

Commonwealth Secretariat

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**Commonwealth  
Youth Ministers Meeting**

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**Provisional Agenda Item 5B**

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PAP-YDI**

**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INDEX**

**COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME**

Commonwealth Secretariat  
Marlborough House  
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## **Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP)**

### **Youth Development Index/Youth Development Indicators (YDI) Concept note**

#### **Background**

Youth Development Indicators have been on the agenda of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) and its Youth Ministers Meetings since 1998. At first the Youth Development Index was perceived as being analogous to the Human Development Index (HDI), raising concerns among member countries that it would become an inter-country ranking exercise. There is wider support for the YDI concept now that:

- It is about indicators plural, rather than arriving at a single number outcome
- Countries are expected to elaborate their own indicators, within certain regional and Pan-Commonwealth guidelines

Papers on the YDI were presented at CYP's Regional Advisory Board in 1999 and at Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting 2000 (by Dr Godfrey St Bernard). The Youth Development Index Asia Region Planning Workshop was held in Brunei in January 2001. Work on the YDI was de-prioritized in 2002 by a Ministerial Review, although a data gathering exercise took place in the Caribbean region. In July 2005 the CYP again picked up the issue of YDI, convening an inter-agency meeting on the YDI with the participation of the World Bank, GTZ, UNESCO, UNDESA, UNDP, UNV and the University of the West Indies.

This was followed by an expert group meeting at UN Headquarters in December 2005 with the participation of a larger number of academics and UN agencies. The Sixtieth Session of the General Assembly had requested the UN Secretariat to establish a broad set of indicators related to youth which governments and others may use to monitor progress under the World Plan of Action for Youth (WPAY). At the UN meeting some stakeholders were still thinking along the lines of inter-country comparison.

In 2007 CYP ensured that the YDI was covered in a youth mapping exercise commissioned by the Youth Working Group of the Civil Society / DFID Network on Children and Youth. The results were presented to 20 key DFID staff and the Minister on 8<sup>th</sup> October. The executive summary report stated: "Of particular interest to DFID should be the development of Youth Development Indicators as a positive, innovative method of using different indices to measure development generally as well as specifically for youth. It is suggested that DFID take a much closer look at the PAYE and work on Youth Indicators".

## Rationale and Scope

According to the UN World Youth Report 2007: “assessing the impact of interventions and investments made in youth development remains difficult because youth-related age-disaggregated data are not always available. Where these data do exist, they are often part of a larger compilation on other population groups and youth-specific issues and trends remain hidden or are glossed over...Many gaps remain that need to be filled through new data collection. Further, even existing data are often not fully reliable.”

The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE, 2007-2015) which has some overlaps with the WPAY, sets out to align three processes:

- YDI - as the measurement of progress made under the PAYE
- Youth Mainstreaming - as the principal government strategy for implementing the PAYE
- All other programme work of the CYP – in Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods; Governance, Development and Youth Networks; and Youth Work Education and Training.

Given the uniqueness and centrality of the PAYE, and the calls from both ministers and young people for *greater monitoring and evaluation of it* (e.g. at 5<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Youth Forum, November 2005 and in the review of PAYE 2000-2005), YAD sees UN efforts as something to work in tandem with, rather than as a reason to discontinue work on the YDI.

The nodal points for the YDI would be government ministries and research institutions (at national and regional levels) but there would also be a role for a range of stakeholders, including youth, civil society bodies and political parties, to contribute their perspectives. Rather than being one “measurement” then, the YDI and its reports would be an arena of debate and social dialogue. Managing the tensions of such an exercise would seem to be a niche area for the Commonwealth Youth Programme:

- It is inter-governmental, and hence has the trust and buy-in of governments
- It is about consensus-building and democracy
- It has a track record of publicising civil society as well as government views
- It has the youth development skills and networks necessary to conduct social dialogue with young people and others
- It has elaborated the PAYE
- It has experience in National Youth Policy which is just as relevant to YDI as is the PAYE.

Given that other agencies have greater strengths in collecting and analysing hard data, the contribution of the CYP would therefore be to

- Spearhead and coordinate the process, especially at the regional level, pooling the resources of participating countries and agencies
- Ensure that the YDI is youth-centred, asset- rather than problem-based, and participatory

- Ensure that qualitative indicators are included, most importantly process indicators concerning the quality of youth participation.

The YDI is integral to two of CYP's three over-arching goals (the third being the professionalisation of youth work). The Strategic Plan was agreed by CYP's four regional centres for Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific, together with the CYP Pan-Commonwealth Office.

The organisational structure for the YDI is found below.

### Organisational structure of the YDI Project

