

The Commonwealth and Climate Change

September 2026



The Commonwealth



Message from the Secretary-General

This year, the world endured its hottest June-to-August period on record. I watched the lawns of Marlborough House turn brown outside my office window as London waited weeks for a drop of rain. An El Niño is gathering force in the Pacific, with the potential to bring drought to some Commonwealth countries and intense rainfall to others.

Climate change and extreme weather events take different forms in different lands, but none of us is beyond their reach. In many of the small and vulnerable states within our family of nations, their consequences are felt in the daily lives of ordinary people. Progress built painstakingly over years can be set back by a single climate shock.

Helping member states strengthen their climate resilience is a central mission of the Commonwealth. Without that resilience, the foundations of our societies are at risk.

Image: ©FisherStudios/S. Allard

Tackling this grave threat also presents a unique opportunity to secure a more prosperous future. Climate action creates jobs and attracts the investment that can drive sustainable growth. Climate resilience and economic prosperity go hand in hand.

I saw that earlier this year at Nyandungu Eco-Park in Kigali. Rwanda has transformed a degraded urban wetland into restored habitats and recreational spaces. Rehabilitated streams and ponds reduce the risk of flooding, and reed beds help control pollution. The project has also created thousands of new green jobs. It was inspiring to see how climate action can make a city more resilient while creating economic opportunity for its people.

Across our 56 countries, there is no shortage of creative responses to the climate challenges communities face. Too often, the biggest obstacle is access to the finance needed to get good ideas off the ground.

That is where the Commonwealth is making a practical difference. Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub advisers are working alongside member governments to help develop investable projects and secure the finance they need. The Hub has already helped mobilise almost US$645 million across 131 projects, like Fiji's US$5.7 million Nature-Based Seawalls Project, which is strengthening resilience to sea-level rise, coastal erosion and storm surges. The Hub shows what is possible when member countries set the priorities and the Commonwealth draws on its relationships to support them.

As the climate threat intensifies, we must scale up our response, mobilising private investment alongside public and development finance. Our test should always be whether that co-operation turns commitments into real solutions that build resilience and create opportunity for communities.

In the pages that follow, you will see what this approach means in practice. Our commitment as a Commonwealth is to be an ever more effective partner, helping every member build the resilience on which lasting prosperity depends..

The Hon. Shirley Botchwey
Secretary-General of the Commonwealth



The Commonwealth and Climate Change

The Commonwealth has a long history of commitment to addressing climate change and supporting member countries in dealing with its adverse impacts. Collective political will to protect the planet for future generations has been explicit and robust, ever since the Langkawi Declaration on the Environment of 1989, when Commonwealth leaders resolved to act both individually and collectively on a programme of action on the environment and climate change.

In 2015, just before the UN Climate Conference in Paris (COP21) Commonwealth heads of government made a commitment to limit global temperature rise

below 2°C, while aiming for 1.5°C from pre-industrial levels. This undertaking was reaffirmed at COP21 and captured in the global agreement known as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

At the 2022 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), leaders reiterated their call for urgent action to mitigate climate change, reduce vulnerability and increase resilience, including enhanced participation of young people in climate action. This call was echoed at the 2024 CHOGM in Apia, where Heads reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the Commonwealth's climate change efforts through a series of declarations and established programmes.



Real problems, real solutions

The Commonwealth supports member countries through practical programmes spanning climate finance, nationally determined contributions, land and biodiversity, geospatial information, climate health, youth and gender, energy transition, climate law, ocean governance and human rights. This work combines policy support, technical assistance, capacity building, knowledge exchange and partnerships to help countries translate climate commitments into practical action. Particular attention is given to Small Island Developing States, least developed countries and other small and vulnerable Commonwealth countries.

Contact Uzoamaka Nwamarah, Head and Adviser, Climate Change (climatechange@commonwealth.int) for more information.



Small States and Climate Vulnerability

Small states – many of them island nations – are on the frontlines of climate change, facing rising sea levels, extreme weather and economic instability. Thirty-three of the Commonwealth's 56 member countries fall into this category, and their vulnerability is compounded by limited access to climate finance and development aid. Recognising this, the Commonwealth has launched a suite of initiatives aimed at strengthening resilience and unlocking support for these nations.

Complementing the work of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH; see below), the Disaster Risk Finance Portal is a digital tool designed to simplify access to disaster-related funding and help governments better manage climate risks.

The Commonwealth has invested in data-driven planning through platforms such as CommonSensing that use satellite technology to support climate resilience strategies, particularly for small states such as Fiji and Vanuatu. This work is being furthered in partnership with the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) in order to utilise technologies like remote sensing, satellite imagery, earth observation systems and geospatial data to transform the way we manage natural resources, respond to disasters and plan for a more resilient future.

The Secretariat has also pioneered sustainable finance models through Commonwealth Meridian for Practical and Strategic Support (COMPASS), which enables small states to attract non-debt investment without compromising sovereignty. Meanwhile, the Apia Commonwealth Ocean Declaration, adopted at CHOGM 2024, commits all member states to protect 30 per cent of ocean areas by 2030 and safeguard maritime boundaries against rising seas which pose existential threats to SIDS.

