



Commonwealth Secretary-General



ACTION
COPY

Mr. Wu (email)

DSG/CAL

Mr. Ban Ki-moon (email)

DS/PA

29 April 2016

Dear Secretary-General

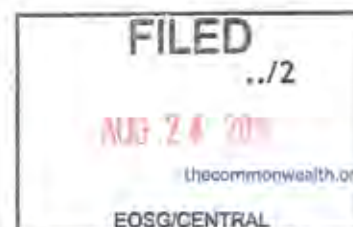
I write to warmly congratulate you on the adoption of the landmark Climate Change Agreement ratified by a record number and signed by 175 countries last Friday. I was delighted to witness this historic signing at your kind invitation. Like you, I firmly believe that this journey has only now begun and that our focus should be unequivocally set on implementation. On this latter point, I would like to work with you on two initiatives which are central to success on the climate change agenda: access to climate finance and realisation of the potential of the blue economy.

The Commonwealth, boasting a membership that comprises one third of the world's population, is therefore keen to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the COP21 Climate Change Agreement. We see these two Agendas as inextricably linked, and especially important for the future survival of our small states, specifically our Small Island Developing States. Of the Commonwealth's members 31 are small states, and of those, 25 are Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Excellency, we in the Commonwealth very much value the personal leadership you have demonstrated in spearheading the SIDS agenda from the very beginning of your tenure. With almost half of our members being SIDS, we have been working with this group of member states to advance long-term development sustainability. In this regard, one important policy option in which we have invested in heavily has been the Blue Economy. This is because many of them enjoy rights over vast areas of ocean space and resources, which provide significant development opportunities, particularly through the development of the 'blue economy', which could be transformational for many countries.

As stated by so many Heads at last week's signing, one of the largest challenges in SIDS is the inability of these countries to address the negative impact of climate change, but more particularly, their inability to access necessary climate financing. Recognizing this, during our Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Malta in November 2015, Commonwealth Heads agreed to establish a Climate Finance Access Hub, intended to help SIDS access climate financing. The Hub is an institutionally light and agile knowledge mechanism. It is being hosted by Mauritius, and will help Commonwealth member states access much needed climate financing through the deployment of national and regional advisers in Commonwealth countries and regions. Here our main objective is to fill the large climate finance advisory capacity gaps in each and every small state in the Commonwealth. A summary note is attached hereto.

HE Mr Ban Ki-moon



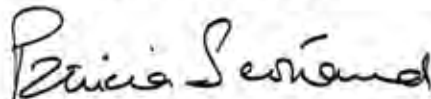
The Commonwealth has been engaged in pioneering ocean governance work and we are particularly proud of our work with many small island states throughout the Commonwealth, where we have helped member countries to extend their jurisdiction over significant additional areas of marine space, settle unresolved maritime boundaries, establish regional and national blue economy strategies, and helped to establish ground-breaking offshore joint management arrangements. This work is set to continue, and there is space for the Commonwealth to continue to expand its role in this area to meet the development needs and expectations of our member countries including with respect to addressing climate change through better marine spatial planning and the management of carbon sinks. More specifically, we are investing in placing advisory capacities in jurisdictions across the Commonwealth to ensure that appropriate frameworks are in place to protect the marine environment while at the same time ensuring sustainable utilisation of these resources.

These two initiatives have been fully endorsed by our Heads as they both stand to close important gaps and are forward looking. Unfortunately, however, the Commonwealth by itself lacks the financial envelope, to make them a successful reality. It is on this basis that we would like to partner with the UN. In effect, we are eager to work with you as your global influence can be instrumental in helping us obtain the full complement of required resources.

These are just two initiatives but I believe we could develop many more if the partnership between the UN and the Commonwealth could be encouraged to flourish through the joint work of our teams. I know we have similar aspirations and I would dearly like to work with you directly so as to enhance the prospect of the realisation of our joint ambition.

Excellency, please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

With best wishes



The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC

HE Mr Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations Headquarters
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New York - NY 10017
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Enclosure:

- Climate Finance Access Hub



The Commonwealth



CHOGM
Malta 2015

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

Malta, 27-29 November 2015

BACKGROUND INFORMATION PAPER

CLIMATE FINANCE ACCESS HUB

(Paragraph 20 of CHOGM 2013 Communiqué)

Background

The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub is a Commonwealth initiative aimed at assisting small and vulnerable states with acute capacity needs to access climate finance. This pioneering initiative is informed by the findings of the 2013 Commonwealth Expert Group on Climate Finance which emphasised the vulnerability of these states to the impact of climate change. The Secretariat also engaged an independent consultant firm which reaffirmed the value and need for such a facility which was reinforced by a wide cross-section of member states. The Hub will be operated through a small knowledge centre in Mauritius and linked to technical advisers based in regions with greater capacity needs for climate finance. This networked approach will enable swift sharing of knowledge and provisions of expertise.

Value of the Hub

The value of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub lies in the flexible deployment of climate finance advisers who are linked to a capacity development programme. This development programme will strengthen the capacity of host countries/institutions to access and sustainable deployment of climate finance at national level. The Hub will seek to provide requirement based support, aligned with national priorities in climate change and will assist in institution building to develop National Climate Action plans.

Objective

The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub will help to build the capacity of countries to access climate finance by:

- (1) Assisting small and vulnerable member states with gaining access to climate change finance;
- (2) Building human and institutional capacity of host countries;
- (3) Supporting the development of pipelines of projects for climate finance as part of National Climate Action Plans; and
- (4) Facilitating cross-Commonwealth cooperation, and sharing of experiences and expertise.

Intended impact

The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub will:

- (i) Help countries with limited capacities bid for and access much needed financing which they may not ordinarily accomplish with their existing capacities;
- (ii) Facilitate establishment of coherent approaches for dealing with multiple funds and partners, and innovative financing;
- (iii) Enhance implementation of national adaptation and mitigation measures and creation and strengthening of institutions towards this end; and
- (iv) Increase potential for realising sustainable development goals at national level.

Sustainability

Deployment of advisers to meet specific needs and assist in human and institutional capacity building will aid sustainability. This will be augmented through knowledge management linked into other networks for continuity. The Hub will work closely with the Commonwealth Small States Centre of Excellence based in Malta.

The growth of the Hub will be progressive. Its operational features will be as follows:

- Secretariat: The Government of Mauritius will generously host and underwrite a small secretariat for the Hub based in Port Louis.
- Regional Support: To aid sustainability and provide regional support the Secretariat is deploying experts in the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5 Cs) in Belize, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in Samoa and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) in Mauritius.
- Capacity Building: The Secretariat will additionally assist with providing technical support in accessing climate change finance and institutional capacity building in a national context, particularly in the operation of 'Debt for Climate Action Swaps'. This capacity building can be supplemented

through the deployment of experts offered by other member states or institutions.

- Partnerships: The Hub will explore partnerships as mutually supportive with like-minded organisations, such as UNEP and UNDP, and other agencies in the field of climate change.

Commonwealth Secretariat
November, 2015