

NEWSLETTER



Highlights In The Newsletter

- COSW Council first meeting & new Board members 2
- New Secretary General and Strategic Plan 3
- Malawi Social Work Practitioners Bill 4
- Pacific solidarity, Nigerian Social Work Council delay 5
- Fit for our Commonwealth, USAID cuts, Africa webinar 6
- CHOGM 2026, Nairobi 2026, Senegal 2025 7
- Sri Lanka 2025, Council member reflects 8
- Barbados association history 9
- Stop Press – Foundation and IFCO leadership 10
- COSW Associate opportunities 11

8th Issue

1st September 2025

COSW President Sylvia Daisy Romanus



In welcoming you to this issue of the COSW Newsletter, I acknowledge the terrible shocks which have affected so many social workers following the USAID cuts and other changes in development assistance. In a session of our Policy Forum on 13th September 2025 COSW continues to explore the most effective responses and new ways forward.

I am nevertheless proud to draw your attention to several new initiatives which we promised last year and have already delivered. The new COSW Council, made up of country representatives from across the Commonwealth and the Board members, has started work with great optimism. The new Associate Membership scheme has been launched and continues to attract new members. The process for creating the new Board is almost complete and will be confirmed by the Council in September. In addition, COSW has responded to global crises such as the halt in USAID, engaged with the new Commonwealth Secretary General and the Strategic Plan consultation and strengthened our partnerships.

This is probably my last Newsletter as President, so I extend my thanks to colleagues right across the Commonwealth for your constructive and positive approach to our shared objective of strengthening social work. I wish the new Council and Board well and will continue to be involved in a different role..

Join the COSW network today!



Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work invites individuals and organisations to support the voice of social work in the Commonwealth by joining as Associate Members. Joining could not be easier. A short membership form is available on the Associate Membership portal with no fee. Arrangements for making donations will be announced soon.

Within weeks of the soft launch, over 100 individuals and organisations had already signed up. Associates can take part in a new webinar series, aiming to share good practice and support curriculum development.

Why not sign up today!

[Become an Associate member here.](#)

See page 11 for more about the network

COSW Policy Forum – 13 September

A new report: **"From Fragility to Fortitude: Building Resilient African CSOs in the Wake of the US Government Funding Collapse"** will be a key element in the 2025 COSW annual Policy Forum. A presentation by the report authors will be followed by a pan-Commonwealth panel discussion with an opportunity for audience contributions.



The Zoom webinar will also include reports on COSW activity during 2024-5 and greetings from the Commonwealth Head of Communications and the Presidents of IFSW and IASSW.

**Zoom link @ www.cosw.info before webinar.
Open to all.**

New COSW Council convenes for first formal meeting

COSW took a major step into a new era when the newly formed COSW Council was convened for the first time on Saturday [24 May 2025](#) on Zoom, following an induction session on [3 May 2025](#).

The new Council structure includes one representative from each Commonwealth country as well as the Board members, increasing the number of people and countries directly involved in running the organisation. An invitation was issued to all countries, primarily through national social work associations, to create an Appointment Group to oversee the national selection. COSW is not a Federation of national associations, so the process of appointment is different from both IFSW and IASSW. Several countries completed the process. Once a minimum of 15 countries were represented, the structure could come into operation. This has now happened. **Representatives from more countries would be very welcome; guidance and nomination forms can be found on the [website](#).**

16 countries are represented on the Council, which has places for all 56 Commonwealth countries. Representatives from more countries would be very welcome. The national representatives on the new Council are: Gambia – Basamba Drammeh*, India – S Cyril Alexander*, Kenya – George Kombe, Malawi – Stephano Joseph, Nigeria – Chinwe Nwanna, Rwanda – Joseph Hahirwa, Uganda – Byamukama Ntanda, Zambia – Jacob Sichone, Sri Lanka – Rasika Samanmalee, UK – Carlene Cornish and Fiji – Malakai Kaitani*.



Board Members are also Members of the Council. The current Board continues to serve until September 2025 and includes: Sylvia Daisy Romanus (President)(India), Godfred Boahen (Treasurer)(UK), David N Jones (Secretary General)(UK), Naomi Spencer (Board Secretary)(Australia), *Charles Mbugua (Kenya), Jan Christianson-Wood (Canada), *Monique Auffrey (Canada), *Joachim Mumba (Zambia), Ramesh K. S. (India), Nathan Chong-Nee (ANZ), *Teoh Ai Hua (Malaysia), Gerald Okiria (Uganda)(Newsletter Editor), Sharon-Rose Gittens (Barbados). Those marked * were not able to attend the meeting in May.

Organisations interested to explore membership of the Council should write to COSW Admin at cosw.cw@gmail.com.

New COSW Board members

COSW is pleased to welcome potential new members to the Board. They are being recommended for appointment by the September meeting of the new Council. A full introduction will be provided in the next Newsletter.

Mary Bastien (Trinidad and Tobago) is Director, National Family Services Division of Trinidad and Tobago government with over 14 years' experience as a Social Work Manager.

Carlene Cornish (UK) grew up in South Africa, now a social work academic in the UK with particular interests in child protection, fostering and adoption, youth offending, restorative justice and racial justice.

David Kegan (Australia) formerly developed and delivered services for refugees and asylum seekers in the Pacific region, now a social work academic.

Continuing Board members are Nathan Chong-Nee (Aotearoa New Zealand), Jan Christianson-Wood (Canada), Sharon-Rose Gittens (Barbados), Gerald Okiria (Uganda) and K. S. Ramesh (India).

Proposed for co-option – Sylvia Daisy Romanus (India, Past President) and Godfred Boahen UK/Ghana, Treasurer). Charles Mbugua (Kenya – 2026 conference) and Naomi Spencer (Board Secretary) will be invited to attend Board meetings. A call for nominations from countries not so far represented on the Board to fill the remaining four vacancies follows later in the year.

Celebrations as New Secretary General takes up office



*Honourable Shirley Botchwey (Secretary General)
with David N Jones (COSW General Secretary)*

The Honourable Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey became the 7th Commonwealth Secretary General on 1st May 2025 and was welcomed at a reception hosted by the British Government on 5th June. COSW was represented at the event by our Main Representative, David N Jones, who was honoured to share a few words of congratulation with the SG. The whole event had a strong Ghanaian vibe with African drums, Caribbean steel pans and disco beats as well as formal speeches.

The British Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, offered the unwavering support of the UK to the Commonwealth and its new SG: "A thriving Commonwealth is a matter close to my heart. My heritage, spanning the UK and the Caribbean, Africa and India gives me a powerful sense of belonging in this family of nations."

In her address Honourable Shirley commented: "The Commonwealth is a living promise — of unity, of cooperation, of progress and sustainability. The Commonwealth is proof that we can overcome our past; that we can take the good, while calling out the bad; that we can find unity in purpose, not identity; that we don't have to look East or West, South or North, just forward." She continued: "In a world this fractured, we are a space for solutions." Read the full speech [here](#).

COSW contributes to Consultation on Commonwealth Strategic Plan 2025-2030

COSW joined more than 50 Accredited Organisations for the [first meeting](#) with the new Secretary General focused primarily on the draft Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan.



The new Secretary General's first meeting with Accredited Organisations on 15th July 2025

COSW joined partners in the Commonwealth Health Professions and Partners Alliance (CHPA) and many others seeking to ensure that social policy remains a strategic Commonwealth focus, including health, education and social development. COSW played a key role in drafting the submission from the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations (IFCO) which highlighted the need to strengthen partnerships and to include social policy themes. CHPA has written personally to all High Commissioners and the UK Foreign Secretary to stress this point. The Commonwealth Children Interest Group (ComCIG) made a brief submission focused on activating the [Kigali Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform](#). COSW responded to the consultation by supporting the IFCO, CHPA and ComCIG submissions. The Secretariat welcomed feedback from stakeholders [and promised further consultation](#) before the Plan is finalised and a continuing role in developing the implementation plan.

