

40 Commonwealth organisations celebrate renewal of global coordinating body ahead of Heads of Government meeting

Monday 1 June, 2026

Around 40 international organisations holding accredited status in the Commonwealth, including the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association (CPA), have celebrated the formal relaunch of the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations (IFCO) at Marlborough House in London.

IFCO undertook a thorough review of its structure and operations through 2025 and a new constitution was approved in March 2026 followed by elections. David N Jones (Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work) was elected unopposed as the new Chair.

14 additional members were elected to the new Steering Committee whose first meeting was in Marlborough House on 14th April alongside a Secretariat briefing for AOs on the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

The first IFCO conference under the new constitution was held in Marlborough House on 27th April 2026, attended in person and online by around 40 Accredited Organisations (AOs).

The Deputy Secretary General said:

"The Secretariat, as well as Heads of Government of the Commonwealth, see Accredited Organisations as a force multiplier, especially in these days of depleting resources in every sphere of life".

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.

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

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. 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. A Partnership with Commonwealth Accredited Organisations notes the Commonwealth 'commitment to partnerships and supports the intention to move from declarations to implementation'.

The submission calls on CHOGM to 'commit 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 to promote the proposal with member states and partners is underway. The conference approved a Code of Conduct as a guide for respectful working and started work on communications and work plans. IFCO is the umbrella group for Commonwealth Accredited Organisations.

A Commonwealth Pharmacists Association spokesperson said:

"CPA warmly welcomes the renewal of IFCO and congratulates the Forum on the adoption of its new constitution, and remains a proud member. IFCO is a unique and invaluable platform for the coordination of cross-sector understanding and multilateral collaboration between diverse civil society groups, and offers an important voice for professions, communities and causes ahead of this autumn's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Antigua and Barbuda."

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