

Preparing for the National Student CHOGM 2017

COMMONWEALTH YOUTH
NEW ZEALAND



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the National Student Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (SCHOGM) for 2017, and to the exciting world of international politics ...

- Please note this is a working document to assist you prepare for your role at CHOGM.
- Please bring it to CHOGM with you.
- A final detailed programme will be issued at registration on day one.

Programme

Attached as Appendix A is draft programme for your information. Some parts of the programme are still being tweaked and the final version will be given to you at registration

The importance of preparation

The key to enjoying your experience at CHOGM, and ensuring that everyone gets the most out of their time, is preparation. This booklet is a starting place, but you will need to research widely before you are ready to assume your role.

Researching your country

Key to your preparation for SCHOGM is to get to know your country's issues, troubles, challenges, motivations and background. Not to do so could result in the event being a hollow exercise. On the other hand, if you arrive with the right knowledge and attitude at your fingertips, SCHOGM will be an unforgettable highlight of your school years.

Each delegate or delegation has been assigned a Commonwealth country to represent at the SCHOGM. Make sure that you have a good overview of the major facts about your country. Familiarise yourself with both its key foreign and domestic policies and the circumstances that have motivated your government to take the actions they have.

Ask yourself what role your country plays in the Commonwealth? Does it take a leadership role at CHOGM? Does it actively work with its regional partners? Is it playing an active role in other regional groupings such as ASEAN, APEC, CARICOM, European Union and the African Union?

Remember you are representing the government of your country – which can often be different to representing the people of that country.

The key to becoming successful is in taking your knowledge of the political and social climate of the country you have been allocated and stepping into its government's shoes.

Rather than asking "what would David Cameron or Julia Gillard do?" ask yourself "what would I do as a representative of Britain or Australia, in this situation? It is important to remember that you are not attending CHOGM as "David Cameron or Julia Gillard" – and while you are not expected to be a character actor by all means give it a go!

Your country will inevitably face challenges common to others in the Commonwealth, but its priorities may be completely different. You may be asked for money by other countries, or you may be doing the asking. You may enjoy a cooperative relationship with your neighbours, or you may be on the brink of armed conflict. Research your country's situation, and get a flavour for how its government is approaching these issues. Assess which countries you would naturally ally with, and those whose every statement you will criticise.

Conference Theme

The conference theme is "A peace-building Commonwealth"

Although the conference theme guides some of the content, various other pertinent topics will be discussed at the 2017 SCHOGM. Do research these other issues, and other topics that you may be interested in (both foreign and domestic) that may be pertinent to your country.

At the conference you will draw all these threads together and engage with the other countries at the table on behalf of your country. Put simply, to stay 'in role' you need to know your stuff.

Your role at SCHOGM

Where you are attending as a two-person delegation, one of you will act as that country's Head of Government, and the other will be its Minister of Foreign Affairs. These titles will not limit your participation at SCHOGM – both of you must be equally prepared. Where there is only one of you, you are automatically that country's Head of Government.

For Retreat Workshops, you will move into groups and look at a given topic in more depth with greater ability to discuss these interest areas.

What will we discuss?

The discussion and debate at SCHOGM is largely controlled by you – the delegates. In advance of your arrival at SCHOGM you are asked to think of, and bring along, three key issues affecting your country that you would like addressed during the first plenary session.

One of these issues should relate to either your region or another Commonwealth country.

One of your delegation will have about two minutes to speak about these issues, so do not prepare a lengthy speech – we are looking for succinct but robust statements. We do not want to hear about the history or geography of your country unless it is pertinent to the issues being raised.

These policy issues will form the basis of the deliberations in the plenary sessions, the communiqué and any statements/declarations SCHOGM may choose to issue at the end of the meeting.

Common themes at each Student CHOGM have included:

- Good Governance
- Incurable diseases
- Nations in crisis
- Access to medicine
- Terrorism and piracy
- Drugs
- Climate change
- Education
- Trade and Development
- Human Rights
- And many more ...

Country profile

You can download this by going to www.thecommonwealth.org

Reaching a Consensus

The Commonwealth has no constitution and unlike the United Nations, it does not pass formal resolutions. Coming out of the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting is a communiqué and position statements that reflect collective agreement amongst Heads of Government for action by member countries. Occasionally Commonwealth leaders will take a position on a matter that has the support of a majority but not all member countries.

As the conference progresses, you and other delegations are likely to find common ground on various topics. For example, a group of Pacific Commonwealth countries may agree to organise a "Commonwealth teacher training exchange programme". The delegations then draft a resolution, outlining in broad terms the key elements of the programme, and take it to the main table for debate during a plenary session.

