

Discussion Papers

A True People's Commonwealth: Towards A Common Future

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A True People's Commonwealth: Towards A Common Future

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Introduction

In a few months, the people and their leaders from 52 Commonwealth nations will meet in London in April 2018 to discuss the shared global challenges and decide the roadmap for – ‘Towards A Common Future’ – the theme of the summit. This is for the first time that the Commonwealth People’s Forum, Youth Forum, Women’s Forum and Business Forum will meet in the same venue alongside the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (popular acronym is CHOGM). It reinforces the value that the association of Commonwealth is as much between the people as between the governments. The relations between civil society and Commonwealth family of institutions have come a long way since the first Commonwealth NGO Forum which took place in Harare in 1991 to the latest Commonwealth People’s Forum (CPF) in Malta, 2015. These relations have contributed to uphold the Commonwealth values of democracy, human rights, good governance, and inclusivity, despite occasional tensions.

This paper traces the evolution of relations between Commonwealth and civil society organisations from historical and institutional perspectives. It identifies some salient moments and contributions of civil society organisations in setting the discourse on development and

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democracy Commonwealth wide. It also highlights some unfulfilled expectations of civil society from the Commonwealth institutions and their leaders which are responsible safeguarding the Commonwealth values and principles as enshrined in its Charter¹. The paper then argues the contemporary relevance of Commonwealth in rapidly changing global and geo-political scenarios. The final section of the report presents a vision for “Towards A Common Future” from people’s perspective.

Institutional architecture of the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth of Nations or commonly known as the Commonwealth is a voluntary inter-governmental association of 52 independent and equal sovereign states. Its origin goes back to the British Empire when some countries were ruled directly or indirectly by Britain. The year 1949 marked beginning of the modern Commonwealth when the leaders of eight governments -- Australia, Canada, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa and the United Kingdom -- came together and declared themselves to be “united as free and equal members” co-operating together in the pursuit of peace, liberty and progress. In the subsequent years, more governments join as free and equal members of the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth, which has evolved as world’s one of the oldest political associations, is home to approximately 2.4 billion people and includes both advanced and developing economies. There are 30 small member states, many of which are island nations. The functioning of the Commonwealth is guided by the values and principles as enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter adopted in 2013.

The *Commonwealth Secretariat* was established in 1965 to support implementing the priority areas of work as agreed at CHOGM, which occurs every two years.

The *Commonwealth Foundation* (CF) came into being in 1966. The Foundation was initially tasked with encouraging the growth of the (largely professional) corps of Commonwealth organisations. Eventually, its responsibility grew to encompass support for wider civil society and

to facilitate the Secretariat’s engagement with a fuller spectrum of civil society, particularly those with a developmental focus (Commonwealth Foundation, 2012).

The *Commonwealth of Learning* (COL) is an inter-governmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1987 to promote the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Commonwealth of Learning, 2015).

Along with these core organisations, the member countries are supported by a network of more than 80 inter-governmental, civil society, cultural and professional organisations.

In addition to the history of a shared language (English) and administrative institutions, the Commonwealth has also proclaimed its commitment to the ideals of democracy, rule of law and peace (reinforced through the Harare Declaration² in 1991) (Martin and Tandon, 2014).

The evolution of Commonwealth-civil society relations

“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.”

– Charter of the Commonwealth, Article XVI.

The importance of civil society’s role in the Commonwealth received recognition in the Commonwealth Charter which was adopted in 2013. However, the engagement between civil society organisations and Commonwealth started a long ago with several remarkable milestones.

The First Commonwealth NGO Forum which took place in

Harare in August 1991, added a new chapter in the evolving history of Commonwealth-NGO relationships. The decision to hold such a formal consultation was taken by the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth Foundation as "... a regular Commonwealth Forum of NGOs to provide a focus for the many forms of consultations that continue at all levels of Commonwealth contact..." (Commonwealth Foundation, 1991). This decision was also welcomed by the 1989 CHOGM. The endorsement, however, found its original roots in Lusaka CHOGM in 1979. The Commonwealth NGO Forum in Harare chose "Environmentally Sustainable Development" as the theme of the Forum and provided an important preamble to the Rio Earth Summit which would take place next year in Brazil. The deliberation in the Forum strongly argued for maintaining a harmony between natural resources and human needs. This harmony was crucial for a large number of people living in the island nations who already started experiencing the devastations caused by rising sea level due to climatic changes. It also argued to broaden the mandate of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) to allow NGOs to technical expertise and appropriate technology and for the CFTC to develop a database on traditional technologies which could be utilised for development projects undertaken by the CFTC or other organisations (ibid). The location and the then political momentum in the region made it inevitable to extend solidarity to the CSOs in South Africa which by then began to prepare for a post-apartheid "rainbow" nation.

The Second Commonwealth NGO Forum took place in Wellington, New Zealand in June 1995. The Forum chose its theme as "Paths out of Poverty: The Role of NGOs". This choice reflected both the sense of urgency and commitment which existed in the NGO community of the Commonwealth about poverty, and an opportunity to follow up the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, which took place a few months ago in March 1995. The Forum deliberated on the causes, dimensions and effects of poverty. It highlighted the central importance of social mobilisation, towards the involvement, participation and genuine empowerment of the people themselves in the fight against poverty which affect them

(Commonwealth Foundation, 1995). The Forum also endorsed *NGO Guidelines for Good Policy and Practice* (Ball and Leith, 1995) which provided a useful framework of principles on which NGOs and others could develop their work. This document became an important reference for the governments, donors, and international agencies across the Commonwealth in strengthening NGOs and enhancing the impact of their work. It urged the governments across the Commonwealth to create right environment in which NGOs can function freely and independently, in an appropriate legislative framework, within a democratic society (ibid).

The Third Commonwealth NGO Forum, held in Durban, South Africa, in November 1999, chose the theme as “The People’s Future: Citizens and Governance in the New Millennium”. The Forum was remarkable where the delegates addressed the substance of democracy, more than the form, and that the consequent focus was on the citizens and ways to give citizens involvement in the task of governance (Commonwealth Foundation, 1999).

The findings of an ambitious Commonwealth-wide research project “Citizens and Governance: Civil Society in the New Millennium” (PRIA, 1999) was shared and deliberated in the Forum. The study addressed the following three main research questions to more than 10,000 citizens across 47 Commonwealth countries:

- How do you view a good society, and to what extent does it exist now?
- In such a society, what roles are best played by citizens and which by state institutions and other sectors?
- What would enable citizens to play their roles more effectively in developing such a society in the future?

The study highlighted that for Commonwealth citizen a good society is one which fulfils basic needs for economic security, social services, physical security and peace; while also provides for association with others to ensure respect for culture and heritage, and caring and sharing. It ensures participation in responsive and inclusive governance, equal rights, and justice. Despite some variations, these responses represented

a broad consensus as expressed by citizens and citizen leaders of 45 Commonwealth countries. However, they also felt that most societies across the Commonwealth did not represent these characteristics.

In respect of the roles to be played by state, citizens, and others, in a good society, citizens wanted the state to provide basic needs, a role to be complemented by active citizens. Collective citizen action was to be the main strategy in strengthening associational aspects of society, with the state acting to promote and facilitate. The state also has a role in promoting citizen participation in governance. The role of citizen leaders and other intermediaries, recognised and encouraged by the state, was also seen as very crucial.

Actions identified as necessary for arriving at a good society included the encouragement of citizen leadership as a vital link between citizens and government, with access to information, exposure to a wider world beyond their immediate communities, and access to organisation, and the building of linkages with other actors and with state agencies.

The findings of this study provided an important precursor to the important policy discourse and emerging practices on *participatory democracy* around the world. Since early 2000, there was a growing realisation that the representative democracy needs to be complemented with participatory democracy where citizens have an important role beyond being voters and consumers. A key challenge, therefore, was the construction of new relationships between ordinary citizens - especially the poor and excluded - and institutions, especially government. The Development Research Centre³ on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability (Citizenship DRC) at the Institute for Development Studies, UK in partnership with universities, research institutes and non-governmental organisations in more than 25 countries explored these new ways that citizens were shaping the states and societies.

Commonwealth Foundation, in 1996, set up a Civil Society Advisory Committee (CSAC) which would give advice and guidance on its work. Since then CSAC has played a significant role in assisting the Foundation to keep abreast of development in civil society and strategize

the priorities for action. It has also been responsible for planning civil society mobilisation in preparation for the subsequent CHOGMs.

The Commonwealth People's Forums have taken place at regular intervals in Australia (2001), Nigeria (2003), Malta (2005), Uganda (2007), Trinidad and Tobago (2009), Australia (2011), Sri Lanka (2013), and Malta (2015). The civil society engagement with Commonwealth was furthered in Abuja in 2003. The Abuja CHOGM made a declaration on democracy and development largely based on a report of an expert group led by Dr. Manmohan Singh and sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Civil Society Forum organised by the Commonwealth Foundation in Abuja became active in advocating for the practical operationalisation of key commitments from the Abuja Declaration (Martin and Tandon, 2014).

Each of the Commonwealth People's Forums highlighted and asked for fairer actions from the Heads of Commonwealth Governments related to indigenous people and communities, value of cultural diversity, climate and environment, human rights, peace and security, governance and democracy, health, education, technology and innovation, economic development, trade and finance, and gender equality and women's rights.

Commonwealth Foundation has also organised a number of regional consultations often in preparation of the People's Forum, but also to emphasise the need for a transparent and accountable partnership between civil society organisations and government. One such event entitled Common Ground for Development: NGO-Government Relations in the Commonwealth (1997) was organised in UK in October 1997. The event was attended by senior government officials, civil society leaders, and observers from inter-governmental agencies and organisations. The consultation came up with clear recommendations on mechanisms for improving relations and partnership between civil society organisations and government, which have relevance even today. It recommended:

- The distinctive purpose and activities of NGOs, and the vital roles they

play in the development process should be recognised and promoted by the government,

- Formal mechanisms should be established through which NGOs can participate in official policy making, as part of open governmental processes. Such mechanisms should be at all levels of government and should include mechanisms and networks established by NGOs themselves in order to formulate collective viewpoints and make them known to governments.
- Legal frameworks and regulatory mechanisms should be developed which reflect the increasingly diverse nature, scope and purpose of NGOs in contemporary society. Such frameworks should be established in consultation with NGOs.
- Civil society demands ethical conduct, accountability and transparency from both government and NGOs. Accordingly, NGOs should implement codes of conduct, while governments should establish and make known clear principles concerning their relationship with NGOs.
- Action should be taken to strengthen the capacity of NGOs to achieve their objectives, maintain their values and discharge their responsibilities.
- Action should be taken to improve the viability and sustainability of NGOs.

Emerging issues in Commonwealth-civil society relations

There exist mutual respect and valued relations between civil society organisations and the Commonwealth. The civil society organisations associated with various Commonwealth events and activities have always valued this relationship, as evidenced from their past engagements and contributions. The Commonwealth Foundation, in particular, has made enormous efforts to get adequate attentions by the Commonwealth governments towards civil society organisations' contributions in development, governance, democracy, and human rights over decades.

Martin and Tandon (2014) noted that although initial pan-Commonwealth associations were membership associations of

professionals (like nurses, teachers, journalists, etc.), this changed dramatically in the 1990s. Active civil society by then came from grassroots actors in the member countries. Commonwealth Foundation also started supporting the work of civil society both through direct funding as well as through interface with relevant national government agencies. The spaces created by the Commonwealth Foundation for the engagement of in-country civil society with government representatives at CHOGM and ministerial meetings were quite significant. There was support for capacity development to engage as well as resources to participate in such forums. The programme focusing on participatory governance has helped civil society organisations to promote voices of the marginalised at the grassroots. In addition, the Commonwealth Foundation has created a network of in-country partners who interact among themselves and engage with inter-governmental mechanisms at the pan-Commonwealth level. It has invested in national platforms and promoted regional and pan-Commonwealth workshops for mutual learning and support.

However, such mutual appreciation, support and partnership is not without disappointment and tensions, particularly on the role of Commonwealth Secretariat on facilitating dialogues between civil society and the leaders of Commonwealth states.

