

CFNHRI STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2024

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Table of content

Table of content.....	2
Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	3
Foreword.....	4
1. Introduction and background.....	5
2. Vision, mission and core values.....	5
3. Organizational structure	6
4. Review of achievements in the past strategic plan	7
5. Strategic priority areas.....	7
6. Key strategic interventions	9
7. Key drivers for success	10
8. Monitoring and Evaluation.....	11



Acronyms and Abbreviations

CATC: Connect Across the Commonwealth

CALL: Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands

CFNHRI: Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions

CHOGM: Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

LGBTI: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex.

NHRIs: National Human Rights Institutions

SGBV: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

TBD: To Be Determined

Foreword



The Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institution's Strategic Plan 2022-2024 has been developed at a time when the world is in the process of responding to the ongoing effects and recovering from COVID-19. NHRIs are called to create change at the national level and to act rapidly and professionally to protect human rights in such challenging situations.

The CFNHRI endeavors to provide support for its members and increase their effectiveness, while simultaneously creating synergies and increasing a collective effort across the Commonwealth, promoting human rights and strengthening engagement with member governments and other key international stakeholders.

During 2022-24 the CFNHRI will focus on the priority themes of health, sport, business, climate, women and children's rights, taking into account achievements made by NHRIs and the difficulties they have encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CFNHRI agreed thematic priorities will be engaged by our membership, both collectively and individually. In addition, however, the Forum will consider the issue of its own long-term stability. During the life time of this Strategic Plan, we aim to create a recognized legal entity with and establish a secretariat tasked with the objective of developing a sustainability plan that will include identifying suitable funding models.

As Chair of the Rwanda National Human Rights Commission, I am delighted to have been endorsed by our peers throughout the Commonwealth and tasked with leading the CFNHRI through this significant period of the development. As a cornerstone of international and domestic system we are collectively mandated to protect the human rights of nearly 2.5 billion people. Creating a strong and resilient Forum capable of providing support between colleagues is an important means of increasing our effectiveness as human rights defenders.

MUKASINE Marie Claire

CFNHRI Chair

1. Introduction and background

The CFNHRI is an inclusive body of Commonwealth NHRIs, ombudsmen and public defenders with a human rights mandate.

It is a network of 46 organizations, all of which are charged with protecting and promoting the human rights in their respective jurisdictions. This collective reach of the CFNHRI spans the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific regions and includes a population of approximately 2.5 billion people. It is a diverse network with global reach, united by its shared values and aspirations.

The role of the CFNHRI is to support the broad objectives of promoting, networking, sharing information, experience, and best practice; encouraging member states of the Commonwealth to establish Paris Principles compliant NHRIs, and assisting those institutions to fulfil their mandated activities.

The CFNHRI plays an important role in ensuring that human rights standards are respected, protected and fulfilled in accordance with international standards. The forum aims to influence the progression of human rights within the processes of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM); by providing a united voice on priority issues and ensuring members and other stakeholders can learn from the insight, experiences and expertise contained within the Forum.

In ensuring the sustainability of the actions of the predecessor chair, the strategic plan 2022-2024 seeks to build on the past achievements and to reflect the current agreed priorities of the CFNHRI.

2. Vision, mission and core values

Vision: The CFNHRI's vision is "A Commonwealth where human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled".

Mission: To ensure that international human rights standards are realized in practice across the Commonwealth by supporting the development of NHRIs and their effectiveness.

Core values :

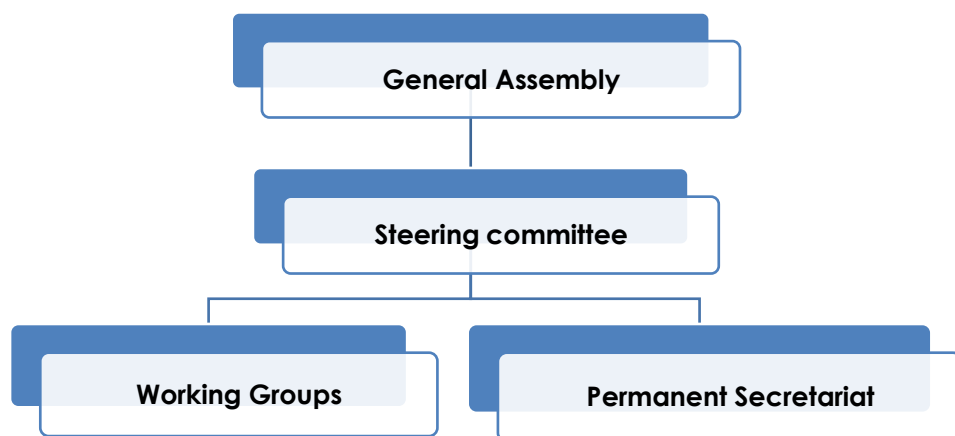
- Legality and respect for international human rights standards
- Equality
- Transparency
- Cooperation
- Building positive relationship
- Participation
- Accountability

