COMMONWEALTH YOUTH FORUM

CHOGM ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA 2026

The Commonwealth

Commonwealth Youth Policy Recommendations for Heads of Government

Investing in Youth Agency:
Co-creating Pathways towards Shared Prosperity

Commonwealth Youth Forum
November 2026, Antigua and Barbuda

Executive summary

The Commonwealth Youth Policy Document 2026 turns the Commonwealth Youth Forum theme, *"Investing in youth agency: Co-creating Pathways towards Shared Prosperity,"* into a practical policy advocacy agenda for discussion alongside CHOGM 2026. It draws on pre-Forum consultations conducted across all 56 Commonwealth member countries through two virtual consultations and a written submission process. The written-input register contains 490 entries classified as individual or organisational/institutional submissions. The agenda builds on the 2024 Commonwealth Youth Forum Declaration and the 2025 Windhoek Declaration.

The agenda's added contribution is to connect these priorities to proposed actions, indicative roles, progress measures and a participation-and-response standard. It is a resource for adaptation and advocacy, not an adopted Commonwealth or CHOGM position.

Five connected priorities

- Democratic participation and shared power: Give young people meaningful roles in decisions, protect civic space and publish how institutions respond to their proposals.
- Economic opportunity and future economies: Connect learning to paid, safe and decent work; widen fair routes to enterprise, finance and sustainable livelihoods.
- Climate resilience and sustainable futures: Include youth in climate decisions and strengthen locally led adaptation, resilient livelihoods and access to climate support.
- Wellbeing, equity and social inclusion: Improve access to mental-health and other essential services, quality learning, safety and inclusion, with attention to barriers faced by under-represented groups.
- Digital futures, innovation and skills: Expand meaningful digital access and skills, support responsible innovation and protect rights, privacy and safety.

What leaders and partners can do

Governments can adapt the proposals to national settings, use existing institutions, identify a focused set of priorities, assign delivery roles and report progress publicly. Youth organisations, civil society, employers and development partners can contribute to implementation and independently review results. Young people should help shape priorities and assess whether actions improve their influence and opportunities. The document offers common indicators and a model response standard while recognising that countries will use different laws, institutions and measures.

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Purpose, scope and policy foundations

This document presents a youth policy advocacy agenda for discussion alongside CHOGM 2026 under the Commonwealth Youth Forum theme, “Investing in youth agency: Co-creating Pathways towards Shared Prosperity.” It translates youth priorities into five connected pillars and practical actions that governments, young people and partners can adapt through 2030. This work supports the CHOGM theme, “Accelerating Partnerships and Investment for a Prosperous Commonwealth,” by connecting partnership commitments with delivery and public accountability. [S04, S05, S08]

The agenda builds on the 13th Commonwealth Youth Forum Declaration, “Navigating Our Course: Building Resilience for a Common Future” (2024), and the 2025 Windhoek Declaration. It carries forward the 2024 Declaration’s priorities—democracy, environment, economies and social wellbeing—and gives digital futures a dedicated pillar. It is also directly informed by 2026 pre-Forum consultations and the International Youth Day Dialogue. The consultation process reached all 56 Commonwealth member countries; the consolidated synthesis reviewed more than 99 contributions from over 50 countries across the five regions. Participants highlighted the need for clear routes from community participation to decision-making, visible responses to youth proposals, practical support to widen participation, and stronger pathways from digital learning to work. [S04, S05, S08, S25]

The document’s added contribution is to connect those priorities to proposed policy actions, indicative roles, progress measures and a participation-and-response standard. It complements the Commonwealth Charter, the Marlborough House Commitment for Youth Development and the Commonwealth Youth Programme Strategic Framework 2026–2030, endorsed by the Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Task Force in July 2026. It also aligns with the Commonwealth Strategic Plan, the 2030 Agenda, AU Agenda 2063 and relevant human-rights, climate, biodiversity, peace and digital frameworks. Each country can adapt the proposals through its own laws, institutions and youth policy. This is a policy advocacy agenda, not a negotiated or adopted Commonwealth position or CHOGM outcome. [S01, S02, S03a, S06, S09, S10, S12, S14, S18, S22, S24]

