



2024 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) Side Events Application Guide and Form

Overview

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 56 independent and equal countries. It is home to 2.5 billion people and includes both advanced economies and developing countries. 60 per cent of which are under the age of 30. The Commonwealth family or 'aiga' is one of proud, connected and diverse nations. Developed and developing, big and small, the most vulnerable, comprising 33 out of the world's 42 small states, of which 25 are Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as well as 12 Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The Commonwealth Aiga is home to some of the fastest growing economies and some of the largest ocean states from across Africa, Asia, Americas, Europe, Caribbean and the Pacific; brought together as a family; an Aiga of shared beliefs and values. Commonwealth member states work together to promote prosperity, democracy and peace, protect the environment and to amplify the voice of small states.

CHOGM Side events serve as an inclusive and collaborative space for Commonwealth member states and accredited organisations to convene meetings, dialogues, and host events to show case their critical work, innovative solutions or contributions to thematic issues and trends that CHOGM 2024 seeks to address in the areas of governance, climate, finance, digital economy, with cross cutting themes of youth and gender.

Commonwealth member states, the Commonwealth Secretariat and accredited organisations are welcome to apply to host side events. **Due to limited space, only a handful of side events will be approved to participate in CHOGM 2024.** Applicants are therefore encouraged to submit joint applications and collaborate where possible, with other applicants whose side events aligns with theirs in objective and vision. A completed event request form (Annex I) for consideration will be required for member states and organisations who wish to host an event at the margins of CHOGM 2024, either in conjunction with the

Secretariat or independently on a thematic area of relevance (see Annex II).

It is recommended that events are designed in line with the vision and thematic programme of CHOGM 2024 (this is included in Annex 2). Applicants are also strongly encouraged to include a significant element of local and regional partnership with the Pacific region and within the Commonwealth as a whole.

Process

Interested Commonwealth member states, organisations and Sections within the Secretariat are invited to provide details on potential events using the application form in Annex I.

Notes

Interested Commonwealth member states, organisations and Sections within the Commonwealth Secretariat submitting an application for a side event slot at CHOGM 2024 are to please note the following:

- Due to limitation of venue space and availability, only a handful of applications will be approved.
- Submissions will be accepted up to **22 April 2024**. **No submissions will be accepted beyond the stated deadline.** Submissions will be evaluated on an on-going basis during this period.
- Submissions are to be made via email to 2024CHOGMsideevents@commonwealth.int Applicants can expect to receive a decision regarding their applications by **10 May 2024**.
- All events will be expected to commence no earlier than 0930 and end no later than 1730 each day. Special events can be considered, for earlier starts or evening events like receptions between 1800 to 2000 upon **special and explicit request** in the application form.
- Side event organisers will be **solely responsible** for coordinating logistics, insurance and administrative arrangements for their respective side events, with the indicated suppliers. This includes

catering, transportation, audio-visual etc. *Please note that neither the Host Country nor the Secretariat will be responsible or liable for assuming financial costs or responsibility for logistical arrangements and support for the side events beyond providing the venue and the list of suppliers and the inclusion and promotion of approved side events on the CHOGM2024 Programme and website.*

- Side event organisers will be required to set up, clean up and remove all related materials from the allocated side event venue within the time frame allocated for the event. A 30-minute time gap between events will be included to allow for this.
- Side event organisers will be required to notify the CHOGM 2024 Side Event management team at: 2024CHOGMsideevents@commonwealth.int immediately, should they need to cancel their event.
- Submitting an application does not guarantee automatic allocation of a side event slot, though every effort will be made to ensure placements of events, including through mergers with other side event organizers where and when plausible.
- Approval and allocation of side event slots will be reviewed against strict criteria which includes alignment with the 2024 CHOGM theme and vision, reflection of Commonwealth values and inclusion of Pacific and international partners among others.
- All proposed events will be required to have Commonwealth Government / Secretariat / Accredited Organisations speakers and a direct link with the 2024 CHOGM theme and outcomes.