To ensure long-term impact, the Commonwealth continues to advocate for use of the Universal Vulnerability Index (UVI), a standardised measure that captures climate-related economic fragility as well as other vulnerabilities, as a means of supporting small states with access to timely and affordable finance by bilateral and multilateral development partners. This, along with the joint UN–Commonwealth Small States Advocacy Strategy and its Programme of Action (2024–2026), forms a comprehensive advocacy and technical assistance framework to help small states not just survive but thrive in the face of climate change.

Efforts have also been made to go beyond advocacy: the Commonwealth has supported small states to implement their economic policies by promoting domestic resource mobilisation through regenerative tourism and circular economies. The goal is to build the capacity of small states to sustainably address their climate-related vulnerabilities.



Contact Dr Thomas Munthali, Adviser and Head, Economic Policy and Small States. (t.munthali@commonwealth.int) for more information.

Unlocking Climate Finance

Climate change is hitting Commonwealth countries hard – rising sea levels, extreme weather and land degradation threaten lives and livelihoods. Despite billions pledged globally, accessing climate finance remains a major challenge, especially for small and vulnerable states.

The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH), launched in 2015 and headquartered in Mauritius, helps countries overcome these barriers. By embedding Commonwealth, National, Regional, and Thematic Climate Finance Advisers in government ministries and institutions, CCFAH builds long-term capacity to develop bankable projects, strengthen policies, and improve readiness for climate finance.

Using a hub-and-spokes model, CCFAH has supported 25 countries and expanded its reach across Africa, the Asia-Pacific and the Caribbean. Advisers with expertise in gender, health and climate finance enhance support for country-specific priorities, while a dedicated knowledge officer ensures effective sharing of tools and insights.

As of August 2026, CCFAH has helped secure US$644.69 million in climate finance and trained more than 4,154 officials through over 191 capacity building initiatives. Its practical 'writeshops' guide participants from concept to proposal, addressing common challenges like limited technical capacity and data gaps.

Beyond technical skills, CCFAH fosters collaboration across sectors, ensuring that proposals reflect diverse expertise.

Key resources like the *Toolkit to Enhance Access to Climate Finance* and the Commonwealth Climate Finance Essentials e-course distil key lessons from CCFAH's work. Specialised training in climate negotiations further equips member states to engage effectively in global climate finance discussions.

As demand for climate finance grows, CCFAH remains a vital partner in turning climate ambition into action.

Strengthening Climate Finance Partnerships

The Commonwealth continues to strengthen strategic partnerships to mobilise climate finance, build

technical capacity and support climate action across member countries. In partnership with Azerbaijan's COP29 Presidency, the Commonwealth established the COP29 Presidency–Commonwealth Fund for Small Island Developing States, offering grants of up to US$200,000 per project to support climate resilience, ocean conservation and sustainable energy. The Secretariat is also expanding collaboration with multilateral climate funds, development finance institutions, the private sector and technical partners to improve access to climate finance and support climate-resilient development.

Contact: Uzoamaka Nwamarah, Head and Adviser, Climate Change (climatechange@commonwealth.int) for more information.

See thecommonwealth.org/CCFAH

Deployment of CCFAH Advisers

Africa	Indo-Pacific	Caribbean	Thematic (global)
Eswatini	**Maldives**	Antigua and Barbuda	**Gender**
The Gambia	Fiji	Barbados	**Health**
Lesotho	**Kiribati**	*Belize*	**Information and Knowledge Management (officer)**
Mauritius (Central Hub)	Nauru	**Dominica**	
Mozambique	Solomon Islands	**Grenada**	
Namibia	**Sri Lanka**	Guyana	
Seychelles	Tonga	Jamaica	
Uganda	Tuvalu	Saint Lucia	
Zambia	Vanuatu		
Regional Technical Assistance: CRCFA, Africa	**Regional Technical Assistance: CRCFA, Indo-Pacific**	**Regional Technical Assistance: CRCFA, Caribbean**	

Note: countries and regions in bold have an active Commonwealth National or Regional Climate Finance Adviser in place; italics indicate that one is being recruited; in those not in bold or italics, Advisers have completed their tenures. Thematic advisers work across geographies to support national advisers to ensure that gender and health are integrated in proposals for climate finance. CRCFAs are Commonwealth Regional Climate Finance Advisers.



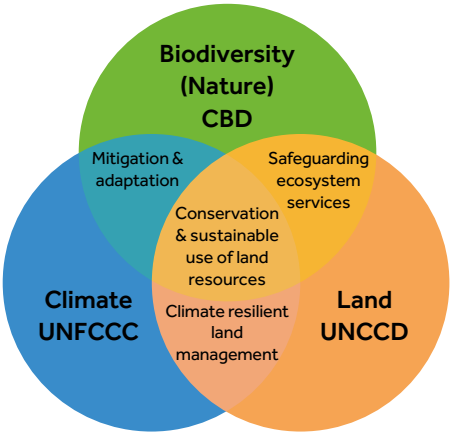
The Commonwealth Living Lands Charter

The Commonwealth Living Lands Charter, adopted by Commonwealth leaders in June 2022, aims to support nations to tackle critical, interconnected land issues: biodiversity loss, climate change and land degradation.

The world's land resources require a unified, global response to this triple threat. That's why all 56 Commonwealth member countries have united under the Commonwealth Living Lands Charter to protect our shared planet for generations to come.

It takes a harmonised approach to fulfilling the goals of the three 'Rio Conventions' (UNFCCC, CBD, and UNCCD), agreed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, which address interdependent issues within the same ecosystems.

The 2019 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land emphasised the urgent need



for countries to implement their commitments together, thereby unlocking powerful co-benefits that help us achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and uphold the 16 principles of the Commonwealth Charter.

The Charter's work is focused on six key thematic areas:

- climate resilient agriculture: ensuring food security
- soil and water: conservation and management
- sustainable green cover: protecting biodiversity
- carbon-neutral livestock: promoting climate-friendly practices
- indigenous and local peoples: supporting resilient development
- climate and health: addressing the nexus of these two crucial issues.

It is also integrating cross-cutting themes including justice and equity, gender, youth entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence, data and innovation.

Through working groups led by member countries, the Commonwealth Secretariat is implementing the Living Lands Charter with:

- evidence-based analysis and policy influence
- financing for implementation
- technical assistance and capacity building
- knowledge sharing and management.



Contact Mxolisi Sibanda, Adviser, Climate Change (livinglands@commonwealth.int) for more information



Unlocking Legal Pathways for Climate Action

As the International Court of Justice (ICJ) recently affirmed, climate justice is not a matter of charity – it is a legal obligation. Countries must not only halt harmful practices but also deliver reparations for past climate harm, including restoring ecosystems, rebuilding infrastructure and compensating for loss and damage.

To meet these obligations and effectively implement the Paris Agreement, countries need robust legal frameworks. The *Law and Climate Change Toolkit*, developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change provides a global resource to support this effort.

The Toolkit helps governments, legal practitioners and researchers design, assess and strengthen climate laws aligned with their nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

It includes:

- a legislation explorer – a searchable database of climate laws worldwide
- a legal assessment module, to identify legislative gaps and recommend best practices
- lessons learned and case studies, to guide effective law-making across contexts.

Hosted on UNEP's Law and Environment Assistance Platform (LEAP), the *Toolkit* is part of a broader ecosystem of environmental legal resources. This integration enhances usability, ensures regular updates and supports cross-referencing with other toolkits on biodiversity, governance and pollution.



The ICJ's advisory opinion underscores the urgency of legal preparedness: states have binding obligations to prevent climate harm, protect human rights and co-operate internationally, even if they are not party to specific treaties. The *Toolkit* equips countries to meet these obligations and translate climate ambition into enforceable action.

Contact climatechange@commonwealth.int for more information.



Commonwealth NDC Programme

The Commonwealth NDC Programme supports member countries to advance their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), or national climate plans, by turning climate commitments into implementable and investable action. The Programme helps countries translate NDC priorities into investment strategies and accelerate implementation towards climate-resilient, low-carbon, gender-responsive and youth-inclusive development.

Alongside thematic knowledge products, the Programme builds partnerships and fosters synergies to strengthen member countries' NDC implementation.

As an institutional and implementing member of the NDC Partnership, the Commonwealth Secretariat provides targeted support through initiatives such as the Climate Action Enhancement Package and the Partnership Action Fund. Results include the following.

- Antigua and Barbuda: feasibility study of a gender-responsive blended financing window under the Sustainable Island Resource Framework Fund.
- Eswatini: climate public expenditure and institutional review; strategy to enhance private sector engagement in NDC actions.

- Grenada: resource mobilisation strategy for NDC implementation plan (2023–2030).
- Jamaica: socio-economic and financial assessment of climate change impacts.
- Zambia: climate finance mapping and monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of climate finance.
- Maldives: development of an adaptation investment pipeline.

The Secretariat also contributes technical expertise on climate finance to global NDC conferences and youth engagement forums convened by the Partnership.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is an active member of the Africa NDC Hub, a collaborative platform



supporting African countries to deliver their NDC commitments, with particular focus on adaptation and private sector engagement.

Enhanced Transparency Framework

The Secretariat is currently working with the Hub to strengthen member countries' capacity to implement the UNFCCC Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). Transparency is central to building trust and accountability under the Paris Agreement. Article 13 established the ETF, which requires all countries to submit biennial transparency reports (BTRs) from 2024 onwards.

The Commonwealth Secretariat supports member countries to meet these requirements by:

- providing technical assistance on the preparation and review of BTRs
- supporting national systems for MRV of climate finance flows
- training and nominating Commonwealth experts to serve as UNFCCC technical reviewers.

Advancing Climate Transparency

Commonwealth BTR Review
Launched in May 2026, the review analysed Commonwealth countries' first Biennial Transparency Reports, highlighting progress, common challenges and areas where further support is needed. The findings are helping inform targeted capacity building and collaboration for future reporting cycles.

Regional Centralised BTR Review
The Commonwealth Secretariat was invited by the UNFCCC to support the first Regional Centralised BTR Review for African LDCs in Kigali, strengthening reviewer capacity, regional learning and preparedness for future BTR cycles.

SADC Regional Transparency Hub
Launched in Eswatini in May 2026, the Hub provides a regional platform for Enhanced Transparency Framework implementation, supporting greenhouse gas inventories, NDC tracking, adaptation reporting, climate finance transparency and peer learning.

The Commonwealth NDC Webinar Series

The Commonwealth NDC Programme's ongoing webinar series to share knowledge, showcase innovation and facilitate peer learning on NDC financing and implementation. Discussions focus on practical experiences, lessons

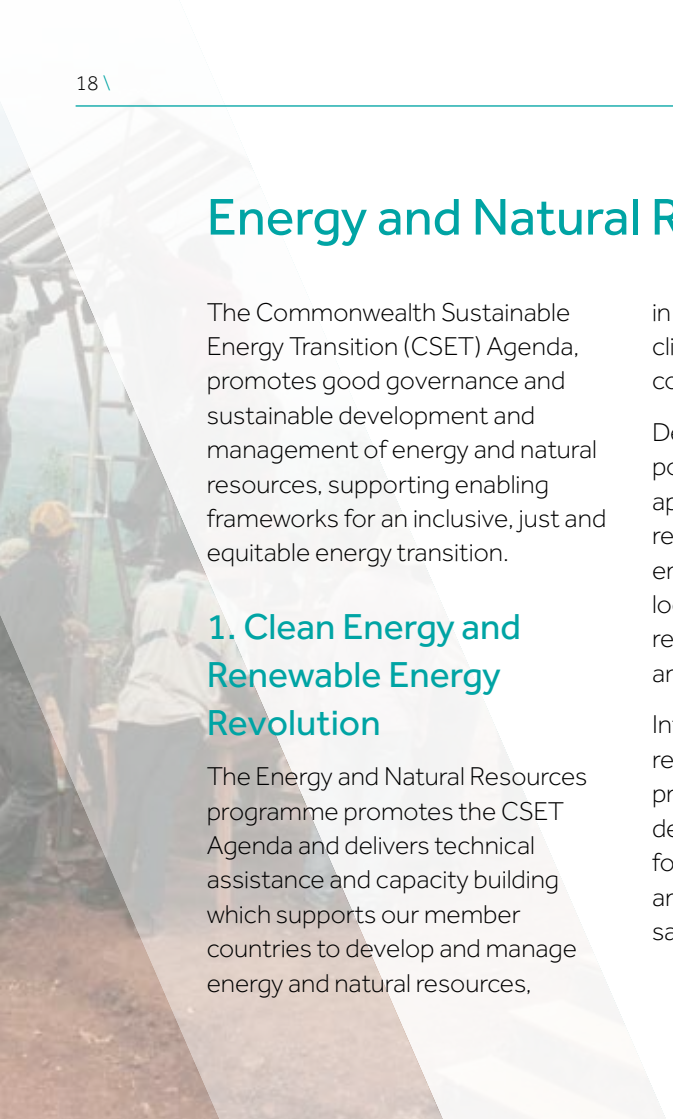


learned, and inclusive approaches to climate finance. Past sessions have included:

- Africa–Caribbean Knowledge Exchange and Learning: Financing Mechanisms for NDCs in SIDS and LDCs (October 2025)
- Accelerating Inclusive Gender-Responsive Climate Finance: The Role of National Climate Funds (March 2024)
- Resource Mobilisation for NDC Implementation: Experiences from Commonwealth Countries (May 2023)
- Developing Climate Financing Frameworks for Public-Private Alignment (April 2022)
- Integrating Gender Equality into NDC Implementation (International Women's Day, March 2022)
- Climate Finance: From Landscape to Strategy Implementation (February 2022).

Contact Uzoamaka Nwamarah, Head and Adviser, Climate Change (climatechange@commonwealth.int) for more information.

See thecommonwealth.org/ndc-webinars



Energy and Natural Resources

The Commonwealth Sustainable Energy Transition (CSET) Agenda, promotes good governance and sustainable development and management of energy and natural resources, supporting enabling frameworks for an inclusive, just and equitable energy transition.

1. Clean Energy and Renewable Energy Revolution

The Energy and Natural Resources programme promotes the CSET Agenda and delivers technical assistance and capacity building which supports our member countries to develop and manage energy and natural resources, in alignment with national climate goals and international commitments.

Design and reform of appropriate policies and legislation: establishes appropriate fiscal instruments and revenue mechanisms; enables energy system investment and local content; and promotes climate resilient infrastructure deployment and environmental resilience.

Inter-related are mining sector reforms, that enable sustainable production and beneficiation, develop critical minerals required for renewable energy technologies and entrench environmental safeguards.

Knowledge products include: *UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM): Implications and Strategies for Commonwealth Countries; Commonwealth Model Mining Feasibility Study Guidelines; Understanding Mining Feasibility Studies.*

2. Emission Governance and Decarbonisation

Resource extraction is responsible for half of the world's carbon emissions, and collective efforts are necessary to mitigate this impact. In parallel with the transition to increase the deployment of more renewable sources in the production of energy, clean energy requires emission governance and an acceleration of decarbonisation efforts. In particular, for small island developing states to achieve

climate goals, decarbonisation of the transportation sector and power sector is critical.

To achieve effective governance and minimise the environmental and economic impacts of hydrocarbon operations, the Commonwealth support governments with development of effective strategies for decommissioning oil and gas infrastructure. Knowledge products include: *Oil and Gas Decommissioning Toolkit: Practical Guidance for Governments; Field Development Plans: A Handbook for Government Officials*

3. Energy Leadership and Literacy

For good governance of energy and natural resources and the efficient development and regulation of low carbon sectors, competent human capital and robust institutions are integral. Thus, strengthening of government officials and youth empowerment are pre-requisites, and the Commonwealth continues to design and deliver specialist capacity building programmes on enabling frameworks: policy, governance, fiscal, legal, regulatory, etc.

Furthermore, the Commonwealth Youth Action Group continues to promote clean energy, advocating for greater youth engagement and energy transition career pathways. One example is the Eswatini technical and vocational education training (TVET) programme, where the Secretariat, under the CSET agenda, is collaborating with the Government of Eswatini and its development partners, to upskill youth in solar photovoltaic installation.

Additionally, to increase energy literacy, the Secretariat has produced a series of energy children's books, targeting ages 7 to 12, and promoting technology and innovation, inclusive transitions and enabling frameworks.

To accelerate the energy transition, including climate adaptation and climate mitigation in the energy sector, ongoing financing and public private collaboration and partnerships remains critica

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Ocean and Climate Change

Commonwealth countries are stewards of more than one-third of the ocean under national jurisdiction, including nearly half the world's coral reefs and a third of mangroves. Twenty-five member countries are SIDS, and 49 have a coastline. This puts Commonwealth countries on the front line of ocean-related climate impacts such as sea-level rise and inundation, extreme weather events, coral reef bleaching and ocean acidification.

It also means that they support many 'blue carbon' ecosystems that can provide nature-based solutions to climate mitigation and adaptation, and can greatly benefit from ocean-based renewable energy technologies. Ensuring that ocean and climate policies and actions are joined up is critical, particularly in small states with limited capacity to implement new policies.

In light of this urgency, Commonwealth Heads of Government adopted the Apia Commonwealth Ocean Declaration for One Resilient Common Future on 26 October 2024. It sounds a clarion call for the restoration and protection of the Ocean in the face of severe climate change and pollution. Leaders agreed to

'Recommit to urgent, ambitious and collective climate action and mitigation, under the Paris Agreement, based on the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities in the light of different national circumstances, to put us on the trajectory for limiting global average temperatures to well below 2°C above preindustrial levels and in pursuit of efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C'.

The Commonwealth Blue Charter (CBC), agreed in 2018, commits all 56 member countries to co-operate on tackling our shared ocean-related challenges and meet commitments for sustainable, fair, equitable and inclusive ocean development, protection and governance. The Charter of the Commonwealth provides the underlying principles for the Blue Charter, ensuring that the Commonwealth takes a fair, equitable, inclusive and sustainable approach to ocean governance.

At the heart of the Blue Charter are six Action Groups on priority ocean issues, each led by one or more

Blue Charter Action Groups



of 15 champion countries. These Action Groups are Climate Change and Ocean Health , Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance, Marine Ecosystems and Livelihoods, Marine Protected Areas, Sustainable Aquaculture and Fisheries, Sustainable Blue Economy.

The CBC's Project Incubator provides grants to support government-led proof-of-concept and pilot projects for ocean action and climate adaptation and mitigation, as well as capacity-building through training, rapid assessments and the sharing of durable solutions. Projects that the incubator has supported include: building capacity for youth on ocean monitoring; enabling frameworks

for 'blue carbon' and nature-based solutions; the restoration of coastal ecosystems; and policy guidance for tackling ocean acidification. Round II of the Blue Charter Incubator will launch in Q3 2026, with an expanded programme almost twice the size of the first round.

To further support countries to access and raise financing, we have launched the Commonwealth Guide to Blue Bond Issuance, which describes how these financing tools can support sustainable blue economy, climate change adaptation and mitigation goals, and provides step-by-step practical guidance for governments on preparing, issuing and managing blue bonds. This is complemented by the Commonwealth Blue Bond Readiness Programme, which provides tailored technical assistance to help countries assess their readiness, strengthen institutional and regulatory frameworks, develop blue bond pipelines and prepare for issuance. To date, 23 Commonwealth countries are participating in the Programme, working to build the capacity, frameworks and investment pipelines needed to mobilise blue finance and advance sustainable ocean and blue economy priorities.