Cross-cutting standards

Across all five pillars, apply human rights and non-discrimination; gender equality and intersectional analysis; disability access and reasonable accommodation; climate justice and intergenerational equity; safe and meaningful youth leadership; and digital inclusion, privacy and accountability. Use ages 15–29 as a common programme reporting band where appropriate, while retaining national and regional definitions. State the source age range for every statistic about young people. Report ages 15–17 separately where child safeguarding applies, and report national youth age bands above 29 as an additional series. [S10, S11, S12, S16, S17]

The proposals are for all young people, with deliberate action to include and learn from rural and outer-island communities, young people with disabilities, young women, Indigenous peoples and minorities, migrants and displaced youth, young carers, informal workers, and those outside education, employment or training. Participation should be open on equal terms and should not depend on personal connections, ability to pay or political views. [S07, S12, S17]

Priorities for leaders and partners

Heads of Government

- Adopt a shared youth participation and response standard: define what is open to influence, how representatives are selected, how proposals will be considered and when institutions will respond. Give young people clear ways to describe what worked well and suggest improvements to future participation.
- Request a cross-government youth delivery plan within 12 months. Name a coordinating ministry, assign sector leads for each priority, preserve accountability with the institutions responsible for delivery, and set a small number of measurable national milestones.
- Require an annual public account of results and gaps, reviewed with young people and followed by a published response and corrective actions before the next CHOGM cycle.

Ministers of Youth and sector ministers

- Coordinate implementation through existing Commonwealth Youth Programme and national youth-policy arrangements. Convene relevant authorities—including labour, education, health, climate, digital, justice, child protection, peace and security, and local government—around a focused set of shared actions.
- Give youth bodies defined roles in policy and programme decisions across all five priority areas. Publish their mandates, selection methods, terms, access support and response records. Support National Youth Delegates in line with the CYC Constitution; involve them early in developing national positions and provide opportunities to engage relevant senior officials and ministerial meetings, including CHOGM and Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meetings where rules permit. State their role in advance and report how their proposals were considered.
- Use the common indicators as a starting set. Establish national baselines and targets within six months of approving a delivery plan, including measures of youth employment, NEET status and decent-work quality using nationally appropriate age bands.

Youth organisations, civil society and partners

- Youth organisations should help set priorities, identify the decisions they seek to influence, explain whom they represent, document proposals and take part in reviewing the response. Include groups facing access barriers and protect independent advocacy.
- Civil society, universities, youth-work associations and professional bodies should support evidence, services, practitioner development and independent evaluation. Employers and private-sector partners should provide decent-work pathways, fair market access and safe technology. Development partners should align technical support with country priorities and report on commitments they undertake.

Pillar 1 — Democratic Participation and Shared Power

Young people contribute lived experience, ideas and networks to public decisions, but participation does not always influence policy, services or implementation. The 2026 pre-Forum consultations and International Youth Day Dialogue highlighted a shared priority: institutions should explain how youth proposals were considered, what changed and why some proposals did not proceed. Meaningful participation depends on clear roles, timely responses and visible follow-up. [S04, S08]

Governments and public institutions should create sustained routes for youth participation, linking grassroots organisations and community forums with local and national decisions and appropriate Commonwealth platforms. Protect the rights to expression, association and peaceful assembly, including the right to disagree. Use civic technology alongside accessible in-person and offline routes, with privacy and safety protections. [S10, S17]

Policy actions

The actors below are indicative; each country should assign lead roles through its own institutional arrangements. Progress measures are suggested starting points to adapt to national baselines. This applies across all five pillars.