Annex I: CHOGM 2024 Side Event Application Form

Title:
Thematic Area (resilient democratic institutions, environment, economics, cultures and peoples):
Focus Area (ocean, water, governance, democracy, trade, technology, digital transformation, health, youth empowerment, gender equality and others -please specify):
Type (panel/roundtable/workshop/product launch/signing ceremony/exhibition):
Level (high level/technical - please provide further information):
Lead Country/Organisation and Partners (if any):
Key Contact within the Commonwealth Secretariat (if any):

Description of event, including linkages to the Commonwealth (Maximum 150 words):
Duration (Maximum 90 minutes):
Preferred Date and Time:
Format of Event (indicated if in Person/Virtual/or Hybrid):
Expected Audience Size (Maximum 50 seated persons):
Contact Person Details (name, e-mail and mobile):

Annex II: Samoa CHOGM 2024 Concept Note



ONE RESILIENT COMMON FUTURE: *Transforming our Common Wealth.*

The Commonwealth 'Aiga'

The fa'asamoa, or the Samoan way, underpins the people's collective responsibility for each other, their 'aiga' or family, their communities and country. The fa'asamoa encapsulates the core values of respect, dignity, love, protection, and service. The fa'asamoa is seamlessly aligned to the shared principles of our **Commonwealth Aiga** as articulated in the Charter of the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Aiga of 56 nations is home to one third of the global population, 2.5 billion people, 60 per cent of which are under the age of 30. We are a family of proud, connected and diverse nations. Developed and developing, big and small, the most vulnerable, comprising 33 out of the world's 42 small states, of which 25 are small island developing states (SIDS), as well as 12 least developed countries (LDCs). The Commonwealth Aiga is home to some of the fastest growing economies and some of the largest ocean states from across Africa, Asia, Americas, Europe, Caribbean and the Pacific; brought together as a family; an Aiga of shared beliefs and values; one family - where every member's contribution matters and none is insignificant or subservient to another.

Our Aiga, together with the rest of the global community, is facing a polycrisis, a serious multi-dimensional threat, complex in its nature and scope. We are faced with a plethora of challenges that require collective solutions towards achieving the ultimate goals of *sustainable development, democracy and peace*. These are our common goals, the goals of our Commonwealth Aiga.

At the Samoa CHOGM, we call on the Commonwealth Aiga of 56 countries, with the support of our sister organisations and 89 Accredited Organisations, to come together to learn from the Pacific peoples. Now, more than ever, our Commonwealth calls for UNITY and Enhanced RESILIENCE as a matter of survival.

A Resilient Common Future

Resilience is a unifying approach that transcends the humanitarian, development, human rights, and peace and security pillars. It is the ability of individuals, households, communities, cities, institutions, systems and societies to prevent, resist, absorb, adapt, respond and recover positively, efficiently and effectively from exogenous shocks. Resilience demands the maintenance of acceptable levels of functioning without compromising long-term prospects for sustainable development, peace and security, human rights and well-being for all. When faced with crisis, resilience helps prevent and curtail economic, environmental and human losses.¹

The time has come to implement concrete and innovative solutions to the polycrisis we face. As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of our Commonwealth Charter and commit to concrete and innovative actions to respond to the multiple global crises, it is crucial for us to build on and focus on our strengths by transforming Our Commonwealth into a *Common Wealth*. Unlocking our potential, leveraging our ‘Commonwealth Advantage’, identifying our Commonwealth Niche and working towards a truly connected, digital Commonwealth, can ensure a resilient common future where no one is left behind.

In our resilience, we can continue to reinforce the Commonwealth as a compelling force for good, a value-based organisation; an effective network for co-operation and promoting sustainable development, peace and democracy.

