



THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS' FORUM REPORT 2018

CONCEPT, DELIVERY, AND IMPLEMENTATION –
MAKING IT HAPPEN



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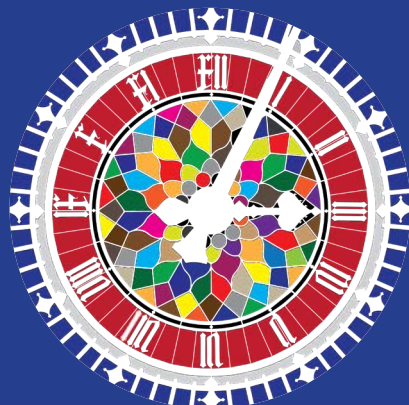
CPA UK

CPA UK is funded by the UK Parliament, where it has its home, to support and strengthen parliamentary democracy throughout the Commonwealth, and to learn from fellow Commonwealth Parliaments. CPA UK is the largest and most active branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and has been a key player ever since CPA's forerunner was formed in 1911. CPA UK shares CPA's aims, which include developing and supporting Parliamentarians and their staff, and helping them implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth.

CPA UK has developed a distinctive ability and capacity in this area, drawing on the UK Parliament's propensity to learn, evolve and inform. Peer to peer learning is central to CPA UK's methodology. It designs and delivers opportunities for UK and Commonwealth parliamentarians and officials to meet and to share knowledge in order to improve parliamentary oversight, scrutiny and representation.

CPA UK runs a series of themed events and projects each year. The programmes bring together international speakers of note from politics, academia, civil society and governments across the world to provide perspectives, opinions and case-studies suitable for the variety of Commonwealth contexts, to stimulate thought, dialogue and constructive debate.

The first Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum was a unique opportunity for CPA UK to harness the convening power of Westminster to bring together parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth to discuss the focus areas for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and also the supporting Forums, attended by representatives from business, civil society, youth groups and women's organisations. Over a year in the planning, the Parliamentarians' Forum drew on CPA UK's earlier work on sustainability, poverty reduction, climate change, gender, security and cyber security, human rights and public financial management, supporting parliamentary democracy and promoting accountability in institutions.



AUTHORS



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All errors remain the responsibility of the authors.

The Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum 2018: What and Why?

From the 26 February – 1 March 2018, approximately 80 parliamentarians, officials, youth delegates and social change activists took a step towards engaging with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2018 in new, creative, and pragmatic ways. This first ever Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum did not merely create a small piece of history, it pushed the boundaries of experimentation—from design and content to delivery and implementation.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK (CPA UK) believed that it was vitally important for Commonwealth parliamentarians to engage with the overarching CHOGM theme, 'Towards a Common Future', and with its key objectives

- A more **Sustainable** future
- A **Fairer** future
- A more **Secure** future
- A more **Prosperous** future

Equally important were the Forums' crosscutting themes of youth, gender, and inclusion. Conscious that crosscutting themes often become afterthoughts, or token mentions, the Forum strived to make them a consistent part of the week. We did this by integrating a diverse youth delegation from across the Commonwealth, by addressing gender imbalances, and by ensuring that the voices of lesser represented groups and demographics had a metaphorical 'seat at the table' – with the support of technology. Whilst the main and crosscutting themes were acknowledged to be broad, there was a strong consensus on their complexity, inter-connectedness, and inter-dependence.

This was succinctly expressed by Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Chair of CPA and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon:

"There can be no peace without fairness; there can be no meaningful development without peace; there can be no security without peace; and therefore no nation can prosper without fairness, peace, and security; and therefore no nation can reach their SDGs without all the above in place."



The Forum also introduced a visually powerful concept of the '**Commonwealth Body**'. The focus on the anatomy represented a universal experience. The chosen body 'parts' of the **head, heart, hands, and skeletal** frame attempted to visually describe the Commonwealth and how it works – and could work better. Through deeper exploration of this concept, delegates began to collectively map out the assets and identify the deficits that affect the full and healthy functioning of the Commonwealth Body. Some of these observations are captured further on in the report.

It was important to frame and shape the Forum appropriately for a diverse, yet common network of Commonwealth nations. It was therefore apposite that the golden thread linking the discussions, and the challenges facing Commonwealth countries, was the transformative agendas of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Against this backdrop of the 17 goals, and the 'unfinished business of the MDGs', there is a clear and distinct role for parliamentarians to play in achieving success.



Parliaments and parliamentarians can exert strong leverage and influence over their country's approach to the SDGs by creating an ecosystem for successful SDG implementation. This spans their critical role in setting the policy ambition, addressing the finance strategy, looking at effective implementation, and scrutinising the metrics of success. This is undoubtedly a large responsibility and remit for parliamentarians. It will require a range of skills and behaviours, from the 'softer' skills of empathy, openness, and collaboration, to the 'hard' skills of legislative scrutiny, and data and evidence analysis.

The opportunity for the Commonwealth lies in its rich network (see the 'Head' of the 'Commonwealth Body'). Member states of the Commonwealth can come together to collectively set standards to achieve the goals they prioritise. A more collaborative and

connected approach may support problem sharing and strengthen problem solving. This short Forum report aims to achieve a few clear objectives. It intends to accurately reflect the lively discussions over the course of the four days. One of the main strengths and successes of the Forum was in the diversity of content, delivery mechanisms, pace, experiences, and perspectives of parliamentarians. Parliamentarians and our delegates made the Forum, and it is incumbent on us to disseminate the quality of their work more widely.