Priority and policy action	Indicative actors	Progress measure
Decision-making roles — Create ongoing youth roles in policy, programme and service decisions across the five pillars, from local planning to national institutions. Publish mandates, selection criteria, terms, representation and participation support. Provide voting or co-decision powers where permitted; otherwise require a public, reasoned response.	Relevant ministries, local government, legislatures and National Youth Councils or equivalent youth-led bodies, within their mandates..	Share of relevant bodies with published terms, inclusive selection and defined youth decision rights.
Response and accountability — Before consultation, state what can be influenced and when. Within 90 days, publish recommendations, how they were considered, what was accepted or changed, what was not taken forward and why, the decision owner and next step. Record effective practice as well as areas to improve.	All institutions that consult young people; youth ministries can coordinate a public register.	Share of consultations with a complete, timely public response; examples of influence and documented improvements.
Civic space and safe participation — Protect expression, association and peaceful assembly. Provide accessible complaint routes for threats, discrimination or retaliation. Review laws and administrative rules affecting independent youth participation and councils. Include non-partisan civic and electoral learning in formal and non-formal education.	Justice, elections, education and human-rights institutions; independent oversight bodies.	Participation barriers reviewed; complaints handled safely within published timeframes; remedies recorded.
Digital and offline civic access — Offer low-bandwidth, accessible digital participation alongside in-person and assisted options. Publish public information in accessible formats and languages, and protect participants' personal data.	Digital ministries, electoral bodies and local authorities.	User-tested access; participation through online and offline routes, disaggregated where safe.
Leadership pathways — Link community, school, local, national and Commonwealth opportunities. Provide mentoring and orientation, and help outgoing representatives transfer records and unfinished work to their successors. Give under-18s age-appropriate, safeguarded routes to leadership.	Youth ministries, youth networks, schools and community organisations.	Progression and retention across levels; representation of under-served groups; documented influence.
Youth work across all pillars — Recognise youth work as a practice that supports participation, learning, wellbeing and skills. Involve trained youth workers in relevant actions across all five pillars; where professional associations exist, engage them in practitioner development, safeguarding and practice standards.	Youth ministries, youth-work providers and professional associations where they exist.	Youth-work practitioners involved in relevant programme design or delivery; safeguarding and practitioner-development arrangements documented.

Pillar 2 — Economic Opportunity and Future Economies

Young people are ready to contribute to productive economies. They need paid, safe work and training linked to labour demand. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that the global youth unemployment rate for people aged 15–24 was 12.4 per cent in 2025, equivalent to 67 million unemployed young people. An estimated 257 million people aged 15–24 were not in employment, education or training (NEET). These are global figures, not Commonwealth totals. Informal work, care responsibilities, limited access to markets and finance, and mismatched education systems deepen the barriers. Licensing and certification costs, along with restricted access to equipment, can also limit entry into sectors such as mining, tourism, manufacturing and commercial agriculture. [S27, S64]

Policy should connect learning to paid work and enterprise, improve conditions for informal and platform workers, and open sustainable livelihoods in agrifood, green, blue and creative sectors. A 2026 ILO–World Bank review of 228 studies across 62 countries found that well-designed employment programmes can improve young people's employment and earnings, with results varying by programme design and participant group. [S23, S28, S29, S73]