The theme *One Resilient Common Future* looks at all the key pillars of the Commonwealth through a resilience lens. Building on the Commonwealth Aiga’s historical achievements, in

¹ United Nations (2020), United Nations Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies, New York (UN)

the face of current and future crises, we must persist in our efforts to ensure:

- **resilient democratic institutions** that uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The work of our Commonwealth Election Observer Groups and our whole-of-electoral cycle support for members, the technical assistance available for anti-corruption benchmarking and human rights implementation allows member states to strengthen this first pillar;
- **a resilient environment** for the survival of our planet and to combat the existential threat of the climate emergency. Our support for our Commonwealth Blue Charter and Commonwealth Living Lands Charter, the oil and gas decommissioning toolkits, our Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub and climate finance access guides, our 2023 toolkit on sustainable production and trade, and our guides on the circular economy further our environmental goals;
- **resilient economies** to support recovery from and survive future pandemics, withstand economic uncertainties and unlock the potential of the private sector, bolstered by the adoption of innovative and transformative technologies and digital solutions that can safeguard the prosperity of our family of nations. To this end, many member states will continue to benefit from the Commonwealth Meridian Debt Management System, the Commonwealth Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, in collaboration with the IMF, the support of the Small States Office in Geneva for our work at the WTO, and from the Commonwealth resources on sustainable trade and “Doing More With Less” for low-cost policy implementation;
- **resilient societies and peoples** that can enjoy peace, security, social inclusion and lead free, healthy and productive lives. Our societies must go further in empowering women; protecting the most vulnerable and marginalised and strengthening the voice of civil society and communities, crucial in achieving real change. We must aim to be truly resilient - in all forms: environmentally, socially, economically and culturally. We must continue to invest in our Youth, with our Commonwealth programs for youth entrepreneurship training, and our Commonwealth Year of the Youth programmes launched in 2023. Youth are ultimately the

leaders that will deliver the resilient common future we are aiming for.

The Commonwealth is only as strong as its weakest, smallest or most vulnerable. To achieve One Resilient Common Future, we must **ensure the resilience of our small and our vulnerable states, those most in need**, by enhancing their voice and responding to their needs. **Unity is our strength and we are at our best when we work together** as when advocating for the Loss and Damage Fund, and for the use of the Commonwealth Universal Vulnerability Index.

The S-A-M-O-A Approach

Samoa will be the first Small Island Developing State from the Blue Pacific continent to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. This is an important milestone not only for Samoa, having recently celebrated 61 years of Independence and political stability but also for the Blue Pacific, at the frontline of these global crises.

Samoa's vision for CHOGM 2024 and its subsequent chairmanship is to focus our efforts on building One Resilient Common Future by transforming our Commonwealth. We call on our Commonwealth Aiga to focus on:

Strengthening and building on existing work with a focus on SOLUTIONS

As we prepare for CHOGM 2024, it is important for us to reflect and build on our achievements and ongoing work as we strive for a resilient and sustainable Commonwealth in the face of a climate emergency, the struggles of COVID-19 recovery, global food and energy crises, rising debt, growing inequalities and increasing conflicts around the world.

The Samoa CHOGM is a key opportunity to assess our current work and accelerate action on some of the decisions made or initiatives launched at past CHOGMs. In London we worked Towards a Common Future, in Kigali we aimed for Delivering A Common Future, in Samoa we must be transformational to ensure that we are resilient, innovative and bold in the face of current and future challenges.

CHOGM Samoa needs to be solution-oriented. This demands a refocus on the Leaders and what they wish to discuss. Samoa is determined to zero in on the Leaders and will create the necessary space to discuss and exchange perspectives, reflective of their context and generate apt solutions. The same expectation is envisaged for the pre-CHOGM forums. The events in the lead-up to CHOGM itself are just as important to inform and further enable our Leaders to focus on key issues critical to our common future.