It was also important for us to focus on implementation and looking forward. We wanted to go a step further by 'un-packing' some of the discussions at the Forum, addressing assumptions, and proposing a way forward in response to what parliamentarians shared and exchanged at the Forum. Beyond the Forum, CPA UK will support parliamentarians to hold their governments to account effectively, and continue to protect and defend their vital role. One method for this will be the establishment of a leading group of parliamentarians to monitor the Commonwealth's progress towards achievement of the 2018-20 Strategic Plan and report back to colleagues. We acknowledge that there are several other 'moving parts', but we are committed to act and work with parliamentarians across the Commonwealth on these vitally important challenges.



The Head

Focusing on the knowledge and collective intelligence across the Commonwealth. It represents leadership at all levels of society.



The Heart

Focusing on what we are passionate about; as individuals, parliamentarians, and Commonwealth countries. This is about values, ethos, and ensuring fair and just outcomes for all Commonwealth citizens.

THE COMMONWEALTH BODY

What? The Commonwealth Body is a visual concept we have used to describe the Commonwealth and how it works. We have selected four body 'parts' to represent the sum of the Commonwealth. Whilst each session on the programme falls under one of the four official themes, they also encompass one or more of the Commonwealth body 'parts', by being focussed either on knowledge sharing and people, values and ethics, delivery and implementation, or the systems and infrastructure that facilitate good practice across the Commonwealth.

Why? The body is universal and common to all of us. This concept of universality will permeate the entire programme, and with the help of visual artists, we will be capturing your ideas, insights, and thoughts throughout the Forum. All of your work will be unveiled on the final day of the Forum.

Who? The 'who' is quite simply all of delegates attending the Forum, playing a vital role in re-drawing an effective Commonwealth narrative, as Commonwealth parliamentarians and global citizens.

The Hands

Focusing on the 'doing', and represents an era of tangible delivery and innovation across the Commonwealth, that ensures we collaborate and adapt to changing global realities.



The Skeletal Frame

Focusing on the infrastructure, environments, and conditions in place to support and deliver desired outcomes for Commonwealth citizens. This represents the core foundation of the Commonwealth Body.





SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 NO POVERTY | 2 ZERO HUNGER | 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | 4 QUALITY EDUCATION | 5 GENDER EQUALITY | 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION |
| 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY | 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION |
| 13 CLIMATE ACTION | 14 LIFE BELOW WATER | 15 LIFE ON LAND | 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS | 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS | |

Forum Objectives and Outputs

PROJECT AIM

To facilitate parliamentary engagement on the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018 agenda themes and issues.

KEY OBJECTIVES



1. **Promote** the importance and relevance of the Commonwealth for future generations amongst Commonwealth parliamentarians.



2. **Increase** Commonwealth parliamentarians' awareness of the key themes to be discussed at the CHOGM (Sustainability, Fairness, Security, and Prosperity, with cross-cutting themes of youth, gender, and inclusion).



3. **Empower** Commonwealth parliamentarians by building capacity and confidence to influence their Governments ahead of the CHOGM, and beyond.



4. **Strengthen** the role of Commonwealth parliamentarians in addressing Sustainable Development Goals, by engaging with the experiences of their Commonwealth (and non-Commonwealth) counterparts in the vital role of scrutinising the goals and their implementation.



5. **Enable** purposeful networking and collaborative opportunities between Commonwealth parliamentarians and the wider Commonwealth family.



6. **Identify** and enable innovation around parliamentary engagement, whether that be in practices, procedures, civil society engagement etc.

PROPOSED OUTPUTS

A number of 'mixed' outputs from the Forum will ensure sustainable engagement between stakeholders beyond the Forum and CHOGM 2018. These include, but are not limited to:

- Establishment of a **"virtual" pan-Commonwealth leading group of parliamentarians** to monitor the Commonwealth's work towards achievement of the 2018-20 strategic plan and report to colleagues.
- A visual representation of the **"Commonwealth Body"** - artistic representation of diversity, inclusion, commonality, representing a 21st Century Commonwealth.
- **Communique/Statement of Commitment** from parliamentarians whereby delegates commit to maintain and further discussions with their Commonwealth counterparts.
- **Mixed media** combination of written opinion pieces, interviews, short video reflections promoted week-by-week post-event (in the run up to the CHOGM).

Forum in Numbers

73 speakers

2,262,126 people reached via #ParliForum18

67 parliamentarians

3 locations

569 Slido votes

10 youth delegates

33 countries represented

24 sessions

6 visual builds

24 current & former ministers & shadow ministers

4 themes

What did we do?

The Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum 2018 was a unique, inspiring, substantive, and creative four-day event covering 24 sessions, and offering parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth the opportunity to:

- Engage in discussions and activities that focused on the **importance of the Commonwealth's future direction of travel**
- **Embrace free and lateral thinking** without bureaucratic or hierarchical constraints in the room
- Start new conversations and collaborations internally and externally – with a focus on **connectedness through networks as well as common structures**
- Engage and participate in a series of events **shaped by them, co-designed with them**, and arranged to offer diversity of content via parallel sessions, video messages live streaming, and spotlight events
- Engage with **new methodologies and concepts** such as Slido polling, 'pitches and pleas' immersive facilitation, visual builds, the Commonwealth School of Inclusive Thought, and the Commonwealth Body:

"The 'What', 'Why', 'Who', 'When', and 'Where' approach was particularly powerful, as was the diagram linking the big challenges facing the Commonwealth to the scope for collaboration in sustainable development and the role of parliamentarians in addressing these challenges. All connecting the relevance of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum 2018..."

