

Commonwealth Business Forum 2015
24th -26th November, St Julian's, Malta
“Adding Global Value: Creating a More Prosperous Commonwealth”

Interim Communiqué and Report to Heads of Government (CHOGM)

The Commonwealth Business Forum concluded with a call by the Chairman of the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council, Lord Marland, to double intra-Commonwealth trade to US\$1 trillion before 2020 and for Commonwealth Governments to support the development of a Commonwealth Green Finance Facility that will encourage private sector investment into projects that help implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and address the impacts of Climate Change.

The Global Goals Commonwealth Sustainable Business Challenge was also launched to encourage businesses to engage with and contribute towards the SDGs.

This was the first Business Forum to be organised by the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC). Established in July 2014, with the intention of creating an organisation that was better able to deliver on the economic potential of the Commonwealth by adopting a clear agenda for “Creating a More Prosperous Commonwealth” with a strong culture of delivery for both member countries and our member companies. The Business Forum was a clear manifestation of our intent in this regard.

The CWEIC would like to express its sincere appreciation to all our Founding Strategic Partners, our member companies and all those who have supported the new organisation from inception. In particular we would like to recognise the leadership of The Hon Dr Joseph Muscat MP, Prime Minister of Malta, Secretary-General HE Kamallesh Sharma and The Rt Hon Hugo Swire MP, UK Minister responsible for the Commonwealth.

Addressed by 15 Heads of Government, 180 Government and private sector leaders and attended by more than 1300 delegates from 75 countries, the Forum continues to be a growing feature of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Reflecting the clear priorities of Commonwealth member countries of trade, investment, growth, employment and private sector led development.

The Forum identified a number of areas where the Commonwealth can increase trade and investment, and “Add Global Value” across our six priority of themes of financial services, technology, infrastructure, healthcare, tourism and sustainability and launched five new initiatives to increase Commonwealth trade and investment. These are elaborated in more detail below.

As the Commonwealth nominates its sixth Secretary-General, the Forum expressed its clear desire to see the appointment of an outstanding candidate, committed to embracing the trade and investment agenda and working in close partnership with the Prime Minister of Malta as incoming Chair-in-Office. Strong leadership is vital to the future of the association and its relevance in an increasingly fragmented world.

The CWEIC would like to record its gratitude to our co-hosts the Government of Malta and the Malta CHOGM Taskforce 2015 for their unstinting support and superb delivery of the Business Forum, and to all our sponsors and partners for making the event possible. A full list of supporting organisations is included as Appendix One.

The Commonwealth and the Global Economy

The purpose of the Forum is not to forecast or make predictions about future economic performance, but it is clear that the global economy faces considerable macro-economic challenges from the worsening global security situation, the growing threat of extremism, unprecedented migration and climate change.

We welcome the focus on these interrelated issues by Heads of Government and believe that they are all areas in which the Commonwealth can play a significant role. The private sector stands ready to assist. Improved economic performance, prosperity, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities will be a vital part of any solution to these challenges.

Despite the difficult economic conditions Commonwealth countries continue to perform better than the global average, reflecting the advantages underpinned by the Commonwealth values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as well as shared legal systems and the English language.

However, stagnating global trade, increasing dependence on the performance of the Chinese economy and the collapse in commodity prices are substantial risks to many Commonwealth countries, with a number facing increasingly unsustainable debt burdens.

Sound economic governance and strategies for economic growth have never been more important and the Business Forum calls for enhanced public private sector dialogue in all member countries to ensure continued economic prosperity and a focus on facilitating trade by improving the business environment in member countries – not least by tackling the pervasive challenge of corruption.

The Business Forum welcomed the Commonwealth Secretariat's flagship trade publication "The Commonwealth in the Unfolding Global Trade Landscape" and in particular its finding that trade costs are on average 19% lower between Commonwealth countries. There is significant opportunity to increase intra-Commonwealth trade and investment. The Commonwealth Secretariat calculations predict that US\$502bn intra Commonwealth trade gains could be achieved if all countries were to reach UK and Singaporean levels of trade facilitation.