There exists an understanding that the Commonwealth is^[11]_[SEP] more than an association of governments, yet its institutional governance structures and processes do not make adequate provision for the inclusion of civil society. Commonwealth Foundation's Board of Governors is primarily comprised of the high commissioners based in London and their representatives of member governments. The Chair of the Board and the Director are appointed by the Secretary- General of the Commonwealth. Therefore, Commonwealth Foundation itself has an inter-governmental character. It is interesting to note that only the Director of the Foundation can represent the deliberations of the Civil Society Forum to CHOGM. The Director is an official appointed by the Secretariat and not by the

civil society, yet, acts as the voice of the civil society in this key inter-governmental mechanism.

Several civil society actors engaging with the Foundation over a long period have voiced serious reservations about the appropriateness of this approach where direct representation of civil society and issues is mediated through the structure and leadership of the Foundation. Such void also exists in the way spaces are constructed at Commonwealth Ministerial Meetings, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), election monitoring or Commonwealth technical assistance.

These have been pointed out unequivocally in 2011 civil society communiqués titled “Civil Society as Drivers of Change in a Dynamic Commonwealth” (Commonwealth Foundation, 2011) which was presented to Commonwealth Heads of Government in Perth, Australia. A strongly worded statement read, “We see many references to civil society in CHOGM Communiqués and declarations, but these rarely take cognisance of the views of civil society. There should be nothing written for civil society without civil society’s involvement and engagement” (Ibid).

CHRI’s (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative) International Advisory Commission’s Report (CHRI 2015) to the 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) is another document that expressed concerns over inaccessibility to decision makers, opaqueness in decision making, and lack of facilitation in opening up spaces for civil society in official deliberative mechanisms. The report was premised in the backdrop of shrinking civil society spaces across Commonwealth and insisted that today the need for the Commonwealth to champion civil society’s work and defend the space in which it operates is greater than ever. It observed that in too many member states civil society space is being systematically curbed and the right to associate freely with others, speak openly and protest peacefully is being unfairly restricted. The report, while recommend a number of actions to

Commonwealth Heads of Governments, Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Foundation, and civil society, also acknowledged that “While civil society needs a Commonwealth that champions its values, particularly as they relate to freedom of assembly, conscience, association and expression, the Commonwealth needs the energy, capacity and diversity of its network of organisations to realise those values” (ibid).

Commonwealth in the changing global order

In the last decade, especially in the aftermath of 2008 global financial crisis, the world has seen many tectonic shifts. Today we see a new kind of economic and financial nationalism, greater level of trade protection, and increasing fragility around international economic cooperation. The breakdown of consensus in the Eleventh Ministerial Conference that took place in December 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, is a case in point. One report (Mehta and Chatterjee, 2017) observed: “This is not the first time that a WTO ministerial conference was unsuccessful. We have seen it happening before: in Seattle (1999) and Cancun (2003). However, the difference between the earlier ones and the one in Buenos Aires is that there was no palpable appetite on the part of any WTO member to make it a success.” The US pulling out of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2017 is another example of parochial nationalism on the part of the US administration under the presidency of Donald Trump. This US decision considerably threatened the historic consensus around a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so.

On the other hand, we also see the emergence of new actors and new geo-political inter-governmental groupings, which are not only influencing the global economy but actively advocating for reforms in global governance institutions. It is true that such groupings as G20, BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, ASEAN, and others with somewhat overlapping membership with the Commonwealth are bringing far greater, diverse, and intensive economic cooperation.

Prior to the era of globalisation, the mechanism for international cooperation, negotiation and engagement were in some way anchored in the UN system. The UN system, the General Assembly and its various specialised agencies were the main vehicles and arenas for deliberations on international policy, treaties and conflict resolution. Since its inception, the UN system has functioned as an inter-governmental mechanism. However, by the turn of the millennium, a number of new supra-regional, regional, and geo-political inter-governmental groupings appeared to be more vigorous and active in international cooperation. The political posture assumed and the decisions made by some of these groupings have had far reaching implications on the post-World War II global governance order.