(UK MP and Forum delegate)

- Tap into a deeper, **emotional connection with themselves, each other, and the Commonwealth** through an immersive facilitation introducing four archetypes:
 - Forward energy (Warrior): Resolute
 - Backward energy (Lover): Competent at listening
 - Up energy (Jester/Magician): Flexibility and play
 - Down energy (King/Queen): Stability
- Develop insightful content and **become 'builders' of a visually powerful representation of a re-imagined Commonwealth** fit for the 21st century

Playback of the Forum: Emerging Common Narratives

Topics and discussions at the Forum ranged from the relevance of the Commonwealth Charter, SDG implementation, SDG financing, climate change, conflict prevention, freedom of religious belief, modern slavery, the future of work and skills across the Commonwealth, and the role of renewal and innovation in parliamentary development. The entire Forum underscored the role of parliamentarians in government accountability and transparency.

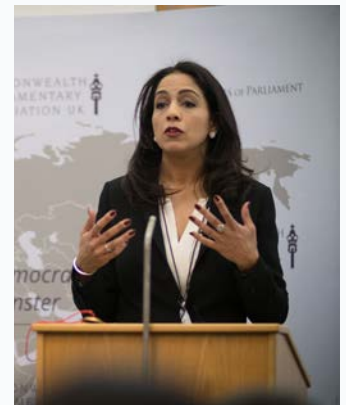
The Forum secured speakers and contributors from across the Commonwealth and beyond, including a number of international and political leaders such as Dr Amina Mohammed, Achim Steiner, Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson, Rt. Hon. Jeremy Corbyn, and Neto Agostinho. Delegates enjoyed contributions from dynamic speakers, including Jessica Horn, Tong Yee, Samuel Munzele Maimbo, Philip Connolly, Maja Daruwala, Dr David Halpern, and Dr Eva Namusoke – to name just a few.



Across all discussions, there was consensus on the incredible potential of the Commonwealth. This included recognition that 'wealth' is not just tangible, but also exists in intangible forms such as our rich cultures. The 'common' includes recognising the common problems we face, such as climate change and social development, whilst understanding that we can have common strength to address these problems.



Similarly, a focus on the economic outlook and potential of the Commonwealth grounded the conversations in reality. Expert speakers stated that there is a 19% advantage for intra-Commonwealth trade. When Commonwealth countries trade amongst themselves, they benefit more than when trading with other nations: the trade between two Commonwealth countries is likely to be 1/3-1/2 higher than trade between a Commonwealth and a non-Commonwealth country. Therefore, there is a real need to nurture and develop relationships across this economically beneficial network. However, there were strong arguments for the Commonwealth to invest more in opportunities for people to connect, for example by expanding scholarship programmes that are currently undervalued and under-funded. Speakers agreed that to truly enhance Commonwealth prosperity and trade, investing in people-to-people programmes, at a time when technology has made it easier than ever before to connect, will have great impact.



It is by no coincidence that, as with the framework of the SDGs, discussions continuously focussed on the themes of **fairness** and **sustainability**. Forum delegates challenged more 'traditional' interpretations of these themes by debating the role of the Commonwealth Charter in securing fairness, broadening the scope of sustainability, including the future of skills development, and moving beyond discussions purely focussed on climate change. Delegates articulated a real desire to **Leave No One Behind**.

"The Commonwealth is a family, but a family that is greatly divided by inequalities..." (Senator, Kenya).

"We don't want to leave people behind, and we don't want to leave countries behind...but it is happening..." (Forum speaker).

Across all of these interdependent themes, a set of common narratives emerged. We have captured the five main messages below:

1. The art of collaboration – maximising the Commonwealth network

Whilst Forum delegates recognised the difficulties of collaboration in practice (it takes time, requires trust, and challenges power dynamics), they agreed on the value added by the Commonwealth network's ability to come together and collectively define and solve problems. This was particularly highlighted during the session on climate change, in which the idea of the Commonwealth Climate Change Committee was born. Delegates expressed a desire for a committee to help finance weather monitoring and disaster relief for smaller countries affected by climate change, and for Commonwealth nations to apply pressure to each other to address this issue. There was a consensus that Commonwealth nations should work together to monitor climate change challenges in each country, but also to address them using collaborative resources.

As well as mastering the art of collaborating with each other, delegates and speakers highlighted the importance of more open engagement and collaboration with other stakeholders, including constituents, civil society, and the private sector. Delegates were encouraged by speakers to continue looking beyond their parliamentary walls, and learn lessons where relevant, from organisations and sectors that have developed good practice in areas such as accountability mechanisms.

2. Recognising & addressing difference across the Commonwealth

Whilst commonality and likeness is an obvious feature of the Commonwealth, so too is the glaring difference and disparity of experiences and realities across this network of countries. Beyond the more binary discussions for example, of 'developed vs. developing', 'big vs. small', 'young vs. old', Forum delegates highlighted the real disconnect between SDG implementation and the reality of Commonwealth countries not being on 'a level playing field'. The vulnerability of small island developing states (SIDs) to climate change, and trade across the Commonwealth, which paints a fragmented picture– acutely highlighted this point. Delegates were clear that Leave No One Behind will not happen without acknowledging the different starting points of each Commonwealth country. The spotlight sessions on day 3 of the Forum were also a powerful reminder of this when covering topics of global health challenges, freedom of religious belief, stigma, and inequalities between Commonwealth countries as well as within them.

3. 'The Lion without teeth' – creating tangible change

The symbolism of the 'Commonwealth Body' hands resonated with Forum delegates who expressed frustration with the Commonwealth's lack of specific deliverables and measurable effectiveness, but also their own commitment to act. With the focus on SDG implementation, delegates stressed the importance of tangible delivery, and agreed that the Commonwealth's potential has to be realised through measurable activities. Delegates valued the Commonwealth's immense potential to pull together relevant toolkits and frameworks, drawing on shared knowledge and resources to bring about real change for Commonwealth citizens.

