



INDEPENDENT FORUM OF COMMONWEALTH ORGANISATIONS

A Partnership with Commonwealth Accredited Organisations

The IFCO submission to CHOGM – Antigua & Barbuda 2026



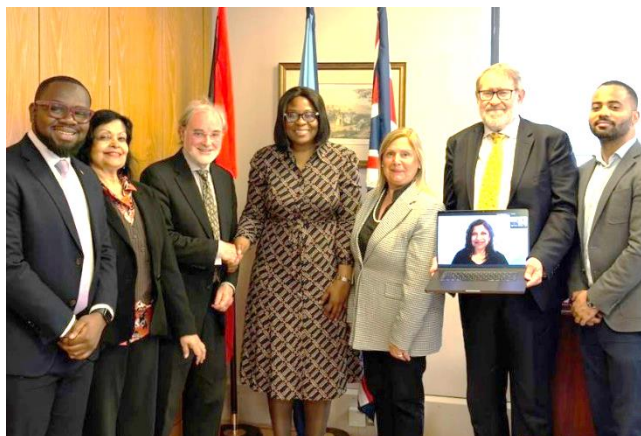
On behalf of Accredited Organisations (AOs) the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations (IFCO) has submitted the following text for integration into the CHOGM 2026 Communiqué, noting the Strategic Plan's commitment to partnerships and supporting the Commonwealth intention to move from declarations to implementation:

“Recognising the value, expertise and community reach of civil society and Accredited Organisations as the third pillar

of the Commonwealth family, able to promote the Commonwealth and its values to the peoples of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth commits to establish a meaningful, structured, strategic partnership with Accredited Organisations based on regular, early consultation and genuine engagement, transparency, inclusivity, shared responsibility and mutual exchange.”

An advocacy strategy involving all Accredited Organisations to promote the proposal with member states and partners is underway.

Meeting between IFCO delegation and Antigua and Barbuda High Commissioner Her Excellency Karen-Mae Hill



Attendance: IFCO – Rose-Anne Cuschieri, David Jones, Bishakha Mukherjee, Owen Tudor and (online) Sneh Aurora and Gerald Abila (not in the photo)

For Antigua & Barbuda: Karen-Mae Hill, Caleb Gardiner and Brent Scotland

An IFCO delegation was honoured to be invited to meet HE Karen-Mae Hill, High Commissioner for Antigua and Barbuda (CHOGM hosts), in April 2026.

The meeting discussed arrangements for CHOGM and for the involvement of Accredited Organisations. The IFCO submission to CHOGM was presented (see above). There was also discussion about future activities when Antigua and Barbuda takes over as Chair-in-Office after CHOGM in November.



Many of the issues discussed in this newsletter are explored in more detail in a forthcoming article by IFCO Chair David N Jones in *The Round Table: The Commonwealth*

Journal of International Affairs and Policy Studies. He concludes: 'There is great potential for the Commonwealth in these challenging and disruptive times. There are willing partners. If the ecosystem as a whole

cannot respond positively to the opportunities, the world will be the poorer and millions of people will be the losers. CHOGM 2026 has the opportunity to demonstrate a new culture of partnership, reassert Commonwealth values and emphasise concerns for the people of the Commonwealth'.

The article will be available online - Jones, D. N. (2026). 'The Commonwealth Strategic Plan 2025–2030. Facing the challenge of an unstable world.' *The Round Table*. DOI:10.1080/00358533.2026.2679652

Join Commonwealth Sport conversation with Accredited Organisations

This session will bring together colleagues from across the network to explore key developments shaping the future of the sports movement, including:

- Commonwealth Sports Vision
- Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games update

- The forward vision for CHOGM, Commonwealth Youth Games and India 2030

This is a unique opportunity for AOs to hear directly from Commonwealth Sport, align on priorities, and engage in discussion ahead of the upcoming Games.



Through its collaboration with the Commonwealth Businesswomen’s Network (CBWN) and the Commonwealth Creative Industries Alliance (CCIA) - of which CBWN is a co-founder - the Cine International Film Festival (CIFF) 2026 in London is introducing the Commonwealth Short Film Award. The Award will spotlight bold, original

storytelling Films must have been completed within the last 3 years prior to the festival date. All genres and styles are welcome including narrative, documentary, animation and experimental work. Selected films will be screened during CIFF as part of the official programme.

Key dates

June 30, 2026: Regular Deadline

July 31, 2026: Late Deadline

August 31, 2026: Notification Date

September 9 – 12, 2026: Event Date, London

Details: <https://filmfreeway.com/CIFFWorld>



On 18 May, at Marlborough House in London, a high-level event convened by the **Commonwealth of Learning (CoL)**, included its Board, education ministers, and representatives from some AOs, including the IFCO Chair, to strengthen collaboration

on building inclusive, future-ready education systems across the Commonwealth. Together, delegates identified practical pathways to ensure education systems remain responsive to the evolving needs of Commonwealth Member States

IFCO meeting dates



The new Steering Committee is scheduled to have a online meeting on **Monday 8th June**. The next hybrid IFCO conference for all AOs is scheduled to on **Monday 15th June**.



CONFERENCE CELEBRATES RELAUNCH OF IFCO

Commonwealth Accredited Organisations (AOs) celebrated the relaunch of the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations at a conference on Marlborough House on 27th April 2026. The conference was the first held under the new constitution and heard from the three Commonwealth intergovernmental institutions as well as the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.



IFCO Steering Committee with the High Commissioner for Antigua & Barbuda, with retiring members, at Marlborough House, April 2026

IFCO undertook a thorough review of its structure and operations through 2025 and appointed COSW General Secretary David N Jones as Interim Chair to steer through the review. A new constitution was approved in March 2026 followed by elections. David was elected unopposed as the new Chair. After a contested election for the 14 other places on the new Steering Committee, it had a first meeting in Marlborough House on 14th April alongside a Secretariat briefing for AOs on CHOGM 2026.



DSG Arjoon Suddhoo with David N Jones

The first IFCO conference was attended in person and online by around 40. Opening the conference, the Deputy Secretary General (DSG), stressed the importance of partnerships with AOs and others and welcomed the IFCO relaunch. He urged AOs to remain true to the principles and objectives in the new constitution and emphasised the key role for AOs - whom he described as 'a force multiplier especially in these days of depleting resources' - in the Strategic Plan.



John Virgoe (FCDO) listening at IFCO

John Virgoe, UK government Envoy to the Commonwealth (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office) welcomed the IFCO commitment to partnership opportunities and stressed the UK commitment to the Commonwealth.

Sat Bindra (Head of Communications) talked about the importance of partnerships with AOs around promotion of Commonwealth Day and CHOGM not least to engage young people in understanding the value of the Commonwealth.



Razmi Farook

Razmi Farook, Director General of the Commonwealth Foundation, presented its draft Strategic Plan and looked forward to constructive joint work with AOs in the increasingly difficult global environment.

Peter Scott, President and CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL), joining from Vancouver, also stressed the importance of more effective partnership working and invited IFCO to contribute to a forthcoming CoL Board roundtable in London.

The conference approved the submission to CHOGM 2026, developed by a working group of AOs. *A Partnership with Commonwealth Accredited Organisations* notes the Commonwealth 'commitment to partnerships and supports the intention to move from declarations to implementation'.

The conference approved a Code of Conduct as a guide for respectful working and started work on communications and work plans.