

Innovation Newsletter

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Editor's Note

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At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018 in London, Heads highlighted the seminal role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Science, Technology and Innovation in supporting good governance, promoting inclusion and sustainable development, and reducing the digital divide. They encouraged member countries to prioritise access to ICT for all in their national development plans, including through a gender and equity lens, and agreed to share innovations in this area, including through the recently launched Commonwealth Innovation Hub. Since then, the Commonwealth Secretariat has made much progress in this area.

The next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), to be held in Rwanda in 2020, is fast approaching and ICT and innovation is expected to be one of the major themes discussed by Heads. Member states, accredited organisations and partners are already working on this agenda and the Commonwealth Secretariat is coordinating this work.

Some innovative projects were recently initiated by the Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership. In addition to the multi-purpose facility that was launched with Bloomberg, the Commonwealth Secretariat continues to explore collaboration with Bloomberg on a number of areas outlined in the memorandum of understanding, including



Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland (centre) speaking at the launch of First Descent, a pioneering deep sea research expedition being undertaken by the Commonwealth in partnership with Nekton Foundation and others to gauge the health of the world's oceans.

international trade, innovation, natural disasters, oceans, and cities. The Commonwealth Secretariat has also joined the Nekton Foundation and other partner organisations on a pioneering marine expedition in the Indian Ocean region to support the implementation of the Commonwealth Blue Charter.

There are some exciting activities coming up in the innovation space. A guide book on frugal innovation will soon be launched. Winners of the inaugural edition of the 'Commonwealth Secretary-General's Innovation for Sustainable Development Awards' will be announced soon. An Innovation Workshop will be held in the Seychelles in June. Finally, an open day on Innovation and Digital transformation will be held for the Commonwealth Secretariat's Board of Governors on 3 July 2019.

1. Seven Commonwealth Countries in 2018 SDG Index's Top 50

The **2018 SDG Index and Dashboards Report**, published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), provides a report card for country-level performance on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda. The index and dashboards describe countries' progress towards achieving the SDGs and indicate areas requiring faster progress. The global SDG Index score and scores by goal can be interpreted as the percentage of achievement. The difference between 100 and countries' scores is therefore the distance in percentage that needs to be completed to achieving the SDGs and goals. The same basket of indicators is used for all countries to generate comparable scores and rankings.

The SDG index highlights the fact that most countries have started SDGs implementation, but important gaps remain. No country is on track towards achieving all SDGs. Conflicts are leading to reversals in SDG progress. Most developing countries have experienced significant progress towards ending extreme poverty in all its forms, including income poverty, undernourishment, access to health and education services, and access to basic infrastructure. Achievement

gaps are greatest towards universal completion of secondary education. Countries experiencing conflict have experienced some of the sharpest reversals, particularly towards achieving Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Goal 2 (No Hunger). Progress towards sustainable consumption and production patterns remains too slow. High-income countries obtain their lowest scores on Goal 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production) and Goal 14 (Life Below Water). Trends on Goal 15 (Life on Land) are also insufficient. They show that further efforts are needed to protect the biodiversity and support sustainable production and consumption. High-income countries generate significant environmental, economic, and security spillover effects that undermine other countries' efforts to achieve the SDGs. Yet, there is high variation in spillovers among countries with a similar per capita income.

Seven Commonwealth member states are among the top 50 countries in the 2018 SDG Index, which ranks a total of 156 countries on the basis of available data.

The full 2018 SDG Index and Report is available here: <http://sdgindex.org/>

2018 SDG Index – Commonwealth Countries

Member States	Ranking	
	Commonwealth (/53 countries)	Global (156 countries)
UK	1	14
New Zealand	2	17
Canada	3	20
Malta	4	30
Australia	5	37
Singapore	6	43
Cyprus	7	50
Malaysia	8	55
Trinidad & Tobago	9	70
Jamaica	10	81
Sri Lanka	11	89
Mauritius	12	90
Ghana	13	101
Belize	14	103
Guyana	15	104
South Africa	16	107
Bangladesh	17	111

Member States	Ranking	
	Commonwealth (/53 countries)	Global (156 countries)
India	18	112
Namibia	19	114
Botswana	20	116
Kenya	21	119
Rwanda	22	120
Cameroon	23	121
Tanzania	24	123
Uganda	25	125
Pakistan	26	126
Zambia	27	129
Gambia	28	133
Lesotho	29	135
eSwatini	30	136
Mozambique	31	138
Malawi	32	140
Sierra Leone	33	146
Nigeria	34	150

Source: SDG Index 2018, SDSN Secretariat

2. South Africa and UK to Lead on Commonwealth Digital Connectivity Agenda

South Africa and the United Kingdom are jointly leading a Commonwealth initiative to boost digital connectivity amongst member countries. South Africa and the UK have agreed to co-lead the Digital Connectivity group - part of the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda on Trade and Investment that was announced at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London last year.

The Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda brings together trade and sectoral policymakers, regulators and implementers to explore ways to increase trade and expand investment across the Commonwealth through peer-to-peer learning, capacity building and the promotion of best practices. The Digital Connectivity Group, one of five clusters in the Connectivity Agenda, will be drawing together countries to support inclusive growth and sustainable development in the Commonwealth through digital trade and digitalisation. The inaugural joint meeting of the Digital Connectivity Cluster took place 19-20 March in Durban, South Africa. The 20 members of the group shared best practices, experiences



and learning to promote digital development. Kirk Haywood, Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda Lead at the Commonwealth Secretariat, said: "The Commonwealth provides a safe space for members to share their experiences, raise their concerns and provide case studies of how digital transformation is already changing the landscape for their growth and development. The work that Members have begun today will provide practical and pragmatic initiatives to ensure all members benefit from the fourth Industrial Revolution."

Read more on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda [here](#).

3. First in the Pacific: Tonga Online Mapping Tool to Visualise Development Statistics

A new online mapping application was recently released in Tonga – the first Pacific Island country to benefit from this technology. PopGIS3 will allow the visualisation of data according to where it has been collected. The mapping application will enable national statistical offices to more effectively

engage in socio-economic data analysis and deliver information products in a user-friendly way. It can also play a critical role in times of disaster response, when accurate maps of disaster affected areas may be required.

Read more [here](#).

4. Bahamas Parliament Approves \$30 Million Digital Transformation Programme

A \$30 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank will finance the Government of Bahamas' Digital Transformation to Strengthen Competitiveness Programme. Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis tabled a Resolution to this effect in the House of Assembly in January; it was subsequently debated and passed. The digitisation programme will update government procedures, design and implement a government cloud computing service that will allow government agencies to access a shared e-Government

infrastructure and applications, update the citizen portal and place government procedures online. "We must make government work for the people instead of people working for the government. Our services must become more efficient, easier to access, transparent and faster, not just for business but for every Bahamian," said Prime Minister Minnis.

Read more [here](#).

5. Video Masterclasses: New Online Resource for Commonwealth Parliamentarians

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Masterclasses are a new online resource to assist Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff in their professional development. CPA Masterclasses are concise video briefings for Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff from across the Commonwealth on a particular subject or topic such as gender, trade

or parliamentary procedure. The videos are aimed at building parliamentary capacity and knowledge. The Masterclass Library and video resources are password protected and the CPA only currently provides access to Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff of CPA Member Branches.

Read more [here](#).

6. Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship Launched

The Commonwealth Pharmacists Association (CPA) and the UK Department of Health and Social Care's Fleming Fund will be supporting 12 selected health partnerships working to tackle antimicrobial resistance. The Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) aims to share skills and expertise between multidisciplinary healthcare teams in the United Kingdom and four low and middle income countries, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, to support AMS initiatives.

Through sharing insights and adapting AMS approaches to suit low resource settings this will also highlight frugal innovation and learnings for healthcare workers to apply in high income settings. The close joint working between multidisciplinary UK health service and overseas staff will allow initiatives to be developed that overcome barriers to appropriate antimicrobial use and understand the local context.

Read more on this programme [here](#).

7. New Innovation Partnerships Between UK, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa

A series of ambitious new Innovation Partnerships between the UK and Africa are expected to stimulate significant economic growth and support the creation of thousands of new jobs. The partnerships, announced by the UK Prime Minister, will be established in African countries with growing tech sectors where there are young, expanding populations with ideas and innovations developing at a rapid pace. The partnerships will enable UK and African entrepreneurs to share skills and ideas, and encourage future trade.

The tech sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in Africa. The continent's start-ups raised 50 per cent more venture capital in 2017 than in 2016, and the majority of this is being invested in South Africa (£130 million), Kenya (£114 million) and Nigeria (£89 million). Nigeria and Kenya's technology sectors are also growing rapidly and generate more than ten per cent and 11 per cent of their respective economic output.

Read more [here](#).

8. India's 'Commonwealth window' supports SDG projects in Grenada, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

The Government of India has launched a US\$50 Million Commonwealth window within the India-UN Development Partnership Fund to support demand-driven, country-owned and concrete initiatives that focus on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Commonwealth countries. Grenada, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu are the first three development partners engaged under this Commonwealth window. "The Commonwealth membership is built on a shared past, respect for common values, broadly similar government

structures, and institutions. We are, therefore, excited to initiate this partnership to contribute to our collective efforts to implement Sustainable Development Goals," said Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations.

Read more [here](#).

9. Commonwealth Adviser Wins International Anti-Corruption Excellence Award – Innovation Category

Dr Roger Koranteng, Adviser on Public Sector Governance at the Commonwealth Secretariat, was awarded the 2018 Sheikh Tamim Hamad Al Thani International Anti-Corruption Excellence Award for his work on tackling corruption in Commonwealth countries and elsewhere. Dr Koranteng was awarded for his “sustained commitment to the fight against corruption not only by visioning, establishing, operationalising, designing and delivering training programmes at the regional Anti-Corruption Centre in Botswana and across the Commonwealth. Dr Koranteng established the vibrant the Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa and in the Caribbean, which is delivering tangible results.” Dr Koranteng received his award in the Innovation category at a ceremony in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Dr Roger Koranteng receiving the 2018 Sheikh Tamim Hamad Al Thani International Anti-Corruption Excellence Award in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia