



Advancing together: delivering people-centred governance through the Commonwealth

Breaking barriers. Shifting power. Transforming lives.

Kigali, Rwanda, 22-24 June 2020

Vision

Our world today is an exciting, challenging place. The nature and pace of change is unprecedented in human history. This is creating unimagined opportunities but also causing great disruption and uncertainty.

We need much better ideas—and more powerful, diverse voices—to hold ourselves and our governments to account. We need these voices and ideas to lead the transformation of systems and attitudes that entrench inequality and marginalise so many.

The Commonwealth People's Forum 2020 will ask—and try to answer—the big, important questions of our age. How do we harness the best of humanity—the forces of love, compassion, equality, and justice—to advance our common future and protect our planet? How do we work together to build or re-fashion our institutions so that they support a world that leaves no one behind?

Framework

'A society for all' is how the World Summit for Social Development defined an inclusive society, in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play. At the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development lies such a society—a just, equitable, tolerant, open, and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised are met and the voices of future generations are heard.

The key to achieving the vision of this society lies in Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG16): 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels'. Achieving the broad ambition of SDG16 will only be possible if we are honest about the challenges of inclusion; if we hold public institutions to account; and if governance systems are seen to have the potential to transform to deliver on citizens' needs. In the age of the fourth industrial revolution, we must also ensure that benefits and opportunities are available to all in the form of dignified lives, decent work, and the protection and support of those in need.

The People's Forum 2020 will be an opportunity for a collective and interactive exchange of ideas. It will bring together diverse voices and perspectives to demonstrate inclusive, participatory, and creative ways to fulfil SDG16. It is our aim that participants leave with the learning, tools, and evidence to contribute to SDG16's vision in their respective countries.

Day one: justice

Monday 22 June 2020

The meaningful involvement of those typically excluded from policy formulation and implementation is key to making SDG16—with its emphasis on peaceful, just, and strong institutions—a reality. Working towards inclusion means acknowledging and addressing the barriers to participation and rethinking current approaches to ensure that governance structures and policies deliver for everyone. Day one is focussed on justice in the existing and emerging systems that govern the world: on locating both obstacles and opportunities and on challenging systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice.

0900	Official opening
1000	Keynote: committing to change
1045	Plenary: the 'big' questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we share the world's resources, including new technological resources, equally and fairly? • How do we protect communities from the impacts of the climate crisis regardless of wealth, geography, and status? • How can we support and encourage countries to develop in fair and sustainable ways? • How do we protect the freedom to question and monitor the systems that govern civil society?
1200	Lunch and networking
1315	Plenary: economic justice and exploring bold ideas
	We will explore bold ideas to reduce poverty and inequality and the challenges in implementing them.
1430	Afternoon tea
1500	Debate: climate justice: what now?
	How do we balance adaptation and mitigation efforts for climate justice? A lively discussion in debate format exploring conflicting priorities around this critical issue.
1615	Day one wrap up plenary
1700	Networking

Day two: accountability

Tuesday 23 June 2020

SDG16 calls for peaceful, just, and strong institutions for all by 2030. For this to happen, there must be meaningful opportunities for people to participate fully in all aspects of society, including in the governance structures that directly affect their lives. In addition to the freedom to access institutions, citizens should be able to understand how their institutions operate and be involved in assessing their legitimacy and effectiveness. Transparency is critical to holding the institutions of governance accountable on both its service delivery and governance.

Day two aims to examine the systems that are essential for just and accountable governance through the lenses of essential freedoms: the freedom to participate and the freedoms of opinion and expression.

0900	Reflections
0930	Keynote address: freedom of creative expression
1015	Plenary: freedom of thought, opinion, and expression
	How does civil society deal with the barriers and challenges it encounters in seeking to uphold and protect these freedoms—and how can civic voices realistically challenge these barriers and manage the risks?
1130	Morning tea
1200	Plenary: protest
	Across the world, from London to Hong Kong, citizens are expressing their desire to be more involved in decisions affecting their lives—to have their voices heard on matters they care about the most. What is civil society learning from these experiences?
1315	Lunch
1430	Plenary: digital power, freedom, inclusion, and accountability
	How do we ensure freedom, inclusion, and accountability? We hear plenty of good-news stories of new technologies mobilising, connecting, and enabling transformative change in governments, governance, and civil society action. But what about the citizens who are not connected, and those that cannot digitise their voice? And is digitisation always a force for good?
1515	Afternoon tea
1645	Plenary: the power of participation
1830	All forums gathering delegates at Kigali Convention Centre

Day three: action

Wednesday 24 June

Achieving SDG16 will require a transformation in ambition and genuine commitment to action. In day three, speakers and performers will react to the possible action plans and ideas proposed for tackling the big challenges of our era. Day three will inspire participants to think differently - and encourage us all to be brave and bold in delivering change.

0900	Reflection	
0930	Plenary: are you ready?	
	How can civic voices engage with bold new ideas to transform economic and social systems in their communities and countries? How can we ensure these ideas are relevant to everyone: so all communities can participate in shaping new systems?	
1045	Morning tea	
1115	Masterclasses: transformation	
	Transformations from conflict to peace This session encourages delegates working in conflict negotiation and peace building to bring their outstanding issues to a group of practitioners who have successfully involved lesser-heard voices in negotiations, most especially women and young people.	Transformation in corruption This session encourages delegates to bring their questions and concerns about corruption to a group of practitioners who have fought it on the frontline.
1115	Learning journeys: transformation in practice	
	A unique opportunity to meet with Rwandan civic voices in the workplace to find out, first-hand, how transformation is happening on the ground, how accountability is being monitored, how inclusion is being addressed, and other themes of The People's Forum 2020. Lunch bags will be prepared for delegates to eat on the go.	
1230	Lunch	
1445	Official closing ceremony	
1600	Forum finale	