bringing organisations together in pursuit of shared goals and objectives. There is also an interest from many of the associated organisations (which have a mandate for implementation) to work with the Commonwealth Secretariat to better monitor and evaluate the impact that they are making to support the Commonwealth's mandate. This paper could be a basis on which to build tools to measure this better for member countries.

The Commonwealth Secretariat in particular is seen as providing some of the infrastructure that is needed to foster partnerships. There is also need for co-ordination and information among accredited organisations as part of the process of adding value to partnerships. Infrastructure for the co-ordination of accredited organisations, so that they can better engage with Commonwealth processes, is also required. It has been noted that the emphasis on funding for projects and programmes comes at the expense of support for co-ordination and liaison.

## 6. Conclusion

The Commonwealth Charter is infused with reminders that the Commonwealth is more than an association of governments. It starts: 'We the people of the Commonwealth...' and goes on to welcome 'the valuable contribution of the network of the many intergovernmental, parliamentary, professional and civil society bodies which support the Commonwealth, and which subscribe and adhere to its values and principles'. The place of accredited organisations in the Commonwealth is well established.

During the ten years since the adoption of the Charter, questions have been asked about the ways in which accredited organisations contribute to its advancement. This has included critiques. At a conference organised in London in the lead-in to CHOGM 2022,<sup>4</sup> the question was asked, 'Is the Commonwealth Working?' This included a critical look at the Commonwealth's networks. From people who had worked for Commonwealth intergovernmental organisations, there were two prevailing critiques of accredited organisations as a whole: that they did not reflect the Commonwealth's diversity and they were in the main, focused on governance issues rather than development challenges. There was a demand from governments for more information on the activities of accredited organisations and the impact that they were having. This has been met in part by the improved systems for gathering data from accredited organisations in the annual reporting regime, which was instituted by the Commonwealth Secretariat on the Commonwealth Innovation Hub launched in 2018.

From the accredited organisations, there was a demand for an improvement in the quality of interactions with the intergovernmental Commonwealth. This was seen in terms of better engagement between organisations, as well as more meaningful dialogue in the Commonwealth processes that accreditation grants access to. It

has been observed that there is less time available for interaction with accredited organisations at Commonwealth ministerial meetings and that inputs are not allowed for at all such high-level gatherings. Access to these processes is seen as the main benefit of accreditation. Without an improvement in this quarter, some organisations will ask themselves whether seeking accreditation is worthwhile.

Most accredited organisations work with limited capacity. This is most often defined in terms of scarce financial and human resources. There is no dedicated source of income from the intergovernmental organisations – each of which has its own strategic plans and mandates to deliver on and is working with budgets that are declining in real terms. It has been suggested that the intergovernmental organisations could develop a list of preferred providers invited to bid for contracts to deliver programmes and projects, and that such a list should include accredited organisations.

Accredited organisations also feel that their capacity to contribute to Commonwealth processes is limited by a lack of information. The establishment of 'Huddle' – the Commonwealth portal for sharing information, as well as dedicated webpages, are seen as valuable, but they pre-suppose a level of awareness and information about the Commonwealth that makes it difficult for newly accredited organisations to engage.

Setting the constraints aside, organisations with experience of engaging with other multilateral institutions compare the Commonwealth favourably with those others, such as the UN. A spokesperson for a newly accredited organisation stated: '

*The Commonwealth is a broader church and is much more open. There is space for organisations to take an initiative. It is much less prescriptive and is much more analogous to a jazz band – whereas the UN is more like an orchestra.*

Many accredited organisations pre-date the intergovernmental organisations. They popularise the Commonwealth. They also reach important and influential constituencies. They are not well-endowed, but manage to bring additional resources

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4 The conference, organised jointly by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, The Commonwealth Association, the Commonwealth Foundation and *The Round Table: Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, was held on 27 May 2022 and entitled 'Is the Commonwealth Working?' See: <https://commonwealth.sas.ac.uk/podcasts/commonwealth-working> (accessed 29 June 2022).

and partners into the Commonwealth's sphere. They help the institution to move forward faster than governments can and respond to new and emerging issues, while demonstrating that it can be inclusive.