Advancing our collective interests

Building on our shared values and achievements, CHOGM is an opportunity to leverage the implicit strength in our diversity to provide tailored Commonwealth solutions that advance our interests and safeguard our values. The Commonwealth can contribute positively and innovatively to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, and to influencing global decisions that take into account our interests and priorities. This is especially important as we work within the parameters for the Decade of Action; for the accelerated action and increased ambition to meet the promise of the Paris Agreement, the commitments made in our Commonwealth Blue Charter and our Commonwealth Call for Action on Living Lands, realising the potential of transformative digital technologies in our pursuit of economic prosperity and a fairer and more secure future.

Mounting Global challenges

Multilateral co-operation and the upholding of the rule-based international order are fundamental for the timely and orderly resolution of the world's polycrisis. A resilient common future entail groundbreaking solutions to our mounting challenges. The Commonwealth has a history of providing collective interventions and solutions to important global problems and has been at the forefront of multilateral solutions to substantial global challenges such as energy and food crises, climate change, ocean health and biodiversity loss, living lands, growing inequality, threats to democracy, governance and human rights, political violence, debt sustainability and the decline and now the reform of multilateral institutions. The Commonwealth is now called upon to become the loudest advocate for the small and most vulnerable states.

It is fitting that Leaders decided to bring the Commonwealth to the Blue Pacific continent, as this is home to some of its smallest and most vulnerable members, that are on the frontlines of climate change and stand to lose the most. The Samoa CHOGM promises to be a landmark Pacific CHOGM, aiming to deliver concrete solutions to these mounting global challenges, through the Pacific principle of *talanoa*. Working in the spirit of this principle, based on inclusive, transparent and engaging dialogue, will enable our 56 family members, our Aiga, to provide leadership in building a more resilient Commonwealth, and indeed a more resilient world.

Ownership - Our Commonwealth, Our Common future

The Samoa CHOGM will be held at a critical time in the continuous journey of our Commonwealth Aiga. It will be the first CHOGM for the new Head of the Commonwealth, His Majesty King Charles III; a new Secretary General will be chosen, and it will be the first CHOGM for the newest members of our Commonwealth Aiga - Togo and Gabon.

As we gather amid unprecedented and decisive shifts in the world, all 56 members are urged to recommit to the shared ownership of our Commonwealth. This starts with a reaffirmation of our shared values; investment of resources into our organisation; dedication to its work, its modernisation and to our endorsed initiatives, which promise to deliver a better tomorrow for our people.

Attendance at CHOGM at the highest level, would signal strong commitment and ownership. The CHOGM Leaders' retreat is an opportunity for the Commonwealth family of Leaders to engage meaningfully, embrace and endorse transformational solutions for our nations. We must commit and unite in shaping a modern Commonwealth, an Aiga which will ensure One Resilient Common Future for us all.

Accelerated Action

From building resilience for peaceful, just and stable societies, to meeting the 1.5 degree aspiration of the Paris Agreement, financing for climate-resilience and environmental sustainability, compensation for loss and damage, to leveraging intra-Commonwealth sustainable trade and digital solutions; implementing the Sustainable Development Goals to realising commitments made at past CHOGMs, the Samoa CHOGM aims

at delivering innovative solutions that will ensure impactful, dedicated and Accelerated Action.

In transforming our Commonwealth into a Common Wealth - our numbers, organisations, partnerships, shared values, resources, ingenuity, knowledge, experience, diversity, youth, history and resolve will be key. Bold, ambitious, decisive, accelerated action is critical. Our Commonwealth advantage is fundamental to accelerated action to unlock our potential. Our work on artificial intelligence, can put our member states at the forefront of digital leadership. Transformation requires our increased support for and investment and innovation into areas such as fintech (the use of technology to deliver financial services and products), entrepreneurship and ICT education policy.

The Government and people of Samoa look forward to welcoming the Commonwealth family, our Aiga, to our island home for the 2024 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. We will share and demonstrate our unique culture and traditions (fa'asamoa) as our means of adaptation towards a highly resilient community and perhaps by extension a resilient Commonwealth aiga.