

# Islamabad Declaration on Youth Development

Adopted at the Commonwealth Asia Regional Youth Ministers Meeting  
28-30 January 2025 | Islamabad, Pakistan

## Preamble

We, the Youth Ministers of the Commonwealth Asia Region, Central Asian Republics and Middle East convened in Islamabad, Pakistan, from 28 to 30 January 2025, on the occasion of the inaugural session of the **Commonwealth Asia Youth Alliance (CAYA)** and the **Commonwealth Asia Regional Youth Ministers Meeting**, hereby reaffirm our commitment to empowering young people, fostering their meaningful participation in decision-making processes, and addressing the challenges facing youth across the region.

Acknowledging that the Asia region is home to a significant portion of the youth population, we recognize their immense potential as agents of change in achieving sustainable development and fostering regional integration.

Guided by the outcomes of the **10th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM) in London (2023)** and the **Commonwealth Asia Regional Youth Leadership Summit in Kuala Lumpur (2024)**, we affirm the establishment of **CAYA** as a vital platform to amplify youth voices and enhance regional cooperation.

## Our Shared Vision

In honoring the Marlborough House Commitments, we envision that young people:

1. **Lead efforts to address regional challenges**, around Education, Employment, Engagement and Environment.
2. **Participate meaningfully in governance** at regional levels, ensuring their voices shape policies and decisions that impact their futures.
3. Benefit from **inclusive, innovative, and sustainable development opportunities**, fostering resilience, intergenerational solidarity, and cross-cultural understanding.
4. Young people are able to access Youth Work Services and provisions in keeping with **Commonwealth Youth Work Professionalization** agenda.

## Key Commitments

To realize this vision, we commit to:

### 1. Strengthening Regional Collaboration

- a. Support the operationalization and institutional development of **CAYA** as the regional youth platform for advocacy, collaboration, and capacity building.
- b. Promote partnerships between CAYA and relevant sub-regional bodies to amplify regional impact on Youth Development.

### 2. Promoting Youth Participation in Governance

- a. Promote and support **CAYA** as a mechanism to enhance the active, meaningful, and inclusive participation of young people in policymaking and governance structures.
- b. Ensure representation of youth in national and regional development agendas through active collaboration with **National Youth Councils** and regional youth networks.

### 3. Promoting Youth Work Professionalization:

- a. Promote development and enhancement of the status, recognition and standards of youth work as a legitimate and respected profession to ensure that youth workers are adequately prepared, supported and empowered to work effectively with young people.
- b. These include establishing accessible and inclusive formal education and training pathways for aspiring and existing youth workers, establishing a code of ethics or a set of professional values that guide the behaviour and conduct of youth workers, establishing national youth worker associations as per national circumstances and capacities, and advocating for the recognition of youth work as a distinct profession and raising awareness of its importance in supporting young people's development.

### 4. Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

- a. Strengthen the capacity of **National Youth Councils**, to lead impactful advocacy and programs at the national and regional levels.
- b. Facilitate knowledge exchange, cross-cultural learning, and intergenerational dialogue through regional forums and collaborative initiatives.
- c. We agree to explore integrating digital platforms as a tool for empowering youth across the Commonwealth Asia region by providing access to experiential learning, mentorship, and skill-building opportunities. Recognizing the importance of digital innovation, we will encourage enhancing youth participation in regional initiatives, promoting digital literacy and skills development.

## 5. Fostering Inclusion and Equity

- a. Promote the inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented youth, including women, differently-abled individuals, and those from underserved communities, in all aspects of youth engagement and development.

## Actionable Outcomes

As immediate steps to realize these commitments, we resolve to:

1. Endorse and launch the **CAYA Strategic Plan**, outlining country specific actionable priorities for 2025-2030, taking into account the relevant laws, regulations and policies of each country.
2. Organize **annual regional dialogues** and capacity-building workshops to review progress, share best practices, and strengthen intergovernmental cooperation.
3. Advocate for increased investment in **youth work**, education and training at the national and regional levels.
4. Ministers agreed for CAYA to explore establishment of a fund to support it, which is accessible to all the member countries, especially in the areas of youth empowerment.

## Declaration of Unity and Collaboration

We, Youth Ministers, reaffirm our shared commitment to empowering young people as key stakeholders in driving sustainable development and fostering regional cohesion.

Together, we commit to supporting the vision and mission of the **Commonwealth Asia Youth Alliance (CAYA)** and ensuring that the voices of youth resonate across all levels of governance, policy, and practice.

Adopted on this day, 30 January 2025, in Islamabad, Pakistan.