The Business Forum welcomed the suggestion of a standalone meeting of Commonwealth Trade Ministers to focus on these issues and asks Heads of Government to consider the practicalities of this proposal in the run up to the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Nairobi in December.

Themes

The Business Forum focused on the following themes of relevance to all Commonwealth countries:

➤ **Financial Services**

We were delighted to welcome The Rt Hon Lord Mayor of London to launch a Commonwealth wide financial services programme, in partnership with the City of London Corporation and corporate partners, focused on the development of financial centres, skills development, innovation in financial services, Islamic Finance and access to finance.

➤ **Technology**

Recognising the importance of technology as a driver of future economic growth and prosperity the CWEIC launched its technology programme in partnership with Tech City UK. The tech programme will initially focus on helping to establish the ecosystem for technology based companies in member countries to flourish with an initial focus on the important areas of EdTech, FinTech, Smart Cities, e-Government, Open Data and Innovation.

Tech City UK brought a delegation of UK digital entrepreneurs in these fields who are keen to establish links for the mutual benefit of the Commonwealth. With their support we will be establishing a “Digital Commonwealth” Working Group that helps to inform policy in these areas and establish an Open Data Framework Charter for the Commonwealth.

➤ **Infrastructure**

The Business Forum made considerable progress towards identifying an agenda for helping countries to plan, access funding and build major infrastructure projects – vital for future economic development. The CWEIC plans to establish a Commonwealth Infrastructure Group to advise Governments on infrastructure development.

➤ **Healthcare**

The Business Forum saw the launch of the Commonwealth Healthcare Business Group, led by Rt Hon Professor Lord Kakkar and Maltese Minister for Health Hon Chris Fearne, which will bring together complementary public, private and third sector expertise to help facilitate the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Governments in improving health provision and outcomes.

➤ **Tourism**

Tourism was identified as a key driver of economic growth in all Commonwealth countries. Discussions focused on adding value in tourism and also the importance of being able to measure the impact of tourism. The CWEIC will explore further mechanisms to support the development of tourism and sharing of best practice across distinct tourism segments.

➤ **Sustainability**

The Business Forum was grateful for leadership of HRH The Prince of Wales and our Sustainability Partner PwC, and discussions focused on the private sector's role in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals and facilitating finance for sustainable infrastructure and investment projects.¹ There was a strong focus on The Blue Economy and infrastructure for Island States at the Forum.

➤ **Maritime**

For the first time a special session was held on the "The Maritime Commonwealth" led by the Rt Hon Lord Mayor of London. It was agreed that a working group should be established to explore the opportunity for further collaboration, involving organisations including Transport Malta, Maritime London and the Shipowners Association of Nigeria.

Outcomes

➤ **Commonwealth Green Finance Facility**

The Facility will improve the bankability of green projects in Commonwealth countries by providing risk cover and credit enhancement in particular for the Island States. It would be capitalised initially through sovereign contributions and support and then subsequently by issuing 'Green Bonds' in order to attract the participation of institutional investors. Its initial size would be \$1 billion, with further capitalisation over time.

A Working Group will be established to develop the Facility, and would begin its work in earnest in 2016. It will initially comprise of already agreed representatives from countries including Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Nigeria The Seychelles, Grenada, Malta and the UK, assisted by a number of companies, including HSBC, Willis, Linklaters, SEB and PwC.

The Working Group will be chaired by Lord Marland of Odstock, Chairman of the CWEIC, and Justin Mundy, Director of The Prince of Wales' International Sustainability Unit (I.S.U).

➤ **The Global Goals Commonwealth Sustainable Business Challenge**

The Challenge aims to encourage all companies across the Commonwealth and beyond to consider how they can engage with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how they build them into their strategy and the way they do business. The Challenge is led by CWEIC and PwC with the support of Project Everyone and HRH The Prince of Wales's Accounting for Sustainability Project.