4. The role of transparency & government accountability

The fight for 'radical transparency' as urged by a Forum speaker, was a key message of the Forum and heavily informed the Forum outputs. Parliamentarians addressed the need to sustain democratic dialogue by promoting transparency and accountability, and recognising the importance of good data and reliable evidence as an enabling factor. Beyond the multiple initiatives at a country level, including the openness of communication between parliamentarians and their constituents, there was agreement in the strength of parliamentarians holding each other to account.

*"We need to work together to build an evidence base rather than a dense download of academic reports."
(Forum Speaker – Dr David Halpern)*

5. The unique & distinct role of parliamentarians

Across all thematic areas, discussions centered on the unique and distinct role of parliamentarians in affecting change. Beyond the common understanding of a parliamentarian's role to review and scrutinise legislation and budgets, to represent their constituents, and generally hold governments to account, it was also recognised that a large part of the challenges require individual leadership and preparedness to act. Delegates discussed the role of parliamentarians to blur the lines between government, citizens, and sectors to build relationships and trust beyond their own silos, and collaborate with local agents to build modern, inclusive communities. Their role as active transmitters or translators of government messages, objectives, and outcomes, was also acknowledged. The key is addressing the complexities of serving their respective publics in a new era of data and evidence use through these networks and collaborative relationships.

"...parliamentarians hold a certain amount of influence...and therefore the ability to offer solutions to some of their societies' complex challenges..." (Forum speaker)

The Commonwealth is a complex body. Yet much of the stimulating discussion across the four-day Forum agreed that the Commonwealth should persist in unlocking its vast potential, and now is the time to re-define its goals and articulate its purpose as an organisation.

The Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum 2018 was a timely and stimulating intervention. Beyond that, from concept to delivery, and with a focus on implementation, the Forum offered several insights around the skills, behaviours, ambitions, and cultures that exist across Commonwealth parliaments that will either help or hinder the process of successfully delivering the SDGs, and securing the best outcomes for Commonwealth citizens.

Whilst there is genuine ambition to be forward-thinking, progressive, and dynamic, there remain legitimate concerns around what is required in order to create this shift.

We have selected five areas (or inconvenient truths) that we believe are **critical to understanding** how to take the range of outcomes from the Forum and convert them into a **different working environment for parliamentarians** and a **different culture for the Commonwealth**. These are not the only issues, nor might they even be the most important. They reflect our experience of co-curating, delivering, and capturing the ideas and insights of Commonwealth parliamentarians. In thinking about these 'inconvenient truths', we repeatedly asked the question: **How does the Commonwealth become a more connected and collaborative network, and what role can parliamentarians play in this process?**

Five Inconvenient Truths...and Enablers for change?

1. The elephant in the room: Moving beyond rhetoric to tangible delivery

"Why has the Commonwealth espoused nice sounding principles, but failed in implementation? The SDGs have an actionable plan, the Commonwealth needs this...we must go beyond the talk, we must walk the talk." (Senator, Kenya)

Rhetoric is easy. Tangible delivery is much harder. The reality of a large and complex network such as the Commonwealth is competing priorities, different motivations, and different approaches. The establishment of a leading group of parliamentarians to monitor the Commonwealth's progress against CHOGM outcomes over the next two years is not a 'magic bullet' for improving measurable and useful activities across the Commonwealth. CPA UK recognises the strength of individual and collective will amongst this group, given the passion and energy of parliamentarians at the Forum to develop solutions-focused answers – such as the Climate Change declaration seeking endorsement from Heads of Government – the early signs are positive. CPA UK will be working very closely with this group, using our resources and relationships to achieve this objective of ensuring tangible delivery of the CHOGM outcomes.

2. Building on a collaborative Commonwealth network (that already exists!)

The Commonwealth has at its fingertips an asset-rich network of individuals, organisations, and governments. There are a staggering 155 Commonwealth organisations and associations – some of which have vast reach, including the Commonwealth of Learning which is the largest distance learning organisation in the world. A smart approach is essential to connect the brilliant pockets of creativity, innovation, and experimentation that exist across this network, and build on this growing coalition of people keen to create positive social change for Commonwealth citizens. Lord Howell, President of the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) described the modern Commonwealth as ‘the Mother of all Networks’, and was joined by Microsoft founder Bill Gates, who remarked at the Business Forum 2018, that the Commonwealth is the ideal network to fit into this new era of technology.

Technology and the digital age can enhance and expand this network, arguably in more decentralized and democratic ways – but it also raises questions around accountability that are harder to solve. The Forum, however was a good example of what happens when you create the right physical space and culture to develop new ideas and strengthen common connections. Moving forward, it will be important to defend and protect such spaces for parliamentarians. CPA UK notes the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat in driving this forward through its newly created “Innovation Hub” and ongoing commitment to the development and sharing of best practice.

3. The Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum: Maximising impact

The Forum, like all good experiments, will benefit from reflection, learning, and application (we hope for delivery of a Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum in 2020). We learnt what worked well and what did not, and are keen to see this incorporated into 2020 planning. There are a number of practical points to consider, such as variation of session lengths and formats that allow much more discussion and problem solving. There were also clear directives for CPA UK's own work in mobilising Commonwealth parliaments to deliver country plans.

