



## CHOGM 2015: CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL VALUES

1. **Recognising** the importance of the *Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Development* adopted by Heads at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka in 2013 which sets out a clear agenda for delivering sustainable, inclusive and equitable development in the countries of the Commonwealth;
2. **Noting** that this declaration specifically commits Commonwealth nations to act decisively to tackle the challenges confronting the global economy to ensure balanced, sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth, to addressing poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, to developing capacity and to strengthening partnerships and that it **reaffirms** member nations' determination to collectively call for a strong and effective partnership for development;
3. **Acknowledging** the extensive engagement and debates which culminated in the comprehensive zero draft of the Sustainable Development Goals to which Commonwealth nations will commit at the UN General Assembly meeting in 2015 and which are consistent with Commonwealth values as expressed in the Commonwealth Charter, and which will inform the work of Commonwealth states for the period 2015 to 2030;
4. **Noting** that the SDGs reflect an important set of goals and targets which constitute a critically important global agenda for action over the next 15 years;
5. **Noting** the 2015 *Gaborone Declaration – Local Government Vision 2030* which acknowledges the key role of local government in promoting sustained economic growth, promoting local democracy and good governance and in being key partners at both the national and international level in delivering a sustainable future;
6. **Recording** the approval by member states of the United Nations of the *International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning* at the UN Habitat Governing Council meeting in April 2015 which sets out a clear global framework for improving policies, plans and implementation processes for more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities and territories and which sets out to develop a universally applicable reference framework to guide urban policy reforms; to capture universal principles from national and local experiences that could support the development of diverse planning approaches adapted to different contexts and scales; and to raise the urban and territorial dimensions of the development agendas of national, regional and local governments;

7. **Recording** the responses regarding the SDGs from civil society representatives from around the Commonwealth in preparation of the drafting of this statement indicating that civil society:
- Welcomes the initiative and eagerly looks forward to governments taking the lead as rallying points;
  - Sees the need for far greater awareness of the SDGs at all levels in all governments, including amongst the general public and decision makers;
  - Requires clear policy and programme directives from national governments, being the organs of state responsible for their delivery;
  - Argues for use of the SDGs to reinforce existing initiatives and innovate new measures in order to address country specific matters;
  - Requires Commonwealth - level advocacy and collaboration across all spheres of government and with civil society, regarding process, policies and programmes and where possible to develop concrete schemes of collaboration between member states;
  - Sees the necessity of capacity building and resource allocation to all levels of government and civil society to deliver the outcomes required in only 15 years;
  - Argues that the SDGs cannot be delivered within 15 years other than through partnerships between spheres of government, with civil society and between nations.

**CIVIL SOCIETY CALLS UPON HEADS OF GOVERNMENT IN THE COMMONWEALTH TO:**

1. **Lead by example in expressing their commitment to planning and implementing the SDGs over the next 15 years in partnership with other spheres of government and with civil society in all its forms, including the private sector;**
2. **Urgently prepare integrated strategies, policies and programmes, informed by long term strategic vision, participatory processes and local context, for the implementation of the SDGs over the next 15 years;**
3. **Commit to establishing nationally specific and binding SDG goals and targets for monitoring the achievement of the SDGs;**
4. **Empower civil society and other spheres of government to play a full role in the delivery of the SDGs through awareness raising, capacity building and resource allocation, as well as through dialogue, information collection and knowledge sharing, using new technologies to enhance civil society participation;**
5. **Undertake legislative and regulatory reform to build a solid framework for the development planning needed to deliver a sustainable urban future;**
6. **Support Commonwealth - wide co-ordination through a dedicated Commonwealth SDG programme, building on the State of the Commonwealth Cities Programme adopted by Heads at its meeting in Port of Spain in 2009 and utilising the potential of research and information technology to better inform policy and manage places.**

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