

The Commonwealth Equality Network

Statement of Values

1. **The purpose of the Commonwealth Equality Network (“TCEN” or “The Network”) is to promote understanding and goodwill between all the peoples of the Commonwealth. The Network facilitates discussion between member organisations and promotes the principles of equality and non-discrimination.**
2. **As with The Commonwealth itself, TCEN prides itself on being a values based organisation. The values that that TCEN ascribes to are outlined below and are directly drawn from the Commonwealth’s own values.**
3. **The Network believes in the liberty of all individuals under the law, in equal rights for all citizens and we are committed to the principles of human dignity and equality, in line with:**
 - a. **The Commonwealth Charter 2013:**
 - i. We are committed to equality and respect for the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, for all without discrimination on any grounds as the foundations of peaceful, just and stable societies.
 - ii. We note that these rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and cannot be implemented selectively.
 - b. **The Port of Spain Affirmation of Commonwealth Values and Principles 2009:**
 - i. section 5 that a core Commonwealth value is the “promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all without discrimination on any grounds” and that “rights are universal...and cannot be implemented selectively.”
 - c. **The Harare Declaration 1991:**
 - i. We oppose all forms of racial oppression, and we are committed to the principles of human dignity and equality
 - ii. We believe in the liberty of the individual under the law, in equal rights for all citizens regardless of gender, race, colour, creed or political belief
 - d. **The Singapore Declaration 1971:**
 - i. The core beliefs of the Commonwealth are expressed in this Declaration, which embrace equal rights for all regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief
4. **The Network believes in the principle of non-discrimination, in line with:**
 - a. **The Commonwealth Charter 2013:**
 - i. We are implacably opposed to all forms of discrimination, whether rooted in gender, race, colour, creed, political belief or other grounds
 - b. **The Singapore Declaration 1971**
 - i. We believe that our multi-national association can expand human understanding and understanding among nations, assist in the elimination of discrimination based on differences of race, colour or creed, maintain and strengthen personal liberty, contribute to the enrichment of life for all, and provide a powerful influence for peace among nations.

5. **The Network believes in the individual's inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which he or she lives, in line with:**
 - a. **The Commonwealth Charter 2013:**
 - i. We recognise the inalienable right of individuals to participate in democratic processes.
 - ii. We emphasise the need to promote tolerance, respect, understanding, moderation and religious freedom which are essential to the development of free and democratic societies, and recall that respect for the dignity of all human beings is critical to promoting peace and prosperity.
 - b. **The Harare Declaration 1991:**
 - i. [We believe] in the individual's inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which he or she lives;
 - c. **The Singapore Declaration 1971:**
 - i. [We believe] in their inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which they live. We therefore strive to promote in each of our countries those representative institutions and guarantees of personal freedom under the law that are our common heritage.

6. **The Network believes in the value of accountability and transparency and works towards achieving good governance internally and promoting it throughout the Commonwealth, in line with:**
 - a. **The Commonwealth Charter 2013**
 - i. We reiterate our commitment to promote good governance through the rule of law, to ensure transparency and accountability and to root out, both at national and international levels, systemic and systematic corruption.

7. **The Network works to protect and promote international human rights standards, in line with:**
 - a. **The Commonwealth Charter 2013:**
 - i. We are committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights covenants and international instruments.
 - b. **The Harare Declaration 1991:**
 - i. Extending the benefits of development within a framework of respect for human rights
 - c. **The Port of Spain Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting**
 - i. (CHOGM) that reaffirmed the agreement that states had made at the 2007 Kampala CHOGM that all Commonwealth members should ratify core international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
 - d. **In Toonen v Australia (1994) CCPR/C/50/D/488/1992**
 - i. the UN Human Rights Committee held that the criminalisation of same -sex sexual conduct was incompatible with the right

to privacy and the right to equality before the law, as guaranteed under the ICCPR.