Policy actions

Priority and policy action	Indicative actors	Progress measure
Decent-work pathways — Expand paid apprenticeships and work-based learning linked to labour demand. Provide recognised skills, qualified supervision, safe conditions, worker voice and a route to recruitment. Ensure placements follow national labour law and remuneration standards; do not count unpaid placements as decent employment.	Labour and education ministries; employers and worker organisations.	Completion and recognised skills; employment and retention at six and twelve months; pay, safety and worker-protection standards.
Youth enterprise growth — Simplify registration and business advice; improve access to buyers, public procurement and stage-appropriate finance. Use proportionate contract requirements, prompt payment and transparent selection. Where lawful, consider time-limited measures to open markets to youth-led firms and evaluate their results.	Enterprise, finance and local-government agencies; business associations.	Survival, revenue and market access among supported youth-owned enterprises at 12 and 24 months.
Green jobs and future skills — Link training to local plans for renewable energy, building efficiency, adaptation, transport and circular production. Anticipate job changes and support workers through transition. Prepare young people for technical, supplier and enterprise roles in low-carbon value chains.	Labour, energy, industry and education ministries; employers and unions.	Training linked to verified vacancies or contracts; paid employment at six and twelve months; wages and safety.
Creative and cultural livelihoods — Protect fair contracts, intellectual property, creator rights and access to distribution. Recognise cultural and creative production, including sport, as work and track earnings as well as participation.	Culture and trade ministries; collecting societies, platforms and sport bodies.	Share of supported creators with written terms and paid work; earnings and market access.
Agrifood and blue economies — Connect young producers to land and resource rights, extension, storage, processing, transport, buyers and climate services. Support sustainable fisheries and food systems while protecting ecosystems and worker safety.	Agriculture, fisheries, trade and local authorities; producer organisations.	Enterprise productivity and income; access to buyers and services; resource safeguards.
Finance, mobility and worker protection — Match finance and business advice to enterprise stage, with clear eligibility, suitable collateral and repayment terms. Support ethical recruitment and recognition of skills for young people who move. Extend suitable social protection and dispute routes to informal and platform workers.	Finance and labour ministries; regulators, lenders and worker organisations.	Finance and market access by enterprise stage; recruitment complaints remedied; protection and dispute routes available.

Pillar 3 — Climate Resilience and Sustainable Futures

Climate impacts affect food, water, health, education, housing and livelihoods. Young people already lead community climate action and should be partners in shaping decisions and designing local responses. Governments, communities, civil society and businesses each have roles: public authorities and major economic actors remain accountable for emissions reduction, adaptation, resilient public services and support under agreed loss-and-damage arrangements. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that developing countries will need US$310–365 billion a year for adaptation in 2035, depending on the estimation method; these global estimates use 2023 values and are not a Commonwealth allocation. [S14, S15, S30]

Use existing climate processes without conflating their roles: Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) set out national climate commitments; National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) guide adaptation planning; and Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) report progress and support under the Paris Agreement transparency framework. None alone shows that a proposed action is funded or being delivered. Climate resilience also requires disaster-risk reduction, food systems, biodiversity, oceans, affordable energy and attention to loss and damage. [S31, S32, S33, S34, S62]

Policy actions

Priority and policy action	Indicative actors	Progress measure
Climate decisions and justice — Include youth representatives in NDC and NAP implementation and adaptation planning. Publish how youth proposals were considered and assess effects by age, sex or gender, disability, income and location. Integrate climate education into schools and non-formal youth work.	Climate and planning ministries; local government.	Relevant bodies with youth roles; proposals receiving reasoned responses; distributional assessments published.
Local adaptation and disaster readiness — Translate climate and disaster risks into maintained, tested early-warning, heat, flood, drought, water and service-continuity plans. Include small islands, outer islands, remote communities and people with disabilities.	Disaster agencies, local authorities, meteorological services and utilities.	At-risk communities covered by tested accessible warnings and continuity plans; service disruption tracked after hazards.
Food, land and biodiversity —Support climate-resilient farming, fisheries and food processing; draw on Indigenous and local knowledge; secure tenure and resource rights; and assess biodiversity and displacement risks before nature-based interventions. Give particular attention to mountain and upland communities by supporting youth participation in watershed management, climate-resilient agriculture and pastoralism, and ecosystem restoration.	Agriculture, fisheries, land and environment authorities; producer and Indigenous organisations.	Livelihood and ecosystem measures set before action; rights and consent safeguards checked; local benefits reported.
Blue and green livelihoods — Develop sustainable coastal, marine, tourism, restoration and circular-economy work with skills, safety and ecological limits. Apply relevant ocean and biodiversity commitments.	Blue-economy, tourism, environment and labour authorities.	Paid youth work created and retained; ecosystem condition and distribution of benefits reviewed.
Clean energy and just transition — Expand reliable, affordable clean energy and link investment to accredited training, local employment and protections for workers and communities affected by the transition.	Energy and industry ministries; utilities and worker organisations.	Energy access, reliability and affordability tracked alongside job quality and transition support.
Climate finance and loss and damage — Improve access to existing climate-finance mechanisms for youth-led and locally led priorities through clear eligibility, accessible information, project-preparation support, proportionate safeguards and timely decisions. Track how support reaches implementation. Meet agreed climate-finance commitments, prioritising grant-based adaptation and loss-and-damage support for small and vulnerable states.	Climate-finance focal points, national designated authorities and eligible entities.	Youth and community priorities tracked through proposals; decisions, timelines and support reaching implementation reported.

Pillar 4 — Wellbeing, Equity and Social Inclusion

Wellbeing enables young people to learn, work and participate. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that one in seven adolescents aged 10–19 experiences a mental disorder; this is a global statistic for a different age band from the common youth-policy reporting band. Mental health is connected to education, violence, sexual and reproductive health, disability access, housing and livelihoods. Services should protect confidentiality and connect early support with qualified care. [S40, S41, S76]

Access to education, health services, safety and social protection varies with gender, disability, income, care responsibilities, conflict, displacement and location. Women and girls face gender-based violence, unpaid care and discrimination; young people with disabilities often encounter inaccessible services. Housing insecurity can also delay independence and increase exposure to harm. Young people should be recognised as partners in peace and security, in line with the Youth, Peace and Security agenda. Inclusion calls for accessible systems and safeguarded participation across public services. [S11, S12, S42, S43, S44, S45]

Policy actions

Priority and policy action	Indicative actors	Progress measure
Mental health and psychosocial support — Integrate youth-friendly information, early support, referral and professional care through primary health, schools and community settings. Peer support should include training, supervision and clear limits. Include crisis and post-disaster support. Include evidence-based suicide and self-harm prevention, with confidential referral pathways and locally accessible crisis support.	Health and education ministries; qualified providers and community services.	Waiting times, referral completion, service quality and access by age, sex or gender, location and disability.
Gender equality and sexual and reproductive health — Provide accurate, confidential information and services consistent with human-rights obligations and applicable national law. Prevent and respond to gender-based violence, including technology-facilitated abuse, and support pregnant and parenting learners to continue education.	Health, education, gender and justice institutions; survivor organisations.	Service and referral access; response to reported violence; school continuation for pregnant and parenting learners.
Disability inclusion — Apply universal design, reasonable accommodation and accessible communication—including sign languages and braille—in public services, learning, work and civic participation. Test access with young people with diverse disabilities.	All ministries and public-service providers; disability organisations.	Programmes passing user-led accessibility review; accommodation requests met; barriers remedied.
Education equity and lifelong learning — Track attendance, learning, completion and transitions separately. Provide second-chance, technical and lifelong learning routes with recognised learning and links to work. Offer flexible re-entry for learners whose education was interrupted by cost, care or displacement.	Education and labour ministries; schools, colleges and employers.	Learning, completion and transition outcomes; access to second-chance learning; differences by sex, disability and location.
Safety, safeguarding and protection — Require risk assessment, trained staff, codes of conduct, confidential complaints, referral and response procedures in youth programmes and youth-facing online services. Maintain referral links to appropriate housing and social-protection services for participants who need them.	Youth and sector ministries; child-protection and safeguarding authorities.	Programmes meeting safeguarding standards; complaints handled safely and on time; corrective actions completed.
Peacebuilding and social cohesion — Support youth-led dialogue, community problem-solving and meaningful participation in peace and security processes. Do not make participation conditional on sharing sensitive information with security agencies. Use sport as an inclusive route to cohesion and wellbeing, with safeguards.	Peace, justice and local-government institutions; trusted community networks.	Youth roles in peace and security processes and local dialogue; proposals receiving a response; participant-reported safety where safe to collect.

Pillar 5 — Digital Futures, Innovation and Skills

Digital access shapes learning, work, public information and services. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) estimated that 2.2 billion people of all ages remained offline worldwide in 2025. This global estimate does not measure affordability, accessibility or quality of use. Young people face unequal access to devices and skills, online abuse, cybersecurity risks and artificial intelligence (AI) systems that can reproduce bias or deny services without a clear remedy. [S46, S47]

Policy should combine connectivity with education, innovation, public-service accountability and rights safeguards. Digital systems should widen access without making essential services digital-only. Assess AI according to its use and likely impact, with stronger review when decisions affect education, work, health, benefits or safety. Apply age-appropriate safeguards for children and young people. [S18, S19, S20, S21, S48, S75]

Policy actions

Priority and policy action	Indicative actors	Progress measure
Meaningful connectivity — Improve reliable and affordable broadband, electricity, devices and accessible formats. Maintain assisted and offline routes for essential services, including in rural and outer-island communities.	Digital and infrastructure ministries; regulators and service providers.	Access, cost, reliability, device availability and completion of essential tasks, disaggregated where safe.
Digital and future skills — Embed foundational digital, media, civic and AI literacy in school, technical and lifelong learning. Train teachers and connect advanced skills to employers and public needs.	Education and labour ministries; colleges, employers and youth organisations.	Task-based skills assessment; course-to-work transition; participation by girls and under-served groups.
Safe and accountable AI — Before public high-impact AI is used, document its purpose, legal basis, affected groups, data, risks and human oversight. Provide accessible explanations, appeal and correction. Apply child-specific safeguards.	Digital regulators and procuring ministries; data-protection and human-rights authorities.	High-impact systems assessed before use; independent review; appeals accessible and errors corrected.
Innovation, STEM and enterprise — Link schools, universities, technical colleges, start-ups and public procurement to local problems. Support girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), protect intellectual-property rights and provide paid work experience.	Education, enterprise and procurement authorities; universities and businesses.	Youth-led solutions tested with intended users; paid STEM placements; customer growth and 12-month enterprise survival.
Responsible digital services and wellbeing — Co-design accessible services with young people and assess effects on safety and wellbeing, including online abuse, harmful content, exploitation and age-specific risks. Provide clear reporting and support routes, protect personal data and freedom of expression, and require cybersecurity review and incident response. Apply AI safeguards to AI-enabled services. Plan for repair, reuse and safe disposal of equipment. Make platform reporting and support options easy to find, accessible to users with disabilities and available in relevant local languages. Connect users to qualified local support where appropriate, while protecting privacy.	Digital agencies, cybersecurity and data-protection authorities, sector ministries and local government.	Accessibility and wellbeing risks assessed; security and privacy issues addressed; support routes available; repair, reuse and e-waste tracked.

Implementation, partnerships and accountability

Implementation is a shared effort among young people, governments, civil society, educators, employers and development partners. Build on existing ministries, statutory bodies and Commonwealth Youth Programme structures; create a new mechanism only where national review identifies a clear gap. Youth ministries can coordinate, while sector institutions remain accountable for public decisions, services and legal responsibilities. Each participating actor should state its commitments, report progress within its role and respond to youth-led review.

Partner	Shared responsibility
Heads of Government and Cabinet	Set political direction, name a cross-government coordinator and require annual public reporting, youth review and follow-up.
Ministries of Youth	Coordinate national plans and participation standards; maintain accessible records of youth proposals and institutional responses.
Sector ministries and local government	Deliver policy and services in their areas; publish progress, data, response deadlines and corrective action.
Youth networks and civil society	Co-design and contribute through inclusive processes; independently track decisions, share evidence and report exclusion or harm.
Educators, youth workers and professional bodies	Connect learning, wellbeing and participation to practice; support practitioner development, safeguarding and standards where associations exist.
Employers and private sector	Provide safe paid work and fair market access; meet labour, privacy, accessibility and cybersecurity standards; report on commitments undertaken.
Development and multilateral partners	Align support with country priorities, coordinate with national systems and share progress on agreed commitments.
Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Youth Programme	Support policy coherence, peer learning and regional cooperation within existing mandates; complement, not replace, national accountability.

Three steps for national delivery

Timing	Required step	Public output
First six months	Map existing policies, youth mechanisms, services and available data with young people and affected groups. Set baselines and identify gaps and access barriers.	Published baseline, participation terms, gaps and designated institutions.
Within twelve months	Approve a focused plan with three to five country priorities, named sector leads, milestones, safeguards and indicators.	National action plan and accessible youth-response register.
Every year through 2030	Public institutions and participating partners report on their roles and commitments. Invite youth-led review, publish a response, and adjust actions as results or context change.	Public progress account, youth evaluation, partner updates and corrective actions.

Common indicators

Set national targets after establishing baselines. Report the common programme age band (15–29) alongside source-specific ranges, including ages 15–24 for international labour-market estimates. Disaggregate by sex or gender, disability, location and other relevant factors where safe, lawful and statistically reliable. Publish definitions, geography, reporting period, numerator, denominator and missing data. These are proposed measures, not Commonwealth obligations.

ID	Measure	Definition	Suggested reporting actor and frequency
A1	Shared accountability	Share of participating institutions and partners with a published role or commitment, annual progress update and response to youth-led review.	Cross-sector coordinator and participating partners; annual.
D1	Youth decision roles	Share of designated youth-policy bodies with published mandates, transparent selection and defined youth decision rights.	Youth ministry and relevant institutions; annual.
D2	Institutional response	Share of youth consultations receiving a public, reasoned response within 90 days.	Consulting institutions; annual.
D3	Documented influence	Share of tracked policy or service decisions that record whether and how youth proposals influenced the outcome, including reasons when not adopted.	Decision owners and youth evaluators; annual.
E1	Youth labour status	Unemployment and NEET rates with the source age range stated; include international ages 15–24 and national youth series where available.	Statistical office and labour ministry; annual.
E2	Decent-work transition	Share of programme entrants in paid work or viable self-employment at six and twelve months, with hours, safety and protection recorded.	Labour ministry and evaluator; annual.
E3	Enterprise progression	Survival, earnings and market access of youth-owned enterprises at 12 and 24 months, by sector and location.	Enterprise agency or statistical office; annual.
C1	Climate decision influence	Share of relevant NDC, NAP or adaptation bodies with youth roles and published responses to youth proposals.	Climate ministry; annual.
C2	Resilience and continuity	Share of supported local plans with a risk baseline, maintenance arrangements, accessible warnings and service-continuity measures.	Disaster and local authorities; annual and after major events.
C3	Climate livelihood outcomes	Changes in livelihood security, ecosystem condition or essential-service disruption, measured against locally appropriate baselines.	Climate and sector agencies; annual.
W1	Mental-health access	Waiting time and referral completion for youth mental-health support, with confidential records protected.	Health ministry; annual.
W2	Education progression	Attendance, completion and transition to further learning or work, including second-chance pathways.	Education ministry and statistical office; annual.
W3	Accessible and safe services	Share of youth-facing programmes passing accessibility and safeguarding review; complaints resolved safely and on time.	Service owners and independent reviewers; annual.
T1	Effective digital access	Affordability, reliability, accessible device access and successful completion of essential digital tasks.	Regulator or statistical office; annual.
T2	Demonstrated digital skills	Share of participants meeting task-based digital, media or AI-literacy benchmarks linked to further learning or work.	Education and labour authorities; annual.
T3	AI accountability	Share of high-impact public AI systems with prior assessment, human review, accessible appeal and documented correction.	Digital or data-protection regulators; annual.