- Non-discrimination
- Respect for diversity
- Solidarity

3. Organizational structure

The governance model and structure of the CFNHRI is comprised of four organs as follows:

3.1. CFNHRI Organizational structure



- ❖ **The General Assembly:** is the highest decision-making organ of the CFNHRI in which all members participate in line with the agreed set of governance arrangements and associated rules of procedure;
- ❖ **The steering committee:** presides over the coordination of the CFNHRI's strategic priorities led by its Chair and works closely with the permanent secretariat in the management of the day-to-day activities of the Forum;
- ❖ **Working Groups:** Engage with priority human rights concerns within a given mandated period of time. These are: business and human rights, sports and human rights, women and girls, climate change and human rights, health and human rights;
- ❖ **The Permanent Secretariat:** undertakes the day-to-day management of the Forum led by the Secretary General. It may employ a number of staff to assist the Secretary General.

4. Review of achievements in the past strategic plan

During the CFNHRI's chairship by the Equality and Human Rights Commission of Great Britain from 2018 - 2022, many achievements were realized by the Forum including but not limited to:

- ✓ Establishment and update of the CFNHRI member database;
- ✓ Redesigning and regularly updating the website;
- ✓ Creation of an online networking program for CFNHRI members' staff entitled "Connect Across the Commonwealth (CATC)";
- ✓ Membership communication;
- ✓ Dispatching the regular newsletter, updating members about forthcoming events and opportunities and sharing details of members' work;
- ✓ Organizing and chairing the annual meeting and
- ✓ Organizing the CFNHRI Biennial Meeting.

It is important to note that these achievements were delivered during the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, in the absence of support from a permanent secretariat or financial security to enable medium to long term planning.

5. Strategic priority areas

The CFNHRI strategic priorities of health, sport, business, climate, women and children's rights were developed during the biennial meeting held in Kigali, June 2022. They were also influenced by the recommendations of the CHOGM, as well as related Commonwealth institutions and forums. The reference documents include the following:

- The St Julian Declaration on Climate Justice, 2015;
- The Mérida Declaration on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015;
- The London declaration on sport and human rights, 2018;
- The Communiqué of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting "Delivering A Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming", 2022;
- Commonwealth Living Lands Charter: A Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands (CALL), 2022;
- The Declaration on Sustainable Urbanization, 2022;
- Kigali Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform, Women's, Peoples and Youth Forums outcomes, 2022 and
- The Kigali Declaration on upholding human rights during a pandemic and other global crisis, 2022.

- ❖ **Sport and human rights:** Sport binds member states not least through their participation in the Commonwealth Games movement. It is also an area that both requires actions to protect human rights while providing a platform for their promotion to a wide and diverse audience. Sport creates space for dialogue, to advance gender equality, promote social inclusion and tackle discrimination against vulnerable and marginalized groups. NHRIs may also enhance collaboration with national governing bodies and game federations as well as developing capacity building programs in sports and human rights;
- ❖ **Business and human rights:** Business activities can negatively affect the enjoyment of human rights through exploitative labour practices, pollutive or extractive industrial activity, data mismanagement and much more. NHRIs have a critical role to play in preventing and mitigating the business impacts on human rights especially during the implementation of measures taken to support the economic recovery after COVID-19 pandemic. They may call upon businesses actors to commit to respect human rights, carry out due diligence and provide a remedy when abuses occur. NHRIs can also use their powers to conduct monitoring and investigate business activities, advocating for greater levels of protection and providing access for victims to effective remedies.
- ❖ **Climate change and Human rights:** Climate change is an issue that concerns all CFNHRI's members as it has negative consequences for the entire world. These effects are particularly acute however in many Commonwealth members states, particularly small islands and developing countries where it is further increasing existing inequalities. The CFNHRI's has prioritized climate justice and environmental protection with the aim of increasing collective action among its members and enhancing their expertise in monitoring, evaluating and protecting the rights of those directly impacted by this global emergency at a national level.
- ❖ **The rights of women and girls:** The CHOGM 2022 women's forum highlighted gender-based violence is a global crisis that has intensified since the outbreak of COVID-19. Lockdowns and other mobility restrictions have left many women trapped with their abusers, isolated from social contact and support networks. Increased economic precarity has further limited many women's ability to leave abusive situations. Economic and social instability has also increased the risk of sexual abuse, child marriage, female genital mutilation and human trafficking and exploitation. The CFNHRI will continue to focus on supporting members in their work and to be a collective voice advocating the full realization of the rights of the women and girls across the Commonwealth;
- ❖ **Health and Human Rights:** The CFNHRI Biennial Meeting that was held in June 2022, adopted the Kigali Declaration on upholding human rights during a pandemic and other global crisis. In order to implement the declaration, the CFNHRI's members will advocate for the respect of human rights during COVID-19 pandemic recovery and provide support to Forum members by sharing good practice