An advantage of delivering a Forum with diverse content was the opportunity to gauge the type of thematic issues parliamentarians are keen to prioritise. There was consensus that an ‘agenda-driven’ Commonwealth must pick a narrow list of priorities and work on them relentlessly. Delegates were also keen to strengthen cross-government, and cross-sector interactions to ensure relationships stretch beyond individuals of parties and organisations, in order to secure institutional memory.

The metrics for success of the Forum will be challenging without commitment to long-term engagement, and human resources for Commonwealth parliaments and CPA UK. However, through delivering the Forum, we have collectively established a different platform that holds a strong proposition for Commonwealth Heads of Government. In order to maximise impact, there needs to be adequate ‘follow-through’ with successive Forums to build on the outputs and review outcomes of this year.

“I came with the intention of listening and learning but this programme will allow me to go back to my government and ‘teach’ them. I will apply our ‘open mind’ and an ‘open heart’ when dealing with my constituents” (MLA, Cayman Islands).

CPA UK will support parliamentarians and continue to build on these commitments, by ensuring spaces and platforms like the Forum to drive both delivery and practice across the Commonwealth. This is where the hard work begins.

4. Matching ambition with delivery: 'Implementation is the last 98 percent'

The Forum was an ambitious programme. That ambition for the 'what next', and the passion and energies of parliamentarians and Forum delegates will need to translate into specific deliverables for the Forum to have real credibility and legitimacy. It does not do justice to the scale of the challenges ahead to simply articulate in a report what it will take to successfully deliver on the Forum outcomes, but it does offer a great deal of hope to see the inspiring plans that many parliamentarians committed to implementing as a result of attending the Forum:

"It will better my capacity to acknowledge, engage, and respond to needs of my constituents.

It exposed me to a variety of perspectives on each subject matter posing very implementable ways of dealing with issues." (MP, Nigeria)

"The forum has highlighted major issues in the world, and helped to equip me with skills and strategies to enhance my role as a parliamentarian...our challenges may be different but we are all interconnected – we need to work together, there is no one size fits all." (Senator, Rwanda)

"I will create an SDG caucus/scrutinise international conventions/obligations, etc... the Forum was very relevant: I am now more aware of all key issues and have the contacts to tap into for my work." (Senator, Kenya)

"My greatest take away is really around ensuring that I do not become 'part of the pack' but that my passions are grounded in the reality of my constituents, and that I find the data to support my positions so I speak on their behalf." (MP, Jamaica)

"The Forum gave context to issues that we'll be dealing with as MNAs regarding CHOGM and SDGs in the near future. Thorough level of debates, contributions, perspectives and innovative ideas put forward. Particular sessions have given me ideas for my role as a legislator to follow through on the Executive by asking questions, committee work, and carry out research. The knowledge and expertise of the panelists helped in providing clarity on what I was most interested in." (MNA, Seychelles)

5. Taking steps towards renewal, reform, and innovation: Looking within and re-imagining leadership for the future

Parliamentarians hold unique and privileged positions within their constituencies that also comes with huge responsibilities. Their remits seem to expand as the political and global contexts around them rapidly change. There are often assumptions about what they should know, and what skills they should possess. Renewal, reform, and innovation of parliamentary engagement were key topics at the Forum. As it related specifically to the future of parliamentarians, there were clear directives for them to:

- Build capacity for introspection and self-observation
- Master the art of becoming 'black belt listeners' & develop deeper empathies for their constituents
- Tune in to the application of intelligence: open mind, open heart, and open will

However, there were also more technical skills identified for 21st century parliamentarians. These included the need for parliamentarians to:

- Become more effective consumers (and producers) of data and information
- Become strategic collaborators, working with a range of stakeholders to improve local and national outcomes

This is an intense set of competences and skills needed to instigate real change. This can only be learnt and developed over time, and with dedicated support. Parliamentarians need the space, resource, and expertise to hone and test these skills safely. The Forum can offer such a place where parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth can take ownership of these unique challenges and invest in the process – but they will also need the support of their governments. There is a personal commitment required from parliamentarians to strengthen their own capacity and to set the expectation level amongst their peers. This can be supported by context specific, capacity-building partnerships that aim to improve the functioning & accountability of modern parliaments.

Next Steps?

It is perhaps premature to predict the success of the Forum outputs, and in many ways, this will be shaped by the parliamentarians who participated in the Forum. Individual ownership of these outputs and outcomes will be key.

The CHOGM 2018 Communique acts as a pertinent starting point. It produced a number of commitments to global and Commonwealth challenges. Heads of Government reiterated and reaffirmed many existing deals and arrangements, including the Paris Agreement (recalling the 2015 Commonwealth Leaders Statement on Climate Change and the target to complete the work programme by COP24), the Doha Development Rounds, and the Commonwealth Cyber Declaration. Bright spots and new initiatives included the recently launched Commonwealth Innovation Hub, and the adoption of the Declaration on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment.¹ It is disappointing to note that on the question of renewal, plans to review governance arrangements of the Commonwealth Secretariat have stalled, and there appears to be no definitive articulation of reform and renewal for the Commonwealth.

The Communique is clear on the 'what', yet less forthcoming on the 'how' and 'who' will take real ownership of these commitments. Vis à vis this statement, our leading group of parliamentarians argued that there is a clear distinction between principle and practice. Whilst it is clear that the Commonwealth has done much to strengthen its principles and commitments to certain values, how this translates into practice is a much bigger challenge that has not yet been effectively addressed.

CPA UK were pleased to fulfil one of the key Forum² outputs by convening members of the leading group of parliamentarians and delegates from the Forum to participate in CHOGM week of 16-20 April 2018. The delegations' objectives for the week were to attend, observe, and participate in a number of CHOGM activities and events, and effectively gather evidence from a range of discussions to inform an action plan for their broader objective: to monitor the Commonwealth's progress on CHOGM outcomes over the next two years. Whilst this is clearly a large and ambitious remit, the group felt strongly about the importance of such an undertaking, and have chosen to develop a framework or matrix of practice that begins to break this down into short, medium, and long-term steps.