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Climate and Health

Climate change is increasingly a health systems, development and equity challenge across the Commonwealth. Rising temperatures, extreme weather and ecosystem disruption are increasing climate-sensitive disease, malnutrition and mental-health risks, while undermining food and water security, livelihoods and access to essential services. Climate hazards also threaten health infrastructure and the continuity of essential services, with the greatest impacts falling on already vulnerable populations, particularly in Small Island Developing States.

The Commonwealth elevated climate-health synergies as a priority agenda item for the Commonwealth Health Ministers Meetings held in 2024 and 2025. During both meetings, ministers recognised that strong, resilient, climate-proof, environmentally sustainable, well-financed, functional and well-governed health systems are fundamental to addressing these challenges. Ministers concluded that to strengthen the link between climate and health and build more resilient health systems, the following actions are needed.

- Prioritise sustainable investment in health infrastructure to safeguard essential services amid escalating climate risks.
- Mobilise dedicated climate finance to strengthen health systems' capacity to prevent, withstand and recover from climate-related shocks.
- Accelerate access to finance from the Multilateral funds, MDBs, philantrophies, and the private sector and the private sector, and to innovative mechanisms to support the implementation of health national adaptation plans, including technical support

for project development as well as decarbonisation of the health sector.

- Build the evidence base, with the voice of small island states and other vulnerable countries to be represented in IPCC assessment reports and other multilateral platforms.
- Advocate for improved application processes in the GCF, and broader conceptualisations of vulnerability such as the multi-vulnerability index.
- Supporting the development and implementation of Health National Adaptation Plans and the decarbonisation of the health sector.



- Establish robust governance mechanisms and foster co-ordination across sectors to ensure coherent and climate-responsive health action.
- Deepen collaboration with partners and elevate youth leadership to accelerate progress and innovation at the climate-health interface.

To support the implementation of agreed actions, and in alignment with climate resilience outcome 1.8's commitment to enhance member states' influence in global policy making and climate negotiations, the Commonwealth is spearheading a critical initiative through the WHO-led Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate Change and Health Task team-mapping financial resources and access mechanisms for climate and health. This initiative intends to provide essential pathways for ministries responsible for health, especially in small island developing states and vulnerable countries, to identify and access funding opportunities at the intersection of climate change and health.

This will, in turn, enable them to build climate-resilient health systems capable of withstanding environmental shocks while maintaining essential health services. The Commonwealth is increasingly supporting member countries to move beyond recognition of climate-health risks towards implementation and investment. Through the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH), technical support is helping countries integrate health into nationally determined contributions, adaptation planning and health-sector strategies; strengthen Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessments and Health National Adaptation Plans; identify climate-health financing gaps; develop project pipelines; and position priority interventions for climate finance. This initiative fulfils Commonwealth commitments to support member states to build climate resilient health systems, and aligns with the landmark WHO World Health Assembly Resolution on Climate Change and Health (WHA77) adopted by 194 member states in May 2024.

Through collaboration with WHO, ATACH, national governments, regional institutions and development partners, the Commonwealth is supporting stronger policy coordination, technical capacity, evidence generation, project preparation and access to financing.

The Commonwealth is also supporting the development of climate-health collaboration platforms. Kiribati, for example, is being supported to lead a Climate-Health Working Group intended to strengthen multi-sector collaboration, knowledge exchange and partnership opportunities across the Commonwealth.

The partnership with WHO also extends to strengthening digital capabilities for climate-resilient health systems through digital maturity assessments and strategic digital-health planning. Seychelles and Zambia have participated in this work, with Kiribati identified to follow.

Contact: Dr Janneth Mghamba, Health Adviser, j.mghamba@commonwealth.int.





Human Rights and Climate Change

Human wellbeing and the full enjoyment of human rights depends upon a healthy environment. Equally, climate change, deterioration of biodiversity, habitat loss and desertification are immediate threats to the human rights of every individual in both present and future generations. These environmental harms jeopardise food security, weaken public health, exacerbate conflict and displacement, deepen inequalities, undermine development, threaten achievement of the SDGs and impede economic growth. Although the negative human rights impacts of environmental harm are felt by all, they are disproportionately borne by indigenous peoples, local communities, women and girls, children and youth, the poor, and persons, groups and peoples in vulnerable situations.

Human rights are crucial to addressing environmental harm, as was acknowledged by the UN General Assembly in July 2022 when it formally recognised the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a fundamental human right, and called on states and international organisations to enhance international co-operation, strengthen capacity-building and continue to share good practices in order to scale up efforts to ensure a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for all.

Building on normative developments in international human rights law and international environmental law, the Commonwealth Secretariat Human Rights Unit provides contextualised support to member countries to integrate human rights norms into domestic legal frameworks for environmental protection.

Human rights-based approaches to environmental policy have great potential to effectively and equitably address climate change and safeguard biodiversity. The Human Rights Unit can also provide technical assistance to member countries for the development and implementation of rights-based approaches in economic, social, legislative, political and technological actions relating to environmental protection. This includes, for example, assistance



for the development and implementation of due diligence standards for businesses in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and support to integrate traditional knowledge and practices into inclusive decision-making processes with the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples and the protection of cultural rights.

Please contact GPD-HRU@commonwealth.int for more information.



Gender Integration for Climate Action

The Commonwealth's fourth priority on gender equality is on gender and climate change. This Commonwealth consensus-building for action recognises the link between gender inequality and higher climate impacts, and advocates for women and girls to be positioned as agents of change for climate action.

To support member countries to mainstream gender into their climate change policies and implementation plans, the Commonwealth Secretariat produced a report on *Gender Integration for Climate Action: A Review of Commonwealth Member Country Nationally Determined Contributions*. Its purpose was to better understand how and to what extent Commonwealth member countries are integrating gender and social inclusion concerns into their NDCs, with a view to identifying prevailing gaps, entry points and opportunities. The report provides useful best practice examples and recommendations for strengthening gender responsiveness in the implementation of NDCs, under the following topics: prioritising gender in context; policy integration of gender; institutional co-ordination across gender and climate change; capacity building in technology; MRV systems, sex-disaggregated data and information; and financial resources for gender

inclusion. The Commonwealth has also strengthened its technical capacity through a dedicated Commonwealth Climate Finance Gender Adviser, who provides specialised support to member countries on gender-responsive climate finance, project development, capacity building and reporting. Through the Adviser, CCFAH is helping member countries move from gender commitments to implementation by strengthening gender-responsive climate finance proposals, supporting gender action plans, enhancing institutional capacity, and promoting practical tools, data systems and knowledge products that improve access to inclusive climate finance.

Following its endorsement by Commonwealth Heads of Government at CHOGM 2024, the Commonwealth Collaborative Network on Gender-responsive Climate Action was formally launched at COP30 in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025. The Network supports member countries to bridge knowledge gaps on the gendered impacts of climate change, promote equitable access to climate finance and strengthen diverse leadership in climate decision-making. It also supports the integration of gender into NDCs, National Adaptation Plans, Biennial Transparency Reports and climate finance proposals.

The Network is already supporting practical implementation. At COP30, the Commonwealth launched the Framework for a National Data Hub on Gender and Climate Information in Nigeria to strengthen the availability and use of gender-responsive climate data for policy, planning and climate finance decisions.

COP30 also adopted the Belém Gender Action Plan 2026–2034, providing a renewed global framework for advancing gender-responsive climate action.

Contact Uzoamaka Nwamarah, Head and Adviser, Climate Change. (CCN-GRCA@commonwealth.int) for more information.





Trade Policy and Climate Change

Trade and trade-related policies have an important role to play within the broader spectrum of policy solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The Commonwealth Secretariat's International Trade Policy Section (ITPS) undertakes research and analysis on the nexus between trade and climate change; participates in policy dialogues; and can support members to develop climate-smart trade and investment policies. Through the ITPS, the Secretariat is a stakeholder to the WTO Dialogue on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (DPP) and the Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform (FFSR) initiative. ITPS has prepared knowledge products on:

- sustainable production and trade, focusing on the fisheries, forestry, cocoa, and textiles and garments sectors
- trade in environmental goods and services
- fossil fuel subsidy reform at the World Trade Organization
- plastics alternatives and their production value chains
- trade and technology transfer for renewable energy
- the implications of carbon schemes like the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
- trade implications of the EU Deforestation Regulation for sub-Saharan African countries.

Contact Dr Collin Zhuawu (c.zhuawu@commonwealth.int), Head of ITPS, for more information.

Trade, Gender and Climate

The Trade Competitiveness Section (TCS's) report *Trade, Gender, Climate* addresses trade issues in the context of efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change on women in Commonwealth countries.

The publication offers new analysis to inform the development of gender-responsive, cross-sectoral trade and climate strategies. It demonstrates how national governments can make strategic interventions to integrate gender and women's empowerment issues into trade and climate dialogues through a variety of public institutions at different levels.

The report highlights the fact that women in business suffer significant – possibly disproportionate – losses from adverse climate events.

They also face a 'triple differential vulnerability' to climate change: they operate primarily in the agricultural sector; they continue to face persistent gendered barriers to trade, including access to finance and technologies; and they have limited knowledge of climate change threats and mitigation policies.

The TCS assists women-owned businesses to mitigate against these losses, as advancing women's economic empowerment is crucial to upscaling climate resilience and adaptation. Some interventions include:

- capacity-building for women entrepreneurs and women-led businesses on e-commerce as an alternative to brick-and-mortar shops, which are susceptible to climate change disasters
- providing platforms for advocacy for women's economic empowerment, in partnership with like-minded organisations such as the International Trade Centre and the Islamic Trade Finance Corporation
- advocacy for gender disaggregated data as the foundation for more gender inclusive policies.

Contact Opeyemi Abebe, Adviser and Head, Trade Competitiveness Section (o.abebe@commonwealth.int) for more information.



Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda

Strengthening national data systems for resilient food systems

Millions of smallholder farmers across the Commonwealth already face numerous risks to their agricultural production. Key among them is increasing climate variability resulting in high frequency and severity of droughts, floods, hurricanes, pest and disease outbreaks. Resilience food systems for countries mean efficient utilisation of appropriate technologies such as drought-tolerant crop varieties, better water management, index-base insurance against shocks to adapt to these changes. Achieving this requires up-to-date and relevant data for timely decision-making. Hence the need to strengthen national data systems across the Commonwealth.

The National Agricultural Data Infrastructure (NAgDI) Framework

In October 2025, the Connectivity Agenda launched a Policy Guide with a holistic framework to help countries better coordinate their data systems, using the agricultural sector as a case. By deploying the NAgDI framework, member countries lay strong foundation for data coordination to enable timely and reliable decision making relating to:

- Food security monitoring, input cost reduction and increased agricultural yield
- Disaster risk management, insurance cost reduction and better early warning systems
- Carbon market integrity and quality measurement, reporting and verification systems



- Ocean and marine resource monitoring, shared vessel monitoring and automatic identification systems for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Biodiversity and natural capital value for forests, fisheries and freshwater for taskforce on nature-related financial disclosure compliance
- Disease surveillance and outbreak early detection through real-time cross-border data exchange.

Contact Dr Benjamin Addom, Adviser, Agriculture and Fisheries Trade Policy, Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda (b.addom@commonwealth.int) for more information.



Engaging Youth

The Commonwealth Youth Programme has launched the 'Charting the Climate Future: Youth Voices on the Road to COP30' blog series to provide a platform for the next generation of young changemakers to share their stories, challenges and bold solutions for a greener future. Members of the Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network (CYCN) write two blogs per month to illustrate how young people are at the forefront of climate activism, and demonstrate a profound commitment to sustainability.

The Network empowers young people to translate climate change programmes into effective policies that have a measurable impact on youth wellbeing. CYCN has launched a SIDS and climate advocacy toolkit and convened climate advocacy

workshops, dubbed #Prep4COP, in Seychelles, Mauritius and Fiji. More than 100 young climate advocates received training on:

- effective climate communications
- resource mobilisation for climate projects
- UNFCCC and COP climate processes
- climate advocacy and campaigns.

In previous COP meetings, our youth leaders have:

- convened an intergenerational climate dialogue between the Commonwealth Secretary-General and young climate leaders that focuses on youth empowerment in the climate policy processes.
- co-ordinated policy advocacy workshops co-hosted by the CYCN and YOUNGO focusing on climate change education, training and action for youth-led climate action
- spearheaded side events to accelerate a green economy and drive youth entrepreneurship and employment; championed enhanced youth participation in NDC processes; and advocated for robust youth inclusion in climate decision-making at both national and international levels
- participated in partner organisations' climate events that brought together philanthropists and business leaders to discuss innovative climate finance mechanisms.

Commonwealth Youth for Sustainable Urbanisation, the Commonwealth Youth Council and CYCN also organised a strong delegation at CHOGM 2024 in Samoa, which marked the culmination of the Commonwealth Year of Youth and the 50th anniversary of the Commonwealth Youth Programme, and reinforced young people's involvement in devising solutions to complex global challenges. In 2022, at both the previous CHOGM in Rwanda and the World Urban Forum in Poland, CYSU participated as speakers and conveners of capacity-building sessions to highlight the role of sustainable urbanisation and intersectionality in the global action against climate change.

Contact Sushil Ram, Adviser, Youth Development (s.ram@commonwealth.int) for more information

Climate change is reshaping economies, ecosystems and communities across the Commonwealth. Its impacts are felt most acutely by small and vulnerable member countries, where limited resources and exposure to climate shocks can make the transition from ambition to action challenging.

The work highlighted in this publication reflects the Commonwealth's practical response to that challenge. Across our programmes and partnerships, we are helping member countries mobilise climate finance, strengthen climate plans and transparency systems, advance resilient land and ocean management, integrate climate and health, promote gender equality and youth leadership, and harness knowledge, innovation and technology to support better climate decisions. To power this work, we are creating strategic partnerships within the Commonwealth and beyond and also leveraging the vast network of The Commonwealth Accredited organisations. We are working with tech giants to accelerate and create a transformative technology driven action agenda.

At the heart of this work is a simple principle: Commonwealth support must respond to country priorities and help translate commitments into tangible, inclusive and sustainable outcomes. Our role goes beyond the technical assistance to connect countries with expertise, finance, partnerships and opportunities for shared learning and development across the Commonwealth.

Looking ahead, our focus will be increasingly be on moving from commitments to implementation, from access to impact, and from individual interventions to stronger and more resilient systems. This will require deeper partnerships, stronger institutions, innovative financing and continued investment in the people and communities leading climate action.

The Commonwealth's strength lies in its ability to bring countries together around shared challenges while recognising their different circumstances. By working collectively, we will ensure that climate action delivers enhanced resilience, prosperity, create opportunities and sustainable development for the Commonwealth family.

Suresh Yadav, Director, Climate Change and Oceans Directorate

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