Other than identifying three key issues relating to your country for use in the opening plenary session, you are not expected to prepare any such statements in preparation for the SCHOGM, but be aware that brief, punchy resolutions always become useful as the conference progresses.

Where to find information

The internet is your most useful resource. Some useful websites are:

- Commonwealth Secretariat website: www.thecommonwealth.org
- BBC News: www.bbcnews.co.uk
- CNN News www.cnn.com
- Search the internet for information on your country – in particular government websites
- Use Google to find your country's major newspapers
- Royal Commonwealth Society website: www.thercs.org

SCHOGM ADMINISTRATION

General notes

What to Bring / Dress Requirements

Delegates are advised to bring pen and paper. Please note that internet will not be provided to conference attendees.

We ask that you attend wearing your school uniform, preferably your schools Dress Uniform (sometimes referred to as Number Ones) if possible. If from a non-uniformed school, we ask that you wear clothing appropriate to the Parliamentary setting.

Parking

No parking is available in Parliament Grounds

Meals

Morning tea will be served on both days and afternoon tea on Monday.

The State Dinner on the Monday evening is included in your registration fee.

You will need to provide your own breakfast and lunch on both days. There are many options close to Parliament, and CYNZ members at SCHOGM will be happy to provide suggestions on the day.

Secretary General

The Commonwealth Secretary-General is responsible to all Heads of Government and plays a key role in the direction of the CHOGM and agenda issues. They work alongside plenary session chairs to guide discussions.

The student selected for this role will be required to work with Session Chairs, and therefore will work independently of their school's delegation.

The Secretary-General's role will include:

- making a five-minute speech on their aspirations for the Commonwealth, and for the conduct of the National Student CHOGM 2017
- working with National Student CHOGM 2017 officials to identify key agenda issues
- working with conference officials around the running and content of plenary sessions and to oversee the preparation of the final communiqué

Other business

Between the hours of the conference it is requested by Parliamentary Services that you stay within the confines of the Legislative Council Chamber, the Grand Hall and the Banquet Hall [Monday evening only].

You must wear your name tag at all times together with any parliamentary stickers issued. This is for security purposes.

You are expected to attend and participate for the entire duration of the conference. If you are conducting other business in Parliament or in Wellington, please schedule it at a time that does not clash with the conference.

You must observe at all times, health, safety and security requirements pertaining to the parliamentary complex

Opening Plenary Session

We want you to think about 3 aspects relating to the country you are representing. One of these issues is to involve your country in relation to another Commonwealth country and could be related to security, trade, development, human rights etc.

The Retreat

There are 3 topic areas:

1. Good governance and democracy // discussing elections, political conduct, and related matters
2. International Diplomacy // discussing the importance of international dialogue at a country-to-country level, and important issues to consider when doing so
3. Peacebuilding // discussing the importance of peace and ways to enhance this throughout the Commonwealth

For this session, all delegations will be split up into three groups, which will discuss each topic area with a subject-matter expert. In essence, each group will rotate around the three presenters, spending around 30 minutes discussing each topic from the position of the delegation.

Other Plenary Sessions

This year the plenary sessions will be:

Trade – the importance of sharing goods and services, alongside labour and knowledge, throughout the Commonwealth, with a focus on the economic importance of trade, and ways to enhance trade ties between nations.

Migration and Refugee Resettlement – one of the largest and most complex issues at current, this topic will see a discussion around policy setting for migration, issues potentially arising from migration, the benefits it brings, and the importance of refugee safety.

Climate Change – a long-term issue with grave implications for the future, this topic will see discussion around current efforts to combat climate change, alongside delving in to new opportunities to do more, and outline ways forward.

Open Topic – this plenary session will be open to delegations discussing topics important to their country, and providing an opportunity to cover topics not otherwise covered in the programme.

PROTOCOL NOTES

Plenary session conduct

Each plenary topic will be introduced by the plenary chair. Once the introduction has concluded, the Secretary-General will call on the SCHOGM to speak.

If you wish to speak on the topic on behalf of your country, please raise your country label and the Secretary-General will call on you. Wait for a microphone to be delivered to you and then stand to address the SCHOGM.

Please keep all addresses to the SCHOGM short and to the point (a maximum of 2 minutes).

Remember that the SCHOGM focuses on addressing international issues in a collegial, consensus-based manner. Please keep in mind the spirit and values of the Commonwealth.

Debating issues

All speeches should be directed to the Chair and the full SCHOGM. The Secretary-General may give another country the right of reply at their own discretion, if you specifically mention that country in your speech.

A strength of the SCHOGM is its basis in consensus. If all members present do not agree unanimously to an action, resolution or idea, it cannot be passed. Therefore debate should focus on compromise and trying to understand other nations' values rather than bullying or accusing member nations who have different values to your own.