and advocating for solidarity among Commonwealth member states, equality and non-discrimination in the provision of healthcare during the post COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

6. Key strategic interventions

The CFNHRI's priorities identified in its strategic plan 2022-2024 aim at protecting and promoting human rights and entail different interventions that will be implemented by members with the coordination of the Forum.

In addressing key human rights concerns mentioned above, the CFNHRI's members will emphasize on implementation of the following interventions by:

1. Organizing sports events which are very instrumental in uniting people and constituting an ideal platform for conveying important human rights messages and ideas to the masses;
2. Organizing sports and human rights forum and
3. Raising awareness on non-discrimination in sports.
4. Identifying and addressing any human rights risks associated with sports as due diligence.
5. Building capacity of business actors on the necessity to undertake "human rights due diligence" measures to ensure their operations respect human rights and do not contribute to human rights abuses;
6. Monitoring of the respect of human rights in business activities;
7. Carrying out researches on the situation of human rights in business;
8. Advocating for protection against human rights abuses and providing access for victims to effective remedies;
9. Developing rights-based guidance which provides both a legal and moral basis to climate change action;
10. Calling upon governments to set up mechanisms aimed at reducing the effects of human actions on climate change;
11. Organizing conferences and seminars on the mitigation and management of the negative impacts of climate change;
12. Conducting awareness campaigns on human rights protection in climate action and
13. Advocating for provision of effective remedies to the victims of climate change.
14. Organizing awareness campaigns on women and girls' rights;
15. Conducting surveys on the respect of the right to justice and effective remedy for SGBV victims;
16. Advocate for increasing the women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels, including initiatives such as quotas, mentorship programs, and leadership training.
17. Advocate for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

18. Organizing international conferences, workshops, meetings and developing resources containing women and girl's rights;
19. Identifying opportunities for CFNHRI's members to showcase their expertise in relation to women and girl's rights.
20. Calling upon Governments to avail COVID-19 vaccines to all citizens in need;
21. Encouraging Governments to design and implement national strategies for forward-planning to the fulfilment of human rights obligations and standards during pandemics and
22. Conducting surveys on the accessibility to medical care services and providing related recommendations for redress.
23. Monitoring over health institutions on the availability, accessibility, adaptability and the quality of services.

7. Key drivers for success

To ensure the achievement of its priorities, the CFNHRI will be guided by the following principles:

a. Effective Governance

A well-governed and professional Forum recognized for its expertise on human rights in the Commonwealth. The organizational restructure of the Forum will be completed to ensure the effective governance. In this regard, the coordination committee and working groups will be established. The permanent secretariat legally registered, a programme of work designed and approved by the CFNHRI;

b. Effective communication

Effective communication will enable effective information sharing between human rights stakeholders in the Commonwealth, so that expertise and best practices can be shared between NHRIs. Different communication channels will be used, including the Forum's website. Effective communication will be a strong tool for offering mutual support in addressing shared challenges;

c. Commitment of members

The CFNHRI's members should be committed to implementing activities that enable the achievement of the Forum's priorities in these two years by undertaking the interventions highlighted in this plan. The engagement of members in the implementation of this plan will play a paramount role in maximizing the outcomes;

d. Availability of resources and independence

NHRIs must be independent and have financial autonomy to exercise their respective mandates. The implementation of this strategic plan's interventions requires the independence and availability of both financial and human resources for all members of the Forum. For the sustainability of the CFNHRI's structures, a fundraising strategy should be developed to mobilize funds to finance the Forum's activities.

In addition to the afore-mentioned principles, CFNHRI is committed to supporting NHRIs seeking accreditation and staff development by ensuring the connecting across the Commonwealth programme continues.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

This document aims to provide an overview of the Forum's strategic direction for a two-year's period.

This strategic plan will be monitored on an annual basis by the Chair and progress will be reviewed and discussed by the membership at the Forum's annual meeting.

The evaluation of this Strategic Plan will be conducted at the end of the two years period and the evaluation report will be presented to the members during the future biennial meeting.
