



2009 COMMONWEALTH PEOPLE'S FORUM

Partnering for a more equitable and sustainable future

Invitation for Expressions of Interest

The Commonwealth Foundation, organisers of the 2009 Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF), would like to invite civil society organisations to express their interest in participating at the CPF assembly.

Using lessons learned from the 2007 CPF in Kampala, and in order to have the maximum impact on Commonwealth governments at the forthcoming 2009 CHOGM, the Commonwealth Foundation's Civil Society Advisory Committee (CSAC) has established eight topics within which discussions will be held. These topics will allow participants to focus on delivering messages to Commonwealth governments.

Assembly Overviews

Human Rights

The human rights assembly will network human rights activists and those affected by human rights violations in order to consolidate strategies on Commonwealth engagement. The assembly intends to make a strong statement on partnerships between governments and civil society to lobby the CHOGM. This assembly will offer a platform for victims of human rights violations in the Commonwealth to voice their concerns.

Financial Crisis & Economic Development

In light of the current global financial crisis this assembly will explore the financial flows of nations and regions and analyse the responses and transparency of action by Commonwealth governments. Participants will be invited to make recommendations for action on how to best reduce social vulnerability, increase human security and on how to achieve inclusive global governance, transparency and institutional reform.

Environment & Climate Change

Climate Change is real and is already affecting many in developing countries. This assembly will unpack the various dimensions of Climate Change by examining its impact on trade and livelihoods, gender, governance and faith. This assembly will also highlight the current debate on the issues of migration towards cities and the challenges of increasing urbanisation.

Gender

This assembly will look at recent thinking on many of the issues surrounding gender. Many entrenched problems in society have to do with the power relations between women and men. It is important therefore to identify examples of replicable work involving men and women working in partnership towards achieving gender equality in the Commonwealth. The gender assembly will seek solutions, including recommendations for policy and programme changes, in ways of engaging men, with particular focus on gender-based violence.

HIV & AIDS

A recent call to action by the Pan-Commonwealth Civil Society Network on HIV and AIDs identified stigma as the main hindrance in efforts to end the AIDS pandemic in the Commonwealth. The Network highlighted the need for urgent concerted and multi-sectoral efforts to contain it. This assembly will build on recent Commonwealth activity that has identified good practice, and lessons learnt in eliminating that stigma.

Peace & Conflict

This assembly will examine solutions to conflict and unrest at both the community and national levels. It will call attention to the impact of violence and anti-social behaviour on Commonwealth citizens and seek to position this as a development issue which the Commonwealth should address as part of its 'respect and understanding' mandate.

Deepening Democracy & Governance

The role and responsibility of civil society to ensure good governance will be the main thrust of this assembly as participants discuss how civil society can develop partnerships with government to ensure the successful development of democracy. The assembly will examine how we enable democracy at local, national and regional levels and identify indicators that illustrate the challenges to democracy and potential failure.

Creativity & Innovation

This assembly will promote the contribution of the cultural sector and creative industries in development (including in economic development) and participatory democracy. It will take as its starting point the Commonwealth Foundation's

Putting Culture First analysis, which sets out seven ways in which culture can contribute to development. It will also make policy recommendations on how new media and social technologies can be extended and supported to play an increased role in these areas.

Assembly Organisation and Format

Each of these assemblies has been assigned a member of staff from the Commonwealth Foundation and its advisory committee to co-ordinate and help plan the assembly and this will complement the knowledge and input of relevant civil society organisations. To help make the assemblies as accessible to as many civil society organisations as possible, organisers are asked to indicate which one assembly they would like to participate in.

Each assembly will be run over two days at the CPF. There is no prescribed format – this is subject to negotiation between participating organisations and assembly organisers.

You are invited to make contact and share your ideas. The platform has been created – we look to you to help fill it with stimulating and involving content.

Expressions of interest should be emailed to Joany Grima initially at cfevents@commonwealth.int stating the assembly you would like to be involved in, your name, organisation and contact details. Please also include 100 words on what aspect of the subject matter you would like to contribute to. Note that as many submissions are expected, not all will be able to be accommodated.

Expressions of interest should be received no later than April 30, 2009.