Accredited organisations are an essential component of the Commonwealth. They have long been seen as central to any renaissance of the institution. A report<sup>5</sup> produced by a group of 19 Commonwealth organisations for the 2002 Coolum CHOGM stated:

*Through skilful use of its network from the top of government to the smallest non-governmental organisation, the Commonwealth can contribute much towards setting an agenda for the wider world. It can add value in a great many areas of activity, but it can also – and must – initiate and lead.*

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5 Association of Commonwealth Universities et al. (2002), *A New Vision for the Commonwealth: A report for the Coolum Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2002*. [AQ: add publisher & location?]



# Appendix 1

## The Commonwealth-accredited organisations (as of June 2022) grouped per Commonwealth Charter clause

Commonwealth Charter Clause	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause
1. Democracy: We recognise the inalienable right of individuals to participate in democratic processes, in particular through free and fair elections in shaping the society in which they live.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• The Queen's Commonwealth Trust</li> <li>• Forum of Federations</li> <li>• Ramphal Institute</li> <li>• World Alliance for Citizen Participation</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Commonwealth Girls Education Fund</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel (CALC)</li> <li>• Commonwealth Equality Network</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Boxing Council</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Institute of Commonwealth Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Forestry Association</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>

Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>2. Human Rights: We are committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights covenants and international instruments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• The Queen's Commonwealth Trust</li> <li>• Ramphal Institute</li> <li>• World Alliance for Citizen Participation</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Towards Zero Foundation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Girls Education Fund</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel (CALC)</li> <li>• Commonwealth Equality Network</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Geographical Bureau</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute</li> <li>• SightSavers International</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Health and Disability</li> <li>• Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association</li> <li>• Soroptomist International</li> <li>• Corona Worldwide</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for the Ageing</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Ecology Council</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers</li> <li>• Institute of Commonwealth Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Science Technology and Mathematics Educators</li> <li>• International Social Service</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Jewish Council</li> <li>• Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>



Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>3. International Peace and Security: We firmly believe that international peace and security, sustainable economic growth and development and the rule of law are essential to the progress and prosperity of all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• Forum of Federations</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Women Mediators across the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Resounds</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy</li> <li>• International Social Service</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>

Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>4. Tolerance, respect and understanding:</p> <p>We emphasise the need to promote tolerance, respect, understanding, moderation and religious freedom which are essential to the development of free and democratic societies, and recall that respect for the dignity of all human beings is critical to promoting peace and prosperity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Museums</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Commonwealth Equality Network</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Geographical Bureau</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Women Mediators across the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Zalmi Foundation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Health and Disability</li> <li>• Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Boxing Council</li> <li>• Corona Worldwide</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Resounds</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers</li> <li>• Institute of Commonwealth Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Jewish Council</li> <li>• Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>

Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>5. Freedom of Expression: We are committed to peaceful, open dialogue and the free flow of information, including through a free and responsible media, and to enhancing democratic traditions and strengthening democratic processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• World Alliance for Citizen Participation</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Commonwealth Equality Network</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Geographical Bureau</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Boxing Council</li> <li>• Soroptomist International</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Resounds</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Ecology Council</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers</li> <li>• Institute of Commonwealth Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Royal Overseas League</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>
<p>6. Separation of Powers: We recognise the importance of maintaining the integrity of the roles of the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Commonwealth Geographical Bureau</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>

Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>7. Rule of Law: We believe in the rule of law as an essential protection for the people of the Commonwealth and as an assurance of limited and accountable government.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• World Alliance for Citizen Participation</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel (CALC)</li> <li>• Commonwealth Equality Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Geographical Bureau</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers</li> <li>• Institute of Commonwealth Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy</li> <li>• International Social Service</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Jewish Council</li> <li>• Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>

Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>8. Good Governance: We reiterate our commitment to promote good governance through the rule of law, to ensure transparency and accountability and to root out, both at national and international levels, systemic and systematic corruption.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative</li> <li>• Commonwealth HIV/AIDS Action Group</li> <li>• Forum of Federations</li> <li>• Ramphal Institute</li> <li>• World Alliance for Citizen Participation</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Towards Zero Foundation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel (CALC)</li> <li>• Commonwealth Equality Network</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Geographical Bureau</li> <li>• Chartered Insurance Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Tax Administrators</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Institute of Certified Management Accountants</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Boxing Council</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers</li> <li>• Institute of Commonwealth Studies</li> <li>• Association of International Accountants</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy</li> <li>• International Social Service</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies</li> <li>• Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)</li> <li>• Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Forestry Association</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>

Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>9. Sustainable Development: We recognise that sustainable development can help to eradicate poverty by pursuing inclusive growth whilst preserving and conserving natural ecosystems and promoting social equity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative</li> <li>• Commonwealth HIV/AIDS Action Group</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• Commonwealth Veterinary Association</li> <li>• The Queen's Commonwealth Trust</li> <li>• Forum of Federations</li> <li>• Ramphal Institute</li> <li>• World Alliance for Citizen Participation</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Museums</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Towards Zero Foundation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Equality Network</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Education Trust</li> <li>• Commonwealth Consortium for Education</li> <li>• Commonwealth Engineers Council</li> <li>• Commonwealth Geographical Bureau</li> <li>• Chartered Insurance Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Pharmacists Association</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Zalmi Foundation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Medical Trust</li> <li>• SightSavers International</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Institute of Certified Management Accountants</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Health and Disability</li> <li>• Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association</li> <li>• Soroptomist International</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Ecology Council</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers</li> <li>• Association of International Accountants</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Science Technology and Mathematics Educators</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies</li> <li>• Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)</li> <li>• Royal Overseas League</li> <li>• Conference of Commonwealth Meteorologists</li> <li>• Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Forestry Association</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>



Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>10. Protecting the Environment: We recognise the importance of the protection and conservation of our natural ecosystems and affirm that sustainable management of the natural environment is the key to sustained human development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth HIV/AIDS Action Group</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• Commonwealth Veterinary Association</li> <li>• The Queen's Commonwealth Trust</li> <li>• Forum of Federations</li> <li>• Ramphal Institute</li> <li>• World Alliance for Citizen Participation</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Museums</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Engineers Council</li> <li>• Commonwealth Geographical Bureau</li> <li>• Chartered Insurance Institute</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Planners</li> <li>• Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Medical Trust</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Institute of Certified Management Accountants</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Health and Disability</li> <li>• Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association</li> <li>• Soroptomist International</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Resounds</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Ecology Council</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Science Technology and Mathematics Educators</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Jewish Council</li> <li>• Conference of Commonwealth Meteorologists</li> <li>• Commonwealth Forestry Association</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>

Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>11. Access to Health, Education, Food and Shelter: We recognise the necessity of access to affordable health care, education, clean drinking water, sanitation and housing for all citizens and emphasise the importance of promoting health and well-being in combating communicable and non-communicable diseases.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth HIV/AIDS Action Group</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• Commonwealth Veterinary Association</li> <li>• The Queen's Commonwealth Trust</li> <li>• Ramphal Institute</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Museums</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Towards Zero Foundation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Girls Education Fund</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Consortium for Education</li> <li>• Commonwealth Engineers Council</li> <li>• Commonwealth Geographical Bureau</li> <li>• Chartered Insurance Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Pharmacists Association</li> <li>• International Council on Social Welfare</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Planners</li> <li>• Commonwealth Medical Trust</li> <li>• SightSavers International</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Health and Disability</li> <li>• Soroptomist International</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Resounds</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Ecology Council</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers</li> <li>• Institute of Commonwealth Studies</li> <li>• Association of International Accountants</li> <li>• International Social Service</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Royal Overseas League</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> <li>• Royal Life Saving Society</li> </ul>

Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>12. Gender Equality: We recognise that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential components of human development and basic human rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth HIV/AIDS Action Group</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• The Queen's Commonwealth Trust</li> <li>• Forum of Federations</li> <li>• Ramphal Institute</li> <li>• World Alliance for Citizen Participation</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Museums</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Commonwealth Equality Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Engineers Council</li> <li>• Commonwealth Geographical Bureau</li> <li>• Chartered Insurance Institute</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Women Mediators across the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Planners</li> <li>• Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Medical Trust</li> <li>• SightSavers International</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association</li> <li>• Soroptomist International</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Resounds</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Ecology Council</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Science Technology and Mathematics Educators</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League</li> <li>• Conference of Commonwealth Meteorologists</li> <li>• Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Forestry Association</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>

Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>13. Importance of Young People in the Commonwealth: We recognise the positive and active role and contributions of young people in promoting development, peace, democracy and in protecting and promoting other Commonwealth values, such as tolerance and understanding, including respect for other cultures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• The Queen's Commonwealth Trust</li> <li>• Ramphal Institute</li> <li>• World Alliance for Citizen Participation</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Museums</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Towards Zero Foundation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Education Trust</li> <li>• Commonwealth Consortium for Education</li> <li>• Commonwealth Engineers Council</li> <li>• Commonwealth Geographical Bureau</li> <li>• Chartered Insurance Institute</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Women Mediators across the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Planners</li> <li>• Zalmi Foundation</li> <li>• SightSavers International</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Soroptomist International</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Resounds</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Ecology Council</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• Association of International Accountants</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Science Technology and Mathematics Educators</li> <li>• International Social Service</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)</li> <li>• Royal Overseas League</li> <li>• Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Forestry Association</li> <li>• Royal Life Saving Society</li> </ul>

Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>14. Recognition of the need of small states: We are committed to assisting small and developing states in the Commonwealth, including the particular needs of small island developing states, in tackling their particular economic, energy, climate change and security challenges, and in building their resilience for the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth HIV/AIDS Action Group</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• Commonwealth Veterinary Association</li> <li>• Ramphal Institute</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Museums</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Towards Zero Foundation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Engineers Council</li> <li>• Chartered Insurance Institute</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Planners</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Soroptomist International</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Ecology Council</li> <li>• The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Science Technology and Mathematics Educators</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Royal Overseas League</li> <li>• Conference of Commonwealth Meteorologists</li> <li>• Commonwealth Forestry Association</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>

Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>15. Recognition of the Needs of Vulnerable States: We are committed to collaborating to find ways to provide immediate help to the poorest and most vulnerable including least developed countries, and to develop responses to protect the people most at risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth HIV/AIDS Action Group</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• Commonwealth Veterinary Association</li> <li>• Ramphal Institute</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Towards Zero Foundation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Engineers Council</li> <li>• Chartered Insurance Institute</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Planners</li> <li>• Zalmi Foundation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Soroptomist International</li> <li>• Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Ecology Council</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Jewish Council</li> <li>• Royal Overseas League</li> <li>• Commonwealth Forestry Association</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>



Commonwealth Charter Clause (continued)	Commonwealth-accredited organisations focused on this clause (continued)
<p>16. The Role of Civil Society We recognise the important role that civil society plays in our communities and countries as partners in promoting and supporting Commonwealth values and principles, including the freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and in achieving development goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Lawyers Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative</li> <li>• Commonwealth HIV/AIDS Action Group</li> <li>• Royal Commonwealth Society</li> <li>• Forum of Federations</li> <li>• World Alliance for Citizen Participation</li> <li>• The Round Table</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games Federation</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Leadership Conferences</li> <li>• Association of Commonwealth Universities</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel (CALC)</li> <li>• Commonwealth Equality Network</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Consortium for Education</li> <li>• Commonwealth Engineers Council</li> <li>• Chartered Insurance Institute</li> <li>• Commonwealth Pharmacists Association</li> <li>• International Council on Social Welfare</li> <li>• Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies</li> <li>• Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Planners</li> <li>• Commonwealth Medical Trust</li> <li>• Commonwealth Local Government Forum</li> <li>• Commonwealth Women's Network</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Health and Disability</li> <li>• Soroptomist International</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Resounds</li> <li>• The Commonwealth Association for the Ageing</li> <li>• Council for Education in the Commonwealth</li> <li>• Rotary International</li> <li>• The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers</li> <li>• Association of International Accountants</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy</li> <li>• Commonwealth Association for Science Technology and Mathematics Educators</li> <li>• International Social Service</li> <li>• Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation</li> <li>• Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</li> <li>• Commonwealth Forestry Association</li> <li>• African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</li> </ul>



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