Remember that countries are present at the SCHOGM because they share an understanding of the Commonwealth's values. The SCHOGM may not be the correct forum for addressing all international or domestic issues.

Note passing

To help you discuss issues directly with other nations or the Secretary-General without taking the floor, you may pass notes and messages to other delegates.

To pass notes to other delegates, write them on a piece of paper and hold them up. One of the event assistants will pass them to their intended recipient. Note that event assistants will read all notes before delivering them.

You may use notes to invite delegates outside the debating chamber to discuss issues in person.

Forming resolutions

Resolutions are decisions or requests for action brought to the SCHOGM by member nations, usually to address one of the issues being discussed. To be passed by the SCHOGM they must be unanimously supported by all delegations present.

To bring a resolution to the SCHOGM, raise your hand and request a resolution form from an event assistant. The form requires you to include a title for the resolution, the reason you are seeking the SCHOGM to consider it, the outcome you think it will bring, and a list of the countries that support the resolution. Resolutions must be supported by at least three member nations. Once the form is filled out, request an event assistant submit it to the Secretary General.

The Secretary-General will table the resolution with the SCHOGM and you will be given the chance to speak in support of it. It will then be opened to the SCHOGM to debate.

Voting

The Secretary-General may call a vote on certain issues, including resolutions. Votes are made by raising your table flag.

You may vote in favour of a resolution or issue, against it, or abstain. If any delegates vote against or abstain from voting, then the resolution may not be passed.

Reaching a consensus

Your main challenge, then, is to debate issues and form effective resolutions that address international issues while remaining true to the value base of the Commonwealth and of your own country.

To gain consensus, you may need to compromise on certain issues and decide whether the SCHOGM is the best forum for addressing others.

Press Conference

This event will occur at the end of Day One, where CYNZ members will act as members of the media, and ask you questions about the day's event. These may be challenging and will require you to think on your feet. Acting in the role as the independent world media, they will keep you honest about your decisions and ensure your actions align with your countries' values.

Observers and teachers

You'll note we have a number of observers present. I ask that these observers observe and not interfere in the goings-on of the SCHOGM. Observers may be asked by event assistants to step back if they repeatedly attempt to intervene in the SCHOGM.

Appendix A

2017 National Student CHOGM Programme

Day One: Monday 14 August 2017

Venue: Parliament Buildings, Wellington // Legislative Council Chamber and Grand Hall

Time	Session
8.45am – 9.00am	Registration – Grand Hall
9.00am – 9.15am	Introduction & Housekeeping
9.15am – 9.30am	Official Opening by Minister Dunne
9.30am – 10.00am	Protocol Session
10.00am – 10.30am	Icebreaker
10.30am – 10.50am	MORNING TEA
10.50am – 11.20am	Workshop 1: What do you value?
11.20am – 12.30pm	Plenary Session 1: What does the Commonwealth Value?
12.30pm – 1.10pm	LUNCH (own arrangements)
1.10pm – 1.15pm	CHOGM Reconvenes in Legislative Council Chamber
1.15pm – 3.25pm	Retreat Workshops
3.25pm – 3.45pm	AFTERNOON TEA
3.45pm – 5.15pm	Plenary Session 2: Trade
5.15pm – 5.45pm	Mock Press Conference
5.45pm – 7.30pm	State Dinner <i>Venue:</i> Banquet Hall <i>Guest Speaker:</i> Sir Anand Satyanand, Former Governor-General of New Zealand, and CYNZ Patron
7.30pm	CLOSE OF DAY 1

2017 National Student CHOGM Programme**Day Two: Tuesday 15 August 2017****Venue: Parliament Buildings, Wellington // Legislative Council Chamber and Grand Hall**

Time	Session
9.00am – 9.05am	CHOGM Reconvenes in Legislative Council Chamber
9.05am – 10.30am	Crisis Session
10.30am – 10.50am	MORNING TEA
10.50am – 11.50am	Plenary Session 3: Migration and Refugee Resettlement
11.50am – 12.55pm	LUNCH (own arrangements)
12.55pm – 1.00pm	CHOGM Reconvenes in Legislative Council Chamber
1.00pm – 1.50pm	Plenary Session 4: Climate Change
1.50pm – 2.35pm	Question Time in Speaker's Gallery
2.35pm – 3.30pm	Plenary Topic 5: Open Topics
3.30pm – 3.40pm	Agreement to Communique Language
3.40pm – 3.45pm	Address by the Secretary-General
3.45pm – 4.00pm	Minister Dunne presents certificates and closes the CHOGM
4.00pm	CLOSE OF CHOGM