Youth-led evaluation

Youth evaluators should be able to follow selected decisions from consultation through implementation, check whether people facing access barriers could take part, and publish findings in accessible formats. Provide safeguarding, independent supervision and a complaint route. Institutions and partners should publish a response to findings, including changes made

or reasons for no change. Protect personal data and avoid comparisons between countries where definitions or conditions differ.

Model youth participation and response standard

Institutions and partners using this proposed standard should apply it when young people are asked to inform a policy, law, service or programme decision. Use existing rules where possible and publish the response record.

Before engagement	During engagement	After engagement
State the decision, legal authority, decision owner, timetable and what is open to influence. Explain selection and how under-served groups can take part.	Provide accessible materials, interpretation, online and offline options, reasonable accommodation, safety support and clear rules on consent and personal data.	Within 90 days, publish proposals received, how they were considered, what was adopted or not and why, the decision owner and next step. Invite feedback on what worked and what should improve; update the record as delivery progresses.

Minimum public response record

Decision or consultation	Youth recommendation	Institutional response	Next step and date
Name the policy, service or decision and identify what was open to influence.	Summarise the proposal and participating groups without exposing personal data.	Accepted, partly accepted, deferred or not accepted; explain why and name the decision owner.	State the action, milestone and date; publish an update when delivery is complete or changes.

Method and evidence

This agenda was prepared through a targeted review of youth consultation summaries and submissions, Commonwealth and international frameworks, official statistics and relevant research. The review identified recurring priorities and developed proposed actions and progress measures. The pre-Forum process reached all 56 Commonwealth member countries; the consolidated synthesis reviewed more than 99 contributions from over 50 countries across five regions. These materials provide qualitative evidence of issues and proposals raised, not a statistically representative survey or estimates of how common a view is among young people. [S04, S07, S08]

The consultation materials were reviewed thematically. A separate working file contains 488 entries with inconsistent country and regional labels; it was not used to calculate unique-participant counts or country-by-country comparisons. The materials include input from the Commonwealth Children and Youth Disability Network; subgroup representation is described only where the records support it, and no single submission is treated as speaking for an entire group. Participants proposed mechanisms such as youth participation pathways, public responses to proposals, practical access support and digital learning-to-work routes. These are youth-raised policy options, not independently evaluated programme case studies. The evidence cut-off is 2 October 2026. Statistics retain their source age range, geography and reference year; global figures are not Commonwealth estimates. Country laws and policies should be checked in national context. Recommendations and indicators are proposals for advocacy and adaptation, not adopted Commonwealth obligations. [S04, S07, S08]

Linked references

Commonwealth commitments and youth participation

S01 Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Charter (2013).

S02 Commonwealth Secretariat, Strategic Plan 2025–2030.

S03a Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Task Force, Commonwealth Youth Programme Strategic Framework 2026–2030 and outcome document (2026).

S04 Commonwealth Youth Policy and Advocacy Group, 2026 pre-Forum consultation summary and engagement records; supplied internal material.

S05 Commonwealth Youth Forum, 13th Commonwealth Youth Forum Declaration, "Navigating Our Course: Building Resilience for a Common Future" (2024).

S06 Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House Commitment for Youth Development and 10th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (2023).

S07 Commonwealth Children and Youth Disability Network, Pre-consultation response for CHOGM 2026; supplied internal material.

S08 Commonwealth Youth Programme, Thematic synthesis and International Youth Day Dialogue outcomes, 12 August 2026; supplied internal material.

S25 Commonwealth Youth Council, Windhoek Declaration, First Commonwealth Youth Consultative Dialogue Outcome Statement (2025).

Rights and global frameworks

S09 African Union, Agenda 2063. African Youth Charter.

S10 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

S11 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

S12 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

S14 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Paris Agreement.

S15 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, AR6 Synthesis Report (2023).

S16 United Nations, Pact for the Future and Declaration on Future Generations (2024).

S17 United Nations Secretary-General, Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 3: Meaningful Youth Engagement in Policymaking and Decision-making Processes (2023).

S18 United Nations, Global Digital Compact (2024).

S19 UNESCO, Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021).

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