



“HEALTH IN THE CITY”

Tackling complex health issues in a rapidly urbanising Commonwealth

Expert Group Workshop, London, September 2011

COMMUNIQUÉ

1. Background

An Expert Group Workshop involving over 35 leading planning, health and built environment professionals was convened in London on Wednesday 28 September, 2011. The Workshop was led by the Commonwealth Association of Planners, the Commonwealth Health Professions Alliance and the Built Environment Professionals in the Commonwealth. The workshop was held against the background of the Commonwealth Statement on Action to Combat Non-Communicable Diseases and the Port of Spain Communiqué.

The Commonwealth Statement called for global engagement of the private sector, civil society and governments in efforts to combat NCDs. The Port of Spain Communiqué went on to specifically address other health issues including the issue of health related MDGs and Heads of Government agreed to support the need to strengthen health care systems and spoke of the need for evidence based research for policy making and for the sharing of knowledge.

The Port of Spain Communiqué similarly dealt with human settlements issues and Heads of Government acknowledged the challenge posed by rapid urbanisation. They went on to support work being undertaken to address these challenges - the primary vehicle for this work being the State of the Commonwealth Cities Programme. This Programme seeks to establish a reporting mechanism on urban and urban management issues to Heads of Government, based on a core set of indicators including indicators on health and well-being.

2. Call for Action

At the conclusion of the Expert Group Workshop the following Call for Action was agreed.

We call on CHOGM and Governments of member states to implement the following Actions to help tackle NCDs and improve health and well-being in Commonwealth cities:

- i. To commit to inclusive and integrated spatial planning and cross disciplinary working as a basis for developing effective policy approaches and actions

- ii. To ensure that spatial planning, public policy and legal frameworks are based on a sound evidence base and improved data collection
- iii. To devolve power to the local level wherever appropriate to help ensure that communities and individuals have increased responsibility over their own lives and environments
- iv. To commit appropriate funding to implement programmes and initiatives, promote demonstration projects and undertake awareness-raising campaigns
- v. To acknowledge that rapid urbanisation in the Commonwealth and its impact on the health and well-being of individuals and communities is an issue for all Commonwealth countries and their donor programmes
- vi. To support the Commonwealth State of the Cities Programme as an appropriate reporting mechanism on urban issues including health and well-being.

3. Our Commitment

We, as members of civil society and professional bodies representing planning, health and built environment professions in the Commonwealth commit to use our expertise, networks and resources to support Commonwealth Governments in pursuing the above actions.

**Commonwealth Association of Planners,
Commonwealth Health Professions Alliance
Built Environment Professions in the Commonwealth**

**28, September 2011
Marlborough House, London**