For example, grouping like BRICS in its First Summit Declaration⁴ expressed “strong commitment to multilateral diplomacy with the United Nations playing the central role in dealing with global challenges and threats.” However, it also reaffirmed “the need for a comprehensive reform of the UN with a view to making it more efficient” and it reiterated the importance of recognising the aspiration of India and Brazil to play a greater role in the United Nations. Notwithstanding, such strong support and solidarity within BRICS, China’s “One Belt, One Road” project which received support from Russia, was strongly opposed by India. India unequivocally opposed the idea of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which ostensibly ignored its core concerns on sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Commonwealth, as an Association of democratic and sovereign nations and with a credible history of promoting democratic practices in the global governance institutions, enjoys a moral pre-eminence as compared to other supra-regional groupings. This credibility and track record must be leveraged, not only for safeguarding the interests of member countries but also be able to set global norms for international cooperation within a democratic and sovereign framework.

The Brexit is likely to have far-reaching implications on many

Commonwealth countries, particularly the smaller nations. For a long time, the EU policies have governed the trade between individual Commonwealth members' and the UK. There are genuine concerns among many developing countries that their market access into the UK and Europe could be disrupted by post-Brexit trade policy shifts. The eight Commonwealth developing countries that send over around 10 per cent of their total world exports to the UK are Botswana (54.4 per cent), Belize (22.7 per cent), Seychelles (19.3 per cent), Mauritius (13.1 per cent), Saint Lucia (10.8 per cent), Cyprus (10.2 per cent), Sri Lanka (9.8 per cent) and Bangladesh (9.5 per cent) (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016).

At the same time, there may be new trade and investment opportunities by harnessing the so-called unique Commonwealth trade advantage, augmenting trade and investment flows between Commonwealth members. Enhanced co-operation will also enable the Commonwealth to be an effective force for global good by promoting the role of an inclusive international trade regime as a means for realising the Sustainable Development Goals (ibid). The potential role that Commonwealth can play for promoting open and fair trade and investment within its member countries cannot be overstated, but also as an Association it can influence other global entities, as well.

India as an emerging economic power and global political standing can play significant role in providing leadership to Commonwealth. Historically, the ABC countries -- Australia, Britain and Canada -- have provided greater leadership in the Commonwealth. The present political leaderships in these ABC countries are likely to be more outward looking. There is an opportunity for India along with countries like, South Africa, Nigeria and Malaysia to play bigger role in the Commonwealth to push G20 and other multilateral bodies towards a common future. It can unleash a new era for south-south cooperation with collective leverage from the Commonwealth. India can also gain much more from the Commonwealth with deeper development cooperation with 30 plus small countries from the Caribbean and the Pacific region. This could be

major strategic strength in the UN General Assembly. More concretely, India could offer to host CHOGM and other associated Forums including CPF as a strategic choice for influencing the civil society across the Commonwealth. Secretariat of several key global and regional civil society networks are located in one or the other Commonwealth countries, for example CIVICUS in South Africa, ASPBAE, FIM and CHRI in India – which are models of trans-country initiatives. These civil society networks can play supportive role in organising civil society and other actors in the Commonwealth.

The issues related to global governance, trade, and investment are major areas of concerns in international cooperation; nevertheless, the importance of preserving democratic civic space domestically within member nations cannot be overstated. Civic space forms the bedrock of any open and democratic society. The degree to which individuals and organised groups have adequate ‘civic space’ is essential to the healthy functioning and development of any society. Civic space is the freedom and means to speak, associate, organise, and participate in public decision-making. The means to do so might include access to information, resources, and institutions. It includes communicating without hindrance and in doing so, influence the political and social structures. For that to happen, a state has a duty to protect its citizens while respecting and facilitating their basic rights to associate, assemble peacefully and express views and opinions.