Association of Social Workers in Malawi (ASWiM) Reviews Social Work Practitioners Bill



Following the first successful National Professional Social Work Conference in May 2018, actions were taken to establish a national task force to drive forward the process of professionalising social work in Malawi, with the plan to establish a professional association. In May 2020 the second National Professional Social Work Conference was marked by a vibrant and celebratory event to officially launch the Association of Social Workers in Malawi (ASWiM). This was supported by the (then)

Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare; UNICEF Country Representatives; the President of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) – Africa Region; representatives of Social Work Associations from Zimbabwe and Zambia; Supporting Social Work in Malawi (SSWiM) – UK; representatives of academic institutions from across Malawi and Africa; and social workers from across Malawi.

The launch of ASWiM coincided with the presentation of the draft Malawi Social Workers Practitioners Bill. This represented a clear and conscience way to professionalise social work in Malawi benefit from strong, responsive, ethical professional high-quality services from professional social workers.

On 15th August, 2025, ASWiM, with support from UNICEF and in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) – Social Welfare Directorate, conducted a hybrid consultation (virtual and physical) for all social workers in Malawi, and those from the wider related diaspora, to solicit their views on the draft Social Work Practitioners Bill, aimed at supporting, developing and regulating the profession.

In his remarks, Chisangalalo Ntonio, ASWiM President, said that there are high expectations that the Social Work Practitioners Bill, once passed by Parliament, will help to support the development and regulation of the social work profession by ensuring that only licensed social work practitioners are allowed to practice across the country.

“We will ensure that social work practitioners are properly certified. As a social work body we have noted and are saddened by the practice where many individuals are practicing without the necessary qualifications in social work and this has the potential to endanger the clients. Some are currently establishing organizations and dealing with clients.



Chisangalalo Ntonio – ASWiM President

These practices will be things of the past once the law is in place “

Joseph Kalero-Phiri, a renowned social worker in Malawi, lauded the consultations as a step in the right direction for social work in Malawi. He noted that the consultation process presented an opportunity for stakeholders to present their views on the Bill when he remarked that:

“This is a step in the right direction towards a more inclusive way of developing a law that will affect many. Society will benefit from ethical and professionalised social work practice”, he commented.

Kalero-Phiri noted that, due to passage of time, many things have changed in the progress of social work in Malawi, hence consultations are necessary. He noted that the process needs wider consultations to ensure that diverse groups of service users and practitioners are consulted, including those working with people with disabilities, older people, children in child care institutions, health settings, courts and wider bodies.

In his remarks, Enock Bonongwe, Deputy Director of Social Welfare in the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW), said Government is committed to ensuring the Bill's passage so that social work in Malawi becomes more recognised, organised and impactful.

The Social Work Practitioners Bill is being reviewed with support from UNICEF, with legal facilitation provided by renowned lawyer Chancy Gondwe.

Stephano Joseph

Talanoa Moana Pacific Solidarity, Global Impact

In September, the Association of Fiji Social Workers (AFSW) and the University of the South Pacific will host an inaugural symposium — the first time social workers in Fiji will gather in this way. This project is a commitment to AFSW to further enable a thriving, connected community of social workers who can influence both locally and globally and builds on initiatives linked to the promotion of social work at CHOGM 2024 in Samoa.



The Talanoa Moana team
L-R: Watisoni Nata (AFSW Treasurer), Nathan Chong-Nee (CE ANZASW), Carol Tana-Tepania (ANZASW & TWSWA Member), Malakai Waqa Kaitani (AFSW President & USP Social Work Discipline), Dr Landon Chinen (Social Work Leader, Hawai'i) in Aotearoa

Pacific social work voices are essential in global conversations. Talanoa Moana will strengthen our unity and connections, amplifying Pacific social work voices to speak with strength and clarity, both across our region and on the world stage. This aligns shared aspirations for a connected social work community across the Pacific, and our commitment to elevating Pacific representation in global spaces such as the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW).

As part of the South Pacific Project (built on the strategic working relationship between COSW, the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW), and AFSW) Talanoa Moana will bring together over 70 social workers, allied professionals, and students from across Fiji. ANZASW CE Nathan Chong-Nee, Dr Landon Chinen (Hawai'i) and Carole Tana-Tepania (ANZASW Member & Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association Kāhui Member) will attend as allies and supporters of AFSW.

Funded by the Young Pacific Leaders Initiative, Talanoa Moana is a call to Pacific social work solidarity to step forward: connected, visible, and ready to amplify Pacific social work voices.

Delay in constituting Nigerian Social Work Council criticised by social work leaders

Social work leaders in Nigeria have declared that the absence of a Council to regulate social work is undermining the growth and progress of the profession in the country.



Nigerian social work leaders meeting in Abuja
Alhaji Mashood Mustapha centre

A strategic meeting in Abuja convened by Nigeria Association of Social Workers (NASoW), in collaboration with its affiliate professional bodies - Association of Social Work Educators in Nigeria (ASWEN), Association of Medical Social Workers of Nigeria (AMSWON) and Institute of Social Work in Nigeria (ISOWN) ended with a joint communiqué.

The meeting was attended by Alhaji Mashood Mustapha, President of NASoW, Mrs Esther Nasara, General Secretary of NASoW, Professor Alamveabee Idyorough, President of ASWEN, Professor James Ayangunna, National Secretary of ASWEN, Mr. Kayode Ogedengbe, National President of AMSWON and Daniel Ellu, National General Secretary of AMSWON (see picture).

Issuing a "Call to Action", the leaders called on policy makers, the media, and the general public to support this cause 'which seeks to enhance the delivery of essential social services, protect the vulnerable, and promote national development through professional social work practice', 'in the spirit of unity, professionalism, and commitment to national service'.

Welcoming the statement, COSW President Sylvia Daisy Romanus said: 'the formal recognition of professional social work is crucially important for development and community wellbeing across the Commonwealth. I therefore fully support the Call to Action, not only in Nigeria but across all Commonwealth countries'.

Read the full report [here](#).

Webinar highlights recognition of social work across Africa



Progress in establishing recognition and regulation of social work across Africa was reported in a webinar on 20th March 2025, jointly organised by International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) Africa and the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW). The video can still be viewed [here](#).

Introduced by Sylvia Daisy Romanus (COSW President) and Oluwatoni Adeleke (IFSW Africa President), the webinar featured contributions about recent legislation in Zambia by Joachim Mumba and Nigeria by Alhaji Mashood Mustapha. David N Jones presented key questions and challenges to be resolved when setting up regulation. Participants reported on positive developments in several African countries.

COSW examines the Trump effect on aid and development



The dramatic impact of the sudden halt to USAID prompted action by COSW and our Commonwealth partners. The Health Professions and Partners Alliance (CHPA) issued a statement on the [freeze of USA overseas aid](#) and urgent calls for

action to the US government, Commonwealth member states and the Secretariat. The Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations issued a statement on [global relationships and development assistance](#), noting the benefits of investments in development aid and highlighting the repercussions on Commonwealth communities and calling on the Commonwealth Secretariat to take a lead in exploring alternatives to protect people and save lives. COSW contributed to a podcast examining the Trump effect on aid and development. Some African politicians argued that the impact was a wakeup call to African governments to develop self-funded health services. The personal impact on hundreds of social workers who lost their jobs and futures overnight was brought home in an article for the UK newspaper [The Observer](#) by COSW Board member and IFSW President Joachim Mumba. The [COSW Policy Forum](#) in September 2025 continues the search for solutions.

Fit for our Commonwealth COSW at the Commonwealth Civil Society Policy Forum 2025

The annual Commonwealth Civil Society Policy Forum was convened online by the Commonwealth Health Professions and Partners Alliance (CHPA) in February. The report was presented to the Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting (CHMM) in Geneva on 17th May 2025 by CHPA Chair Victoria Rutter (Commonwealth Pharmacists Association) with COSW Board member David N Jones in attendance.



Victoria Rutter presents the CHPA report to governments in Geneva

Social work contributors to the webinar included Zeni Thumbadoo (Deputy Director, National Association of Child Care Workers, South Africa) who described how her organisation was responding to the USAID cuts and the impact on communities and staff. The four recommendations focussed especially on actions needed to recruit and sustain the health and social care workforce. The report can be downloaded [here](#).



Representatives of Commonwealth Accredited Organisations attending Health Ministers Meeting - Geneva May 2025

Planning for CHOGM 2026 A warm Caribbean welcome



CHOGM 2024 Opening

Prime Minister Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa (left) King Charles (centre) Secretary General Patricia Scotland (right)

COSW and Commonwealth partners are already looking ahead to CHOGM 2026 in Antigua and Barbuda. COSW policy is that social work is represented at CHOGM by local social workers. Sharon-Rose Gittens (Barbados) is a continuing Board member and will play a key role in the delegation joined by new Board member Mary Bastien (Trinidad & Tobago). COSW will again play a key role in drafting the IFCO submission on behalf of Accredited Organisations, which is again likely to focus on sustaining and strengthening the civil society voice in the Commonwealth and member states. The dates have not yet been announced but November looks the most likely time.

Social Work in Africa: Navigating the Challenges of Social Cohesion and Sustainable Development 26 – 30 November 2025



The conference is being held in Dakar, Senegal.

Registration remains open at:

<https://www.ifswafricaregionconference.org/>

SWSD 2026 – 26-29 June 2026 Welcome to Nairobi! Karibu Nairobi! Secure Your Place



The Joint Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development is a biennial event that brings together members of the Associations of Social Work to exchange experiences, explore current trends, and share best practices in the field of social work worldwide.

The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) are pleased to announce that registration is now officially open for the [2026 Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development](#) (SWSD 2026). COSW will be a contributor and host a side event.

Hosted by the Kenya National Association of Social Workers (KNASW) at the iconic Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC), the conference is guided by the theme "**Harambee for Sustainable Shared Futures**". This concept, rooted in East African traditions of unity and collective action, reflects our shared commitment to social justice, equity and inclusive development.

Charles Mbugua, Chair of the Local Organising Committee and COSW Board Member, said "I am honoured to welcome you to Nairobi. Harambee, a Swahili term meaning 'all pull together', is more than a word. It is a philosophy and a lived practice in Kenya and across the region. It reflects the very spirit of solidarity, community-building and collective responsibility that lies at the heart of social work and social development."

Early registration is encouraged to benefit from [early bird rates](#) (until 31.10.2025) and to secure your place at this high-level global event.

Join us in Nairobi as we come together in the spirit of Harambee to envision and build sustainable shared futures for all.



Initial thoughts of new Council members

Gambia greeting

As a Council Member representing The Gambia, I am dedicated to amplifying the voices of social workers and promoting inclusive approaches that respond to the unique challenges of our communities. My commitment is to foster collaboration within COSW, advance social justice, enhance professional development, and strengthen the impact of social work in The Gambia and across the wider region.

Basamba Drammeh.



Malawi Musing

As a new member of COSW I am looking forward to sharing new ideas and learning from countries across the Commonwealth on how we can together further social work aims and objectives in the region. I am particularly thrilled and looking forward to sharing new knowledge and innovative ideas on the impact of social work towards Human Development.

Stephano Joseph



Rwanda reflection

Rwanda is relatively new, having adopted social work in 1998 and joined the Commonwealth in 2009. However, being a post genocide society, it has adopted various homegrown solutions (HGSs) to deal with social problems. Among other HGSs adopted, we may say Umuganda, Gacaca, and Ubudehe, which have helped Rwanda to become a safe and clean destination. Hence, we are excited to be part of the COSW Council, where we can learn from others and share our experiences as well, and there is a hope for COSW to bring the Commonwealth World to another stage through working together.

Hahibwa Joseph (Member) and **Pierre Celestin Bimenyimana** (Alternate Member)



United Kingdom thinking

"As COSW Board Member and UK Council Member, I am excited to form part of a governance structure that provides strategic direction and ensuring that the international reach of social work as a profession is strengthened across Commonwealth nations".

Carlene Cornish



Sri Lanka statement



challenges" **Rasika Samanmalee**

"As a new Council member, I hope COSW will continue to strengthen collaboration and solidarity across the Commonwealth. I am determined to contribute my experience to promote social justice, equity, and human dignity, ensuring social work remains responsive, innovative, and impactful in addressing today's global and local

Nigeria notification



As a member of the COSW Council, my hopes are to adhere to the goals of the COSW, promote social justice and human rights, participate in formulation of policies to serve the interests of social workers particularly Nigerian social workers, share my expertise and foster collaboration with other professionals.

Chinwe R. Nwanna



28th Asia Pacific Social Work Regional Conference IFSW-AP & APASWE

**Social Work Responses to Climate Change
and Other Environmental Issues**

18th - 21st November 2025



**Bandaranayke Memorial International Conference
Hall, Colombo, Sri Lanka &
Taj Samudhra Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**Organized by
Sri Lanka Association of Professional Social
Workers (SLAPSW)
Collaboration with
National Institute of Social Development (NISD)**

Contact

<https://ifswapap2025.slapslw.lk>
apswc2025@gmail.com

Formation and achievements of the Barbados Association



The Barbados Association of Social Workers (BAPSW) is committed to the development of social work as a profession in Barbados. Its primary goal is advocacy on behalf of the social work profession, social workers and their clients. Formed in the late 1960s, the first President was Mr. Lomer Alleyne and first Secretary, Ms. Marva Alleyne (retired Director of Bureau of Gender Affairs).

Its main objective in the 1960s was to bring social workers together and to address government on issues pertaining to the profession and social development. Training of social workers and school social work were key issues. Training was only available at the University of the West Indies. The certificate programme eventually became a Bachelor's programme, on par with what was offered in the UK and USA. The Association then had a low period but rebounded in the late 70's to challenge government on its plan to implement counsellors in the schools, who were untrained and being paid at a higher grade than the trained social workers who were already available. The Association was also instrumental in advocating for the implementation of the BSc Social Work programme at the UWI Cave Hill campus. Over the years the Association has had periods of inactivity and consequently regrouped several times.

By 2021 the Association rebranded under three pillars which guide its current existence. These pillars are: Colleague Upliftment, Community Outreach and Advocacy and Capacity Building. **The mission of the Association is "to be the voice of the Social Work Profession". Its mandate is to provide support, development and growth of all members through education, social interaction, emotional enhancement and solidarity.** By so doing, it serves as a change agent impacting on social policy and social work development in Barbados.

1994 to 2004 Building membership and forming alliances focusing on social workers in the profession

2004 **Social work week** theme "sharing the vision"

2007 Revised the **constitution**

2007 Actively celebrating **World Social Work Day**

2008 -2010 **Honoured** Gordon Walters & Marjorie Blackman 2008, Hensley Robinson & June Gibson 2009; Hildegard Weeks & Lionel Clarke 2010

2007 – 2011 Prayer & **breakfast meetings & members' retreats** focused on strategic vision of the association and engage with other key professionals

2009 **Manpower survey** examined the Status of Social Work Profession in Barbados, in collaboration with Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and University of the West Indies.

2010 Opened Secretariat in St. Michael

2011 Capacity building training including topics such as Professional Burnout Prevention and Intervention; Social Work and Disaster Management

2013 **World Social Work Day** Special on Brass Tacks

2014 Represented on the Board of Caribbean **Journal of Social Work**

Contributed to legislation on Minors Accessing Health Care

2017 Discussions on Engagement of **School Social Workers** as Volunteers within the Primary School

2018 Discussions on the Development of a BCC **Certified Trauma in Social Work Course** with Jomo Phillips and Principal of BCC

2020-2023 Becoming a member of International Federation of Social Work (**IFSW**) and **COSW**

Attending **First Global Social Work Online Conference**

Partnerships in Crisis and Disaster Management: **Ministry of Health and Wellness**

Barbados National Mental Health Team

Psychosocial Support and Remote Tele-Counsellors of COVID-19 victims

Ministry of People Empowerment & Elder Affairs

Social Assessment of COVID 19 Families

Hurricane Elsa Social Assessment Recovery Response

BAPSW 1st Government Subvention

Ministry of Education

BAPSW Resilient Awards

Certified BCC Trauma in Social Work Course

Employment and Training Opportunities

Employment of 20 School Social Workers

Employment of 7 School Safety Officers

Employment Contracted social workers at Welfare Department

Employment of Family Empowerment Officers

First Aid Training

Trauma in Social Work

Acute Childhood Trauma

Celebrating and Recognition of World Social Work Day

2023-2025 **Social Justice Committee, Resilient Awards** for Class 4 Students, Human Trafficking Training, Faith Marshall Harris Sandy Lane Charitable Trust Child Helpline responders

Sharon-Rose Giffens (BAPSW President, COSW Board member)

STOP PRESS – STOP PRESS - STOP PRESS - STOP PRESS WELCOMES

FOUNDATION DIRECTOR-GENERAL

COSW was pleased to join the welcome to the new Director-General of the Commonwealth Foundation at a special IFCO meeting on Thursday 28th August 2025. Razmi Farook takes up office on 1st September 2025.

'Razmi Farook brings exceptional leadership experience from senior roles in civil society and intergovernmental organisations, including the United Nations, the International Federation of the Red Cross, and ActionAid International. Her career has focused on supporting marginalised and war-affected communities, advocating for equity, inclusion, and active civil society participation in governance and decision-making processes.'

Speaking to representatives of Accredited Organisations, Razmi said 'I am thrilled to be joining the Commonwealth Foundation as Director-General, having committed so much of my career to working internationally to strengthen the role of civil society, support governments, and place communities at the heart of everything I do. I will relish the important platform the Commonwealth Foundation provides to build global civil society solidarity and intergovernmental cooperation, especially at this critical moment in history when our common values and principles are being put to the test.' She looked forward to working closely with Accredited Organisations and developing new partnerships.

<https://commonwealthfoundation.com/razmi-farook-appointed-as-commonwealth-foundations-director-general/>.

Also speaking at the IFCO meeting (online from Vancouver) was Peter Scott, recently appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of the [Commonwealth of Learning](#) (COL). He also stressed the value of partnerships and looked forward to closer working with Accredited Organisations and exploring areas of mutual interest.



INTERIM CHAIR OF IFCO

The new Interim Chair of the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations (IFCO) is COSW Board Member David N Jones. IFCO is the umbrella grouping of Commonwealth Accredited Organisations providing a forum for mutual support, partnership and common action. He replaces Nicholas Watts who stands down after several years in the role.

David will help steer the IFCO governance review process with a timetable leading to the election of a new Steering Committee and officers by April 2026.

David said "Civil society is a core element within the Commonwealth, often referred to as the third pillar, alongside the member states and the intergovernmental institutions. The 97 diverse



*Razami Farook and David N Jones @ IFCO
Both take office on 1st September*

Accredited Organisations are the formal embodiment of that pillar. We represent many diverse views but we also have common interests. Our governance review reflects the maturing of our network and a shared determination to protect and enhance the civil society voice across the Commonwealth in difficult times of change and upheaval.

"I look forward to working with Accredited Organisations, the Secretariat Governors and new Secretary General, the new Director-General of the Foundation, the recently appointed Chief Executive of the Commonwealth of Learning and other stakeholders to support the Commonwealth Charter principles and to strengthen the Commonwealth eco-system.

"I thank Nicholas for his immense commitment to the Commonwealth and IFCO and look forward to continuing to work with him during this transition and beyond."



COSW ASSOCIATE WEBINARS



Photo from Freepik.com

COSW Associates are invited to join special interest groups offering an opportunity to meet and share best practices with

colleagues from around the Commonwealth. New Council member Carlene Cornish is consulting Associates to discover what groups and activities would be of interest to them.

The first consultation webinar is on Tuesday 2nd September focusing on social work with children and families. Other specialisms on the Associate registration form include older people, physical health, mental health, and workforce development.

A series of webinars will start initial discussions and develop collaborative initiatives that strengthen and enhance social work as a profession across the Commonwealth nations.

Associates are also invited to submit short articles for future editions of this Newsletter.

To participate in the consultation and Associate activities, all that is necessary is to sign up as a COSW Associate at <https://cosw.info/associate-membership/>. We aim to be in touch with you within two weeks and then to link you into this exciting new development.

There is no joining fee but Associates as individuals or organisations will be invited to make a donation at a future date.



The Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is made up of 54 countries around the world

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of independent countries spread over every continent and ocean. Its 2.5 billion people, who account for over 30 per cent of the world's population, are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, Europe and the Pacific. They are of many faiths, races, languages and cultures.

The Commonwealth promotes peace and international co-operation, democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and the improvement of lives through economic and social development.

These values and aspirations are described in the Charter of the Commonwealth. The Charter expresses the commitment of member countries to the development of free and democratic societies and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all Commonwealth people. It also acknowledges the role of civil society in supporting the goals and values of the Commonwealth.

MEMBER COUNTRY	CAPITAL
1 ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	St John's
2 AUSTRALIA	Canberra
3 THE BAHAMAS	Nassau
4 BANGLADESH	Dhaka
5 BARBADOS	Bridgetown
6 BELIZE	Belmopan
7 BOTSWANA	Gaborone
8 BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	Bandar Seri Begawan
9 CAMBODIA	Yasuni
10 CANADA	Ottawa
11 CYPRUS	Nicosia
12 DOMINICA	Roseau
13 ESWATINI	Mbabane
14 FIJI	Suva
15 THE GAMBIA	Banjul
16 GHANA	Accra
17 GRENADA	St George's
18 GUYANA	Georgetown
19 INDIA	New Delhi
20 JAMAICA	Kingston

MEMBER COUNTRY	CAPITAL
21 KENYA	Nairobi
22 KIRIBATI	Tarawa
23 LESOTHO	Maseru
24 MALAWI	Lilongwe
25 MALAYSIA	Kuala Lumpur
26 MALDIVES	Malé
27 MALTA	Valletta
28 MAURITIUS	Port Louis
29 MOZAMBIQUE	Maputo
30 NAMIBIA	Windhoek
31 NAURU	Nauru
32 NEW ZEALAND	Wellington
33 NIGERIA	Abuja
34 PAKISTAN	Islamabad
35 PAPUA NEW GUINEA	Port Moresby
36 RWANDA	Kigali
37 ST KITTS AND NEVIS	Basseterre
38 SAINT LUCIA	Castries
39 ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	Kingstown

MEMBER COUNTRY	CAPITAL
40 SAMOA	Apia
41 SEYCHELLES	Victoria
42 SIERRA LEONE	Freetown
43 SINGAPORE	Singapore
44 SOLOMON ISLANDS	Honiara
45 SOUTH AFRICA	Pretoria
46 SRI LANKA	Colombo
47 TONGA	Nukunono
48 TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	Port of Spain
49 TUVALU	Funafuti
50 UGANDA	Kampala
51 UNITED KINGDOM	London
52 UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA	Dodoma
53 VANUATU	Port Vila
54 ZAMBIA	Lusaka


Map source: Commonwealth Secretariat/Department of Foreign Affairs
The designations and the presentation of material on this map, based on UN practice, do not imply the agreement of any other member state on the part of the Commonwealth Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Information correct as of 1st of February 2022
This is a poster

Commonwealth Secretariat
Hartwood House, 75, Whitehall
London SW1Y 2HQ, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 20 747 8385 / 86

thecommonwealth.org
info@commonwealth.int

facebook.com/commonwealthsec
twitter.com/commonwealthsec

Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW) Executive Board			
Sylvia Daisy Romanus (India) – President	Naomi Spencer (Australia) – Honorary Board Secretary	Godfred Boahen (UK / Ghana) - Honorary Treasurer	
			
	David N Jones (UK) Main Representative to the Commonwealth	Charles Mbugua (Kenya)	
			
Jan Christianson-Wood (Canada)	Monique Auffrey (Canada)	Joachim Mumba (Zambia)	K. S. Ramesh - (India)
			
Teoh Ai Hua (Malaysia)	Okiria Gerald (Uganda)	Nathan Chong-Nee (Aotearoa New Zealand)	Sharon-Rose Gittens (Barbados)
			

For details visit our
website

www.cosw.info

Social Media Platforms



<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthOrganizationForSocialWork>



<https://twitter.com/CwlthSocWk>



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTadGT4rwaUsTQdYiyqFgAQ>