



COMMONWEALTH
YOUTH
PROGRAMME

PAN COMMONWEALTH YOUTH
CAUCUS REPORT



Submitted by Pan Commonwealth Youth Caucus
Chairperson
Mr. Mobafa Baker

Introduction

The Pan Commonwealth Youth Caucus is a dynamic group of dedicated, resilient and resourceful young men and women who represent and speak on youth issues from Commonwealth Countries around the world. Over the last two years this Caucus has been involved in unique projects, programmes and initiatives that have resulted in the development of a stronger body. This report captures a few of these activities and also recommends several initiatives to our successors.

Pan Commonwealth Youth Caucus Executive

Over the period 2006 – 2008 the Pan Commonwealth Youth Caucus Executive was made up of the four Regional Youth Caucus Chairpersons and the Pan Commonwealth Youth Caucus Chairperson. Below is a list of the members of the Executive as it currently stands:

Pan Commonwealth Youth Caucus Chairperson: **Mr. Mobafa Baker 2006-2008**

African RYC Chairperson: **Mr. Batsho Nthoi** (2006 – 2007)

Mr. Sammy Kavuma (2007- present)

Asian RYC Chairperson: **Ms. Nosheen Abbas** (2006-2007)

Mr. Ahmed Mahloof (2007 – present)

Caribbean RYC Chairperson: **Mr. Norman Gilbert (2006-2008)**

: **Mr. Kamal Powell** (2008- present)

South Pacific RYC Chairperson: **Ms. Elaine Howard (2006-2008)**

Ms. Nukutua Pokura (2008 – Present)

1. Representation:

Regional Youth Caucus members represented their countries, regions and the Commonwealth at different events over the last few years with great distinction. This occurred from small in country events such as school discussions, live radio, television and print reporting, to major national events such as in Parliament and on Cabinet appointed committees, to international events on Commonwealth Observer missions and Committees appointed by the Commonwealth Secretary General. It will be too voluminous to list every single level of representation so this report will briefly highlight some key ones.

a. Commonwealth Election Observation:

Over the past two years RYCs participated in their own capacity on several Commonwealth Election Observer Missions in countries such as Zambia, The Gambia, Guyana, Solomon Islands, Uganda and Nigeria. Thus far all RYCs who have had the opportunity to participate in such missions have indicated that the experience was both life changing as well as eye-opening as they saw raw democracy at work.

b. National Recognition

The natural progression in some countries for youth ambassadors to take on national leadership continued with the appointment of Regional Youth Caucus representatives to positions of national development. Namely, we salute the appointment of Ahmed Mahloof to his National Parliament. The inclusion of several RYCS in the development of their countries national youth strategies is a welcomed achievement. Additionally, I wish to commend a number of RYCS who have since been named National Youth of the Year within their respective countries based on the work they have produced, for example, the former RYC of Sierre Leone.

c. Commonwealth Committees/ Task Force

Arguably one of the most important Commonwealth Committees appointed within the last two years was the committee on Respect and Understanding. The concept emerged directly from an initiative of Heads of Government to arrest the apparent breakdown of respect linked to misunderstanding worldwide. The Caucus was represented on this Committee by Ms. Elaine Howard, former RYC Chairperson from the South Pacific Region. Her presence there was supported by RYCs who provided information and updates as she relayed the youth voice at these meetings.

On a regional level, at the Caribbean Heads of Government Meeting held in early 2007 it was agreed that a Commission be established to review the status of Youth Development within the Region. RYC member Alberto Vallios from Belize was selected as a Commissioner to represent youth views on behalf of the entire region.

Regional Youth Caucus representatives from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Pan Commonwealth Chairperson represented the Caucus on the International Planning Committee at the recent Commonwealth Youth Forum in 2007. This Committee met formally on two occasions before the Forum once in London and then in Uganda to effectively plan for the participation of young people at this event. It also took on the overall management role at the actual CYF.

d. Commonwealth Meetings & Seminars

The opportunity to provide a youth perspective at meetings was afforded to the Pan Commonwealth Chair at the joint meeting to receive the World Youth Report 2007. This report was developed by the World Bank and launched at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. Additionally, the Caucus was represented at the Youth Employment Summit held in Kenya by the Pan Chairperson in October, 2006.

Although not in his official capacity as Deputy Chairperson of the Pacific Region, Mr Kevin Grimwood from New Zealand, attended the Commonwealth Education Ministers Meeting held in South Africa in December, 2006. Similarly the former Chair of the African Region Bathso Nathoi participated in the UN Global Youth Summit held in New York in an unofficial RYC capacity but yet in both instances they shared their experience with the Caucus.

2. Advocacy

Being an advocate is a major part of the work of Regional Youth Caucus representatives. Again, like much of our work, this advocacy has happened informally and around issues which are more community and nation specific rather than an overall Commonwealth level. For example work has been ongoing within the Commonwealth on issues linked to HIV & AIDS, access to education and health, environmental issues, human rights and the abuse of drugs

As a Commonwealth, there are countries amongst our membership with the highest level of transmission of HIV and AIDS. This has been identified by persons such as Dabesaki Mac-Ikemenjina from Nigeria as one of the major issues on which he has led a Pan Commonwealth lobby. Other members have also lobbied for more to be done on these issues. These have been identified by the work and inputs of the Pan