However, in far too many countries the right to association, the right to peaceful assembly, the right to freedom of expression and the right to participation are under renewed and sustained assault. This assault is being driven by a number of motivations, including an increasing focus by states on enforcing national security and countering terrorism; pushback against the successes that mass protests have achieved in recent years; the capture of many governance systems by wealthy elites pursuing private sector interests (Chakrabarti and Bandyopadhyay, 2017). CIVICUS *State of the Civil Society Report* (2017) observes that in conditions of poor civic space, civil society is repressed through practices that include

legislative and regulatory restrictions, the forced suspension or closure of CSOs, judicial harassment, public vilification, detentions, violence and killings. The CIVICUS Monitor finds that only three per cent of the world's population live in countries where civic space is fully open. The restriction of civic space has become the norm rather than the exception. It should now be considered a global emergency.

Commonwealth as an Association has been in the forefront of preserving democratic governance amongst its member nations. It has not only provided support to strengthen legal systems and democratic institutions for member countries but also taken proactive steps to expell membership of those nations which deviated from the democratic principles and practices as agreed in Harare declaration in 1991. In the face of shrinking civic space in many of its member nations today, it is imperative for the Commonwealth to amplify civil society voices with the Heads of Governments as well as in other inter-ministerial forums.

Trajectory: Towards a common future

Over more than six decades of its existence, the modern Commonwealth has developed and strengthened a robust institutional architecture with Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Foundation and Commonwealth of Learning at the core. However, traditionally these institutions have worked somewhat in silos with each focusing on one or more constituencies. This has been reflected in the way various meetings like CHOGM and Forums like, People's Forum, Business Forum, Youth Forum, and Women's Forum were organised in the past. The ambition 'Towards a common future' will require breaking of these silos and underlining the need for bringing various constituencies at a shared, common platform.

The themes chosen for discussion in the forthcoming CHOGM in April 2018– environmental sustainability and climate change, democracy and human rights, security and prosperity through responsible trade and investments – reflect the greatest challenges that human society is facing today. Civil society organisations, in partnership with other

actors from the government, business and media, are at the forefront of addressing these challenges, locally and globally. The enormous energy, expertise, and capacities that exist with professional NGOs, civil society organisations, and academia need to be harvested and utilised alongside mobilising commitments from the heads of the countries. The Commonwealth, with its incredible goodwill and collective strengths, can provide global leadership in redefining value driven multilateralism, supporting international solidarity action for democracy and human rights, reducing vulnerabilities for millions of people through climate mitigation and adaptation, enhancing human security, and promoting inclusive trade and investment as a tool for achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

In achieving the above, three potential actions towards the next CHOGM in April 2018 can be considered. *First*, official task forces created for preparation of background documents for the meeting of officials and Heads of Governments can include a diversity of civil society experts drawn from diverse set of countries in the Commonwealth. Towards a Common Future can be most effectively promoted, in and beyond the Commonwealth, with active and shared ownership of, not just analysis but also action steps agreed upon by various actors, in particular civil society.

Second, a two-day consultation of various Commonwealth platforms—civil society, business, professionals and officials -- can be planned just before the CHOGM in UK to deliberate upon and develop a shared responsibility of each set of actors in moving Towards A Common Future. Such a consultation can be planned in a manner that includes voices of civil society from countries around the Commonwealth, and actively supported through joint team of various Commonwealth bodies — Secretariat, Foundation, etc. Newly emerging political, business and civil leadership from non-ABC countries, like India, should be mobilised to take on greater responsibility for designing, conducting and enabling such a consultation.

Third, results of these deliberations, along with mandates of the CHOGM, should be taken forward in a time-bound manner in each Commonwealth country. A multi-stakeholder task force should be constituted at the Commonwealth level to support such follow-up in each country. Similar multi-stakeholder task forces should be facilitated in each Commonwealth country with clear mandates. This mechanism should be mandated to report progress made on these agreements in each member country and across the Commonwealth before the next CHOGM is planned in 2020.

In light of the above analysis, it is suggested that India should take an active role towards building such a shared process and consensus Towards A Common Future in preparation for CHOGM 2018, and beyond.

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Endnotes

- ¹ For more information, please see <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-charter>
- ² For more information, please see <http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/history-items/documents/Harare%20Commonwealth%20Declaration%201991.pdf>
- ³ For more information on Development Research Centre, please see <http://archive.ids.ac.uk/drcitizen/>
- ⁴ For more information, please see <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/090616-leaders.html>

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