¹ With the goal of expanding investment and boosting intra-Commonwealth trade to US\$2 Trillion by 2030, Heads adopted a Declaration on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment and mandated the Secretariat to develop an accompanying action plan that considers capacity building and hard and soft connectivity. They further agreed to share best practices and experiences, and undertake voluntary mutual support to enable member countries to realise their full economic potential and deliver prosperity for all their people. Recognising the importance of a long-term vision on trade and investment, member countries agreed to work together towards an appropriate framework and to facilitate business-to-business contacts.

² The visiting group to London in April 2018 is not the final membership for Forum 2018, and other Forum parliamentarians and delegates are welcome to join ahead of the next CHOGM in 2020.

A FRAMEWORK OF PRACTICE: Monitoring CHOGM Outcomes

This framework is not rigid, but seeks to map out some of the practical actions month-by-month, and year on year. Some are more immediately achievable, whilst others require a longer-term approach. There is shared responsibility across parliamentarians, Heads of Governments, and organisations such as CPA UK and CPA International (CPA HQ).

This framework proposes the 'what', and to some extent the 'how' – but it cannot be prescriptive, and must allow flexibility to work with different country approaches. The hope is that the current leading group of parliamentarians, will finalise and agree the framework, complete with key performance indicators (KPIs) and milestones by autumn 2018, and develop a clear implementation plan.

CPA UK will work to support this group and Commonwealth parliamentarians to use levers such as the Forum, its outputs, and subsequent framework to gain more influence to challenge and hold their respective governments to account on Commonwealth priorities. However, it will be the work of a more collaborative, joined up Commonwealth of parliamentarians, Heads of Government, cross-sector organisations, and citizens to actively work on and deliver on these commitments. We look forward to being part of this Commonwealth collaboration.

A FRAMEWORK OF PRACTICE: MONITORING CHOGM OUTCOMES

Short-Term

Medium-Term

Long-Term

6 MONTHS - 1 YEAR

2 YEARS

5 YEARS +

IN THE LEAD UP TO CHOGM 2020

- Triage and unpack the CHOGM18 Communique & Leaders Statement ●●
- Start to test and apply the framework with responsive Commonwealth parliaments ●●
- Ignite a series of internal conversations across Commonwealth parliaments on CHOGM outcomes ●●
- Help to strengthen the convening power of the leading group of parliamentarians in the interim period before CHOGM 2020. This can involve providing space, networks (e.g. CSPOC January 2019) and expertise, and some resource to sustain newly brokered partnerships and collaborations from the Forum ●
- Identify and establish the network of regional focal points and across each Commonwealth parliament. This will serve to encourage better lines of communication and understand the commitments to the CHOGM outcomes from each parliament ●
- Work closely with CPA HQ, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and regional representatives as the key vehicles for coordination and 'buy-in' of this framework ●
- Continue to disseminate the Forum declarations and follow-up actions ●
- Early engagement with the UK Chair in Office ●
- Continue to defend and protect the role of parliamentarians across the Commonwealth ●●

- Sustained engagement with relevant stakeholders to influence CHOGM and related meetings and events (i.e. advocating for one day of the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference to focus on monitoring of CHOGM priorities & objectives) ●
- Developing strong links with CHOGM 2020 host country, advocating for a Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum in 2020. CPA UK and the current leading group of parliamentarians will act as 'critical friends' to CHOGM 2020 hosts, providing a 'how to' framework, advice and expertise on delivering a follow-up Forum ●●●
- Current group of leading parliamentarians to identify and select, along with Forum 2020 organising body, a new group of parliamentarians to act as accountability partners for the CHOGM 2020 outcomes ●
- A review of the Forum 2018 declarations and actions by current leading group of parliamentarians ●
- A set of benchmarks to be agreed and monitored ●
- Continue to defend and protect the role of parliamentarians across the Commonwealth ●●

- Sustained engagement and review of successive CHOGM outcomes, with a clearly defined and tested methodology to do this ●
- Sustained engagement with CHOGM related activities ●●
- Engagement with All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) to support CHOGM outcome via CPA branches ●●
- Commonwealth Parliamentarians brokering country/national outcomes with other anchor institutions, and cross-sector groups to address country approaches to broader Agenda 2030 ●●
- Continue to defend and protect the role of parliamentarians across the Commonwealth ●●

KEY

Lead party on each actionable step:

● CPA UK

● Parliamentarians

● Heads of Government

APPENDIX

This appendix includes a combination of materials that support the content in the main report. This information encompasses collated data and statistics, photographs, feedback from delegates, as well as final Forum outputs.



