



## APIA DECLARATION

Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions

*“A sustainable culture of human rights for a resilient future”*

17-18 October 2024

Apia, Samoa

### Purpose

1. To call on the representatives of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to demonstrate support and commitment for human rights, and to encapsulate the commitments of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI) at the Biennial Conference that was held from 17 to 18 October 2024, in Apia, Samoa.

### Call to CHOGM and Member States

2. We, the members of CFNHRI attending the Biennial Conference on the 17th-18th October 2024 in Apia, Samoa:
  - a. **Recall** the previous commitments made by CHOGM on human rights, as expressed for example in the Coolum Declaration (2002), the Aso Rock Commonwealth Declaration (2003), the Kampala Declaration on Transforming Societies to Achieve Political, Economic and Human Development (2007), the Port of Spain Declaration (2009), the Commonwealth Blue Charter (2018), the London Communique (“Towards a Shared Future”) (2018), and the Kigali Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform (2022).
  - b. **Recall** Member States’ obligations under international human rights instruments which they have ratified and recall the commitments made by the international community on human rights, as expressed for example in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the nine core international human rights treaties and their optional protocols, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
  - c. **Call upon** CHOGM to:
    - i. Put the human rights of all Commonwealth peoples at the center of their deliberations and decisions.
    - ii. Acknowledge the important role that National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) play within their member states.
    - iii. Ensure that NHRIs are sufficiently resourced as required under the Paris Principles<sup>i</sup> in order to effectively discharge their human rights obligations and duties.
    - iv. Address the human rights impact of climate change affecting Commonwealth countries by incorporating a human rights-based approach and ensure respect for the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, including by holding countries and businesses causing emissions to account.
  - d. **Call upon** Member States to commit to:
    - i. Establish National Human Rights Institutions within their jurisdictions in the Commonwealth (for those that do not yet have an NHRI, especially in the Pacific

- where there are less than five NHRIs)
- ii. Provide sustainable support for national human rights accountability mechanisms including national human rights institutions as required under the Paris principles.
- iii. Support democratic institutions to uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law.
- iv. Build a resilient economy by making sure that economic plans protect people's social, economic, political and cultural rights, provide fair access to services, support everyone's participation, address climate challenges, and promote sustainable development.
- v. Promote equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, accountability and the rule of law, ensuring that the rights of all people, including Indigenous Peoples and those who are marginalized, are respected and protected.

#### **Outcomes:**

##### **3. *As CFNHRI, we agree:***

- a. That the following four pillars will guide CFNHRI collaboration over the next two years:
  - i. Resilient democratic institutions that uphold democracy, human rights and the rule of law
  - ii. Resilient environment to combat climate change
  - iii. Resilient economies that support recovery and prosperity
  - iv. Resilient societies that empower people especially those who are marginalized
- b. To meet at least once a year online to share experiences and best practices and coordinate activities.
- c. To prioritize progress towards registration and accreditation within the Commonwealth Secretariat through the ongoing work of the CFNHRI Steering Committee.

##### **4. *As individual NHRIs, we agree:***

- a. To pursue domestic (self-regulated) progress towards the four strategic pillars through individual NHRI activities and collaboration within CFNHRI.
- b. To continue to contribute through CFNHRI as a mechanism for promoting and protecting human rights across the Commonwealth.

#### **Background**

The Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI) is an unincorporated global network of National Human Rights Institutions working to ensure that international human rights standards are respected across the Commonwealth. The forum's shared goal is to support the broad objectives of networking, information sharing, experience and best practice; encouraging countries to establish independent and effective NHRIs in compliance with the Paris Principles and assisting national institutions to fulfill their mandated activities.

**Declaration formally adopted by members of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions present at its biennial meeting on Friday 18 October 2024 in Apia, Samoa.**

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<sup>1</sup> Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (The Paris Principles), General Assembly Resolution 48/134, 20 December 1993.