¹ Link to Concluding Address by HRH The Prince of Wales

<http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/media/speeches/speech-hrh-the-prince-of-wales-the-commonwealth-business-forum-malta>

➤ **Commonwealth Trade Initiative**

The Business Forum welcomed the presentation on the Commonwealth Trade Initiative, an online business collaboration platform launched with the support of AMPP Group, and recognised its potential for maintaining and creating new business connections between Business Forums.

➤ **CommonwealthFirst**

The CWEIC announced it was launching a major new programme with the support of Royal Mail to encourage SMEs to leverage the Commonwealth network when starting their export journey. The programme will be initially piloted with 100 specially selected UK SMEs over a three year period. In due course it is hoped the programme will be established in other Commonwealth countries.

➤ **Business Deals**

A major feature of the Business Forum is the strong opportunity for networking and trade and investment deals. More than 300 pre-arranged one to one meetings were held at the Forum with countless other interactions taking place, as well as 17 country and regional investment windows held during the Forum.

We will be working with the Government of Malta to facilitate inward investment into Malta following the Forum, and we will continue to track and report business outcomes from the Business Forum to the greatest extent possible.

Future Priorities

➤ **Ease of Doing Business**

Following the Forum a major priority for the CWEIC will be helping countries to improve the business environment, through a focus on public private sector dialogue, improved corporate governance and an anti-corruption programme. The CWEIC will also be leveraging the potential of further collaboration between Commonwealth Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs).

➤ **Free Movement of Business Leaders**

The Business Forum has yet again exposed the challenges faced by business leaders in travelling across the Commonwealth. The CWEIC expresses its strong desire for political leadership to allow business people to travel and work more easily within the Commonwealth and the possibility of establishing an APEC style Business Travel Card for the Commonwealth.

➤ **Collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Family**

A key feature of the CBF 2015 has been the strong collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, in particular work with the Trade Division on developing intra-Commonwealth trade and investment, and the Youth Affairs Division on Youth Entrepreneurship and the development of the Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs. We look forward to working with the Secretariat in other priority areas including the development of the Commonwealth Green Finance Facility and the Commonwealth Trade Finance Facility.

We were also grateful for the input of our sister organisations such as the Commonwealth Businesswomen’s Network, Commonwealth of Learning, Commonwealth Local Government Forum and Commonwealth Environmental and Investment Platform and look forward to developing strong working partnerships in future with all members of the Commonwealth “Family” of organisations.

➤ **International Offices**

Over the next two years CWEIC will be establishing regional offices across the Commonwealth. An on the ground presence will help us be more relevant and do more for both our member companies and supporting Governments.

A final Communique and Report to Heads of Government will be issued following the completion of the Heads of Government Meeting.

The CWEIC looks forward to delivering on this agenda and reconvening the Business Forum for the 2017 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council
26th November 2015

www.cweic.org

Appendix 1: List of Supporting Organisations

Bank of Valletta
GO Mobile
American University of Malta
Bank Alkhair
Cameroon Investment Promotion Agency
De la Rue
GSD Marketing
Farsons
HSBC
Ship Owners Association of Nigeria
Malta Gaming Authority
PWC
Acumum
Argus Insurance Agencies Limited
Brand South Africa
Chetcuti Cauchi Advocates
EY
GM International
J M Vassallo Vibro Blocks Ltd
Lagos State Government
Latham Watkins
Lekki Free Zone
Liquigas Malta
Malta Industrial Park

Malta International Airport
Malta Stock Exchange
Managing Partners Group
MarTrade
Nexia BT
PsailaGrechCONSULT,
Pegaso
Shireburn Software
SIGMA
Standard Chartered
Sterling Chemical Malta
Tigne Point
The International Risk Management Initiative
Valletta Cruise Port
Zeturf
Trust Vad
Yacht Hub
Air Malta