DECLARATION OF THE 1ST COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS' FORUM CPA UK, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, 26 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH 2018

The UK Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA UK) hosted the first ever Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum in London, from 26 February to 1 March 2018. 90 delegates from 30 Commonwealth countries met 50 days ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), also taking place in London, from 16 April. The following Declaration reflects their discussions and decisions over four stimulating days.

o The Commonwealth and its nations are like a body. Parliaments and parliamentarians are essential to the future health and success of that body.

o The Commonwealth Charter is the essential skeleton for the Commonwealth body. It has as its first core value and principle Democracy; its second Human Rights. The Charter asserts that parliaments are essential elements in the exercise of democratic governance. Delegates committed to playing the roles assigned to them by the Charter, including upholding and promoting democratic cultures and practices, and being accountable to the public in this regard. They represent the people, and must reflect the people's priorities.

o The values and principles of the Charter are the heart of the Commonwealth body. Parliamentarians must help ensure that Commonwealth Governments live up to those values and principles, including the Rule of Law, backed by an independent, impartial, honest and competent judiciary; and Freedom of Expression, including through a free and responsible media. The Latimer Principles remain an excellent basis for ensuring accountability and transparency.

o Parliamentarians can be the hands of the Commonwealth body, to make things happen. Delegates committed to return to their countries ready to do all they could to positively shape their country's approach to CHOGM 2018 and its four, inter-dependent themes. They committed to continuing that campaigning work beyond CHOGM 2018, in particular for the period of the UK's period as Chair-in-Office until 2020. They will press for the proper resourcing of this work.

o Parliamentarians can act as the intelligent head of the Commonwealth body. Delegates committed to seeking and sharing the knowledge and information which their people need. They supported the holding of a second Forum, early enough to influence CHOGM 2020.

o Delegates committed to playing their particular role to support and scrutinise progress by the Commonwealth and its members towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

o Delegates drew inspiration from the presence of youth delegates from a variety of Commonwealth countries. They committed to promoting greater engagement with and by young people in pursuit of the Commonwealth's values and principles. This should be one example of the Commonwealth's strength through diversity and inclusivity, as well as through its unity in action.



YOUTH DELEGATE DECLARATION OF THE 1ST COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS' FORUM CPA UK, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, 26 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH 2018

The UK Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA UK) hosted the first ever Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum in London, from 26 February to 1 March 2018. 90 delegates from 30 Commonwealth countries met 50 days ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), also taking place in London, from 16 April. There were 11 youth delegates from 5 different Commonwealth countries in attendance. The youth delegates unanimously agreed on the importance of upholding The Commonwealth Charter. The following Declaration reflects the decisions that they would like parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth and the Pan-Commonwealth working group to put at the forefront of their agenda between now and CHOGM, and beyond:

1. A commitment from parliamentarians to push for a focus on Commonwealth education in school curriculums.
2. A commitment from parliamentarians to push for a Commonwealth non-governmental policy implementation body to provide checks and balances on the policy proposals of governments and government ministers. This should also ensure that the Commonwealth charter is consistent throughout policy and legislation.
3. In Fiji for instance, there is now an emphasis on gender analysis in policy formulation. We would therefore like to propose across the Commonwealth, a commitment from parliamentarians to encourage youth perspective in policy making.
4. A commitment from parliamentarians to push for evidence based health policy.
5. A commitment to ensuring that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is 'universally applied' with specific regard to marginalised groups.
6. A campaign from parliamentarians for a pan-commonwealth placement scheme to be introduced focussing on apprenticeships and internships for The Commonwealths' young people from low socio-economic backgrounds.



PROPOSED LETTER FOR CHOGM 2018:

CPA UK, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, 26 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH 2018

Dear Commonwealth Chair in-Office,

We the below encourage our Heads of Government to formally support the creation of a Commonwealth Climate Change Council. The council's responsibilities will encompass, but are not limited to, the collection, monitoring, and tracking of natural disasters and natural catastrophic events connected to, or caused by, global warming. The creation of such a council will raise the standard of awareness and assist with the preparedness for, and avoidance of, natural disasters affecting Commonwealth member states.

We the member states all are affected in one way or another by the likes of hurricanes, tropical storms, earthquakes, rising sea levels, flooding, temperature shifts, tsunamis, ocean acidifications, monsoons, and droughts, and advocate for a collective approach to monitor the effects of these events.

From a financial, moral, and economic standpoint, it is in our best interests to form such a council as many member states may not be able to afford the required resources, technology and labour necessary for such a commitment. With the ever growing concerns around the negative effects of climate change, we the below signatories see the urgency of the creation of such a council forthwith.

We advocate the creation of a committee and action plan from the CHOGM to address the effects of global warming and natural disasters for Commonwealth members to establish a remit for the Commonwealth Climate Change Council.

This promissory note will be carbon copied to the following names with the hope of the topic being placed onto the agenda as a priority matter for discussion and commitment at CHOGM:

Hon. Emilia Lifaka MP, Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee
 Baroness Patricia Scotland, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat
 Mr Akbar Khan, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
 Theresa May, in her capacity as incoming Chair in Office of the Commonwealth
 Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the UK Opposition

Commonwealth Facts and Figures

53 countries, home to **2.4 billion** people, over **60%** of which are under the age of **30**.¹

Commonwealth citizens speak over **3000** languages, including indigenous dialects.²

Sustainable

The Commonwealth supports urban development and sustainable enterprises.

Half of the top 20 global emerging cities from 2014 are in the Commonwealth: New Delhi, Mumbai, Nairobi, Kuala Lumpur, Bangalore, Johannesburg, Kolkata, Cape Town, Chennai and Dhaka.

Of the 125 global cities analysed by annual reports, 26 are in the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Fashion Exchange features sustainable fashion designers.⁴

Fair

The Commonwealth works to strengthen democratic institutions and processes and enable citizen participation and representation at national and local levels during elections.

