



Kigali Youth Outcomes Statement on Youth Leadership for a Resilient Future -

Building Local Resilience across the Commonwealth

Introduction

Acknowledging that 60% of the Commonwealth population is under the age of 30 and that this portion of the population is inordinately affected by the challenges of rapid urbanisation, underemployment and unemployment, climate emergency, economic crises and growing inequalities.

Fully aware of the immense potential of youth between the ages of 15 and 35 in the Commonwealth to contribute to the economic, social, cultural and environmental development of the Commonwealth States and noting the lack of appropriate formal levers - power and resources - to utilise their potentials whilst undertaking these responsibilities effectively particularly at the local government level.

Expressing support for the "A.I for Youth Initiative," and welcoming its launch at the 10th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting.

Taking note of the Commonwealth Declaration on Sustainable Urbanisation and the Ministerial Statement of the 10th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting.

Acknowledging the intergenerational context of the Commonwealth whilst noting therefore that positioning young people at the centre of resilient and sustainable development strategies is critical to solving the problems of cities and human settlements.

Concerned the futures of young people are being eroded by the impacts of climate change and limited commitment and support has been given to young leaders who are championing the cause for sustainable and resilient futures.

Recognising the contributions of pioneers in fostering youth involvement within the Commonwealth to achieve inclusive democratic institutions. Noting the need to increase commitment to promoting youth engagement in decision-making bodies at local governance level.

Anticipating that the representations and recommendations within this statement will form the basis for youth inclusion and engagement ahead of the next Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Samoa and will feed into the ongoing work of the Commonwealth



Local Government Forum and the [Commonwealth Youth for Sustainable Urbanisation Network](#).

We request for CLGF members and partners to work together to advance the following recommendations:

1. Building resilient democratic institutions

- 1.1. Develop and implement policies that ensure a minimum of 25 percent representation quota of young people in elected roles at local government level.
- 1.2. Request for 2 seats reserved for young people (technical and political) on the board of Directors/Trustees of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum.
- 1.3. Call for a mandatory civic education highlighting the importance of the local government institutions and systems, participatory governance and the democratic processes at all levels of education.

2. Building resilient economies

- 2.1. Develop and implement youth-centric procurement and contracting policies, including certifications for young people, to enhance their inclusion in economic activities.
- 2.2. Advocate for the establishment of a dedicated platform for funding by the Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. This platform should aim to facilitate local governments' access to direct funding and financing mechanisms from external development agencies and regional financial institutions.
- 2.3. Propose the implementation of visa-free movement for young people across all Commonwealth states, focusing on trade, employment, and study to improve their access to international opportunities.
- 2.4. Call upon all member states to ensure unrestricted access to digital skills training for young people. Advocate for the integration of critical skills like cybersecurity and artificial intelligence into the educational curriculum at all levels.
- 2.5. Encourage member states to actively participate in and promote initiatives that empower young people with essential skills for the future workforce.



3. Building resilient environment

- 3.1. Advocate for central and local governments to develop and ensure coordinated action for climate mitigation and adaptation as well as disaster risk reduction especially for small island states. Requesting that such action be integrated across sectors and departments.
- 3.2. Call for investments and financing for local governments to implement sustainable and resilient infrastructure that is affordable, available, and accessible.
- 3.3. Develop and implement participatory spatial design codes and planning that ensure green infrastructure developments and public spaces become safe and secure for young people.
- 3.4. Request for support and funding for youth-led environmental initiatives and implementation at all levels.

4. Building resilient societies and people

- 4.1. Advocate for leadership and mentorship programmes, as well as knowledge-exchange initiatives programs for young people in technical and political background across the local governments
- 4.2. Central and local governments should work towards developing and implementing policies that provide free, accessible and appropriate mental health services for the young people in a safe and secure environment through Youth Clubs.
- 4.3. Advocate for the inclusion of life skills education for the development of independent living and sustainable livelihoods, such curricula should civic education, career guidance, financial literacy amongst others.
- 4.4. Call for the establishment of “*Festival of the Commonwealth*” that celebrates the uniqueness and collective cultures, arts, heritage, innovations, technologies, and scientific advancements of member states.