Over the past quarter of a century, the Commonwealth has observed around 140 elections in nearly 40 countries across the globe.¹

Commonwealth countries make up 7 of the top 10 nations in the Ibrahim Index of African Governance.¹

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Commonwealth countries make up 7 of the top 10 highest performing countries for gender equality.¹

Local developers in Uganda created Yogera, a website and app that allows people to report evidence of corruption or nominate honest 'heroes' to increase civic engagement.³

Secure

The Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative unites 30 international organisations.⁶

The Commonwealth has a unit to counter violent extremism that has hosted 37 young people from 22 countries in a 5 day course to help develop effective strategies to combat hate speech.¹⁴

The Commonwealth has developed 4 toolkits to address extremism.⁷

The CPA UK Modern Slavery Project is a two year project to address the 45.8 million people living in modern slavery worldwide.⁸

Commonwealth member countries Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India make up the top 3 contributors to UN peacekeeping operations.¹³

Young activists from the Caribbean met last summer for a masterclass to discuss countering violent extremism.¹²

Prosperous

The Commonwealth supports economic growth and stability in its member countries with an aim towards poverty reduction and reducing vulnerability to volatility. The Commonwealth helps its member governments to equitably and sustainably manage their human, natural and economic capital, to bolster national resilience to economic and social crises, and to improve prosperity for all citizens.

The combined gross domestic product of Commonwealth countries is estimated at US \$10.4 trillion in 2017 and predicted to reach US \$13 trillion in 2020.

Bilateral costs for trading partners in Commonwealth countries are on average 19 percent less than between those in non-member countries.

Intra-Commonwealth trade was 'likely to surpass \$1 trillion by 2020'.¹⁰

Kilang Bateri is a non profit platform for small scale entrepreneurs and creatives in Malaysia that offers retail stalls for vendors, and currently has 184 vendors.¹¹

1 [thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/FastFactsOnTheCommonwealth-15-01-2018.pdf](https://www.thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/FastFactsOnTheCommonwealth-15-01-2018.pdf)

2 www.verboo.co.uk/your-guess-is-as-good-as-mine-trying-to-count-the-commonwealth-languages/#sthash.Vzd9cgHL.FdG4jPVK.dpbs

3 www.atkearney.com/documents/10192/4461492/Global+Cities+Present+and+Future-GCI+2014.pdf/3628fd7d-70be-41bf-99d6-4c8eaf984cd5

4 thecommonwealth.org/media/news/project-boosts-sustainable-fashion-across-commonwealth

5 creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org/blog/16/08/16/trying-survive-broken-system/

6 thecommonwealth.org/commonwealth-cybercrime-initiative

7 thecommonwealth.org/countering-violent-extremism-toolkits

8 www.uk-cpa.org/modernslavery/

9 thecommonwealth.org/media/news/experts-praise-1-trillion-commonwealth-trade-advantage

10 creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org/media/uploads/files/Malaysia_Creative_Hubs_Report_final.pdf <https://bateri.my/>

11 thecommonwealth.org/media/news/commonwealth-brings-together-young-caribbean-activists-counter-extremism/

12 article1000.com/indias-contribution-un-peacekeeping-operations/

13 thecommonwealth.org/media/news/harnessing-power-youth-battle-against-hate-speech

#PARLIFORUM18

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon** @tariqahmadbt · Feb 26

Delighted to take part in #Commonwealth Parliamentary Forum with Secretary General @PScotlandCSG, @JamesDuddridge MP, Sen Ekweremadu @Ike_Ekweremadu and @CPA_Secretariat Chair Emilia Lifaka. Network of Commonwealth parliamentarians incredibly valuable. @CPA_UK UK #ParliForum18

**Kate Osamor** @KateOsamor · Feb 27

It is time that countries who believe in fairness and taking on vested interests come together and help each other narrow the inequality gap - my message to the #ParliForum18 ahead of April's #Commonwealth Summit in London.

**Samuel M. Maimbo** @maimbofinance · Feb 27

@stillSHErises rightly reminds @maimbofinance that civil society is essential to @Fin4Dev_ development agenda @CPA_UK #ParliForum18

**Maria Miller** @MariaMillerUK · Feb 27

Good to have so many youth delegates views in today's debate on trust in politics at #ParliForum18 @afrobarometer @benatipsosmori @CPA_UK

**DFID** @DFID_UK · Feb 28

@BatesLord tells @CPA_UK audience "democracy is the cornerstone of any peaceful society" that enables "peace, stability and economic growth" #ourcommonwealth #ParliForum18

**Roberta Blackman-Woods** @robertabwMP · Feb 28

@jeremycorbyn giving a really important speech at @CPA_UK #ParliForum18 about the need for Commonwealth countries to work as a partnership of equals to tackle inequality, climate change, the refugee crisis and conflict

**Dr Eva Namusoke** @ENNamusoke · Feb 28

So much important work to do. Happy to share my little bit on the Inclusion panel. Asking parliamentarians to listen to and address youth challenges now - not later. #ParliForum18

**Namal Rajapaksa** @RajapaksaNamal · Mar 2

4 days of deliberations on the way forward for the #SDGs & related #Commonwealth topics are at an end. Appreciate the on-point organisation & structured discussions facilitated by @CPA_UK during #ParliForum18 A job well done. Appreciative of this opportunity.

**New Possibilities** @AnnaGeyer_NP · Mar 8

I felt compelled to tell the story of my experience at #parliforum18 you can find it here spark.adobe.com/page/SQeUs1J2Z...

"Innovate or perish."

Calestous Juma



"We can make a change, we must make a difference, and we need to turn our words into real action."

António Guterres



"Human rights are not things that are put on the table for people to enjoy. These are things you fight for and then you protect."

Wangari Maathai



"Culture does not make people. People make culture. If it is true that the full humanity of women is not our culture, then we can and must make it our culture."

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



"I raise up my voice, not so I can shout but so that those without a voice can be heard...we cannot succeed when half of us are held back."

Malala Yousafzai



"Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth... these are one and the same fight. We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women's empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all."

Ban Ki-moon



